



## Mission Possible

Delivering government's commitments on crime

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UK Government and Public Sector



# Foreword

Deloitte is proud to work with government and police forces to help them answer some of the most pressing questions they face. After a summer of disorder, crime and policing has been high on the new government's agenda. A central plank of its mission-based approach is the Safer Streets Mission, with powerful commitments that are likely to be enacted through the Crime and Policing Bill.

This paper draws upon Deloitte's Centre for Government Insights – *Government Trends 2024* that identified governments across the globe trying to more effectively exploit system change and technology to harness better results.

The UK's context will require government to work across a diverse policing structure to deliver improvements in policing and crime. It will do this with significant fiscal constraints which will demand considerable focus on the mission objectives.

There is a major opportunity to deliver a breakthrough in police reform and performance by creating better alignment in the policing system and the generational step change in technology.

The new government's mission-driven approach provides the opportunity to focus on how government works together and with its external partners, to deliver for citizens.

This is further discussed in a broader context in our paper *Mission-driven government: 5 Critical success factors*.

We hope this paper helps policy makers reflect on how to go about this mission, to set priorities and stimulate ways of working that ensure mission success.



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# Mission possible

## Delivering government's commitments on crime

The new government's Safer Streets Mission is ambitious: seeking to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) and knife crime in a decade. An increase in police numbers is underpinning a *Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee*, generated by savings from better procurement, collaboration and enabling services; improving police effectiveness in detecting crime and boosting public confidence. These pledges are set against a backdrop of challenging public finances that make radical strategies even more important in ensuring this mission can be achieved.

This context is not unique to the UK, across the globe, governments are seeking a step change in their approach. According to the Deloitte Centre for Government Insights report, *Government Trends 2024*, there is a growing drive for more radical innovation delivering 10x improvements in performance and productivity through a more effective interplay of technology, process, policy innovation, workforce, and regulation. Whilst 10x might be unrealistic for UK policing, if government is to achieve its goal of halving priority crimes, then it must at least strive for 2x.

We see six steps the government can take to ensure it offers 2x crime fighting in its Safer Streets Mission.

### 1 Hardwiring the mission

Law enforcement needs to be clear on its direction to tackle the complexity of criminal threats and the pace of technological change it is facing. The Safer Streets Mission needs to remain in central focus through the life of this parliament to ensure sustained results. Central government is not the only player with a crime agenda. In 2012, the *Police and Social Responsibility Act* made a decisive shift to reduce the role of government in crime and policing with the advent of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

Local police and crime plans inform the actions of Chief Constables. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is increasingly influencing local force priorities.

Government is the central actor that can target resources and shape the national landscape to enable effective local action alongside national reform. Local accountability is critical, but transformational reform requires system wide changes. The Crime and Policing Bill should clarify the role of government in policing and crime through the return of a statutory *National Police and Crime Plan* that sets out priorities both for crime fighting and police reform.

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The plan would require national priorities to feature in local police and crime plans, as was previously the case, ensuring a stronger system wide focus and accountability. Legislative change can also ensure other public bodies can be statutorily required to cooperate in the mission. This would broaden the response across government and local agencies, recognising the issues of knife crime and VAWG need to leverage a much wider system response. The mission would be hard wired into the accountability landscape.

## 2 Precision mission

Commitments to halve knife crime and VAWG in a decade require a clear definition of the problem, agile and timely data, and clarity on and how results will be judged. Government is not assisted by the current approach to assessing crime levels.

Police recorded crime is based on public reports and police assessment. These reports categorise offence groups on themes like knife enabled crime and violence. The Crime Survey of England and Wales measures public perception of policing and crime. The Crime Survey is the most effective national measure of crime trends but is not reliable at police force level. The Office of National Statistics consistently emphasises that police recorded data does not give reliable trends for violence and is more a measure of police activity.

The knife enabled crime and VAWG categories of recorded crime are broad – they do not always describe with precision what the public think they do. In the area of knife enabled crime, around 42% of over 50,000 knife crime offences are in fact robberies<sup>1</sup>. A much smaller number of offences are crimes with knife injuries, with 3,897 cases recorded using data from hospital admissions of knife related injuries<sup>2</sup>. The national data returns for critical crimes such as knife crime are incomplete with significant forces still missing from this data. Collection lags months behind events, inhibiting effective insight on national trends.

## 3 Place based missions

*Deloitte Government Trends 2024* shows success at meeting big challenges is a response that crosses departmental boundaries. 2x mission effectiveness on tackling crime will need such a collaboration across Whitehall and national agencies, local mayors and PCCs, chief constables, and place-based services. History tells us that this is easy to say, and hard to do.

*Government Trends 2024* highlights trends across the globe for those who build successful partnerships. A deep understanding of the capabilities needed to impact on problems, a strong shared mindset by

This picture is confusing. Crime statistics can show rises in crime, but the crime survey shows crime falling. The survey is more reliable on a national level. The police recorded data is the only local data available to judge force performance. Classifications of crime into broad categories like knife enabled crime and VAWG inhibit development of a precise strategy with different drivers to the various offences in both areas.

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A review of the crime classifications and perception data is needed to support the Safer Streets Mission. This must include the speed of collection and depth at which this data is assembled. There is a strong case for greater granulation of the crime survey to at least police force level matching the Australian Crime Victimisation Survey which cites regional (State and Territory) data, so that public experience of crime and policing is better understood at a local level. How the public feel about their safety will ultimately define success.

agencies with aligned priorities and evidence-based policy, drive results. Data sharing and focused funding with strong incentives can create the right behaviour for delivery. The Safer Streets Mission will need to crack the challenge of collaboration, and it seems the government is thinking in this way. A strong commitment has been made to support missions to drive collaboration and target spending on priorities that deliver the biggest impact on citizens in phase two of the spending review<sup>3</sup>.

The *Take back our streets* manifesto committed to universal provision, such as a specialist rape units in every police force. It also recognised crime is chronic in some of the poorest neighbourhoods. A new *National Police and Crime Plan* should not shy away from calling out these places as they provide an opportunity to accelerate the Safer Streets Mission. They are the very communities where wins need to be delivered at pace if success is to be achieved, given they are a large part of the national problem.

Knife enabled crime continues to be concentrated in metropolitan areas. 41% of knife crime takes place in the Metropolitan Police Service and the West Midlands Police<sup>4</sup>. Within these areas smaller clusters of wards are the focus of these problems. These ‘tipping point’ neighbourhoods are complex and need a concerted health, economic, education and skills, environmental and housing focus to tackle chronic crime issues, rather than just policing. Pulling the levers in Whitehall will not deliver the effect, government has to go local and stimulate joined up delivery on the ground.

We believe the government should identify those tipping point neighbourhoods and create locally delivered but centrally accountable Safer Streets Mission Areas.

## 4 Smarter policing

The Labour manifesto promised a new *Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme*. The budget has now set out its focus. The settlement for policing indicates short term funding will need to be followed with considerable efficiencies and productivity improvements in the second half of the spending review, not least to fund the growth of 13,000 extra police personnel in *the Neighbourhood Policing Promise*. HM Treasury and Home Office will jointly lead this programme to free up cost and officer time<sup>5</sup>.

Implemented well, it could be the engine of a 2x approach to productivity, but system wide change is not easy across so many police forces. Any programme is going to need to save cash, free up resources and improve performance. It will also need a more national focus.

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Localisation will help create a scalable data strategy across agencies to create deep insight on complex problems and effective responses. The requirements created by a *National Police and Crime Plan* could be used to align agencies into partnership delivery teams. Local communities can help shape and legitimise action at this local level. Done well, this can supercharge action, results, and innovation through practice in the field and not policy in Whitehall. Focus energy and effort at the places where need is greatest, get results and learn lessons quickly to drive the policy agenda.

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After a period of austerity there are limits to what can be achieved within individual force operating models.

We believe this plan should have four parts: Strengthening national procurement, reform of enabling services, tackling consistent areas of underperformance, and resetting the national landscape. Exploiting the opportunities of new technologies should underpin this work.

A national approach to police procurement is underway with *Bluelight Commercial Limited*. The *Procurement Act 2023* regulations offer opportunity to reduce cost and improve pace if the scale of national procurements is increased.



Greenfield opportunities, like the future of electric fleet, offer policing the opportunity to set up its future model on a big-ticket item unencumbered by legacy services. Prosecuting these opportunities with a far more mandated approach will enable a route to early savings.

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The reform of shared services across human resources, finance and business support are areas where cashable savings can be achieved, given restrictions on savings from police officer numbers.

There are compelling reasons for why a more national lens needs to be applied in this area. Whilst there is more efficiency to be secured in some forces, many have already made considerable savings. Policing should also be seeking improvements as well as saving costs.

The current approaches to recruitment, vetting, occupational health and wellbeing, talent management, career management and payroll services are highly variable across the country and often lag the best in class.

The police workforce needs to be well supported to be motivated and productive. Pressure to reduce costs at a force level may inhibit the ability to radically improve and save money if the opportunity for better operating models with real scale was missed.

Finally, in recruitment and vetting the Angiolini Inquiry poses a serious question as to whether a localised model for these services can ever deliver the consistency that public confidence now requires.

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A National Police and Crime Plan needs to extend into operational areas. Policing inspections are increasingly showing a consistent picture in areas where forces are struggling. The recent *HMICFRS State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2023*, identifies almost all police forces have systematic problems in crime investigation. Rethinking the future operating approach in critical areas like this offers the possibility of a step change in productivity, performance, efficiency, and public experience.

A strategic, rather than incremental, approach is needed to effectively drive service improvements and ensure consistent adoption across the country.

These operational areas also have savings potential. Policing has been most comfortable collaborating at a regional scale where forces lack individual ability to be efficient or effective. Today, it is important to identify those services where technology can deliver 2x improvements more systematically and at scale by capability collaboration.

For example, generative AI is delivering transformational change in contact centres across the globe. Digital and voice services are converging rapidly. Viewing public contact as a local policing function will dramatically restrict the ability to deploy these capabilities at scale with attendant benefits.

We will be digging into the future of public contact in a separate paper, but global trends and early experimentation in policing show considerable opportunities to save money and dramatically enhance customer experience in this area.

Policing not only has a complex local structure with its local force model, but also an unclear national tier.

We believe this needs reform to ensure a sustained approach to transformation and technology. The coherence between horizon scanning and science, standards, technology, and procurement will be critical in building approaches to ensure policing stays ahead of threats and rapidly exploits opportunities.

Nationally delivered, locally tailored, capabilities in areas like Digital Forensics can exploit this coherence

to deliver best in class technologies that can have an immediate impact on cost, and more importantly, an immediate impact on victim experience in mission critical crime areas, like VAWG. The Efficiency Plan or a future policing white paper needs to lay foundations for this.

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## 5 Licensed to police

Increasing public expectations and operational demands will require a professionally skilled and ethical policing workforce – and they are not separate requirements. The professionals who are most trusted by the public are regulated professions, accredited with some form of licence to practise model, drawing from bodies like the General Medical Council and governed by the College of Policing provide a pathway

for the service. We recently published a separate paper on a licence to practise and we believe foundational steps need to be taken to ensure the consistent delivery of trusted and reliable vetting for people in policing. Building an effective licensing model for practitioners working in VAWG services and Neighbourhood Policing can ensure skills and behaviours match the mission.

## 6 A listening mission

Policing's confidence challenges are high on the police, political and public agenda. Reform will require changes in culture and standards, but the service needs to be more insightful and responsive to public needs too. The new government's *Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee* should be key to this.

However strong the results on the Safer Streets Mission, success can only be secured if people feel safer and policing is more accessible and responsive.

A licence to practise regime can ensure skills in community engagement for an expanded

neighbourhood workforce so those extra officer numbers can have a 2x effect on the Safer Streets Mission.

The police need much stronger data at neighbourhood level not just on crime but community concerns and safety fears.

***We believe the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee needs a strong information and technology strategy, alongside additional people, to deliver this.***

We have already argued a reformed crime survey can deliver stronger insights into crime and community concerns. Chief Constables must also legally obtain the views of people in each neighbourhood in their force under S34 of *the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011*.

The quality of this work is highly variable across the country. We believe the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee needs a strong information and technology strategy, alongside additional people, to deliver this.

There is a considerable level of neighbourhood insight available on social media platforms. Many conversations in police control rooms will be recorded based only on the offences identified and not the breadth of the callers' concerns. Using large language models, a much richer and dynamic picture can be created of what is happening in neighbourhoods.

The Digital Public Contact Programme has created Street Safe on Police.uk. The public is invited to share issues and locations where they feel unsafe with the police. They do not have to be a victim to report this.

Conversation about safety that police and partners can tackle draws policing back to the lessons learned from the National Reassurance Policing Programme in the early 2000s<sup>6</sup>.

The tools, technology, and the ease with which the public can provide this information should be enhanced. Armed with better skills and precise information on their community, new neighbourhood officers will be better placed to keep the promise of more responsive policing.



## Summary

The Safer Streets Mission is more than possible. Despite the funding challenges ahead, we believe the government and the police can deliver significant improvements in policing and crime in this parliament. We believe this can be achieved by:

1. Hardwiring the mission into legislation and clarifying the role of government in policing and crime through the return of a statutory *National Police and Crime Plan*.
2. Greater precision in the mission by better use of data. A review of the crime classifications and perception data is needed.
3. Joining up government in high crime neighbourhoods by identifying those tipping point neighbourhoods and create locally delivered but centrally accountable Safer Streets Mission areas.
4. Using the Efficiency Plan to generate efficiency, productivity, and performance by a more national approach, focused in four parts: Strengthening national procurement, reform of enabling services, tackling consistent areas of underperformance, and resetting the national landscape. Exploiting the opportunities of new technologies should underpin all this work.
5. Beginning a new, centralised, approach to standards and skills in mission critical areas, with a licence to practise.
6. A Neighbourhood Guarantee that invests in capabilities that provide insight not just officers and share their results.

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# Endnotes

## Endnotes

1. ONS Data Crime in England and Wales ending June 2024
2. ONS -The nature of violent crime in England and Wales; year ending March 2024
3. HM Treasury Autumn Budget 2024 "Fixing the foundations to deliver change" - 2.92
4. ONS Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2004
5. Autumn Budget 2024 "Fixing the Foundations to deliver change" – 2.98
6. An Evaluation of the impact of the National Reassurance Policing Programme - Home Office Research Study 296- 2006



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