

Shaping the Policy of Elected Police & Crime Commissioners

Research by Ian Loader, Professor of Criminology at the University of Oxford, has played an important part in shaping debate about the role and future of elected Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales



as a public good and explain the necessity of a democratic state in the realization of its values, has since sought to defend the idea of democratic accountability that underpins the role of PCCs.

The introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), in November 2012, signalled an important shift in the treatment of crime in England and Wales. The political and policy environment in which the idea of the PCCs was received and implemented, and subsequent thinking about the role and future of the Commissioners, has been shaped by two areas of research undertaken by Professor Ian Loader.

The first strand of work focused on the changing modes of crime governance in England and Wales since the 1970s – a period during which crime has been politicised as a policy domain and the temperature of public debate has ‘heated up’. A second strand set out to investigate the virtues to be gained, and the risks to be averted, by opening up policing and penal policy to extended democratic engagement.

This work, begun in collaboration with Neil Walker from the University of Edinburgh as a project to examine security

Professor Loader submitted written evidence to the Green Paper on ‘Reconnecting Police and Public’ and gave oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee in the House of Commons. He also addressed seminars and conferences attended by Home Office civil servants, senior police officers and key stakeholders in the police policy community

Additional reports, articles and seminars confirmed Professor Loader’s work as a reference point in the Labour Party, clearly influencing the thinking of the Party’s Frontbench Home Affairs team. Loader was also a member of the Independent Commission on the Future of Policing and part of the Editorial Team which produced its final report, launched in November 2013. The report recommended new arrangements for giving effect to the idea of democratic accountability which underpin the experiment with PCCs.