

West Midlands Against Policing for Profit

Briefing on Police Services Privatisation

Business Partnering for Policing in the
West Midlands and Surrey



This is not some dystopian future

A violent burglary. The scenes of crime officer who visits your house is employed by G4S. Fibre samples are found, swabs taken and despatched to G4S Forensics. A suspect is held in police cells run by G4S, appears before magistrates trained by the company.

At Crown Court the accused is found guilty, sentenced, driven to a G4S prison in a G4S van. On probation he attends a G4S work programme wearing a G4S electronic tag.

This is not some dystopian future. All this and more is happening in Britain today. (1)

What is the
Business Partnering
for Policing
programme?

1. Scope of BPP privatisation

According to the contract note, the tender is to run all services that ***'can be legally delegated to the private sector'***. (2)

'The BPP programme is intended to explore the full range of options provision which might be offered through a partnership arrangement with the private sector'. (Police Authority Report) (3)

This is different from previous privatisations of policing services where contracts have been for discrete business areas such as custody or forensics.

2. BPP privatisation programme

“The breathtaking list of policing activities up for grabs includes investigating crimes, detaining suspects, developing cases, responding to and investigating incidents, supporting victims and witnesses, managing high-risk individuals, patrolling neighbourhoods, managing intelligence, managing engagement with the public, as well as more traditional back-office functions, such as managing forensics, providing legal services, managing the vehicle fleet, finance and human resources.” (The Guardian) (4)

3. A privatisation of core police functions

This is intended as a **total** privatisation: *In addition, both forces have ambitions to transform the way they deliver policing services by considering complete end-to-end processes rather than individual functions, departments or activities.*

But critically: *Private companies are invited to bid to take over almost all of what the public regard as core police functions, such as bringing offenders to justice and investigating crime, detaining suspects, managing 'high risk' individuals, disrupting criminal networks, responding to, managing and investigating major incidents . . . (6)*

4. National significance of the BPP

Surrey and West Midlands Police Authorities are acting in a formal partnership and the tender is for a contract initially worth £1.5bn over 7 years.

But this is the first phase of privatisation which it is intended to be rolled out to police forces nationally under a contract worth £3.5bn.

On 24th January 2012, the OJEU notice was published. While Surrey and West Midlands Police Authorities are the intended beneficiaries of the OJEU notice, 41 other Police Authorities were named on the OJEU as potential future beneficiaries of services under the agreement.

(Chief Constable of Surrey's report 17th May 2012, p5) (7)

5. Police Force relationship with the business partner

- There will be a loss of operational control by the Chief Constable over these services.
- But the BPP model envisages something more:

*The partner will invest in the relationship and become **a trusted member** of the Force management team. **This requires more than just a contract**; it requires a cultural change in the way that police officers, police staff and police authorities think about the services for which they are responsible.*

(Memorandum of Information) (8)

Context and drivers to BPP privatisation

1. It's the Home Office, stupid!

The BPP trial is an imposition on the West Midlands region by Central Government and is not a response to local political demands or needs.

There is direct support and involvement by the Home Office over the BPP procurement process.

Bob Jones, chair of the finance committee of the West Midlands police authority and a former chair of the authority, said that the trial was "very much" driven by central government, particularly Home Office minister Nick Herbert, and Cabinet Office minister and paymaster general Francis Maude. (The Guardian 2nd March 2012) (9)

2. ACPO: The cheerleaders of BPP!

Greater Manchester chief constable Peter Fahy, Acpo's spokesman, said that only "radical and fundamental" change would allow forces to cope with the "enormous challenge of the financial cuts" and maintain the protection of the public . . . (10)

*The tender offered by West Midlands and Surrey police signals a shift **which would allow the private sector to provide staff who can carry out routine and repetitive tasks at cheaper rates and, perhaps most intriguingly, to provide temporary access to skilled staff** – such as murder inquiry teams – which can be hired for incidents that are rare in most forces but for which all forces must permanently retain a group of very expensive staff. (11)*

3. Cuts in the West Midlands force

The West Midlands Police Force has to make cuts of £126m over the four years of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

year on year budget cuts

2011-12 £40m

2012-13 £38m

2013-14 £24m

2014-15 £24m

There have already been significant and cuts in staffing. Over a four year period 2,764 jobs are planned to be lost with the axe falling most heavily on police staff whose numbers would reduce over this period by 1,500 posts. (12)

Rationale of BPP

- ‘Problem of doing the same or more with less. And reducing unit costs’
- Predicated upon an attack on the future terms and conditions of staff providing these services.

The BPP procurement process

1. A costly process with no mandate

No consultation

- Neither the West Midlands, nor Surrey police authority has consulted the communities they serve on whether they want this privatisation.
- Surrey Police Authority is proposing to undertake *focus groups* as part of its public engagement over the summer!

Cost of consultants and procurement process

- The overall costs for this process are estimated at **£5m** and the Home Office has agreed to input up to £2m with West Midlands and Surrey funding the rest on a 2:1 basis (£2m & £1m). (13)

2. Where are we in the procurement process?

- OJEU notice issued for BPP on 24th January 2012
 - The Bidders Conference under Gateway 2 took place on 13th March 2012.
 - There was a Joint Board meeting of the two Policing Authorities on 18th May 2012 which shortlisted the preferred bidders.
 - The preferred bidders will receive an 'invitation to Submit Outline Proposal (ISOP), during which bidders submit a written response to set questions.'
 - The WM Police Authority meeting on 24th May 2012 decided to extend the timetable for the procurement to enable the newly PCC to be involved in the decision making around the final award of the BPP contract by May 2013.
- (14)

3. Shortlist of bidders through to Gateway 3

- British Telecommunications, Reliance Secure Task Management and Vanguard Consulting
- Capita Business Services
- G4S Care & Justice Services
- Kellogg Brown & Root and IBM United Kingdom
- Logica UK, Amey Community and Northgate Information Solutions
- Serco, HP Enterprise Services, and Accenture

(15)



The case against the BPP privatisation

1. Case for privatisation is unproven

UNISON:

- There is no competent business case for the proposals. The Home Office has refused to reveal its business case for this privatisation.
- There is no evidence that the private sector provides value for money. (16)

WM Chief Constable admits: ***‘The police service has more limited experience of working with the private sector, although increasing numbers are exploring its potential.’*** (17)

While accepting privatisation of police services is largely unproved, the Chief Constable goes on to justify a complete outsourcing due to complexity of service!

2. Election of Police and Crime Commissioner

- The election of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the West Midlands will take place on 15th November. This office will replace the Police Authority.
- The key issue has been the timing of the procurement process in relation to the election of the Police Commissioner.
- The timing of this procurement process ahead of the election has sought to tie the hands of any incoming PCC into accepting this privatisation and to effectively subvert the election process.
- Due to the progress of the procurement timetable, a newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands, who decided to end the process, would face the prospect of a private sector bidder suing for damages for money spent on the bidding process. (18)

3. Election of Police and Crime Commissioner: 'A Managed Democracy'

73. *The timing of the procurement would coincide with the election period and as such the considerations of the Authority will inform the political debate. **This has the potential to increase the risks for likely partners in terms of possible adverse publicity with individual candidates believing that the debate is such that they need to take a position on the programme as part of their campaign.** The latter has the potential to reduce the likelihood of their appetite for investment in the programme. However, potential suppliers enter this process aware of upcoming elections and as such are almost certain to build consideration of this into their risk profile. Should the Authority determine to continue with its support of the programme, the impact of this issue will become more apparent on suppliers as work progresses to the next gateway.*

74. *It is possible to envisage that any decision by the Authority might be used to justify a political position, whatever that might be. **Accepting the heightened political environment in which the Force and Authority will be working over the next ten months, a decision to continue would need to be accompanied by a jointly developed and owned communications strategy.***

(Report of the Chief Executive of West Midlands Police to the WM Police Authority on 5th January 2012) (3)

4. The corporate takeover: KBR

- KBR, is a former subsidiary of Halliburton, and has had extensive contracts from the US Government to provide services to support the military occupation of Iraq. KBR's subcontractors have engaged in human trafficking and use forced labour to provide its services in Iraq.
- KBR is one of the companies that built the infamous Guantanamo Bay detention camp. The facility at Guantanamo was not only used to detain people without trial and to carry out interrogations with torture, the site itself was built in a manner designed to dehumanise and terrorise those held there.

5. Corporate takeover: G4S

Treatment of Asylum seekers

In the UK G4S has been the subject of 700 complaints over the treatment of asylum detainees of which 130 were upheld. G4S has been implicated in the deaths of a number of asylum seekers in its custody; in 2010 G4S lost a Home Office forcible deportation contract after the death of an Angolan deportee, Jimmy Mubenga, while being restrained on a flight back home.

Supporting Israel's military occupation of Palestine

G4S is also in breach of the Fourth Geneva convention through its activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories:

- a) Is providing security equipment and services to incarceration facilities holding Palestinian political prisoners inside Israel and the occupied West Bank;
- b) Is offering security services and security guards to businesses in settlements;
- c) Is providing security systems for the Israeli police headquarters in the West Bank;

(4th Geneva Convention relates to Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War) (19)

6. Threat to civil liberties

- BPP proposes that private companies take over the detention and safe custody of prisoners arrested.
- Citizens will not have recourse to complain to the Independent Police Complaints Commission about a private company.
- The BPP includes proposals to outsourcing the investigation of crime. There are major civil liberties concerns about giving private companies power to obtain detailed information about people's lives.
- G4S, which has a £200m contract with Lincolnshire Police is now able to access the National Police Records as part of this contract. (20)

West Midlands Against Policing for Profit

Why we are campaigning?

Police privatisation will inevitably blur the boundaries between public and private interests. Private companies are primarily accountable to their shareholders, not to local citizens.

The weakening of public accountability over critical police functions run by private companies presents a clear and future danger for the civil liberties of the citizens of the West Midlands.

These companies have a history of abusing human rights, disregarding the safety of those in their care, and allowing racist and discriminatory behaviour towards those detained. This has serious implications for the highly diverse population of the West Midlands.

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http://www.west-midlands-pa.gov.uk/documents/committees/public/2012/04_PoliceAuthority_05Jan12_Business_Partnering_for_Policing.pdf

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<http://www.surreypa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/12-SPA-BPP-paper.17.05.12.v1.1-FINAL.pdf>

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15. Press release by West Midlands Police

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19. Background note on G4S

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