

Police Federation
Of England and Wales



Ffederasiwn Heddlu
Lloegr a Chymru

Established by Act of Parliament

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Rt. Hon Theresa May MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

20th November 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

After careful consideration of the circumstances of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, I am writing to you on behalf of 123,000 police officers across England and Wales to implore the government to urgently reconsider any reduction to the police budget, which we expect may be made in the Comprehensive Spending Review on Wednesday 25 November.

As Home Secretary you are aware of the very real threat we face and the resources needed within the intelligence services and the police service to try to prevent such attacks in this country. You are also aware of the valuable local intelligence that police officers have gathered in communities through the good work undertaken by neighbourhood policing teams. It is through these relationships, the trust they build with the public and local community leaders, that information has been secured which has prevented a number of terrorist attacks in this country.

We are not a lone voice saying that any further cuts will jeopardise neighbourhood policing; chief constables have said it, as have a number of Police and Crime Commissioners. Indeed, it is now being reported that a restricted document had been sent to you from police leaders warning that any further budget cut would 'reduce very significantly' the ability of the police service to deal with a terrorist attack on a scale of that witnessed across Paris.

Represent Influence Negotiate

We all need to work together to combat terrorism, but pulling the rug from under the police service will not do this. Government must not sleepwalk into disaster.

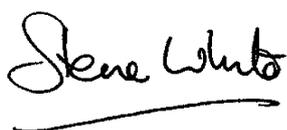
While we welcomed the announcement of an additional £2billion funding and recruitment plans for an extra 1900 staff for MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, we were bitterly disappointed that there was no mention of policing. The cuts have so far resulted in the loss of 17,000 police officers and almost the equivalent number of support staff. The impact of this is already being felt across communities and officers are telling us they are struggling to cope as it is. Any further cuts could seriously jeopardise public safety.

In recent days, police officers have contacted me in droves following the Prime Minister's statement during Prime Minister's Questions that there has been an increase in the number of neighbourhood policing officers across the country. We know that police numbers have fallen and this is not the reality officers see, as they are pulled away from neighbourhood policing teams to deal with 24/7 emergency calls. Indeed, many chief officers have publicly stated that they will have to further reduce neighbourhood policing teams as resources dwindle. To suggest that all is well with community policing is disingenuous. This avenue to good local information, which could help prevent attacks, is closing.

We believe the public would rather the police service was able to continue to prevent this kind of terrorist attack on our shores, rather than attempt to pick up the pieces after a heinous act. We must do all that is necessary to prevent such an attack. Now is not the time for party politics; we must not put political policy before public protection.

The Government must urgently review any plans to further reduce officer numbers through more reductions to the police budget over the coming years. We cannot, and must not, put a price on public safety.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Steve White
Chair
Police Federation of England and Wales