

Steve's Letter recently published in the EEN

This is not the way to police

Using security guards for helping manage events is not new and makes sense. The cracks that are appearing in the public accountability for policing by extending private contractors into police functions make no sense and are unacceptable. In Norfolk we must be vigilant as security businesses are not, as David Benfield of the Police Federation pointed out 'doing this for the good of the community'. GSL Dardan 'looking forward to playing a full and active part in supporting Safer Neighbourhood Teams' tells me they have ambitions to replace some police, PCSO's and Neighbourhood Wardens - all of whom work to standards set by public authorities, are accountable to the public and not driven by profit.

Private contractors are accountable to their shareholders and making a profit is a duty for directors. Private companies can go bust overnight, can be sold on - which could lead to UK policing being provided by a company not based in the UK, and holding staff and the company to account would be a lengthy, difficult and expensive business.

Privatising the police flies in the face of our historic values of public safety, the state protecting its citizens and the sanctity of British law as part of our social fabric. The thin blue line could soon be damaged by a thin wedge of privatisation driven by ambition for profit.

This is not about politics - this is about principles and values. Our streets should be protected by law enforcers who are accountable to the public they serve. We must join together to resist any dilution of that principle.

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