

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

**Minutes of a Meeting of Cumbria Police Authority held on Thursday 15
December 2005 at Police Headquarters,
Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 1.00pm.**

PRESENT

Mr R Watson (Chairman)

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Mr M Ash | Mr J Mallinson |
| Mr A L Barry | Mr C S Moth |
| Mr R S Cole | Mr J Nicholson |
| Ms S E Donnelly | Mrs L L Shaw |
| Mrs C A Egan | Mrs L Slavin |
| Mrs M Johnson | Mr W Smith |
| Ms J Lashmar | Mr J Woolley |

Also present:

Clerk /Chief Executive (Mr C.R. Alcock)
Treasurer (Mr D. Thomas)
Performance Management and Policy Advisor (Miss M Saunders)
Chief Constable (Mr M Baxter)
Deputy Chief Constable (Mrs C Twigg)
Assistant Chief Constable (Mr N Rhodes)
Constabulary Director of Finance and Resources (Mr M Thompson)
Chief Superintendent R Smith
Constabulary Head of Marketing and Communications (Ms G Shearer)
Deputy Clerk (Mr S. Edwards)

**PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND
PUBLIC**

114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs P M Halfpenny.

**115. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND
PUBLIC**

(a) Urgent Business

The Chairman advised that he intended to take a report by the Chief Constable on the “ Premises Improvement Fund 2003/04” as an item of Urgent Business to enable this piece of work to be signed off in accordance with Home Office requirements. He intended to take the item in Part 1 of the meeting immediately after Agenda Item No. 25.

(b) Variation on the Order of Business

The Chairman informed the Authority that he intended to take Agenda Item No. 29, Reconstruction of the Policing Infrastructure in Carlisle in North Cumbria, in Part 1 of the meeting. A revised report had been circulated. It was also his intention to take this item as the first item of substantive business immediately after the Minutes of the Consultative Forums had been received.

(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED, that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraphs indicated of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act –

| Item | Paragraph No |
|---|--------------|
| Contracts for Police Community Support Officers | 1 |
| Budget Issues 2005/06 | 12 |
| Police Structure Review | 11 & 14 |

116. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Mrs C A Egan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 29, Reconstruction of the Policing Infrastructure in Carlisle and North Cumbria and Agenda Item No. 11, Accommodation Working Group, as a North Cumbria Magistrate, a local resident and as her husband was an officer of Carlisle City Council. Mr C S Moth declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 29, Reconstruction of the Policing Infrastructure in Carlisle and North Cumbria and Agenda Item No. 11, Accommodation Working Group, as a North Cumbria Magistrate.

The following Members declared personal, but not prejudicial, interests in Agenda Item No. 29, Reconstruction of the Policing Infrastructure in Carlisle and North Cumbria and Agenda Item No. 11, Accommodation Working Group, for the reasons stated –

- Mr M Ash – as a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mr A L Barry – as a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mr R S Cole – as a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mr J Mallinson – as a Member of Cumbria County Council and Local Member for Houghton
- Mr J Nicholson – as a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mrs L L Shaw – as her husband was a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mr W Smith – as a Member of Cumbria County Council
- Mr R Watson – as a Member of Cumbria County Council

Mr J Woolley – as a Member of Cumbria County Council

117. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Authority held on 10 November and 28 November 2005 had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Chief Constable advised Members that throughout both sets of Minutes the phrase “level two crime” should be replaced with “protective services”. With the above amendment it was –

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meetings of the Authority held on 10 November and 28 November 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

118. AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Audit and Performance Committee presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

119. POLICING PLAN AND BEST VALUE COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee presented the Minutes of the meetings of that Committee held on 18 October and 23 November 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

120. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee presented the Minutes of the two meetings held on 6 October 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

121. COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Committee presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

122. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Committee presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2005. In doing so he drew Members attention to Minute No. 24,

Dip Sampling and Cases Procedure and the review of the Dip Sampling Process, which the Committee had instituted.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

123. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Minutes of a special meeting of the Standards Committee held on 28 November 2005 had been circulated with the Agenda. The meeting had been chaired by one of the Statutory Independent Members of the Committee, and in his absence the Chair of the Authority moved the Minutes.

The Clerk/Chief Executive reminded Members that the meeting had been convened to consider requests from Members for dispensation to enable them to participate in the debate on Police Force Restructuring, following advice received from the Standards Board for England.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

124. ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP

The Chair presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2005. It had not been possible to deal with all the business of the Working Group on the day and the Working Group had been reconvened on 13 December to consider the remainder of the business.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

125. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Chair of the Working Group presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

126. POLICE COMMUNITY LIAISON FORUMS

The Chairs of the Police Community Liaison Forums presented Minutes of meetings held as follows:-

Barrow, 8 September 2005
South Lakeland, 13 September 2005
South Lakeland, 26 October 2005
Barrow, 3 November 2005
Copeland, 15 November 2005
Copeland, 18 November 2005

RESOLVED, that the Minutes be received.

127. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE POLICING INFRASTRUCTURE IN CARLISLE AND NORTH CUMBRIA

(**Note:** Mrs C A Egan and Mr C S Moth both declared personal and prejudicial interests and left the meeting during consideration of this item taking no part in the debate or vote thereon)

The Chief Constable presented a report which set out the current position and options for progress in relation to two of the reconstruction work streams , namely custody facilities and the long term policing estate provision for North Cumbria.

He reminded the Authority that on 10 November he had not been in a position to fully report on the impact of the decision by Carlisle City Council's Planning Committee to refuse the planning application for custody facilities on police owned property at Houghton. This matter had now been considered by the Authority's Accommodation Working Group and as a consequence five recommendations were included within his report. Those recommendations had been developed taking into account local feelings within the Houghton area, other wider issues and his duty with regard to the provision of policing in North Cumbria.

The position with regard to custody facilities in North Cumbria was not tenable. The current situation had been in being since January 2005 and could not be sustained in the longer term. There were health and safety implications for both staff and detainees as well as adverse impacts on the service provided and serious operational problems for officers to overcome on a daily basis. In addition to date the temporary arrangements had resulted in the Constabulary incurring an additional £250,000 of costs. It was clear that a more permanent solution was required to address the issue of custody provision in North Cumbria. The recommendations contained within his report were designed to address this issue.

He was recommending that the Authority should appeal against the City Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the Houghton site. He believed the Constabulary had put forward a strong case both in planning terms and in terms of the efforts it had made to address concerns raised by residents, such as the development of a transport plan for released detainees, a regular meeting forum with local residents and the location of two community constables at the custody facility site. Furthermore he believed that an appeal was essential to safeguard the Authority's ability to further develop its own property for police purposes at a future date.

Notwithstanding his recommendation to appeal against the refusal of the planning permission he was also proposing that further work should be undertaken to consider the feasibility of developing temporary custody facilities for approximately 10 to 14 cells at Rickergate, subject to the provision of suitable flood protection. Any such facility could only be a short term solution.

His next recommendation was that the Constabulary should swiftly and expeditiously explore the viability and costs of locating the modular custody unit within the Headquarters site in Penrith, including the provision of appropriate transport links to and from Carlisle.

Finally he was proposing that, in conjunction with the Authority, work should be undertaken to form a joint view on the long term policing needs for North Cumbria, and in particular the city of Carlisle. This work would be informed by an options paper presented to the Accommodation Working Group by the Constabulary's Carlisle Redevelopment Project Team at a meeting of the Working Group in February 2006. As part of this work he assured Members that the Estates Manager was still looking for appropriate alternative sites within the Carlisle area including the potential for a land swap with property in the Authority's ownership.. He also assured Members that the Constabulary was engaged with Carlisle City Council in discussing all the options, including those opportunities presented by the Carlisle Renaissance Project.

Members referred to the Authority's duty of ensuring the provision of an efficient and effective police force for the people of Cumbria and their duties towards the police officers and support staff employed by the Constabulary. They noted the concerns that had been expressed by those people who had objected to the proposed development of a custody facility at Houghton and referred to other locations within Cumbria where custody facilities, as part of BCU Headquarters, were located within residential areas. The view was expressed that the Authority's primary responsibility was to its staff and to the wider population of Cumbria. The issue of whether it was appropriate to site a custody facility in the Houghton area was a matter for the planners to resolve and as such it was appropriate for the Authority to proceed to the appeal stage of the planning process – which was an extension of the democratic planning process. They welcomed the proposals to explore other alternative options in detail as they believed that there was clearly a duty for the Authority to be able to demonstrate that all possible options had been explored to resolve this issue. In making these observations they acknowledged the concerns expressed by residents in the Houghton area and expressed the view that the Chief Constable's proposals with regard to a transport plan and a local community consultative forum were more generous than existed elsewhere. This was a contentious issue but the Authority had a duty to consider the welfare of the staff employed by the Constabulary and the detainees in their care. They were clear in their view that in this instance finance was not a key issue, this was about ensuring an efficient and effective police service for the people of Cumbria.

A Member stated that, whilst he could support most of the recommendations, he considered that it was premature to make a decision to appeal against the City Council's refusal of planning permission for the Houghton site. He suggested that consideration of this recommendation from the Chief Constable should be deferred for a three month period. He believed that the Houghton site was unsuitable for this particular development. It had generated considerable local public opposition and as a public body the Police Authority had a duty to listen to the public. Indeed, the Constabulary

policed by consent so that the views of the public were of considerable importance. In addition the application had been subject to democratic consideration by the City Council's Planning Committee and rejected. He did not believe that this meant no other police related development would be allowed on the site. Having made these points he acknowledged the need to identify a site upon which to develop custody facilities in North Cumbria and he welcomed the proposals by the Chief Constable to explore alternative options.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations set out in the Chief Constable's report be approved. An amendment was also moved and seconded that consideration of recommendation 2 (to appeal against the refusal of planning permission at Houghton) be suspended for a three month period while the Constabulary and the Authority endeavour to identify a more appropriate site for the development in a non residential setting.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost. The Authority then voted on the original motion, which was carried as follows-

RESOLVED, that

- (1) The Authority acknowledges that the current emergency custody arrangements in North Cumbria are unsustainable and alternative provision needs to be made as soon as possible;
- (2) A formal appeal be made against Carlisle City Council's decision to refuse to grant planning permission for the Houghton site;
- (3) The Constabulary be required to swiftly and expeditiously explore the viability and costs of developing a short term (4 to 5 year) interim custody facility in the rear yard at Rickergate; it should also simultaneously submit a temporary planning application in order to avoid any subsequent time delays;
- (4) The Constabulary be required to swiftly and expeditiously explore the viability and costs of locating the modular custody unit design within the headquarters site and providing transport links to and from Carlisle; and
- (5) the Authority and Chief Constable work together to form a joint view as to the long term policing needs of North Cumbria, and in particular the City of Carlisle; this work to be informed by an options paper presented to the Accommodation Working Group by the Carlisle Redevelopment Project Team at a meeting of the Working Group in February 2006.

128. MEMBERS REPORT BACK

Mrs L L Shaw, the Authority's Lead Member for Custody Visiting, presented a written paper on the recent Independent Custody Visiting Association Annual Conference.

129. POLICE AUTHORITY ISSUES.

(a) Ms J Manners-Armstrong.

The Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that the recent resignation of Ms J Manners-Armstrong had resulted in some vacancies on Police Authority Committees, Working Groups and outside bodies. Members were asked to consider covering the vacancies until a new Independent Member had been recruited.

RESOLVED, that the following appointments be made to Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies:-

Policing Plan and Best Value Committee – Mrs C A Egan
Programme Management Working Group – Mrs M Johnson
Consultation Working Group – Ms J Lashmar
Strategy Working Group – no appointment
South Lakeland Community Liaison Forum (Vice Chair) – Mrs P M Halfpenny
South (Kendal) Link Member- Mrs P M Halfpenny
Firearms BV Lead Member – no appointment
Anti Bureaucracy BV Lead Member – no appointment
Empowered BCUs (South Cumbria representative) BV Lead Member – no appointment
Operational Support BV Lead Member – no appointment
APA Member Liaison Network – Bureaucracy – Mr M Ash
South Lakeland Local Strategic Partnership – Mr J Nicholson

(b) Best Value Review of Anti-Social Behaviour

At its meeting on 23 October 2005 the Policing Plan and Best Value Committee approved the inclusion of a Best Value Review of Anti-Social Behaviour to be undertaken in the period between January and March 2006. The Authority was asked to appoint a Lead Member.

RESOLVED, that Mrs L L Shaw be appointed as Lead Member to the Best Value Review of Anti-Social Behaviour.

130. UPDATE ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICING PRIORITIES

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report which provided an update on the planning cycle. It built on a paper submitted to the Police Authority in September 2005 and contained the latest information available on national developments and the outcome of several local consultation exercises with the community, partners and staff within the Constabulary. It suggested the following for consideration as policing priorities for 2006/7 –

1. to reduce overall crime, with a focus on violent crime, drug crime, vehicle crime and burglary;
2. to work with partners to further increase detection rates, targeting specific and other priority offenders, bringing more offenders to justice and reducing road traffic collisions across the county;
3. to develop Neighbourhood Policing across all communities in the County, ensuring that locally identified concerns about fear of crime, anti social behaviour and disorder are addressed;
4. to develop the Constabulary's protective services capability with a particular focus on Serious Organised Cross Border Crime, Counter Terrorism and Extremism;
5. to develop a professionally trained and integrated workforce, ensuring that people are supported at all levels, to provide an excellent service to all the communities served;
6. to secure the policing capability and capacity needed to maintain and develop current performance and meet future demands, by working with other North West Police Forces to review police structures in the region;
7. to delivery the phased implementation of the National IMPACT Programme, in order to optimise key police and partner decision-making through proactive capture and use of well managed data, intelligence and other information.

This report was one of a series of papers included on the Agenda, the others being Agenda Item Nos 17 (Update on National and Local Policing Priorities – Impact on Targets), 18 (Proposed Policing Priorities 2006-7 – Financial Impact) and 19 (Constabulary Efficiency Planning 2006-2008).

RESOLVED, that

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) the draft priorities for 2006/07, as set out above, be approved for inclusion in the draft Policing Plan.

131. UPDATE ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICING PRIORITIES – IMPACTS ON TARGETS.

The Assistant Chief Constable advised that the report submitted by the Chief Constable considered the impact of the draft local priorities on current targets and suggested where targets might need to be developed and refined as more information was received. It also presented a proposed methodology for determining and implementing the local policing priorities that would be identified through the local domain.

RESOLVED, that the work undertaken to date, and the methodology moving forward, be noted.

132. PROPOSED POLICING PRIORITIES 2006/07 – FINANCIAL IMPACT.

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable that brought together the proposed priorities with budget information and efficiency plans. It considered the proposed approach to aligning resources to strategic priorities, in the context of tight budgetary constraints. This represented the second stage in setting priorities and aligning resources and refinements and updates would be made in January 2006 as further information became available.

RESOLVED, that the information and analysis to date be noted.

133. CONSTABULARY EFFICIENCY PLANNING 2006-2008.

The Assistant Chief Constable presented a report by the Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to provide the Authority with the up to date position with regard to efficiency planning to meet the Constabulary's efficiency targets for 2006—8.

RESOLVED, that

- (i) the revised projected financial position against the Medium Term Financial Forecast 2006-08 be noted;
- (ii) the work undertaken and conclusions from the analysis of workforce modernisation efficiencies be noted;
- (iii) it be noted that the Finance Department were currently working with Basic Command Units and Departments to identify further budget savings; and
- (iv) the draft Efficiency Plan for the Constabulary, based upon work completed to date, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, be noted.

134. BUDGET ISSUES 2005 – 06.

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Chief Constable the purpose of which was to provide the Authority with an updated position of income and expenditure against the revenue and capital budgets as approved by the Authority for the current financial year. A separate appendix to the report addressing the insurance impact of the storm damage incurred in January 2005 was included in Part II of the Agenda.

The Treasurer highlighted various issues within the report for the benefit of Members.

The Chair indicated that any decision in relation to that element of report concerning the insurance impact of storm damage would be dealt with as part the consideration of the report in Part II of the Agenda.

RESOLVED, that

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) the latest estimates of expenditure against the Approved Capital Programme be approved.

135. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2006-07 AND 2007-08 AND THE AMENDED SETTLEMENTS FOR 2004-05 AND 2005-06.

The Treasurer presented a detailed report on the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlements for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the Amending Reports for the Local Government Financial Settlements for 2004/05 and 2005/06.

With regard to the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlements 2006/07 and 2007/08 the Police Authority was to receive a net increase in grant of £1.918 million (3.2%) in 2006/07 and of £2.748 million (3.7%) in 2007/08. Both increases benefited substantially from the “floor damping” mechanism to protect against major grant losses following the introduction of a new formula for determining “spending need” and for distributing grants.

The Treasurer reminded Members that at the November meeting he had informed them that the Minister had presented Amending Reports to Parliament at the end of October which had the effect of retrospectively revising and restating the Financial Settlements for 2004/05 and 2005/06. The consultation period on that announcement ran until 11 January 2006, which was the same date as for the 2006/07 Settlement.

Taking both grant years together, the overall loss in grant to be repaid by Cumbria in 2006/07 was £461,000. This grant loss would be accounted for as part of next year’s budget. However, the “damping” mechanism and the 2006/07 Settlement had fully compensated for the loss being reported, albeit from funds which would otherwise have been available to support next year’s Settlement, which would most likely have gone to those authorities above the grant floor whose grant would otherwise have been scaled back.

RESOLVED that

1. the contents of the report and the impact of the Provisional Settlement for 2006/07 and 2007/08 on the budget of Cumbria Police Authority be noted:
2. the impact of the Amending Reports for 2004/05 and 2005/06, and the fact that Cumbria Police Authority had been fully insulated against the effect of repaying £461,000 in 2006/07, be noted:
and

3. authority be delegated to the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairman, to develop representations to the Minister as part of the consultation process in respect of both the Provisional Settlements for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the Amended Settlements for 2004/05 and 2005/06.

136. BUDGET PROSPECTS 2006/07

The Chief Constable presented a report the purpose of which was to provide Members with an update in relation to the Constabulary's budget position for 2006/07. The paper had been written in the light of the financial settlement for local and police authorities for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and offered a brief commentary on the implications for Cumbria.

The Constabulary's Director of Finance and Resources advised that Members had received regular position statements during the last 6 months in relation to the likely budget position for 2006/07 and beyond. He provided further detailed comments on the report submitted by the Chief Constable.

In response to a question the Chief Constable advised that to date nothing had been included within the proposed budget towards the cost of merger with another force or forces, and this would need to be addressed if mergers were to proceed in April 2007.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

137. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2005 TO NOVEMBER 2005

The Treasurer presented a report prepared jointly with the Chief Constable, the purpose of which was to report on the Treasury Management activities which had taken place between September and November 2005, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

138. UPDATE ON THE CONSTABULARY CONFIDENCE AND EQUALITY BOARD

The Deputy Chief Constable presented a report which provided further information to that reported to the Authority in September 2005. As well as detailing the membership and terms of reference of the Constabulary's Confidence and Equality Board the report outlined the membership of the three working groups aligned to the Confidence and Equality Board, their terms of reference and the role of the Diversity Unit established by the Constabulary. Each of the three working groups have developed action plans and work was now in progress against those plans.

The Chair of the Community and Race Relations Committee advised Members that, together with a representative of the Constabulary, she had recently attended a conference on the establishment of Independent Advisory Groups (IAG's). There was a need to establish a group of this nature to assist with impact assessments. The Deputy Chief Constable advised that work on this matter was in hand.

RESOLVED that

1. the report be noted:
2. it be noted that a further progress report will be submitted to the meeting of the Authority on 22 March 2006.

139. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S PERIODIC REPORT

The Chief Constable presented his quarterly report to the Authority, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. The report before Members had four general themes, namely alcohol, violence, hate crime and partnerships.

In presenting his report the Chief Constable made specific reference to the fact that Airwave was now fully operational throughout Cumbria. He also referred to the outcome of a recent superintendents promotion process and informed Members that a full report on senior officer deployments would be submitted to the next meeting of the Personnel Ccommittee. He then made reference to a recent operation in Carlisle which had targeted street drug dealers. In doing so he thanked the press for the extensive coverage that they had given of this highly successful operation.

In response to a question from a Member he advised that the Pathways to Employment Scheme in Barrow was a pilot project.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

140. PREMISES IMPROVEMENT FUND – 2003/04

This item was being considered as an item of urgent business.

The Chief Constable presented a paper which set out the final position in relation to the various projects supported by the 2003/04 Premises Improvement Fund (PIF). It provided a summary of the improvements carried out at each site together with the final costs and confirmation that the works were now completed.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

(**Note:** The Authority meeting adjourned from 3.25pm to 3.40pm, when the same Members were present with the exception of Mr J Mallinson).

141. POLICE RESTRUCTURING

Separate reports by the Clerk/Chief Executive and Chief Constable had been circulated with the Agenda. Further reports containing exempt information as defined by the Local Government Access to Information Act had been circulated separately in Part 2 of the Agenda.

Prior to opening the debate the Chairman referred to a letter from the Home Secretary, forwarded by the Association of Police Authorities, which had been received that afternoon. The letter offered additional funding to Authorities willing to submit a request for merger by the 23 December deadline set by the Home Secretary. The letter did not address any of the other issues raised by the Association of Police Authorities. A copy of the letter was tabled and Members took the time to read the letter before consideration of the item.

The Chief Constable presented the Business Case prepared by the Constabulary's Review Team. It provided a cost, risk and benefit assessment of the two options for Police Structures in the North West. It was based on analysis by local and regional experts, the results of public and other stakeholder engagement and guidance from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary the Home Office and the Association of Police Authorities. It had been produced within very tight timescales (50 working days), requiring a very high level of regional co-operation.

In presenting the Business Case the Chief Constable acknowledged that within Cumbria there was much support for the retention of Cumbria Constabulary as a stand alone police force. However, in his view and that of other professionals, the position of the Constabulary as a viable independent force was not sustainable in the long term. In the particular circumstances of the Force Structure Review initiated by the Home Secretary a stand alone option for Cumbria had not been included within the preferred options endorsed the Home Office.

It was therefore important to consider the two options supported by the Home Office, namely a merger with Lancashire or a merger with Lancashire and Merseyside. The Chief Constable praised the Review Team for the incredible amount of work they had undertaken in the short period of time allowed for the production of the Business Case. However, within the time available it had not been possible to consider every aspect and implication of the two options. The information available both to him and the Authority did not provide a clear cut case for either option and both had advantages and disadvantages. The Chief Constable was therefore unable to advise Members as to which option would be preferable.

Members noted that the Chief Constable was unable to advise them as to a preferred option. They also noted that at the present time the Constabulary were unable to provide them with all the information of which it was desirable

to be in possession before making such an important decision. Furthermore, the Association of Police Authorities was still awaiting a response from the Home Secretary to matters it had raised in relation to issues, such as governance and the funding of restructuring, that were fundamental to future structures. The letter from the Home Secretary that had been tabled at the meeting did not answer or address these matters – indeed the funding referred to in the letter was already included in the overall police service budget.

Members were reminded that at the summit held on 7 December all 43 police authorities had endorsed a position which, amongst other things included an agreement that no police authority would submit a final Business Case and preferred option on 23 December until all police authorities had received the assurances they needed concerning governance and finance and had been provided with adequate time to complete consultation and comprehensive Business Cases. On 7 December Police Authorities had also indicated that they wished to see a full Parliamentary debate on the issue of restructuring. None of these issues had been addressed by the Home Secretary. A copy of the position statement issued by the Association of Police Authorities after the meeting on 7 December was attached to the report submitted by the Clerk/Chief Executive.

Following a full debate it was -

RESOLVED, that the position and reasons for that position set out in the Association of Police Authorities statement of 7 December 2005 be endorsed and adopted and no preferred option be agreed for submission to the Home Secretary by 23 December 2005.

PART II – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

142. POLICE STRUCTURES REVIEW

Members considered a report by the Chief Constable appended to which were items to supplement the Business Case submitted to the Authority under Agenda Item No.25 (Minute No. 141 above refers). The appendices outlined work in progress on costings and an appraisal of current protective services performance and the investments required to meet national standards. Members also considered a report by the Treasurer which provided an additional financial commentary on the financial considerations contained within the Final Business Case.

RESOLVED, that the reports by the Chief Constable and Treasurer be noted.

143. CONTRACTS FOR, AND AN INCREASE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF, POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSO's)

The Chief Constable presented a report that reminded Members that PCSO's were employed on fixed term contracts linked to Home Office funding. Existing contracts would expire in March 2006. The Government was currently in the process of reviewing the PCSO role and it was likely that a standardised, national role requirement would be developed. His report proposed extending existing PCSO contracts for a further 12 months to reassure staff, with transfer to permanent contracts as soon as the National Standardised Role Requirement had been agreed. This would effectively increase the Constabulary establishment by incorporating PCSO's as permanent employees.

The Deputy Chief Constable advised Members that Monday 12 December had been the deadline set by the Home Office for bids for additional PCSO's. The Constabulary had asked for an extension to the deadline to enable endorsement of the bid by the Authority but unfortunately this had not been granted. She advised the Authority that the Constabulary had submitted a bid for an additional 12 PCSO's, subject to the provision of additional funding.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) Existing PCSO contracts be extended for 12 months and PCSO's be subsequently incorporated into the Constabulary's establishment as permanent employees when a National Standardised Role Requirement is agreed: and
- (2) The Constabulary's decision to bid for 12 additional PCSO's be endorsed.

144. BUDGET ISSUES 2005/06

The Treasurer presented a report submitted jointly with the Chief Constable which dealt with the financial effects of storm damage experienced in January 2005. The report proposed a further contribution and the sources of funding to the Earmarked Reserve created in closing the Authority's accounts for 2004-05, in order to fully address the impact of the storm damage incurred in January 2005.

RESOLVED, that the additional contribution to the Earmarked Reserve and the sources of funding, as described in the report, be approved.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

The Chairman wished all Members of the Authority and all the Constabulary's Officers and Support Staff a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

The meeting ended at 4.50 p.m.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED