



# CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2006

## PRIME MINISTER APOLOGISES

The Prime Minister has made full and gracious apology to a challenge lodged with him by the Cumbria Police Authority over the form of words Tony Blair used at Prime Minister's Question Time to explain the collapse of the Cumbria and Lancashire police force merger.

Responding to the Chief Executive, Clive Alcock's letter of 14<sup>th</sup> July 2006, Tony Blair wrote: "I am well aware of how hard you have worked to try and make the merger between Cumbria and Lancashire happen, and I regret that we were unable to resolve the precept issue in such a way as would have enabled the merger to go ahead. I am very sorry if my remarks have been interpreted as implying that Cumbria and Lancashire had been anything less than fully-co-operative in trying to bring about the merger of the two police forces".

He continued: " I am very grateful for all the work you and your colleagues in Lancashire have put in. I am sure as we now move forward and explore other solutions that the closer links that have been forged between the two forces will be of real and lasting value".

Chairman of the Authority, Reg Watson, said "I'm glad the Prime Minister has made it so clear that what happened was not the fault of Lancashire and Cumbria - of their respective police authorities. He's been very fair about it. What we're looking forward to now is exploring those other solutions for improving the 'Protective Services' side of policing he refers to. I'm sure he's right to suggest that the very close, joint working between the two Authorities and their Constabularies which we've had over this will reap some real dividends."

Editors' notes:

*"Protective Services" cover issues of major, serious and organised crime. Counter terrorism, major disasters, critical incidents, public order and roads policing.*

*Cumbria Police Authority is made up of local people - a mixture of councillors, magistrates and independent members - and acts as the bridge between Cumbria Constabulary and all communities across the county in policing matters. Legally, it is the employer of all police staff and owns the buildings and land in the police property portfolio.*

*It is directly responsible for:*

**(continues overleaf - )**

- *setting the budget for Cumbria Constabulary, including raising local council taxes for policing; and*

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- *consulting and engaging with local communities in Cumbria to find out what they want the local police to tackle; and*
- *setting the strategic direction for policing in Cumbria; deciding local priorities for policing and setting the Constabulary challenging targets to drive performance higher; and*
- *appointing (or, if necessary, dismissing) the Chief Constable; Deputy Chief Constable, and Assistant Chief Constables; and*
- *monitoring and managing local police performance.*

Further information:

- Clive Alcock, Clerk & Chief Executive;
- Stuart Edwards, Deputy Clerk to the Authority

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