



Not Protectively Marked

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY CUMBRIA CONSTABULARY *PRESS OFFICE*



Monday 10 July 2006

Home Office fails to meet Police Authorities' conditions

CUMBRIA and Lancashire Constabularies and Police Authorities today (Monday, 10 July) met with the Policing Minister, Tony McNulty, to hear his proposals for their voluntary amalgamation.

Both Authorities had previously insisted that the merger would only proceed if the Government was able to provide a solution to the 'deal-breaker' issue of Council Tax harmonisation.

At the meeting, the Minister admitted that he had been unable to provide any solutions. He also conceded that the Government had no other proposals to make and accepted that under these conditions, it would be most unlikely that the amalgamation would now go ahead.

Cumbria and Lancashire representatives expressed their intense disappointment that Government had failed to find a solution to a problem identified many months previously.

The proposed amalgamation was promoted by Government as the means of closing 'the gap' in the provision of protective policing services in the two areas. The Minister said that other avenues were being considered but at present, no solutions were being proposed and it was too early to have any view on how this would be achieved.

The Chair of Cumbria Police Authority, Reg Watson, said: "We feel badly let down. We have done everything in our power to get this amalgamation to work. We now have to find other ways of dealing with the problem that Government has left us with."

Chief Constable for Cumbria Constabulary, Michael Baxter said: "Staff in both Cumbria and Lancashire Constabularies have worked very hard over recent months towards achieving a successful amalgamation which would be in the interests of both areas.

"We have already identified many issues that we can take forward in advance of any Government proposals that may emerge. Whilst I am disappointed that amalgamation is now unlikely in the near future, this good work has not been wasted and will be used to improve policing in both areas."



NOTE TO NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS:

Tel: 01768 217009 - Fax: 01768 217018 – Website: www.cumbria.police.uk

Not Protectively Marked

- Mr Baxter will be available to speak to the media by phone on the morning of Tuesday 11 July. All requests for interview must be made by ringing 07967 572283 **prior to** 2200 hours Monday 10 July 2006.
- The Authorities will be meeting on the 25 July (Cumbria) and 27 July (Lancashire) to take a formal decision on whether to proceed with amalgamation.
- Protective services cover issues of major serious and organised crime, Counter Terrorism, major disasters, critical incidents, public order and roads policing.
- The new National Policing Board, chaired by the Home Secretary, meets this Wednesday and is likely to give early attention to the whole issue.

