



CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Friday, 11th November 2005

Police Authority Message about the Police Force Structural Debate

Yesterday (10th November 2005) Cumbria Police Authority met in Penrith to consider the police structure review. This followed on from their decision of 27th October 2005 not to endorse the set of options being identified at that time by their Chief Constable (including one identified as preferred); simply because they had had insufficient time to consider them fully or take proper account of public consultation exercises not yet completed.

At yesterday's meeting, the Authority was informed that the (Staffordshire) Chief Constable leading the Home Office 'Police Structural Review' Unit has now notified the Authority that his team has assessed two North West options as suitable for progression at this stage –

- Three strategic forces: Cumbria and Lancashire
Cheshire and Merseyside
Greater Manchester (stand alone)
- Two strategic forces: Cumbria, Lancashire and Merseyside
Cheshire and Greater Manchester

These options are considered to meet criteria set for force size, capacity and capability; fit to provide protective services to the required standard driving the restructuring process. All other options, including retaining Cumbria as a freestanding 'strategic' force, were deemed unsuitable for progression.

The Authority has decided to write and inform the Home Secretary that they will be taking forward work on both the above options. They will also tell him that they will be seeking - in company with other forces and authorities in the region - to establish regional project boards to progress this work positively and constructively at a regional level, to maximise the potential benefits of regional joint working whilst ensuring a consistency of approach.

The Authority will at the same time express disappointment that the Cumbria 'stand-alone' option has been discounted, when bringing forces like it up to higher capacity/capability standards in 'Protective Policing' services could prove less costly than regional restructurings. They will state their concern about major information gaps; including financial information to assess the viability of options not being available until after the key date (30th November 2005) when the Home Office requires them to have identified one preferred option; and they will reiterate their concerns about timescales set for the review process.

Ends.

News Release

Maintaining an efficient and effective police service



Editors' note:

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 owns the buildings and land in the police property portfolio and is responsible for:

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

Further information: Clive Alcock, Clerk & Chief Executive; or Stuart Edwards, Deputy Clerk to the Authority, at the Cumbria Police Authority office, Carleton Hall, Penrith CA10 2AU. Tel. (01768)

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