

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9TH NOVEMBER 2005

COUNCIL MEETING

14TH DECEMBER 2005

POLICE RESTRUCTURING

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Safer Communities
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Community Safety
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr. Nathan Desmond
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Walter Delin Extn no. 2700 walterdelin@wyre forest.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 Police Consultation Survey Appendix 2 Public Information Sheet

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To respond to the West Mercia Police Consultation Survey in respect of police force restructuring.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **To agree a response to the Consultation Survey based on the recommendations from the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee which met on 9th November 2005.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) 'Closing the Gap' report in September 2005, Charles Clarke, the Home Secretary asked Chief Constables and Police Authorities throughout England and Wales to consult on, and review, a series of options to restructure the police service.
- 3.2 The restructuring exercise was recommended by the HMIC because of their view that the current 30-year-old, 43 force structure, which basically matches local government, metropolitan and county boundaries is no longer 'fit for purpose'.
- 3.3 In particular, the HMIC identified the need to create larger forces – with a minimum strength of 4000 police officers. The HMIC believes that larger forces are better placed to respond effectively to major incidents, serious and organised crime, public disorder and counter terrorism (Protective Services) whilst at the same time maintaining an effective local policing service.

- 3.4 The Constabulary and the Police Authority have today sent a report to the Home Office outlining options for change that, given the design criteria set by the HMIC, are believed to be worthy of more detailed examination.
- 3.5 A questionnaire to find out what people want for the future of policing in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire has been issued by the police authority. **Appendix 1**

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 the Key issues are set out in the Consultation Survey Appendix 1 and the Public Information Sheet **Appendix 2.**

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The impact on local taxation must be spelt out before any decisions are taken and the implications for localism need to be clarified.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no significant risk management issues.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Whilst the police restructuring may be seen as important to be “fit for purpose”, there should not be a presumption that a single regional force is the inevitable solution.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Cabinet members
9.2 Corporate Management Team.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 See Appendices.



31 October 2005

Police Restructuring – Have your say

The Home Secretary proposes a major restructuring of police forces across England and Wales over the next 18 to 30 months, favouring the creation of larger forces with a minimum of 4,000 police officers or 6,000 total staff.

This *will* affect West Mercia, which covers Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and currently has 2,400 officers and 4,000 total staff. It will also affect the other forces in the same Government Region (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands).

It is important to us that we take your views into account in making a decision about what is best for the people who live and work in the West Mercia area. Please take the time to read this briefing note and let us have your views, if at all possible **by 27 November 2005**. The Police Authority is meeting on 29 November to identify its preliminary recommendations for a preferred option and it would be very helpful to have your views in advance of that date. However, the Authority does not have to make a final decision on its preferred option for police restructuring until 13 December 2005 and therefore feedback received up to 10 December will also be taken into account.

Please let us have your views by either: completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to West Mercia Constabulary, completing the questionnaire on line by visiting the Police Authority's website www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk, or if applicable attending one of the special meetings arranged for key stakeholders.

Chief Constable

Chair of the Police Authority

Briefing Note

Background

The change to police structures has been proposed by the Home Secretary in order to address shortcomings in the way that Protective Services are tackled under the current policing structure in England and Wales. These shortcomings were identified in a report entitled "Closing the Gap", published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on 16 September 2005. Protective Services are defined as: Major Crime (homicide); Serious, Organised and Cross Border Crime; Counter Terrorism and Extremism; Civil Contingencies; Critical Incidents; Public Order; Strategic Roads Policing.

The Home Office has given assurances that Local Policing arrangements and Police Divisional Areas or Basic Command Units will remain and that the drive towards more visible, accessible local policing teams will not be affected by any restructuring that may take place. (Within the West Mercia area, separate Police Divisional Areas cover Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin, South Worcestershire and North Worcestershire). Discussions will therefore centre on the changes at a strategic level.

The Options for Change

On the basis that the existing structure of 43 forces will not produce the standard of policing services that will be required in the future, HMIC identified five strategic options for change which Police Authorities and Constabularies were asked to consider:

1. Collaboration

This option would essentially preserve the current structure of forces but would require a much higher level of operational sharing of staff, in order to provide significant resources to a central command.

2. Lead Force for Specialist Capabilities

Forces would develop specialist expertise which others would draw upon as and when required.

3. Lead Regional Forces

This option envisages one force within a Region being resourced at a higher level in order to deliver the protective services requirements of the other forces in the Region, thereby freeing the constituent forces to concentrate upon local policing issues.

4. Federation of Forces

At a local level and against an agreed framework, forces could self-reform and contract together to be served by a common set of protective services. Local force areas would be preserved enabling local policing to remain local, decentralised and relatively independent. HMIC believes this to be the best alternative option to strategic forces, but has concerns that it would not offer a clear, decisive and durable solution.

5. Strategic Forces

This is the most radical option with forces amalgamating to form wholly new structures/forces. Local policing need not be disrupted, however, whilst each force's central support services are being rationalised. On balance HMIC believes that this option offers the best way forward both to improve protective services and to provide better value for money.

Short listed Options

The Home Office has provided guidance, which identifies key design criteria, and the method for the assessment of options for further detailed examination. The parameters set by the Home Secretary are shown below. Any departure from these guidelines will need to be strongly justified:

- The probable solution is for "strategic forces" with a minimum of 4000 officers or 6000 total staff
- Proposals should not split existing forces
- Proposals should not cross Government Regional Office Boundaries

On 25 October 2005, West Mercia Police Authority received a report on the Constabulary's analysis of a number of options, which concentrated on operational factors, and recommended options 1-3 (see overleaf) for further detailed examination. The Authority noted that the Regional Strategic Force and West Mercia Strategic Police Service models achieved significantly higher scores than the other options.

The Police Authority identified options 1 and 2 overleaf as lead options. There was less support for the third recommendation of a merger with Staffordshire, which was assessed as significantly less beneficial than the West Mercia Strategic Police Service option. In addition, an option of merger with Gloucestershire was discussed, although not in any great detail since it had not previously been subject to professional evaluation.

We would welcome your views on the proposed options listed for further examination in particular the two lead options.

	Options Short listed by Police Authority	Reasons for Short listing
1.	<p>West Mercia Strategic Police Service (Existing structure with enhanced investment to meet the gap in Protective Services.)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Police officers = in excess of 2,400 Police staff = in excess of 1,600 Police Divisional Areas = 5 County/Unitary Authorities = 4 Members of Parliament = 13</p> </div>	<p>Police Authority and Force Assessment short listed option because, although not meeting the Home Office design criteria in respect of officer or total staff numbers it was agreed that in all other respects a strong case was made for its inclusion as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It scored the highest on the assessment matrix. • The Force is a top performing force as reflected in the HMIC baseline assessment and Police Performance Assessment Framework results published on 27 Oct 05. • Performance scores for Protective Services were rated highly. • The Force area is already the fourth largest in England and Wales and it is the largest land locked Constabulary. • The Force, already operates at a strategic level covering the County/Unitary authorities of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. • Improvements could be implemented quickly. • There would be no period of disruption. <p>Concerns regarding this option included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not meet Home Office design criteria on numbers. • Would require a significant increase in investment in protective service capabilities.
2.	<p>New Regional Strategic Force Covering West Mercia, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Police officers 13,855* Police staff 7,048* Police Divisional Areas = 32 County/Unitary Authorities = 14 Members of Parliament = 59</p> </div>	<p>Police Authority and Force Assessment short listed option because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It scored a very close second on the assessment matrix. • Supported by other forces. • Matches the boundary of the Government Region. • Strongly matches criminal markets and addresses the main aspects of serious and organised crime activity impacting upon West Mercia Constabulary. <p>Concerns regarding this option included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would result in a very large Force • Resources may be concentrated on high crime urban areas to the detriment of rural policing needs • The ability to influence change and exercise local accountability would be reduced.
	Options not short listed by the Police Authority	Reasons excluded from the short list
3.	<p>New Strategic Force – Merger with Staffordshire</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Police officers = 4,689* Police staff = 2,980* Police Divisional Areas= 9 County/Unitary Authorities = 6 Members of Parliament = 25</p> </div>	<p>While this option met the 4000 officer figure it was not short listed because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationally it was assessed as being significantly less beneficial than the above two options. • Does not link to the criminal markets and protective services activity within the West Midlands area. • Would involve large scale restructuring for little perceived gain.

*Officer numbers as at 31.5.05.

	Options not short listed by the Police Authority	Reasons excluded from the short list
4.	New Strategic Force – Merger with Gloucestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No analysis has yet been carried out on this option as it was only raised formally in discussions in late October. It is expected that this option would rank similarly to a Staffordshire merger It would not achieve the indicative figure of 4000 officers, or reflect criminal markets located within the West Midlands area. Crucially, it would involve a merger outside the Government Regional Boundary.
5.	New Strategic Force – Merger with Staffordshire and Warwickshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It does not add sufficient resource to the two-force merger option. Geography - in surrounding the West Midlands conurbation with a predominately rural force, this option would not link to existing criminal markets or address the criminal networks impacting upon West Mercia Constabulary. Possibility that this will provide insufficient future proofing. Lack of support from other forces.
6.	Status Quo plus greater Collaboration (This operation retains four way collaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option assumes that all 4 forces in the West Midlands region remain unchanged. This was considered unlikely. Absence of support from other forces. Negative resource implications upon local Neighbourhood policing. Uncertainty regarding governance, accountability and command and control arrangements would remain.
7.	Lead Force for Specialist Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No precedent/evidence that this could work. Geographic factors linked to size of region. Current expertise levels within West Mercia Constabulary would be wasted. Concern that other forces may not resource incidents/investigations to the level that West Mercia Constabulary currently does. Potential negative impact upon the policing of West Mercia Constabulary communities. Absence of support from other forces.
8.	Lead Regional Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No precedent/evidence that this could work. Lack of additional funds. Negative impact upon resourcing of local neighbourhood policing. Absence of support from other forces.
9.	Federation of Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No precedent/evidence that this could work. A new Federated structure would appear to add to costs, not achieve savings. Lack of additional funds. Negative impact upon resourcing of local neighbourhood policing. Absence of support from other forces.

What Happens next?

Following feedback from the Home Office, further detailed examination of the two lead options will be undertaken. Taking into account consultation feedback, an update on our preliminary recommendation and analysis will be submitted to the Home Office by 30 November and our final preferred option and justification will be submitted by 23 December.

Feedback on the results of this consultation exercise, along with regular updates on police restructuring generally, will be posted on the Police Authority and Force's websites: www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk and www.westmercia.police.uk



THE OPTIONS - YOUR VIEWS

Q1. Please indicate below your views on the two options short listed for Police Restructuring:

Short listed options by Authority	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor object	Object	Strongly object	Don't know	Reason why
1. West Mercia Strategic Police Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. New Regional Strategic Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q2. If you do not support either of the above options, please indicate which of the below options you would support, and why.

3. Merger with Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4. Merger with Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5. Merger with Staffordshire and Warwickshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6. Status Quo plus greater Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
7. Lead Force for Specialist Capabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
8. Lead Regional Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
9. Federation of Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
10. Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



HOLDING THE FORCE TO ACCOUNT - YOUR VIEWS

Option 2 - A New Regional Strategic Force

This option would establish a new single Police Authority to oversee the existing Forces of: West Mercia, Staffordshire, West Midlands and Warwickshire. Currently, there are four Police Authorities carrying out this role, one in each of the existing Force areas. These are each made up of: 17 members: 9 of whom are elected Councillors (drawn from the County/Unitary Authorities), 3 are appointed magistrates and 5 are appointed independent members.

Police Authorities are responsible for maintaining an efficient and effective police service. Responsibilities include setting the policing element of the Council Tax precept, the appointment of the Chief Officer Team, and holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance and management of the Force. They also provide an important oversight of policing services and are a vehicle for public opinion to be reflected at a senior managerial level.

The Police Authority in West Mercia also supports a network of Public/Community Consultative Groups and Community Policing Boards in each Divisional area. The Divisional Areas (or Basic Command Units) within West Mercia are: Herefordshire, Shropshire, North Worcestershire, South Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin. The full list of West Mercia Police Authority's responsibilities can be found on the Authority's web site www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk. The following table provides some additional comparative information.

	West Mercia	Total for existing 4 Forces areas
Police Authority Membership	17	68
Police Divisions (BCUs)	5	32
County/Unitary Local Authorities	4	14
Members of Parliament	13	59

This single Police Authority would hold the Regional Strategic Force (covering the existing forces of West Mercia, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands) to account and ensure that the views of the communities that it serves are taken into account. Please consider how you think such a Police Authority should be organised, and whether sub groups should be established to influence its strategic decision. The more extensive the structure, the more members would be required to provide representation.

Q3. Please indicate below your preferred structure for a single Police Authority covering a new Regional Strategic Force. (please tick preferred option only)

A Police Authority operating at a regional level only

A Police Authority operating at a regional level with sub groups representing each of the current Force Boundary areas (i.e. West Mercia, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Warwickshire)

A Police Authority operating at a regional level with sub groups representing each of the Police Divisional areas (i.e. Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, North Worcestershire, South Worcestershire)

A Police Authority operating at a regional level with sub groups representing both the current Force boundary areas and each Police Divisional area

Don't know

Other (please specify below)

Q4. Do you think a single Police Authority covering a new Regional Strategic Force should be made up of: (choose ONE option only)

Elected Members only

Appointed Members only

A mix of elected and appointed members

Don't know

ABOUT YOURSELF

Q5. Please state which category you consider that you, or your organisation belong.

Police and Police Authority Members, Officers and Staff

Community and Business Groups, Member of the public

Partner organisation and/or other stakeholders



Q6. If you are completing this form on behalf of an organisation/group, please state the organisation/group you are representing.

Q7. In which area(s) does your organisation/group operate?

- Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Worcestershire Herefordshire Across West Mercia Other

If you are responding as an individual it would be much appreciated if you could complete the section below (optional). Completing this section will help us to establish whether the views we have collected represent the communities we service.

Q8. Please indicate where you reside.

- Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Worcestershire Herefordshire Across West Mercia Other

Q9. Please indicate which age group you are in.

- 16 - 19 20 - 29 30 - 39 40 - 49 50 - 64 65+

Q10. Gender

- Male Female

Q11. Ethnicity

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| White - British <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian - Indian <input type="checkbox"/> | Black - Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White - Irish <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian - Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> | Black - African <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White - Any other background <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian - Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other Black background <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Any other mixed background <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | Any other <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q12. Do you have an illness or disability that has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it in the **PRE-PAID** envelope which is enclosed (no stamp required). Regular updates on police restructuring, including results from this consultation exercise, will be posted on the Police Authority and Force websites: www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk or www.westmercia.police.uk



30275



Police Restructuring Update

The Home Secretary proposes major restructuring of police forces across England and Wales over the next 18 to 30 months, favouring the creation of larger forces with a minimum of 4,000 police officers.

This *will* affect West Mercia, which currently has 2,380 officers, and the other forces in the same Government Region (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands).



Charles Clarke, The Home Secretary

The Home Office has given assurances that Local Policing and Basic Command Units (BCUs) will remain and that the drive towards more visible, accessible local policing teams will not be affected. (Within West Mercia BCUs cover Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin, South Worcestershire and North Worcestershire). Discussions will therefore centre on the changes at a strategic level, which deals with serious and organised crime, counter-terrorism and public order.

Whilst Regionally Police Authorities and Forces are working closely together to develop viable options each organisation is required to separately submit a shortlist of options for restructuring by the *end of October*, and a preferred recommendation by *the end of November 2005*. With final supporting information and justification forwarded by *23 December 2005*.

Why change?

The Home Secretary has stated clearly that 'no change' is not an option. The change is proposed to address shortcomings in the way Protective Services are addressed under the current policing structure in England and Wales. These shortcomings were identified in the report "Closing the Gap" by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies (HMIC) published on 16 September 2005.

What are Protective services?

- Major Crime (homicide)
- Serious, Organised and Cross Border Crime
- Counter Terrorism and Extremism
- Civil Contingencies
- Critical Incidents
- Public Order
- Strategic Roads Policing

What criteria need to be considered?

The Home Office has issued a set of design criteria for force restructuring. A summary of the factors that must be considered in developing options for restructuring forces is given below:

- 1. Capacity**
Forces should have a minimum of 4,000 officers or 6,000 total staff in order to meet the needs of capacity and resilience, now and in the future.
- 2. Capability**
Consideration is to be given to how Forces can combine their complimentary strengths to provide the greatest resilience in addressing volume crime and the provision of protective services.
- 3. Performance**
Risk to current performance is minimised during the transitional period and support

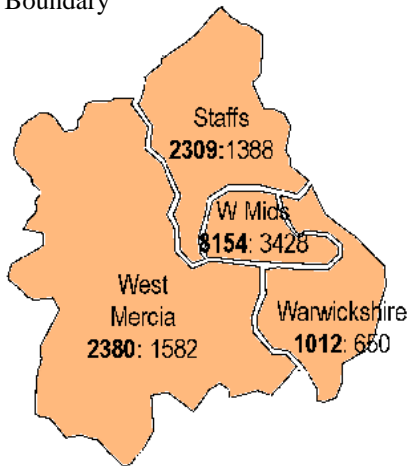
further improvements in performance over the medium term.

4. Criminality

There is awareness of the underlying criminal markets and patterns of cross-border criminality between neighbouring forces.

5. Geography

The best fit geographically to harvest Government and maximise working Regional Boundary



arrangements is provided and takes into account the challenges posed by spread of population and transport links.

6. Co-terminosity

The best fit for political and partner boundaries at all levels of the organisation. Is provided. Forces which cover the Government Office regional boundary which includes West Mercia are: Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.

7. Identity

The identify of units tasked with addressing types of criminality are clear, both within the organisation and to the public, making accountability transparent.

8. Governance

Governance arrangements are clear and unambiguous, not overly bureaucratic or inhibit dynamic leadership.

9. Economics

Mainstreamed and funded accordingly, where possible realising economies of scale.

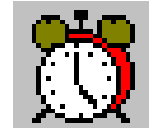
10. Risk

Minimise the level of risk of activities and provide contingencies for business continuity.

How are we going to keep you informed?

We will be writing to our stakeholders, issuing press releases and posting regular updates via the Police Authority website www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk, as will the Force via their website www.westmercia.police.uk.

What is the timetable?



19 Oct	APA* Meeting
20 Oct	Regional Chief Constables meet
21 Oct	APAC# Seminar
25 Oct	Police Authority meet to agree shortlist of options
28 Oct	Shortlist to Home Secretary
1 Nov	Public consultation on shortlisted options commences
28 Nov	Regional Chairs Meeting
29 Nov	Police Authority meet to identify preliminary recommendation
30 Nov	Home Office to be updated on preliminary recommendation and analysis
7 Dec	APA* Chairs' and Chief Executives' Summit to discuss progress
13 Dec	Police Authority meet to confirm preference and submit report
23 Dec	Final Option and justification sent to Home Office

*APA = Association of Police Authorities
#APAC = Association of Police Authority Clerks

How can you have your say?

From the 1 November we will be consulting on the agreed shortlist of options. As well as sending out questionnaires you will be able to complete a survey via our website www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk