

**Extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
held on 9th November 2005.**

POLICE RESTRUCTURING

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive on the West Mercia Police Consultation Survey in respect of police force restructuring.

Members were asked to agree a response to go to full Council on 16th November 2005. The Chairman explained that he had agreed to take the Police Restructuring Consultation as an urgent agenda item as a response had been requested by 27th November 2005.

Members felt that they should have been given more time for the consultation. Hence the Committee was unable to give detailed consideration to each option included in the consultation document.

The Chairman of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel told the Committee that Members had complained to the Director of West Mercia Police Authority about the short consultation period given by the Police regarding its precept increase when he had been invited to its meeting in June 2005.

Members agreed to make the following comments in response to the consultation exercise:

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

- a) The issues detailed above were major national issues, which had little effect on everyday policing in Wyre Forest.
- b) If West Mercia Police Authority was merged with West Midlands Police Authority, the urban demands would take priority and there would be concerns about basic community policing within Wyre Forest. Currently, the District was already suffering due to the concentration of police resources on neighbouring urban areas such as the urban area of Redditch.
- c) The basic arrangements for Community policing should be left unchanged. We would prefer West Mercia Police Authority to remain as it is now in respect of community policing.
- d) If there has to be a merger, West Mercia Police Authority should only be merged with other similar police authorities.
- e) The worst possible outcome would be for the West Mercia Police Authority to be submerged within the West Midlands Police Authority.

RECOMMENDED to Council on 16th November 2005

The points raised above be used as a response to the Consultation on Police Restructuring.