

**MEETING OF THE
WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER**

**BRIEFING PAPER ON
POLICE REFORM**

TUESSDAY 11 OCTOBER 2005
COUNTY COUNCIL BRIEFING NOTE

1. INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the Warwickshire County Council on Tuesday 11 October 2005, the Chief Constable will deliver a presentation on police reform and the potential restructure of the Police Service. This paper provides Councillors with a briefing on the issues included in the presentation.

2. BACKGROUND

The Home Secretary's agenda for police reform is based on the principle that the current structure of 43 forces is no longer 'fit for purpose' in that it is not sufficiently robust to provide the necessary level of protective services increasingly demanded. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) Reports are particularly relevant to this conclusion, entitled 'Mind the Gap' and 'Closing the Gap'.

In 'Mind the Gap' HMIC identified 7 key protective activities and the requirements to deliver these to a national standard:

- Major Crime (homicide)
- Serious, organised crime and crossborder crime
- Counter terrorism and extremism
- Civil contingencies and emergency planning
- Critical incidents
- Public Order
- Strategic roads policing

In 'Closing the Gap' HMIC recommends the creation of strategic police forces of sufficient size to provide protective services, effective neighbourhood policing and affordable support services and strategic development.

As a result of these two reports Chief Constables and Police Authorities have been invited to consider the options for future policing arrangements. It is clear that significant change is necessary and inevitable, but there is a need for it to be the right change and for there to be thoughtful implementation.

3. HOME SECRETARY'S REQUIREMENTS

In his letter dated 22 September 2005, the Home Secretary re-inforced his support for the findings of the HMIC report and that re-structuring was necessary in order to meet the requirements for a modern Police Service:

- The development of local and neighbourhood policing
- The provision of protective services to national standards and
- The organisation of affordable support services and strategic development

The Home Secretary set out the following timescales:

Period	Action by Forces / Authorities	Deliverables
19 Sept – end Sept	Establish Review Teams	Notify Home Office of lead contacts in Force & Authority (Completed)
October	In conjunction with other forces & authorities in the region and Criminal Justice System and local government partners, identify options for restructuring; undertake initial analysis of options and produce shortlist. Initial work to be co-ordinated and supported in each region by HMIC and subsequently by central team	Report to Home Office setting out initial analysis of options, including against national criteria and identifying shortlist of options for further examination in next phase
November	Work up detailed cost-benefit analysis of short listed options and identify preferred option.	Report to Home Office setting out analysis to date of each option and draft proposals.
December	Validate and refine preferred option: commence implementation planning	Submit Final report to Home Office by 23 December setting out full cost-benefit analysis of each of short-listed options, the preferred option, the rationale for the recommendation and initial implantation plans.

HMIC Denis O'Connor asserts in 'Closing the Gap' that, '**the establishment of Strategic Forces offers the best long-term business solution**'. The Home Secretary, 'wholeheartedly share[s] this view' (Home Secretary's letter 22 September 2005).

The Home Secretary outlines guidance for developing potential options for re-structuring including a 'Design Criteria'. This includes: '**The very strong starting presumption will be that any new force areas should not subdivide an existing force area between two or more new forces and that new force areas should not cross Government Office Regional boundaries**' (Home Secretary's letter 22 September 2005 – contained within Design Criteria).

The Design Criteria are:

- Size (minimum 4000 Officers or 6000 total staff)
- Mix of capability and reduction in risk
- Criminal Markets
- Geography
- Co-terminosity
- Identity
- Clarity of command and control and accountability
- Performance
- Costs and efficiency

4. OPTIONS

There are options which do not comply with the Home Secretary's requirements for example: development of a strategic force with forces outside of the Government Office Region

- Warwickshire with Leicestershire and Northamptonshire (Option 1)

There are five options for the creation of a strategic force which are compliant with the Home Secretary's requirements:

New Strategic force from

- Warwickshire and West Midlands (Option 2)
- Warwickshire with West Mercia and Staffordshire (Option 3)
- Warwickshire with Staffordshire and West Midlands (Option 4)
- Warwickshire with West Mercia and West Midlands (Option 5)
- Warwickshire, Staffordshire, West Mercia and West Midlands (Option 6)

5. WARWICKSHIRE POLICE STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

The following set of Strategic Principles have been developed, in addition to the Home Secretary's requirements, to ensure that in considering any option the outcome improves policing in Warwickshire:

- There is a need for strong and identifiable Neighbourhood Policing Teams working within Basic Command Units (Areas)
- Local policing will be delivered through Basic Command Units (Areas) with access to protective services, support services and strategic development
- Coventry and Warwickshire need to be policed by the same Force
- We need to maintain local leadership and accountability by grouping the Basic Command Units (Areas) of Coventry and Warwickshire into a Sub Region under the command of a chief police officer
- The governance of existing Regional arrangements such as Counter Terrorism Support Unit, Regional Asset Recovery Team and Central Motorway Patrol Group needs to be improved
- We need arrangements that are as efficient as possible to release the maximum capacity for re-investment in protective services and neighbourhood policing
- A Strategic Force is required to deliver neighbourhood policing, protective services and affordable support and strategic development

6. REVIEW OF OPTIONS

The six options identified in paragraph 4 above are reviewed below, taking account of the Warwickshire Police Strategic Principles.

Option 1 – New strategic force from Warwickshire with Leicestershire and Northants

This option would allow the existing Basic Command Unit (Area) structure to be maintained minimising impact on performance at the local level. Neighbourhood policing could continue to be developed on the current structure ensuring continuity of already identified communities.

A key issue with this option is the failure to address the operational policing needs of Coventry and Warwickshire being policed by the same force.

The second key issue is this arrangement would unravel the current collaboration and partnership arrangements which exist across the West Midlands Government Region. Examples include, partnerships with the Crown Prosecution Service, Probation and Health and the collaboration in place for policing the motorway network, for tackling terrorism and the Regional Asset Recovery Team.

This option enables the release of capacity to re-invest in neighbourhood policing and protective services but is limited as additional resources would be required to ensure collaboration arrangements were maintained and new partnership arrangements developed.

Option 2 – New strategic force from Warwickshire and West Midlands

This option would allow the existing Basic Command Unit (Area) structure to be maintained minimising impact on performance at the local level. Neighbourhood policing could continue to be developed on the current structure ensuring continuity of already identified communities.

It would also re-connect in one Force area the North and South of Warwickshire, which is currently partially dissected by West Midlands and increase capability to tackle criminal markets. The re-alignment with Coventry would also produce a good synergy in respect of community identities. Policing Coventry with Warwickshire would create a geographical command that better reflects the communities' needs and the ability to tackle the criminal markets which affect them.

This option enables the release of some capacity to re-invest in neighbourhood policing and protective services but is limited in scope due the uncertainty of how much capacity could be released if one large force joins with a small force.

The new structure could invoke issues around differing policing styles and a danger of resources migrating to the centre.

Option 3 – New strategic force from Warwickshire, West Mercia and Staffordshire (the doughnut)

The existing Warwickshire Basic Command Unit (Area) structure could be maintained and the forces involved share similar rural community policing issues. Neighbourhood policing could continue to be developed on the current structure ensuring continuity of already identified communities.

The key issue with this option is the failure to address the operational policing needs of Coventry and Warwickshire being policed by the same force. This will magnify the cross border criminality issues that already exist between Coventry and Warwickshire. There is also the issue of geography and the logistics of skirting around or having to cross West Midlands Force area in order to travel in the new force area.

Due to the increased cross border crime issues, the size of the force and the logistics of travelling and servicing the geographical area, there would be limited scope to release capacity to re-invest in neighbourhood policing and protective services.

Option 4 - New strategic force from Staffordshire and West Midlands

This option would allow the existing Basic Command Unit (Area) structure to be maintained minimising impact on performance at the local level. Neighbourhood policing could continue to be developed on the current structure ensuring continuity of already identified communities.

It would also re-connect in one Force area the North and South of Warwickshire, which is currently partially dissected by West Midlands and increase capability to tackle criminal markets. The re-alignment with Coventry would also produce a good synergy in respect of

community identities. Policing Coventry with Warwickshire would create a geographical command that better reflects the communities' needs and the ability to tackle the criminal markets which affect them.

In being an incomplete Region it would be difficult to establish appropriate collaboration and /or partnership arrangements with the remaining Force in the Region.

There is a risk that during the consultation process, the public would not understand that if change were an improvement, why one force would not want to be part of a regional solution.

This option enables the release of capacity to re-invest in neighbourhood policing and protective services but is limited if one force remains alone in the region. Additional resources would be required to ensure collaboration arrangements were maintained.

Option 5 – New strategic force from West Mercia and West Midlands

As per option 3.

Option 6 – New strategic force from Warwickshire, Staffordshire, West Mercia and West Midlands

This option would allow the existing Basic Command Unit (Area) structure to be maintained minimising impact on performance at the local level. Neighbourhood policing could continue to be developed on the current structure ensuring continuity of already identified communities.

It would also re-connect in one Force area the North and South of Warwickshire, which is currently partially dissected by West Midlands and increase capability to tackle criminal markets. The re-alignment with Coventry would also produce a good synergy in respect of community identities. Policing Coventry with Warwickshire would create a geographical command that better reflects the communities' needs and the ability to tackle the criminal markets which affect them.

This option has the potential to release most savings and efficiencies for re-investing in protective services and neighbourhood policing. It provides for a mix of rural, urban and city policing with additional resilience. It tackles all cross border criminality issues within the current West Midlands Government Region and it embeds the accountability and governance arrangements of the Counter Terrorism Support Unit, Regional Asset Recovery Team and Central Motorway Patrol Group. This option would allow a restoration of traditional sense of community identity exemplified by a Sub Regional Area of Coventry and Warwickshire.

As a result of our initial analysis it becomes clear that Options 2, 4, 5 and 6 are the preferred options.

7. COMMAND

Each of the preferred options will create a large strategic force with the risk of a remote command. In order to address this it is proposed that we create Sub-Regional Commands under a chief police officer that will:

- Be responsible and accountable for local policing delivered through Basic Command Units (Areas) within a sub-region
- Lead on partnership at the sub-regional level

- Monitor and manage performance of the sub-region
- Be a member of the Force Board (top-team), reporting to the Commissioner
- Be a Senior User of Protective Services
- Commission support services
- Represent the sub-region at Force Strategic Tasking and Co-ordination Group
- Arbitrate on cross border operations
- Undertake an inspectorate role
- Line manage the sub-region's Basic Command Unit (Area) Commanders

For all the preferred options, it is proposed that Coventry and Warwickshire is a Sub-Regional Command.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Governance arrangements for the new Strategic Force will need to be defined to ensure accountability at strategic, sub-regional and local levels.

The Police Authority will have a crucial role in shaping the governance arrangements for the new policing structure. There will be a need to ensure that the new arrangements encompass clear governance with robust performance monitoring and local accountability to communities.

9. CONCLUSION

The fundamental principal for any restructure will be to improve policing in Warwickshire.

West Midlands Region and Surrounding Forces

