



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 13 December 2005

Report of the Scrutiny Management Commission

Police Force Restructure

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 That the Commission asks the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to endorse its comments made following the meeting with the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Derbyshire Police Authority, as set out in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.14.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 1 November 2005 the Scrutiny Management Commission resolved to meet with the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Police and the Chair of the Derbyshire Police Authority to discuss proposals for the restructure of the East Midlands Police Forces. The Commission set up a working group to lead the investigation, although all members of the Commission were invited to attend the meeting. The members of the working group are Councillors Ahern, Allen and Latham.
- 2.2 The Chief Constable of Derbyshire is David Coleman and the Chair of the Police Authority is Janet Birkin.
- 2.3 The Commission arranged to meet with David Coleman and Janet Birkin on Monday 28 November. An invitation was extended to all members of the Council at its full meeting on 23 November 2005, by the Chair of the Commission.

Background

- 2.4 The Derbyshire Constabulary website sets out the background to the proposed restructure. A review was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) into how police forces in England and Wales were set up. The outcome report "Closing the Gap" <http://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/docs/closinggap.pdf> concluded that the present make up of 43 police forces in England and Wales needed to change in order to effectively deal with terrorism, domestic extremism, major, serious and organised crime, public order,

civil emergencies and roads policing.

- 2.5 As a result of the report the Home Secretary asked all police forces and their police authorities to examine the options for creating larger more strategic forces through mergers, based on existing regional Government boundaries. This is also predicated on continuing the “laminated” British model of one-police-force-does-all in its territory.
- 2.6 The five forces in the East Midlands region met to decide on the best way forward. Five options were examined based on guidelines from the Government and two options were identified as being viable (in terms of the criteria of having more than 4,000 police officers and 6,000 staff in total) to put forward for further consideration:
- The amalgamation of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire as one police force and Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire as another
 - The merger of all five forces in the region (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire) into one regional force.
- 2.7 At the Commission’s meeting the Chief Constable and Janet Birkin outlined their positions with regard to the Home Secretary’s requirement to put forward a preferred option for the East Midlands region. The Chair then invited members to ask questions and make comments.
- 2.8 After the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority had left the Commission discussed what they had heard and made the comments set out in the following paragraphs.

Conclusions and Comments

- 2.9 The Commission were concerned that as no clear business case had been drawn up for either of the options given in paragraph 2.6 they could not indicate which would be the better of the two or whether either would be better than leaving things as they are.
- 2.10 It seemed apparent to the Commission that the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority were of the opinion that the Police Force structure needed to be changed. However they were both unable to support either of the options at this stage due to a lack of information from the Government, particularly with regard to funding.
- 2.11 The Commission welcomed the suggestion from the Chief Constable that restructuring the East Midlands Police Force could result in some significant efficiency savings, particularly with regard to training, the HR function, and procurement. However they would wish to see any realised saving directed into front line policing, particularly level 1

policing.

- 2.12 The Commission recognised that any resulting amalgamation of local Police Forces would have implications for how the people of Derby would be represented on the Police Authority. They would wish to have clarification of the implications for either option.
- 2.13 The Commission would wish to see the above concerns addressed and for further public consultation to take place prior to a preferred option being put forward.
- 2.14 The Commission shared the concerns of the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority about the inadequate consultation period allowed for such a substantial change to a key public service.
- 2.15 Detailed notes of the meeting have been sent to the witnesses for their comment. These will be circulated to members before the meeting as Appendix 2.

For more information contact:	Katherine Taylor 01332 255599 e-mail katherine.taylor@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Notes taken at the meeting; to follow

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Any restructure to the Police Force has the potential to affect all Derby people.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. Any restructure to the Police Force has the potential to affect all the Council's objectives and priorities.