

Title of Member: *C P Humphries*
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Mr M Richards LLB(Hons) MSt(Cantab)
Chief Constable, Wiltshire Constabulary
Wiltshire Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wilts
SN10 2DN

Please ask for Cllr C Humphries
Your reference
Our reference CPH/AJB
Date 21 February 2010

Dear Sir

POLICING IN WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON: THE FUTURE

Many thanks for the opportunity to make comment on the consultation exercise currently being undertaken regarding the restructuring of the police. It is appreciated that you have a difficult task to develop a preferred option by 23rd December 2005.

I am presenting views on behalf of this authority in light of the Home Office options considered as being 'suitable for further progression' in this region, namely two strategic forces or a regional strategic south west force. We have a number of concerns with both options and if pushed would prefer to see no change to our police force. Our concerns are summarised in the following points:

- It is apparent that the gaps in service provision lie with the level 2 services, serious crime, terrorism and civil contingencies etc., issues that previously were addressed by the now abolished Regional Crime Squads. There is concern that the Government proposes to reorganise every aspect of every force to address this matter rather than consider other ways of addressing the gap.
- Wiltshire is ranked 6th out of 43 forces and has one of the highest detection rates. Why introduce substantive change to a high performing police force which may jeopardise this performance?
- With both options we have concerns regarding local accountability as both will probably leave this area remote from HQ and the 'corridors of power'. This authority works well at a local and strategic level with our police partners but the proposed changes may make it difficult to ensure fair representation by this authority and equitable community engagement by the police across our district.
- The current Wiltshire Constabulary has a strong local identity which is likely to be lost if either of these proposals is implemented.
- There is also real concern that resources currently used to provide services across Wiltshire will be diverted to other areas outside the County. Aligned to this is the necessity to link the precept charged to the service delivered and this will be difficult over a greater area.

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Mr M Richards

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- The regionalisation of policing appears to be at odds with and may prejudice the Government's change agenda for neighbourhood policing (for which this authority is supportive) and it will be interesting to see how the two agendas will integrate.

It is for these reasons that this authority is cautious of both options. I would be grateful if you could consider these comments as you develop your preferred option for submission to the Home Office.

Yours faithfully

CHRIS HUMPHRIES
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

cc Mr H A Woolnough CBE, Police Authority Chairman
Mr K Kilgallen, Police Authority Chief Executive
Ms J Scott, Leader, Wiltshire County Council
Home Secretary, Home Office