

The **POLICE AUTHORITY** met at **SHIRE HALL, WARWICK**, on the **19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2006**.

**Present:-**

Philip Blundell (Independent Member)(**Chair**)  
Ian Francis (Magistrate Member)(**Vice Chair**)

**Independent Members:-**

Brian Lowe  
Dorrette McAuslan  
John Rennie  
Philip Robson

**Magistrate Members:-**

Mike Edwards  
Alan Woodward

**County Councillors:-**

Chris Davis  
Eithne Goode  
Richard Hobbs  
Katherine King  
Philip Morris-Jones  
Izzi Seccombe  
Mota Singh  
Ray Sweet, BEM  
John Vereker

**Police: -**

Chief Constable John Burbeck  
Deputy Chief Constable Keith Bristow  
Chief Inspector Chris Wadsworth

**Police Authority: -**

Eric Wood  
Neil Gulliver  
Claire Thomas  
Sarah Meyrick  
Caroline Slane  
Charlie McGibbon

Assistant Chief Constable Margaret Wood and Rosemary Wildblood (West Mercia Constabulary) also attended.

**1. General**

**(1) Apologies**

**(2) Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

None.

**2. Police Reform Update**

Prior to consideration of the report by the Clerk to the Authority, the Authority received a presentation by Rosemary Wildblood, Eric Wood and Margaret Wood on the key elements of the feasibility study which had been presented to the Regional Chairs, Chief Constables and Clerk/Chief Executives on the 12<sup>th</sup> April.

The Chair then opened up the debate to allow members the opportunity to raise any issues of concern relating to the proposed establishment of a regional force and authority. The areas of particular concern raised by members were:-

- 1) Level of Home Office funding for the establishment of the new force and authority.
- 2) The current BCU structure in Warwickshire to remain in place.
- 3) Greater clarity on the proposed precept.
- 4) Difference in the working practices and cultures across the four forces
- 5) Need for governance and local accountability to be clearly established at local level was crucial.

The Chair then asked the Authority to consider the 12 recommendations set out in the Clerk's report which would form the basis of a joint letter by the Chair and the Chief Constable to the Home Secretary. Members considered each recommendation and made a number of minor amendments.

The Chair then put the following recommendations to the Authority which were unanimously agreed:-

That the Warwickshire Police Authority:

1. Subject to the following paragraphs, continues to support the concept of the Home Secretary's proposals for the amalgamation of the four Forces and Authorities in the West Midlands region into a single Force and Authority in the belief that this will be the most effective means of enhancing community safety, neighbourhood policing and protective services in the region.

2. Considers that public confidence and credibility in the major change proposed for the delivery of policing services demands a robust, secure and transparent implementation process.
3. Believes that the objectives of the amalgamation can best be met by the creation of a new Combined Police Authority ('CPA') so that it has a legal existence on and from a date to be specified before 1st April 2007.
4. Considers that giving a new CPA full powers as a Police Authority from 1st April 2007 and the abolition of the precursor Police Authorities from that date creates a number of significant risks both for a new CPA and the communities and citizens it seeks to serve. In particular:
  - the risk that the process for the preparation of the budget for a new CPA will have been foreshortened in a way which creates real risks that it will not be a robust budget as the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority's Treasurer to certify;
  - the risk that the focus on improving protective services cannot be achieved in a timescale which meets public expectation and therefore will be seen as having failed because it has not been delivered from the outset of the new arrangements;
  - the risk that the governance arrangements necessary to promote and secure public confidence in the CPA and the Combined Police Force will not be fully in place by the required timescale (for example because of unresolved issues around the roles of CDRPs).
5. Is firmly of the view that the implementation process needs to reflect the barriers and risks identified in the joint force and authority feasibility study undertaken in the region and that the scale and complexity of the strategic and organisational tasks involved in securing a credible strategic organisation, fit for purpose in all respects, demands that it should be achieved on a phased basis, with a managed transition to mitigate identified risks. In particular we are mindful of the conclusion reached by the Wave One Treasurers that to implement changes in full (ie abolition of precursor Police Authorities) from 1st April 2007 would "involve so many compromises, and so many risks to the stability of the new organisation as to raise serious doubts as to its advisability".
6. Believes that there would be significant benefit in not disestablishing the precursor Police Authorities on vesting day to ensure the ongoing contribution of experienced Members of the Authority and the local accountability they embody, pending the development of agreed and acceptable new frameworks of local accountability, ensuring, in particular, the continued development of neighbourhood policing. This approach would, in our view, enable community confidence to be retained and ensure a graceful transition to the CPA through what will be a testing time.

7. Considers that the Home Secretary should either
  - (a) allow the precursor Authorities to continue in existence until 31st March 2008 which would make the issues of precepting and budgetary processes stable, enable performance management arrangements to be maintained and ensure ongoing community accountability; **or**
  - (b) empower a new CPA to appoint Committees for the areas within a new CPA formerly represented by the precursor authorities. In appointing such Committees, a new CPA should be able to co-opt members of the precursor Police Authorities who are not members of a new CPA. The Committees should have the power to call the Chief Constable of the Combined Police Force to account for policing within the geographic area represented by the Committee, should be able to discharge an advisory role based on their local knowledge and experience of the area and its communities but would not have delegated powers.
8. Request the Home Secretary to consider these representations as modifications to the draft Model Amalgamation Order in the context of the arrangements it currently proposes and supports the modifications to the more detailed proposals of the Order tabled by the Clerks of the four Police Authorities in the West Midlands Region.
9. Invites the Home Secretary to enter into urgent discussions with the West Midlands Regional Authorities and Forces to explore options to secure as a matter of urgency a framework of robust accountability and governance arrangements in the transition from the existing four force and four authority structure to a single regional force and authority. Such arrangements should include the continuity, consistency and managed transfer of operational policing and functions in the four constituent areas. They should also include the continuation of the effective monitoring of police performance. In order to secure such arrangements and ensure the retention of community trust, we believe, as indicated earlier, that the retention of the precursor Police Authorities or the retention of the membership of such Authorities is essential to the achievement of a managed transfer process leading to full implementation of the new CPA on 1 April 2008.
10. Requests the Home Secretary to address, as a matter of urgency, the fact that the Authority has not yet received, in definitive form, the reassurances which the Authority has been seeking, in line with the APA position statement of November last year, about Funding, Governance and Accountability and HR matters which remain fundamental to the Authority's continued endorsement of the Home Secretary's proposals.
11. Believes that, in order to enable an adequacy of both population and geographic representation, we believe that the new CPA should initially consist of 33 members and that this should be reviewed after a two year transitional period and amended in the light of experience.

12. It remains the view of this Authority that the success of a new CPA will depend upon a thoughtful implementation process which we believe, with goodwill, can be achieved by close partnership working and a common unity of purpose.

**3. Any Other Items**

The Chair confirmed that the Physical Resources Panel would now meet on the 26<sup>th</sup> April at 2.00pm.

Phil Robson suggested that the Police Reform Group should meet during the week beginning the 15<sup>th</sup> May and asked Neil Gulliver to make the necessary arrangements.

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Chair of the Authority

The meeting closed at 12.50pm