



Roger Chaffey  
Clerk – Social Justice and Regeneration Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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Our Ref: CFO/NRH/JT  
Your Ref:  
Date: 1 November 2005  
Contact: N R Hillier  
Tel: 01443 232008

Dear Roger

### Restructuring of constabulary

I thank you for your letter of 28 September 2005 inviting submissions on the above matter. The letter itself has been circulated to all members of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority and was considered formally at the first opportunity, being the meeting of the Authority's Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee on 31 October. The Chairman and members have therefore directed me to reply to you at this juncture with the following comments.

1. Members were very disappointed with the short timescale in which to reply, being only five weeks. It was felt that such an important matter requires far more time for consideration and consultation amongst fellow colleagues and constituent authorities as well as the public. This is particularly important when considering the issue of Community Safety Partnerships.
2. Consideration was given to the actual optimum operational size suggested by the guidance for the UK review of constabulary. The claim that 'big is beautiful' was considered not to be the case as there was evidence to the contrary in Wales. The Welsh Fire Rescue Authorities are regional ones and considering the geographical and communication issues members felt that any police authority areas larger than the fire authority areas would lose the local connection and influence.

It was felt that further collaborative initiatives and co-operation by three or four police authorities in Wales would meet the needs of national issues and strategies. This has worked in the Fire Service in Wales.

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3. With regard to coterminosity this has both advantages and disadvantages. Whilst members concede that if there were to be three police authorities in Wales, coterminosity with Fire and Rescue Authorities would seem appropriate it is not entirely necessary.

The SWFRA has had within its administrative area two Police Authorities for the best part of ten years and there is no evidence that the absence of coterminosity has adversely affected co-operation and service to the public. In fact the situation offers the opportunity for a variety of opinion and different experiences that can inform strategic and tactical thinking.

Finally members have asked me to inform you that they would wish the matter to be debated further at the next meeting of the SWFRA on 21 November 2005 and then a final response forwarded to you.

In the meantime the FAGP, acting in its authorised role on behalf of the SWFRA submits this response to you for consideration by the Assembly's Social Justice and Regeneration Committee.

Yours sincerely



**Brian Fraser**  
**Chief Fire Officer**