

CURRENT POLICE FORCE STRUCTURE IN WALES

There are four police forces in Wales. These are:

- ◆ North Wales
- ◆ Dyfed Powys
- ◆ South Wales
- ◆ Gwent

Map 1 shows the Police Force areas and the Basic Command Units (BCUs) that make up each force area.

There are 17 BCUs in Wales, comprising of either single or pairs of Unitary Authorities.

A Population

Table 1 shows the resident population of the four force areas in mid-2004.

Table 1: Resident population of Welsh Police Force areas, mid-2004

North Wales	674,500
Dyfed Powys	503,700
South Wales	1,217,700
Gwent	556,600
Wales total	2,952,500

Source: Office for National Statistics

B Police strength

Table 2 shows the size of forces in Wales as at 31 March 2005.

Table 2: Welsh forces police strength – 31 March 2005

	Total Strength Police Officers	Total Strength Police Staff	Total size
<i>North Wales</i>	1,676	867	2,543
Dyfed-Powys	1,183	531	1,714
South Wales	3,316	1,510	4,826
Gwent	1,438	688	2,126
Wales total	7,613	3,596	11,209

Source: Home office

C Recorded crime

Table 3 shows that detection rates for all recorded crime for the four police forces in Wales have been higher than the average for England and Wales as a whole over the last five years.

Table 3: Recorded crime: annual detection rate by police force area and region, 2000/01 to 2004/05

Percentages Police force area and region	Recorded crime				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
North Wales	31	28	29	33	42
Dyfed Powys	63	64	68	47	43
South Wales	32	33	29	29	29
Gwent	57	55	48	45	42
WALES	41	39	36	35	36
ENGLAND	24	22	23	23	25
ENGLAND AND WALES	24	22	24	23	26

Source: *Crime in England and Wales 2004/05*, Home Office

D HMIC Performance assessments

During the past three years, a performance framework has been developed by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), with support from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This framework is called the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF). The Home Office published the latest assessments on 27 October 2005¹.

In order to present a picture about how a force is performing, two assessments have been made in seven key performance areas. These assessments are based on a combination of performance data and professional judgement.

Assessments are made covering the full range of policing activity, with a focus on local policing issues, apart from counter-terrorism.

Table 4 below shows the performance of each police force in Wales for the period 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005.

Each force is assessed in seven key performance areas: Reducing Crime; Investigating Crime; Promoting Safety; Providing Assistance; Citizen Focus; Resource Use and Local Policing. Two assessments are made in each of the seven areas, both of which are based on a combination of performance data

¹ <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/performance-and-measurement/performance-assessment/>

and professional judgement. The first assessment concerns the performance delivered by a force over the last year (2004/05).

Typically, this judgement is made by comparing the performance achieved by a force to that achieved by a group of similar forces (its peers).

Forces delivering better performance are graded as either 'excellent' or 'good', forces delivering performance similar to their peers are graded 'fair' and forces delivering performance worse than their peers are graded 'poor'.

The second assessment is made on direction by comparing the performance achieved by a force in one year to that achieved by the same force in the previous year (ie 2004/05 compared to 2003/04).

Forces performing much better than previously are graded as 'improved', forces performing much the same are graded as 'stable' and forces performing much worse than previously are graded as 'deteriorated'.

Each headline grade is an aggregate of other component grades. As such, a force with an excellent grade in a performance area will have many strengths but may also have some areas of relative weakness, likewise a force with a poor grade may have some areas of relative strength. Since assessments cover the period 1 April 2004-31 March 2005 they are not necessarily indicative of current performance.

Table 4: Welsh Police force performance year ending 31 March 2005

FORCE	Reducin g Crime	Investigati ng Crime	Promoti ng Safety	Providin g Assistan ce	Citizen Focus	Resour ce Use	Local Policing
North Wales	Good Stable	Good Improved	Fair Improve d	Good Improve d	Fair Stable	Good Improve d	Good Stable
Dyfed- Powys	Excellent Stable	Fair Deteriorat ed	Fair Improve d	Fair Stable	Good Stable	Fair Stable	Good Stable
South Wales	Good Improve d	Good Stable	Good Improve d	Fair Stable	Fair Improv ed	Fair Improve d	Fair Stable
Gwent	Fair Stable	Good Deteriorat ed	Good Stable	Good Stable	Fair Stable	Fair Improve d	Fair Stable

The PPAF has the following to say about the performance of the four Welsh police forces:

“Dyfed-Powys is a low crime area with a good sense of community spirit and high levels of public support. There is a policy in place requiring all reported crime to be investigated.

The force has experienced increases in the numbers of reported crimes during the last 12 months. This, however, is due to its delayed implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) within the force, rather than an increase in the number of crimes being committed.

Investment in good technology has been a key factor in many new developments and the force is in the process of moving to a purpose-built central communications centre, co-located with the fire service and ambulance service.

Many of the force’s policies and strategies are in the process of being reviewed and updated. This will provide the opportunity to ensure that they are fully integrated and all areas are contributing to force performance.

Gwent Constabulary is responsible for policing the south-east of Wales, and has many diverse communities – from large urban towns to affluent agricultural and tourist towns. There are also a number of towns located in the south-east valleys that were once important industrial centres, but now suffer from high unemployment and deprivation.

The force is particularly successful at investigating all classes of crime and enjoys one of the highest detection rates in England and Wales. Gwent Constabulary has also reduced overall crime, and particularly the offences of burglary and vehicle crime. However, there has been a significant increase in robbery.

One of its major challenges is to maintain this credible record in crime reduction, particularly with serious, cross-border crime involving criminals from the south-west of England who travel to and through the force area. The force also has to concentrate on investigation processes to reduce crime even further.

North Wales is more easily accessible from areas of the north-west of England than other parts of Wales, which makes it an attractive target for travelling criminals, particularly during the summer season. The type, or scale, of crime is not serious enough to attract regular regional support so the force has to respond to it alone, which puts additional pressure on resources.

Despite these challenges, significant improvements in performance during the past year have been achieved, particularly in the area of investigating crime. The force has also embarked on an ambitious neighbourhood policing programme that will see 229 community beat managers deployed to wards within the force. Managing the transition while maintaining performance and meeting demand will be a challenge, particularly when, at the same time, a

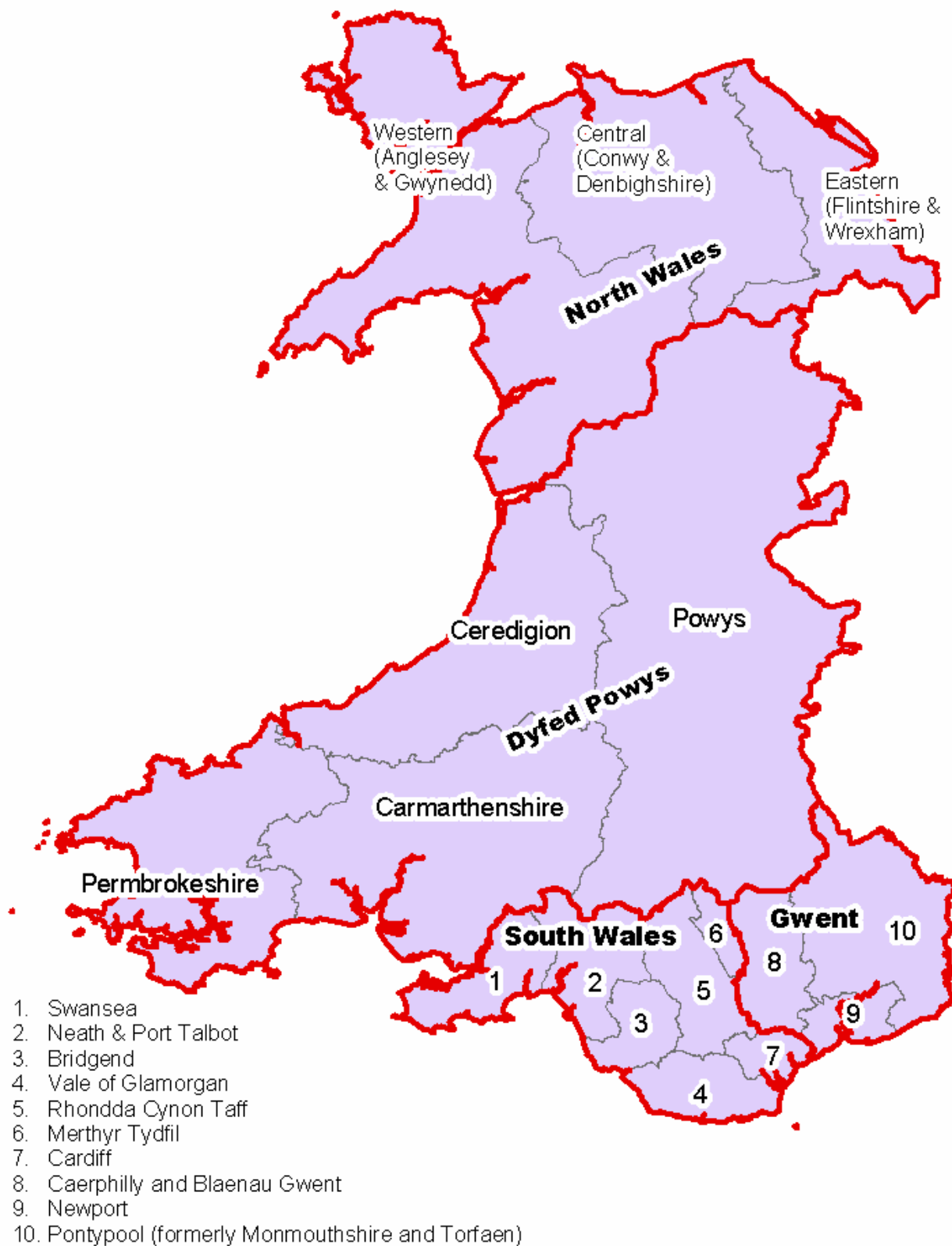
central communications centre will be established to take the place of divisional control rooms.

South Wales police covers just under half the population of Wales, including a number of towns and some rural communities. The force area has two major cities, Cardiff, the capital of Wales and location of the Welsh Assembly, and Swansea, in its western area.

The force has reduced recorded crime in all areas including violent crime. Additionally, it has also maintained a good level of crime detection and has performed well in relation to its peers, delivering good performances in a number of areas.

The force has a good record of detecting crime and is well placed to deal with serious and major crime with its dedicated serious and major crime investigation teams. The major challenge facing the force relates to internal electronic information systems, in particular systems used to monitor and develop performance issues. The force is considering a business case to invest in this area.”

Map 1: Police Force areas and Basic Command Units in Wales



Annex 6



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Pwyllgor Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfywio**

**The National Assembly for Wales
The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee**

Dydd Iau, 6 Hydref 2005

Thursday, 6 October 2005

Adolygiad Polisi: Ad-drefnu'r Gwnstabiliaeth Policy Review: Restructuring the Constabulary

Janice Gregory: We now move into the first information-gathering session on the police reform review. I thank our witnesses very much for attending at very short notice. As committee members, we did not have much notice either, but we felt that it was important that we were involved in this evidence gathering. So, thank you for making yourselves available to come today. We have Richie Eccles, who is chair of the Police Federation Wales, and I understand that we also have Mr Peter Anderson from Gwent Police Federation. There are other Members to come, but would you like to begin your presentation? We have some nice bound copies of the Police Federation for England and Wales's concerns and aspirations, as found in the 'Closing the Gap' review.

Mr Eccles: First, we appreciate the opportunity to come to speak to you today. Mine will be a relatively brief presentation, because, as I am sure you are all aware, the detail is in short supply at the moment. We welcome the opportunity to put on record our initial thoughts about the 'Closing the Gap' document, prepared by HM Inspector of Constabulary O'Connor.

To give you the context of what we are about, the Police Federation of England and Wales represents all police officers up to and including the rank of chief inspector, which numbers, across England and Wales, over 136,000 officers. In Wales, we had 7,613 at the most recent count, serving within the four forces.

As the four federations of Wales, we are committed to working with all the various agencies towards restructuring the existing set-up in Wales. Our aim is to make the transition from the current structure of policing, to a future structure, as seamless and as effective as possible. Our statutory duty as a federation is the welfare of our members, the officers, but also the efficiency of the forces in which we all serve. That is uppermost in our minds as we go through this process. We consider ourselves to be a major stakeholder in the restructure, given the number of officers that we represent.

You have already alluded to the timings, and we share the concerns that some Assembly Members have expressed about the short timescales involved here. We are looking at potentially major changes to the way that we all operate and do business in all forces across Wales. We have to be alive to the fact that the deadlines set for us all are very tight.

One of the key things that we are looking for from all parties involved, as we progress through this, is meaningful and transparent consultation. It is vital that we are fully engaged and involved, and are able to inform our membership and other parties of our current view as the options and proposals emerge. The endgame is a sustainable and performing force structure across Wales. We emphasise the 'sustainable', because we do not want to be revisiting this area in two, four or six years' time. We want something that is long-lasting and future-proof.

Initial speculation and beliefs have emerged over the last week or so that decisions have already been made regarding an all-Wales police service. The majority of national federation representatives in Wales attended the initial consultation meeting in Llandrindod Wells yesterday, and a theme that emerged there was that, although people were quick to show us that this was an open-mind exercise, some felt that decisions had already been made. Hopefully, that is not the case, and we look forward to seeing the options later.

We accept the reasoning behind the restructuring, which is to look to deliver strategic forces in Wales to respond to serious and organised crime. We have to highlight the need to look closely at the impact of that on local policing in Wales—something we consider that we do particularly well at the moment. All four forces are performing well, and that is based soundly on localised policing. We cannot afford to take our eye off the ball.

Neighbourhood policing was mentioned as best practice throughout the HMIC's document, and we are pleased that that has been recognised as an important part of this process. We need to ensure that the focus on serious and organised crime does not detract from the core functions of local, community-based policing. That is currently being delivered through our local, basic command units, which are accountable locally and are in line with local partnerships and local people, and we need to maintain that structure.

We need to ensure that we still have local accountability at the lowest possible level across all rural, urban and post-industrial areas of Wales in the future. We have to protect the service that we provide to communities across Wales. One area that we have concerns over is the resilience of officers in those areas with strong local links, and we need to maintain that they are not taken out of those areas in a rush to fill a gap that has been identified in relation to serious and organised crime. We need to look at the full impact of taking people away from these communities, where the links that they have forged have been vital.

One thing that we need to highlight is the fact that we are performing particularly well at present as four Welsh forces. We are compared with forces across England and Wales, and we believe that we should be recognised as being among the top performers in those groupings. We already collaborate and take part in joint working. We accept that there is room for improvement and for the rationalisation of some of the services that we provide and that support our officers. That is a step in the right direction.

We have wide-ranging crime and disorder problems across Wales, and we need to avoid a new structure that would just introduce more bureaucracy, poorer communications, and no better local results. So, if we are going to change, we are going to have to change for a better model that delivers for everyone right across Wales. We need to accept that what works in Meirionnydd or Monmouth will not necessarily work in Carmarthen or Cardiff. We need to look at how we tailor this to deliver in individual ways across the country.

Community-based policing in Wales is the foundation of our successes to date. We have structures and partnerships in place—we accept that some of them need to be changed, but we need to build on those rather than sweep them to one side. From a federation perspective, we see this as an opportunity to move forward. We are happy to embrace the changes that are coming, and to move forward, and we will work with any of the stakeholders across Wales. We would like to see improvements in the way that we operate, which will hopefully realise savings and cost benefits. However, we must ensure that these are utilised to deliver fully trained and fully equipped police officers to police the communities in Wales. If the savings are coming, we need to divert them to front-line policing so that we ensure that people get the officers that they all tell us they want on their streets.

We are looking at restructuring, and we have to adopt best practice. There are already examples of best practice in our forces across Wales in relation to how we deliver training, including driver training, firearms training, and the like. We need to look at those, see what makes them work so well, and share those lessons so that we can all benefit from them. This is quite ironic, because, on our last visit to the Assembly, we addressed the Minister, Mrs Hart, and we talked about training for police recruits. We highlighted to her that we had concerns at that time about the closure of the Welsh training centre in Cwmbran, which has been there for several years. It was probably one of the few early examples of joint and collaborative working among the four Welsh forces. That was due to close, and that process is ongoing. We find it ironic that we are closing something that is testimony to the fact that we can all work together at one centre to deliver a quality product for new recruits. Therefore, those types of areas need to be looked at carefully to ensure that we do not remove things now and recreate them in 18 months' or two years' time.

The process of change for our members will require an effective communication strategy. That is really important. It needs to be coherent and effective for internal staff, and for external communities, so that everyone is fully informed. The officers and staff of the four Welsh forces are their most valuable resource. We need to take the staff with us, and we need to manage their needs and expectations. We need to ensure that they can continue through this process seamlessly and still deliver the performance that they are delivering at present. If we do not ensure that they are aware and if we have not won their hearts and minds, there are great risks to the communities of Wales. We are committed to this process and to a transparent and meaningful consultation process and we hope that the exercise yesterday in Llandrindod Wells and meeting you here today is the start of that process.

3.00 p.m.

We were also asked to talk about our future structures as a representative body. Our feelings are that it is too early for us to look at how we restructure ourselves until we have seen how all the other parties restructure themselves. We accept that we will probably have to change our structure but we first

need to know what the structures of the Association of Chief Police Officers, the police authorities and the forces are, and we are perhaps of least consideration in this: we need to ensure that our members are looked after first and then worry about where we are at the end of the process.

I said that it would be a brief presentation. That is it. We will submit a written document before the deadline at the beginning of November, but Peter and I are happy to take any questions that you might have.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much, and this document is useful. Mick will ask a question first, followed by Rhodri and Sandy.

Mick Bates: Thank you for coming at such short notice. We look forward to seeing your full paper. I read something interesting in the papers lately. Sir Ian Blair, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, has said that he would like certain police regulations to be removed to make policing more flexible. What are your views on that and will you talk, in particular, about the police negotiating board?

Mr Eccles: Sir Ian's comments were about looking at removing police regulations and it is often mooted by senior officers that we need to get rid of them, because they block us and do not allow us to have flexibility with the workforce. However, the reality is that police regulations are the only protection for police officers. We have a unique status: we are not employees; we are servants of the Crown, if you like. We are bound by the governance of those regulations that relate to a host of things around pay, conditions, misconduct, attendance and performance. The difficulty that certain senior officers and other people who often comment about the need to remove them have is that they do not fully understand them and they do not implement them as they should be implemented. There is sufficient flexibility for them to operate in the way that they want them to operate, but, built into those regulations, are safeguards for our members, for example, the ability to plan a home and family life so that if leave days or duties are changed within certain periods of time, they are compensated or they are given the benefit of protection for the days that they are reallocated. It is little more than putting a framework around what are good employee relations, but the difficulty is that senior officers usually fail to plan and then blame the regulations when they have to pay for the consequences of that. So, I do not agree that we need to remove them; I think that they give us good protection. We may well find that, over the next few weeks or months, as we are within police regulations and, as such, cannot strike, we will be held up as an example if we find that police staff members who have concerns about their pensions and other rights go out on strike and we will be there to fill the gap. So, they have pluses and minuses, but it is just that certain senior officers only tend to see the negative side of them.

Mr Anderson: In addition, we do not have the protection of going to employment tribunals. We have no rights to go to them unless we are part of a specific group. If a police officer feels that he or she has been unfairly dismissed or treated, there is no redress to an employment tribunal.

Mick Bates: That is why I asked particularly about the police negotiating board in terms of pay. What future do you see for that?

Mr Anderson: It is quite a large board, from what I can see, in the way that it runs, so it needs some streamlining, but they are looking to do that anyway. However, you need to have a national body to look after national pay and conditions because, if you start going down the road of local pay and conditions, you will have what has been accepted as a problem, namely special priority payments, which are supposed to be locally agreed. They have caused nothing but dissent within the workforce because only 40 per cent can access that money and 60 per cent cannot, and they feel disadvantaged, not valued and so on. The people who brought it to the table, and who denied it for quite a long time, were the Association of Chief Police Officers. The association has now had to put its hands up and say that it was a mistake. I think that police officers should be paid the same amount and given the same conditions wherever they work in the country. You then do not have to worry about negotiating; you just deal with it. If you are a police officer, you are paid a certain amount of money, and then you move on to do the job of policing.

Mick Bates: Chair, if you will excuse me, I have to attend an emergency meeting.

Janice Gregory: That is fine, Mick. Before we move on, I will ask everyone to turn off their mobile telephones, pagers or police radios. It was remiss of me not to have said that before. The headsets provide us with simultaneous translation, so, if anyone wishes to speak Welsh, we are able to receive a translation. The headsets also amplify sound. I apologise for that. Rhodri Glyn, do you have a question?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Somebody may want to simultaneously translate this into Welsh. Some of us have the fear or concern that the changes that are being discussed in terms of the police force in Wales are being driven, to a large extent, by a need to address and combat terrorism. You have highlighted in your presentation some of the good things that happen in Wales, and also the fact that policing in certain areas of Wales is different, say, to policing in London or other large cities and towns. You have also referred to the good performance of the Welsh police forces, and I can identify with that as I live in an area that is covered by Dyfed-Powys Police. If these changes are being almost forced upon the police forces in Wales because of this need to address international issues such as terrorism, do you have a fear that the areas in which the police forces in Wales perform well could be lost? In terms of the consultation, do you, as a federation, feel that you have been fully involved in that up to now? Do you feel that you have had the opportunity to make sure that your views come through? Are you confident that that will happen in the future?

Mr Eccles: I will answer the second question first, if I may, because that is perhaps the easiest one to start off with. In the early days, there was the usual

hiccup about who was invited to the early meetings, which was quickly resolved. Yesterday, the meeting in Llandrindod Wells that we referred to was attended by us, other representative bodies from within the police service and basic command unit commanders. So, there were probably 60 or 70 key stakeholders within the process in Wales there. That was a good, sound start. We asked there for clear and concise information, and I understand that, last night, a message was put out to all staff across Wales as a result of that request. So, the initial signs are good. Communication within the four forces in isolation is not always brilliant. Although we have police radios and various other means of speaking to each other, sometimes we do not ensure that we deliver the message.

So, the early indications in the consultation are good. I know that the timescales are short for the first stages, but it is a long-term plan, so we need to make sure that that continues throughout. We certainly intend to be knocking on people's doors or contacting people to make sure that we cannot be accused of not telling them that we wanted to speak to them. We need to make sure that everyone is engaging with us fully. So, the early signs in terms of the consultation are good. We will see whether that is sustained, but we will play our part, I can assure you.

Your first question was about the perception that this is to do with dealing with terrorism. I suppose that that is perhaps correct in some ways. There is an increased threat globally from various terror groups. There is also an area in relation to serious and organised crime which, perhaps, is not being addressed as fully as it could be. We accept that that gap needs to be filled, and I perhaps alluded to that in my presentation. The concern that we have is that if we do not realise the savings from some of these rationalisations and we do not put them back into policing, but divert them to be spent elsewhere, to be blunt, we will still have 7,600 police officers in Wales in two years, but they will have a host of different jobs to tackle.

3.10 p.m.

We all know that if we have only so many officers to do so many tasks, something will have to drop off. The concern is that we do not lose the local base and the community relationships. In north Wales, a number of years ago, we withdrew from communities to a degree. Those links with communities that we deserted five or 10 years earlier then have to be re-established. We have to form new—and I say 'new' ironically—relationships. We need to ensure that we increase our numbers and that we work in a smarter way to deliver another facet of policing.

Mr Anderson: It is interesting that serious crime, to an extent, used to be looked after by the regional crime squads. Those became a national crime squad; and now it will be handled as national and international crime, under the Serious Organised Crime Agency. When it is moved, it is not backfilled, unless we do something locally as we have with Operation Tarian. In south Wales, we have tried to backfill. However, when a squad is moved away, a gap is left; where do we draw people from to fill the gap? The only place left is

the community. The strength of policing in Wales is in the communities. If you take people away to deal with terrorism and organised crime, where do they come from? There are no extra resources, and if efficiency savings are not made properly—which is what Richie was talking about—it will come from the communities. That is our worry.

Sandy Mewies: It is important to recognise that the police forces in Wales deliver well. None of us should lose sight of that. I would be extremely disappointed if we were all sitting here working towards a conclusion that has already been reached. It would be remiss of me not to raise issues that have been brought up by people in north Wales, particularly the fact that, traditionally, the force has worked closely with the Merseyside and Cheshire forces. That is because our motorway links are with those areas and to the ports. There has been close collaboration, and there are enormous fears about joining up with south Wales in particular, not because there is anything wrong with south Wales, but because of the distance between the two and the difficulties of communication.

Concomitant with that is what Richie said about community beat managers. That has been one of the greatest developments in policing. They work well for us in north Wales. I am not clear how that community level policing, which is valued by everybody, would operate in the new scenario. Has the Police Federation come to a conclusion on how it would like to see things operate?

Mr Eccles: Those are very valid points. Although we need to look at new structures, and although we probably accept that the new structure will revolve around a Welsh force or forces—because that is the way that this appears to be being steered—I cannot see how any of the Welsh forces can cut their ties with, for want of a better term, our English neighbours. Although we produce home-grown criminals, we cannot lose sight of the fact that criminals cross the borders. We all know that we have criminals, and there are people who travel into Wales to commit crime. We cannot isolate ourselves and not share intelligence and operations with other forces, whether or not we are linked by a common badge. We cannot lose those links.

Community policing is a particular concern. Most chief officers in Wales have the view that community policing is the key to how we operate. The danger, as we see it, is that if the serious and organised crime that we are re-setting ourselves up to deal with becomes the theme, it will be community policing that will drop off. That is a real concern, and is something that we will have to look at, because we have people within our ranks who have set out their stall and have made promises to communities that ‘I am PC Eccles, and I am here for the next five years to serve this particular village or parish’. It would be unfair if they were pulled out and had to break those promises through no fault of their own. That is something that we will watch closely. There is always a danger that, when the latest theme comes out, people charge after it rather than establishing what the impact will be for what is left behind.

Leanne Wood: My first question is for you, Chair. In terms of this consultation and this review being taken seriously by the Home Office, how confident are

you that our views will be fed in and will be taken seriously? Is this a meaningful consultation, or are we just going through the motions?

Janice Gregory: Believe me, I could find a million other things to do on a Thursday afternoon than sit here and, as Sandy said, take evidence for a review that I did not think was going to have any impact.

Leanne Wood: You do get the impression that there is a clear direction in which the Home Office wants to go on this.

Janice Gregory: I cannot make it any plainer: I would not be sitting here as Chair of the committee if that were the case. Let us understand this clearly: forget about what went on in the Chamber last week, this is not the place for that. No-one has held a gun to our head to do this consultation. I put it to you as members of the committee and no-one raised concerns about our doing this consultation. I do not know whether anyone has had second thoughts since then, but nothing was raised in committee. Had anything been raised, then I could have gone back and said 'Thank you for the offer, but the committee has decided that this is not a meaningful consultation'. I think that it is; if I did not, I would not be sitting here. I do not know whether that answers your question.

Leanne Wood: It does not entirely, because that is not the question that I asked you. I was happy for this review to go ahead, and I still think that it is a valid thing to do, as long as the results are noted.

Janice Gregory: I do not have a direct line to the Home Office to say, 'I am Chair of the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee, do you think that this is a meaningful consultation?'. I can only tell you that I believe it to be, and that is why we are all sitting here on a Thursday afternoon.

Leanne Wood: Okay, thank you for that. May I now ask questions to the guests?

Janice Gregory: Yes.

Leanne Wood: Thank you. In terms of the numbers that you included in your presentation, we have 7,613 officers; the Home Office has said that it will not consider forces smaller than 4,000 officers. That makes it potentially difficult to have two forces in Wales. Do you have a view on that? How do the community support officers fit in with this? Do you represent them?

Mr Eccles: No.

Janice Gregory: Leading on from that, do you represent non-uniformed staff?

Mr Eccles: No, we represent uniformed police officers.

Janice Gregory: That was a question that I was hoping that someone would ask.

Mr Eccles: In the main, the community support officers and the support staff would be represented by Unison or, more locally, perhaps, in south Wales, the GMB.

Leanne Wood: The second question that I have is about the concern that you have—

Mr Eccles: The numbers?

Leanne Wood: No, this is a different question, but I would like you to answer on that as well. In terms of centralisation, you talked about potentially moving away from local intelligence. Do you think that that could have an impact on your ability to solve crimes?

Mr Eccles: On the numbers, having done some research before coming here, I was in favour of your proposal for four Welsh forces with 4,000 in each. However, we are then back to funding, so perhaps that is not realistic. The figure that has been set in the document is a minimum suggested figure of 4,000. When you look at some of the English forces, it is possible to draw lines around particular areas, counties and other boundaries and think, 'Well, that will make 4,000 or more', and that is quite simple. When you look at the situation in Wales, there is not a simple and obvious solution to how you would do it. If you were being cynical, you might suggest drawing a line across the country between north and south. However, even things like that are ruled out within the document. I do not have the solution as to what the model should look like.

3.20 p.m.

When the options are delivered, we will look at them carefully to see whether they are viable, and what the impact will be on the whole policing picture in Wales. It is a very difficult question. Intelligence was a key theme at yesterday's meeting. It can be the key to policing, but the intelligence needs to come in at a local level. It then needs to be put out from that local level as widely as it can be, within the police framework, as quickly as possible. The last thing that you want is to know about something that happened a week ago that you needed to know about six days ago. Therefore, it needs to be local intelligence fed through a proper information and communication structure, and it needs to be in the hands of the officers at the earliest possible opportunity so that when a car drives past you, you know what that car or that person has been involved in. Intelligence has a key role, which comes into the communications that we need to get in place. Whatever structure that we have for future policing, we need good communications at every level, including for intelligence.

Leanne Wood: Do you think that if you had the communications in place, you would not be concerned that priorities will have changed in terms of officers being shifted onto more serious crime or anti-terrorism stuff, and that the local kind of work such as solving burglaries and so forth might not get done?

Mr Eccles: I would still have those concerns. The intelligence is a part of the policing model. The issue for us is that we can only do so many jobs with a set amount of officers, so we need to increase the number or some of the jobs drop will off the end, which is a concern. If we are going to focus on redesigning this and getting cost savings, those cost savings need to be re-invested. They might be re-invested in better technology that saves officers from filling in forms, they might be invested in more officers, or more administrative support for officers, but we need to invest them so that we get the maximum benefit from it.

Leanne Wood: I have one more question. Can you give us the Wales Police Federation's view on the devolution of police services?

Would you like to get back to me on that?

Mr Eccles: Yes, I will get back to you because—

Janice Gregory: That was a little unfair, I think, was it not?

Mr Eccles: It is not something that we have considered as being part of this process. We accept that it will probably happen at some point in the future.

Leanne Wood: It has to link in with this somehow, surely.

Mr Eccles: There is a danger that we might invent a model today that does not suit someone when they get the devolved power in future. Unfortunately, the timescale is very tight. I am not so sure that you can deal with devolution in the same timescale.

Janice Gregory: Maybe that will keep for another day and another consultation.

Mark Isherwood: To combine Sandy's point about cross-border working and Leanne's last question, operationally—as opposed to according to personal opinion or view—would it be an advantage, whatever structural outcome we have in Wales, for it to remain part of an integrated force structure within England and Wales? That is operationally, rather than according to any subjective opinion.

I also have great respect for our community beat officers, but one of the biggest complaints about them that I receive from people in the region that I represent is that they are still spread very thinly, which does not have a great impact on the 'prevention as well as cure' aspect, and intelligence gathering. Do you share those concerns and feel that we should be moving more towards localism?

Finally, you comment on page 3 about the need to improve performance through an increased number of officers. Are you referring to the release of more existing officer time for operational duties, or an absolute increase in the

number of officers, or both?

Mr Eccles: I think that it picks up on the point that I just made to Leanne. It is about the whole picture. If we can release officers from bureaucratic functions and have them out and about on the streets, clearly it will be an increase in operational resilience. Obviously, we would aim to have as many police officers on the streets of Wales as we could afford to have. That might be achieved by having an increased number of officers; it might be achieved by changing the way in which we operate. So, in an ideal world, we would get rid of all of the paper and put everyone out on the streets. It is very simplistic, but that is one way to deliver it. There are various ways in which you can deliver it: you can do what we have tended to do in north Wales, and probably in most other parts of the country, which is add to the precept and add to the number of officers, or you can change working practices to put more officers out on the streets more often. So there are various ways of delivering it. We do have concerns about the spread of officers across the country. I do not think that any of my members will say, 'I think that there are too many of us working out of this station'. They manage what comes in to the best of their abilities, with the resources that are available. I do not think that anyone here would say, 'We have too many resources; do not send us any more police officers'. That is not the message. It is rather that we will have whatever people are willing to send to us. The difficulty is that if we are not very careful, we could lose focus on community and local policing and concentrate on what is perceived to be the next level up. Then, obviously, the impact on communities will be great.

Janice Gregory: Thank you both very much indeed. That will now form a part of our report.

I now ask representatives of the South Wales Criminal Justice Board to come to the table. Good afternoon, and thank you for attending at such short notice. I understand that Chris Woolley is not able to be with us, and our thoughts are with him. I understand, Edwina, that you have substituted at very short notice. So, I introduce Edwina Sherwood, who is the area business manager of the Crown Prosecution Service, and Stephen Routledge, a performance officer at the criminal justice board. We are running very late, so I would ask you to give a very brief introduction, before I invite questions, as I did with the last presenters.

Ms Sherwood: We were not sure how much detail you wanted. Chris would have appeared here today in two capacities, in that he chairs the criminal justice board and is the chief Crown prosecutor. We thought that you would want to touch on two elements, which are the role of the criminal justice board and how that might be affected by the reform, and the CPS itself. Is that the type of thing that you wanted to hear, and does that meet with your approval?

Janice Gregory: Yes, that is fine.

Ms Sherwood: One message that Chris would have liked to have put forward today is that the criminal justice boards have been in place now since 2003,

they have achieved a lot, and have been extremely target driven, with joint targets for all the agencies. The agencies represent the chief officers of the police, the CPS, the courts, the probation service, prison and the youth offending teams. We can give you figures, if you need them, on some of the major targets achieved and some of the board's performance since it came into operation. One of the main targets is consistently meeting the Government pledge in relation to persistent young offenders. Also, we have increased public confidence from the baseline of 35 per cent to 41 per cent, and are on course to meet the target for March 2006. The board continually and regularly surpasses targets involving the timeliness and efficiency of the Crown and magistrates courts, and continually reduces the proportion of ineffective trials.

With regard to Crown courts, south Wales is the best-performing area in relation to ineffective trials. We have also reduced the number of unexecuted court warrants, and have exceeded the Government's fine-enforcement payment rate every month since April. We are due to launch the delivery plan on 3 November. Also, because it is so current, I think that it is important to recognise that one of the sub-groups of the board has been given the lead for the Criminal Case Management programme, which, of course, is charging the No Witness, No Justice project, and the Effective Trial Management project. South Wales went live from this Monday, with statutory charging passing the assessments last week. In relation to the No Witness, No Justice programme, there are witness care units in Cardiff and Swansea, with Merthyr Tydfil going live in November. The Effective Trial Management project will be across the area by January. Therefore, those are significant achievements on the part of the board and the sub-groups dealing with them.

3.30 p.m.

On police reform, if the geographical areas change, the boards, which are in line with the geographical areas, will be affected, and we would have to consider, at the time, whether a board expands or disappears, depending on how the geographical borders change. The message from the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General is that they do not want the boards to lose their impetus. We can see the improvements in performance, and in some of the achievements and initiatives, and we would not like to lose that impetus with the boards fading away in any way.

We would also want to ensure that we matched performance to targets. One important thing about the boards is that they provide local delivery. Therefore, if they were to become bigger, we would have to ensure that the people in Gwent had the same local service and felt that they were getting the same kind of service and performance as those in, say, Ynys Môn. It would be important to ensure that, wherever the boards go, local delivery is not lost.

On the CPS itself, the Government has accepted the case for creating larger strategic police forces. The success of the local criminal justice system in recent years has been founded on the fact that all the agencies are coterminous with each other, so we would need to consider that. We would

consider carefully any proposals for changing the boundaries, to see what impact it has on how we deliver our business. We are working closely with the police and the courts, and all the agencies, so that our views are taken into account in formulating any proposals for change.

We believe that the CPS is probably prepared to deal with the changes. In 1986, there were two CPS areas, namely south Wales and Gwent, and north Wales and Dyfed Powys. That lasted until 1993, and it then became an all-Wales CPS area. That lasted until 1999, when the present system of four CPS areas was established, namely north Wales, Gwent, Dyfed Powys, and south Wales. When there was an all-Wales CPS, there was a strong emphasis on local leadership and local delivery, and there were seven branches at that time, each headed by an experienced prosecutor. Therefore, in effect, whichever way the boundaries will change, we have been structured in that way previously, and feel, therefore, that we could structure in that way again.

Whatever the ultimate shape of the police force and whatever the geographical boundaries, the CPS areas intend to work closely to deliver the three main priorities: to strengthen the prosecution process, to put victims and witnesses at the centre of all that we do, and to engage more closely with communities in Wales.

It may be significant to note that we have not been given much information. However, the CPS senior management conference, which I will attend, as will Chris, hopefully, if he is able to do so, is to be held next Tuesday and Wednesday. The director has indicated that he will talk to us a little more about police reform and how it will affect the CPS, so that may give us some more insight.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: To go back to the fact that the CPS seemed to feel that it was better to organise itself into four area services, that was presumably based on effectiveness and how you felt you could carry out your work to the best possible level. Now there is talk that if there is one police force for Wales, there would be one national CPS. Have you made any attempt to evaluate how successful the original process was—going from a national CPS to four area services—and whether you will lose some of your current best practice by reverting to a national CPS? You say that you can cope with the change, but that does not mean that it is the best change for the CPS.

Ms Sherwood: I suppose that there are pros and cons to having the bigger, all-Wales CPS instead of the four that we have at present. One thing that has come out is that, with an all-Wales model, you may lose some of that local flavour and local delivery, which is probably what you were referring to. However, one difficulty is the varying sizes of the areas. Some areas are smaller than Cardiff branch in south Wales for instance. They find it difficult to deal with change. If people leave or are off work sick, those areas cannot cope with the loss of staff. Also, no-one knows when big cases, such as that of Harold Shipman, may come up. The bigger areas are able to deal with such

cases, whereas in the case of the Soham murders in Cambridgeshire, the service there found it difficult to deal with because it just did not have the resources and the staff numbers required. So, there are pros and cons for both. The bigger areas can deal with everything that is thrown at them, because they have the resources and the economies of scale, but they lose some of the local flavour. The smaller areas will have a local lead and a local team dealing with the area. All communities have their own needs and differences—there are different types of crime, different communities and different clusters of ethnic minorities or other diverse communities. The aim is to provide both the resources and the local flavour.

Janice Gregory: Is it possible to have a report or summary of next week's conference? If they put the meat on the bones for you, it would be useful if you could feed that through to us.

Ms Sherwood: Certainly.

Mark Isherwood: What are the areas of common ground and of difference between the four delivery units?

Ms Sherwood: For the four areas as they stand?

Mark Isherwood: Yes. Are they effectively doing the same thing in different areas, or are there things that set them apart in terms of the sort of work that you are doing?

Ms Sherwood: No. The boards and the CPS areas are all driven by the same public service agreement targets and joint plans. There will be slight differences in some of the plans. Part of the plans concern community engagement, and, therefore, elements of what you are trying to do in that regard in Dyfed Powys may be slightly different to what you are trying to do in south Wales. However, all the delivery plans are the same. The targets might be slightly higher for an area that is performing better, but the priorities are the same.

Mr Routledge: The only difference between the criminal justice boards is how they structure themselves. Edwina has referred to the sort of sub-group structure that we have underneath the board for delivery against the targets that we are given. Those are common targets, but the set-up might be different according to different areas.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much for attending.

Chris Sims is the regional staff officer in south-east Wales of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Thank you for coming at such short notice, as I have said to all of our presenters. Perhaps you would do a preamble, and Members can then ask questions if they think it appropriate.

3.40 p.m.

Mr Sims: The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust was established by statutory instrument in April 1998 from the previously existing five ambulance trusts in Wales. We provide ambulance and related services to the whole population of Wales and employ around 2,500 staff. These staff operate over 90 ambulance stations, four control centres, a national training college and associated regional training centres, our trust headquarters in St Asaph, three regional offices and five vehicle maintenance workshops. During 2004-05, we have dealt with almost 267,000 emergency 999 calls and nearly 66,000 urgent journeys and we have transported over 1.3 million non-emergency patients to over 300 treatment centres. Working closely with our colleagues in the police services across Wales, we were able to develop a co-ordinated response to civil contingency issues and other partnership working programmes from a Wales-wide perspective, but maintaining a local response as required by the diversity of the population that we serve. This is reflected in the regions that were developed to mirror some of the existing health boundaries at the time, and has included the formation of regional management teams to ensure that local accountability is maintained and the local needs of our patients are taken into account when developing our whole Wales-wide service strategy.

The regional management team reports, via a regional ambulance officer, directly to the trust board executive team and then follows direction and strategy from the centre and implements changes as necessary, taking into account the regional perspective and local requirements. This, we believe, has allowed us to take a Wales-wide position on developing a number of key organisational issues such as training, clinical skills, medicines management, uniform, vehicles, policies, procedures and IT systems, including the new digital radio scheme. This, in itself, has benefits in terms of finance, procurement, management structure and staff development opportunities. It is therefore the position of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust that we would support the formation of the restructuring of the constabulary in Wales, and would urge that, when consideration is given, the need to be reactive to regional issues within the Wales-wide strategy in context is seen as fundamental.

Huw Lewis: I have a broad-brush question. We have been looking, in the paperwork here, at the drive behind the possible amalgamation and the possibility of a single police force doing that sort of level 2 policing, which includes major incidents. You have made the transition from five bodies to one. First, are you operating better now because of that, and, secondly, would you welcome a similar move on the part of the police? Would there be a proper fit, in terms of, for example, major incidents, between your joint working with the police? Would you be an organisation, in other words, that would welcome the coming of a single force?

Mr Sims: I will reiterate that we are based on regions within the whole Wales-wide structure for our service. For example, in the south-east region, the area for which I am mainly responsible, we deal with two police forces already. If you look at our central and west region, it deals with South Wales Police, Dyfed Powys Police and probably a part of the North Wales Police service as

well. From a regional perspective therefore, we have to, if you like, have the same conversations with two different people or more, so to move to a Wales-wide force would certainly be beneficial for us in those terms.

Sandy Mewies: Huw has made the point that you have already done this. Do you have any problem with your headquarters being in north Wales?

Mr Sims: No, other than the travelling up to attend meetings and so on, but we have regional offices and video-conferencing facilities in all our regional headquarters, so the travelling to meetings is kept to a minimum. Obviously, we tend to use our facilities in Newtown ambulance station in the middle of Wales to draw people to. Other than the travelling, the fact that our headquarters is based in north Wales is not an issue.

Janice Gregory: So even though you are an all-Wales force and identified as that, you manage to retain a regional perspective?

Mr Sims: Absolutely.

Mark Isherwood: Would you be able to share with us any evidence showing comparative performance before the restructure and afterwards, so that we can see clearly what changes have resulted?

Mr Sims: I am sure that evidence is available; I do not actually have it to hand, bearing in mind that we are working on a year-on increase in the amount of demand on our services in any case. Since the introduction of the Welsh service back in 1998—seven years ago—we have made many leaps forward in developing co-ordinated training modules. At one time, each service would have different training for their paramedics, so where you lived would determine what level of service or treatment you would receive. That is something that we have managed to move away from. All our staff are trained in the same way, and an ambulanceman in north Wales will be wearing the same uniform and driving the same vehicle as an ambulanceman in south Wales, and, other than the identifying number—there is one digit's difference—there is no difference in the way that they do their job. With the development of the all-Wales radio system, which will bring us into line across Wales and also enable us to communicate with police and other emergency services far better, the formation of a Wales-wide trust has definitely brought benefits for us. We are alone and unique in the NHS in that we are the only Wales-wide NHS trust. We still liaise with our local partners, with the local health boards, with the Welsh Assembly Government and with regional offices, and we manage to get the job done, and done relatively well.

Leanne Wood: I want to try to explore the thinking behind why you merged into one in the beginning, back in 1998. Can you take us back to the debates that were going on at the time and the reason behind the merger? What were the workers saying? Were they concerned that you would lose the local dimension?

Mr Sims: Yes, they were.

Leanne Wood: It has not actually panned out that way, has it?

Mr Sims: The paramedic working on the ground will meet people from the rest of Wales at the training college, who are there doing the training at the same time as him or her. When he or she travels to different parts of the country, there is every possibility that he or she might come across those individuals again. From a personal perspective, it has certainly made Wales a lot smaller than it used to be, because for me to travel to Newtown, St Asaph or Cefncoed in Swansea for a meeting is now part of a normal working day.

Leanne Wood: You would not have gone there before.

Mr Sims: No, there would have been no need.

Prior to the five services that we had back in 1998, mergers had already taken place to form the ambulance services from the original health-authority-bounded ambulance services. The first of those mergers in Wales involved Gwent, South Glamorgan and Powys coming together as the South East Wales Ambulance Trust, which is one of the trusts that were then merged to form the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Staff did think that there was going to be a loss of identity—

Leanne Wood: Was there opposition from the trade unions?

Mr Sims: I am sure that there was. I cannot really remember, as I was in a different role at that particular time, but, in the south-east of Wales, we had already gone through a transformation, and we had been through some difficult times as well in our trust. The thought of going through another transformation was obviously concerning, but, if you were to ask those staff now about what problems there are in relation to having a Wales-wide service, they would say that our fundamental problem is still communication. We have to be, and are, working consistently to get that communication from board level down to staff level. However, that is something that we feed through the regions and try to feed down.

Janice Gregory: I am sure that everyone will recall the merger being hugely contentious at the time. I remember that the unions had some very grave and real concerns about the merger, and, indeed, the press ran stories about the difficulties and about what would happen to people because the control room was so far away, and that there would be issues about postcodes and people not knowing the streets. It is important for us to recognise that there is a local and regional dimension to the all-Wales ambulance service. You are not going to get an ambulance from north Wales attending someone who is having a potential heart attack in Treorchy.

Mr Sims: There are some benefits from a resilience perspective. If, for instance, our control in this region had to be evacuated for some reason, we could transfer our services to another control. Also, from a management perspective, a manager from north Wales could come down and pick up

where I would have left off, because we work to the same protocols and procedures. There are benefits in scale from that perspective, in any case. At the end of the day, an ambulance service is an ambulance service—it should not differ depending on where you are, and I would assume that the same would be true of the police service.

Leanne Wood: I have one last question; I am sorry, I should have asked this before. One of the things that we were talking about with the police was that this change seems to be driven by a change in priorities. So, potentially, they are going to move away from community-based crime to look more at serious organised crime and anti-terrorism work. You did not have that issue to consider in the ambulance service, did you? There was no change in your working priorities as part of the merger.

Mr Sims: No, not at all. Our response is always to the phone call from a member of the public or a health professional. When we get that call, we respond to it.

Leanne Wood: Okay.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, Chris.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Moving to a national body from a system where you have five areas, as you had prior to 1998, creates an opportunity, as you said, to rationalise costs. The Police Federation was concerned that if there was one police force and it ended up with the same amount of police officers, doing a lot more tasks than they do now, it would effectively lose the ability to carry out some of the important work that it undertakes at the moment. With that process of rationalisation, was there also a process of investment in certain areas of the service? If you were saving money, was that being reinvested in the service? Are there things present now, after 1998, which were not there before?

3.50 p.m.

Mr Sims: We have done a lot of work since 1998, and we now have a research and development department that looks at changes in our protocols and procedures to reflect evidence-based care for patients. We have a thorough clinical governance strategy for use within the organisation and, again, that is new since 1998. A lot of these changes are down to Welsh Assembly Government directives on how we should develop ourselves, but the fundamental core of what we do is still there, namely if someone rings '999', we send out an ambulance. We still do that.

If you were to look across Wales, you would see that we have thinned out our management structure greatly. We now have one chief executive, one director of operations and one director of finance. All of those are at board level with non-executive directors pulled in from different areas to support the board's operations. As I said, each region is run by a regional management team of people with the specific knowledge and skills to be able to do it on a regional

basis. We deliver the strategy on a local basis, taking local needs into account and I think that that works reasonably well.

Janice Gregory: Thank you. I have just one question. The police federation mentioned the closure of the training college in Gwent and concerns that that was a work in progress. In terms of your training, has there been a difference since you became an all-Wales organisation and what is that difference?

Mr Sims: The difference is that it has given us the opportunity to move away from having trust-based training that differed. There was a core basic training manual that we had to apply, but each trust might turn around and apply slightly different things on top of that, because it had the money to do so, or there were local needs for particular services. We were able to develop a training college in Swansea that, effectively, dealt with all our training needs. We also have a training school in north Wales that deals with local day-to-day refreshment training, and a training school in Pontypridd, in our Church Village department, which deals with local refresher training here. We have a central college for putting staff out for their paramedic courses, which take a number of weeks, and the emergency medical technician courses, but we do the day-to-day refresher stuff, which might take one or two days, on a local basis. We are not duplicating effort on that basis.

Janice Gregory: Are you still able to put a local emphasis on the broader training that you are required to do?

Mr Sims: Yes.

Janice Gregory: Does anyone else have any questions? I see that they do not. Chris, thank you very much for attending the committee meeting.

I now welcome David Jeremiah, who is the community safety manager for the Torfaen community safety partnership. Thank you very much for coming to committee again at such short notice, David. We really do appreciate your taking the time to come to us. Do you have a preamble that you want to present?

Mr Jeremiah: I have prepared a very quick preamble, if you do not mind.

Janice Gregory: That will be great, and we will then ask questions afterwards.

Mr Jeremiah: The main purpose of the preamble is just to set the scene and explain who I am. For those of you who do not know, there are 22 community safety partnerships in Wales. We are quite high up on the Government's agenda at the moment in dealing with quality-of-life issues. In Torfaen, the authority that I work for, we like to think of ourselves as leaders in the field. I am also the secretary of the Association of Community Safety Officers in Wales and I have canvassed the views of some of our members for my contribution today.

As I said, there are 22 partnerships, and it is a bit of a curate's egg insofar as that some of the partnerships function very well, some function not so well, and some of them function hardly at all. This is central to the debate on how the police services need to be reconfigured. The one plea that I will make is that when you consider what decision will eventually be made about how police services will be run in Wales, it is the people who are in the front line who desperately need some uniformity of service. We also need a few things done about how the partnerships, the police and other key partners function.

To give you a bit of background, in the community safety partnerships, we see ourselves as the people who deal with the quality-of-life issues. I do not want to go into the jargon, but we are talking about public order offences. In some respects, we are almost battling against the Home Office, insofar as the Home Office sets key performance indicators for us, which often bear very little relevance to what people out in the communities require. For example, to put it succinctly, one thing that we have to deal with is the fact that the Audit Commission produced a report on community safety partnerships, which said that those police forces that apply themselves to nationally set key performance indicators will serve their communities ill. In my experience, that is the case. Unfortunately, the tension between what is wanted nationally and what is wanted locally has to be put into the balance, because there are public protection issues that the police have to deal with, and there are also things that we have to deal with.

One last bit of my preamble is, I suppose, about where we have come from and where we are going to. When I started this job, about five years ago, I remember going to a meeting in Garndiffaith, a community in my area that had suffered very badly owing to the anti-social behaviour of one family. We appeared in this large hall, which is a large cinema—that is, me, the divisional commander, as he was at the time, a few other police officers, and the deputy chief executive of the local authority—and it was bursting at the seams with irate people. These people were complaining about the behaviour of this one family. The commander of police stood up and said that he thought that all those people were under a misapprehension. He then took out the crime statistics for the area, which were the key performance indicators at the time, and he read them out to show that, actually, there was hardly any crime in the area, which was absolutely true. I thought that he was going to get lynched, because what he was reading out from his sheet bore no relevance to the concerns of the people in that hall. That was nearly five years ago, and things have changed markedly in my area now. The police have gone through a huge change, which brings me to another part of this that I will champion, namely strengthening the basic command units.

If you are to deliver things on the ground, what really matters is what people perceive to be happening and what they see happening; that is best delivered by the people closest to the ground. I think that all public order issues ought to be dealt with by the basic command unit. The protection issues can be dealt with quite easily by the national police force. For example, I would like to see the type of scenario removed in which, if the Queen visits Chepstow races in my area, the police disappear. If there is a big event at the Celtic Manor

Resort, the police disappear. We might be involved in an operation to do with an estate where the quality of life of people is on the edge of being destroyed, and halfway through something like that, all of a sudden, the police officers are gone. We must stop that because, if we do not, we will lose the support of the communities, and, as you know, in this country, we police with consent. As it stands at the moment, we have done some Audit Commission reports in our area—I am not speaking out of turn with my police colleagues here; I must stipulate that we work very closely with them—and the perception among the general public of the police and of the service received is poor. It is not that the police are doing a poor job, but that the police have been torn. In the document that I read before this—it was rather a thick document that would make good bedtime reading, as it sent me to sleep a couple of times—there were a couple of good points about trying to achieve this balance. That is what we really need to do.

4.00 p.m.

That is the preamble, and that is how I see the picture. I was watching outside on the television the people from the CPS talking about performance indicators and targets and all that sort of stuff. For the people on the estates, that means absolutely nothing. In many respects, I also treat it with a great deal of scepticism. I was with a witness in court, and saw the witness reduced to tears by a solicitor in an anti-social behaviour order case. We are very proactive on anti-social behaviour orders. Witness support is there on paper; I have seen the policy documents and the performance indicators—I have seen it all—but for a warm body to appear with me in court to protect that witness is as rare as hen's teeth. So, another thing that we must do is ensure that, when you make these decisions, you look for customer satisfaction. I know that it is trite terminology, but we must do this.

If I were given a magic wand, I would say that we need one large overarching police force to look at things such as terrorism and protecting communities from heavy-duty and organised crime, but most of what bothers people out there is young people with alcohol on the streets and anti-social behaviour. Unless you can cure that problem, deal with it, and face up to the responsibility, both as politicians and as officers, we are doing a poor job. That is my basic plea.

Sandy Mewies: You have given us many examples of operational things that happen or do not happen at the moment. How would community safety partnerships organise themselves to operate under this new regime? Are there any operational deficiencies that you can foresee?

Mr Jeremiah: Basically, no. I am very much a front-line service. There are some quality people in police headquarters who do some quality work. However, the relationship, especially in my area—and I speak for about a third of my 22 colleagues throughout Wales—is the essence for delivery. I do not want to sound too cynical, because I also write policy documents, but I receive too many policy documents, directives, key performance indicators, targets, protocols and all this kind of stuff from up above. I have a shelf-full of

them—I am frightened to sit under the shelves in case they fall on me and break my neck. We have got to move away from that. Operationally, my focus would be on the basic command unit. I would not foresee any problems at all.

Janice Gregory: Even if they were not based along a county borough council boundary area? Are you not based on county borough boundaries?

Mr Jeremiah: Yes. Coterminosity is very important. I will give you an example in the Gwent area, which is something that I will lay at the door of the Assembly. In Gwent, the local health boards are configured in one way, the police are configured in another way, local authorities are configured in another way, and the domestic violence unit is configured in another way. They are all key partners, and we are supposed to work together. That comes from the Assembly, but it makes my job incredibly difficult. So, when we look to the reorganisation of the police forces, coterminosity will be the essence. The B division of Gwent Police, and Monmouthshire and Torfaen councils work together. I also have responsibility for drugs policy in Monmouthshire—that has been sub-contracted to us. It is because of that that I have the chief superintendent's personal phone number on my mobile phone—I can phone him any time I like, and we pop into each other's office on a regular basis. The communication is excellent, we undertake joint projects and joint initiatives—all that kind of activity is the essence of delivery. That is the one thing that must remain.

I read about the federal system. As I understand it, there is a kind of federation to deal with heavy-duty crime among the police forces in Wales at the moment, which seems to work very well. Compared with my colleagues across Offa's Dyke, we seem to have quite a good system for the police forces to work together, but it would be better if that system were far more formalised.

Mark Isherwood: Thank you for an excellent presentation. From my perspective, it would be wonderful if you could advise the Home Office on customer satisfaction within whatever structures you have.

Mr Jeremiah: Tell me about it.

Mark Isherwood: On that basis, rather than looking at official crime statistics, which are always contradicting each other, would it be more useful if we looked at, for instance, the surveys that some local authorities are doing with their own citizens' panels?

Mr Jeremiah: I was very lucky. When I came to work in Torfaen, I was given a year by the then chief executive, who went on to join the Audit Commission, to find out about the nature and extent of crime and disorder in Torfaen. That was interesting because it was two years before the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, so it was quite early thinking. I stopped 20 people in the street, at any time of the day or night—I randomised it—in each one of the wards, showed them my identification and said, 'What is it like living around here?'. That way, you get a much better idea. People would say 'You have got to do something

about these kids, and the alcohol that is flowing around the place'. Dog mess was the other thing, of course. However, when you look at the statistics that go into the system, they tell you a different story. For example, our high-crime area, when I started, was at New Inn, where everybody wanted to live. No-one wanted to live in one of our estates where the quality of life was very low, but it was a low-crime area. That is in two parts.

There is a lovely quotation by Harold Wilson that we are very lucky in this country that unemployment hits areas that are used to it. We are also very lucky that anti-social behaviour hits areas that are used to it. I live in Crickhowell, in Powys; if what happens in some of the areas for which I am responsible happened in Crickhowell, there would be questions in the House, but, for some reason, we are able to tolerate it because of the dichotomy that you just alluded to, namely the fact that we have this unbelievable belief that crime statistics will give us some sort of indicator. It does not work that way.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, David. That was quite refreshing, and I am sure that all of us around the table can identify with everything that you said about what is and is not relevant.

Mr Jeremiah: Thank you.

Janice Gregory: I now welcome Gary Griffiths, who is the manager of Victim Support Gwent. Good afternoon, Gary, and thank you for coming at such short notice to give evidence to this review. Do you wish to give a short preamble, Gary, or do you want to go straight into it? It is entirely up to you.

Mr Griffiths: I am quite prepared to say something.

Victim Support is the national charity for victims and witnesses. Last year, the five Victim Support charities in Wales supported more than 60,000 victims and 20,000 witnesses. We not only provide practical and emotional support to victims of crime and to witnesses attending court, but we also seek to ensure that the rights of those victims and witnesses are protected in all aspects of criminal justice and social policy.

Police forces in Wales have some of the highest detection rates in the UK, providing some comfort to victims that their crimes have been solved and, in some cases, that the perpetrators have been brought to justice.

In the past, Victim Support has been adaptable to change and no doubt it will continue to be so in the future. We are coterminous with police force boundaries and, over the years, where there have been changes, Victim Support has changed with that coterminosity. As recently as five years ago, the National Association of Victim Support Schemes, of which Victim Support in Wales is a part, undertook a restructuring programme to reduce the number of Victim Support schemes throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, of which there were more than 500. They are now based on 47 larger area charities, as we call them. With a few exceptions, those charities are coterminous with police-force boundaries at this time.

Any restructuring of the police forces may result in our association's having to consider restructuring the charities again, which may be at a cost to those individual charities. They might be hard pressed to meet those costs.

4.10 p.m.

It has been impossible at such short notice to consult my colleagues in Wales and their boards of trustees, and I am sure that it has been short notice for you. So, I cannot give a real, informed comment on what my colleagues feel. However, there was some discussion nationally as soon as we heard of the proposals to look at restructuring, and some of the questions that have arisen are quite pertinent to the whole issue and should be considered carefully by the Government. Only four questions have sprung to mind so far, but I am sure that a lot of issues will come out in the future.

The first question is: will victims and witnesses have access to at least the same service, or an enhanced consistent service from the police, which is timely and appropriate to meet their individual needs and which recognises the local social and economic issues that those victims face when they are trying to cope with the effects of crime? The second question is: will there be the same accountability for local issues if those charged with the management of any proposed larger structure are removed both personally and geographically from the people whom they serve? The third question is: will those individual victim support charities that receive local authority grants continue to do so? Not all do; I in Gwent do not receive any local authority funding. The charities depend on those funds to supplement Home Office funding, which is notionally 80 per cent of the running cost of each charity in each area. So, we are not fully funded to provide our services as a charity. Will this meet existing and future demands? Will they lose their funding if they become coterminous with a larger police authority structure, because it will mean that local authorities will say that they are not providing local services and so they do not think that they can fund the charities any more? The fourth question is: will the larger forces draw upon local resources, particularly in the rural areas that at the moment are hard pressed, as we know, to bolster those resources in larger towns and cities? This will possibly raise the fear of crime in the community, and remove from victims and witnesses, particularly the vulnerable ones, a service that is responsive to their own individual, and sometimes immediate, needs. So, those are the main issues.

Since we joined the charities together locally in 2001, Victim Support Gwent has supported 50,000 victims and 10,000 witnesses. We are one of the smaller charities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We have the basic minimum service that we are able to provide with the funding that we have. That is one Victim Support branch in each of the five local authority areas in Gwent, and three witness service branches, which are based in all the criminal courts in Gwent, which include the Crown court and the magistrates' court. We employ 19 staff and 150 volunteers. We place great emphasis on the importance of the work of volunteers, who do the job far more efficiently, we believe, and more cost-effectively than if people were employed for that

particular role. That is the overview of Victim Support.

Janice Gregory: I am sorry that it was such short notice. I and other Members understand that you have not had an opportunity to consult with your colleagues. We wish that we had had more notice as well. Sandy, do you have a comment?

Sandy Mewies: Given the short notice, you have done very well to address quite a lot of issues. I am particularly interested in the point that you raised about size; if it was a Big Mac, we would be calling it 'going large', would we not? You are absolutely right that local authorities are reluctant to fund something that crosses their borders. That had not occurred to me. So, I thank you for that, because you have addressed it and brought new evidence, which I had not thought of.

Mr Griffiths: Where we find the additional money that we need to run our services is a big issue. In some parts of Wales, for example, in the south Wales area from Cardiff to Bridgend and up into the Pontypridd valleys, services receive considerable amounts of money from their local authorities, whereas in Gwent we receive nothing. We do not know the reason why, and we cannot access funds, even those Assembly funds for community safety partnerships. I think that it is felt by a lot of members of those authorities that we should be fully funded by the Government. We say, 'Yes, perhaps we should be, but we are not, so how are you going to help us to survive and provide what we believe are important services to the community?'. That is not happening, and it is one of the things that we will be challenging the Assembly Government about over the next 12 months.

Leanne Wood: I want to thank you for the questions that you have posed, because they are really thought provoking. I want to refer to the first two. You asked if local accountability will be the same. I am not convinced that the police are locally accountable at the moment. I do not feel that they are accountable to me, as a council tax payer. Do you think that there is potential for that to get worse, if it can get worse? If we accept that there is not much accountability now, how much worse can it get?

The other question that you asked was whether victims will get the same services that they get now. Again, I am not convinced—perhaps you will say something different—that they get a particularly good service from the police now. I used to work as a probation officer, and we were meant to do victim work, but when you had a big case load, the victim work always fell off the end, because you had to meet court deadlines, or whatever. So, do you think that you get a good service from the police now, which could get worse, or do you think that the service that you get now is not very good and will end up being non-existent?

Mr Griffiths: They are both interconnected.

Leanne Wood: Of course.

Mr Griffiths: Personally, I would say 'no'. It is also my personal view that one police force for Wales would be of benefit, to certain degrees, because there will be one policy and, provided that it is consistent, it will not be a postcode lottery. So, everyone in Wales would expect the same level of service. On the other hand, as you quite rightly said, it depends on which model is used and which policies are adopted. There are police forces that, for example, do not refer victims of crime in accordance with the Home Office circular 44/2001, and following the model that is used in Gwent would not be a good thing for other areas of Wales, where victims are referred in accordance with the circular and have better services and quality services. It is a very difficult issue, and properly thought-out processes need to be built into any decision that is made to ensure that the needs of victims and witnesses in Wales are met.

Leanne Wood: So, consistency is the key there.

Mr Griffiths: It is very much about consistency—there are many occasions when we support victims and witnesses, some of whom are not referred to us by anyone, and it is sometimes two to three years before victims of a serious crime come to our door, as a last resort, and their health has suffered. Again, there is a link there to local health boards, and we in Victim Support believe that the boards should perhaps be playing a part in funding, because, if there is intervention on our part in relation to victims' wellbeing, it will reduce the number of people who access health services.

Mark Isherwood: I just want to confirm what you are saying about a national strategy that has local and regional delivery and is co-operative at a micro level, in that any restructuring needs to reflect local need rather than requiring local need to adapt to a national structure. On a specific point, your colleagues in Victim Support North Wales are seeking new premises, and I was discussing that with a local authority officer recently, who explained their problems in reconciling that, because, on the one hand, it wants to support essential local voluntary services such as your own, but, on the other, it has best value requirements, which means that if it were to release premises of its own, it would have to show that it was maximising income from them. Do you believe that we should be attempting to address these conflicts at a local and national level?

4.20 p.m.

Mr Griffiths: Yes. I believe that people need to look within themselves to see where our work fits. We support members of local communities who have issues that affect their mental health and wellbeing. It is an important service. I do not think that anyone would disagree with that. However, people have to consider that a charity has undertaken this work at a lower cost than that to health or police services, and rightly so, as our work is independent. We are not aligned to the police, although we work alongside them. It is because of our independence that people seek our help. We give them advice and support independently, and deal with their emotional needs, which other services cannot do. On that basis alone, local authorities and the Assembly

Government should look closely at how we are funded.

There are members of the community who desperately need help. We provide the service that they need, and we struggle, throughout Wales, to find premises to deliver services. For example, we are often told, 'Well, perhaps we can give you access for outreach work one day a week'. It is not understood that when a victim decides that they are going to seek help at a specific point in time, that person cannot wait until the following week when the local surgery will be open. In Gwent, the board of trustees is committed to provide high street premises to raise the profile of the organisation and to allow people in the local community, particularly disadvantaged members of the community, to drop in. That has been at a cost, as we have had to find £35,000 a year to run five Victim Support branches. Our Home Office grant just about covers salaries with no increases.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much for that, Gary. No-one else has indicated that they would like to ask a question, so Members are obviously happy with the answers that you have given. Thank you very much, once again, for attending at such short notice. I also thank you for the four questions that, as Leanne said, are thought provoking, and for the information that you have given us.

Mr Griffiths: Thank you for inviting us to the meeting and for the opportunity to present our views.

Janice Gregory: It was a pleasure.

Leanne Wood: Are you going to draw this item to a close?

Janice Gregory: I have not closed yet.

Leanne Wood: Could we have additional information from the Members' research service regarding this review, as I think that it might be useful? I think that it was the last witness who said that the Welsh forces have the highest detection rates in the UK. I would like to know the detection rates for the four services, how they compare to the services in the rest of the UK, and what factors would increase those detection rates. I am concerned that detection rates will go down as a result of centralisation. It would be helpful to see any research that has been done on that.

Janice Gregory: That is fine. If you would like any additional briefing, especially for this review, then e-mail Roger, Claire or me to say what you want. Alternatively, you can go directly to the Members' research service. The service has done research for us, which we have received and which was quite useful in summarising the 'Closing the Gap' document. However, if we want in-depth research, we can ask, and the service will be more than happy to provide that.

Today's meeting is the first that we have had since recess, and we have finished on time. However, would you prefer shorter but more frequent

meetings—Sandy is nodding, and I know what she is thinking—or would you like to keep to the same number at three hours in length?

Sandy Mewies: Witnesses brought a preamble with them, and it would have been useful to have that circulated beforehand. I felt that the time for questioning was limited. I would much rather have the preamble circulated beforehand, even if it was only circulated in the morning before the afternoon's meeting. I know that it is not always easy, and I know that we have been pushed hurtling into this, but I had questions today that I felt that I could not ask, in some ways, as it would not be fair on colleagues. There would be no opportunity for them.

Janice Gregory: I take completely on board what you say, because Roger and I was discussing this during the meeting. Our difficulty is that we have been thrown into this very quickly. To have had witnesses to come today as well-prepared as they were, is really a testament to their ability to respond very quickly to us.

Leanne Wood: When we get a document like this, we can follow what someone is saying.

Janice Gregory: We are going to try to get more streamlined, and I am sure that that will be achieved. The witnesses were only asked to come last week, and some of them only agreed to come as late as yesterday. So, for the rest of it, we will have their written submissions and will be able to circulate those, hopefully. I am sure that we will be able to do that, and the secretariat knows what we need to do. I apologise for that; it was not really fair to you or to them. However, I think that everyone did very well. You will have the written submissions and a chance to scrutinise the report before it goes to Plenary. If there is anything in the report that you do not like, or anything that you want to take out or add, that will be our opportunity to do so. Today has been a testing of the water, and we now know what we need to do.

Mark Isherwood: I have the latest Home Office reported crime figures if you want me to share them with the committee. I also have a citizens' panel report on crime and disorder from one of the north Wales councils, which I would also be happy to share with the committee, if you would like.

Janice Gregory: That is fine. You could pass it on to the Members' research service, which can then share it with the committee as part of the statistics that Leanne suggests that we should have. I would be happy with that. You can circulate it to me and I will circulate it further.

Mark Isherwood: I will do whatever is easier for you.

Janice Gregory: To have the documents twice is better than not to have them at all.

If there is nothing else, the next full meeting will be on 20 October. I must also tell you that, because of this review, I have decided not to take the committee

outside of Cardiff bay this term. However, we will go out twice next term. I did not feel that you needed to travel as well.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 4.27 p.m.
The meeting ended at 4.27 p.m.

Extract from Committee Transcript 20 October 2005

Adolygiad Polisi Policy Review

Janice Gregory: This item is the policy review on restructuring the constabulary. I welcome Ian Lankshear, the chief officer of the South Wales Probation Service. Ian has kindly supplied a written statement prior to the meeting, which was circulated to all Members. I also invited the fire and rescue services, but, unfortunately, they did not wish to take up the invitation to attend the committee; the chief fire officers and the chairs were invited. I need to bring that to the committee's attention, and to say that I received a response from the joint chairs. Thank you, Ian, for attending the committee. I am sure that we will not take up an hour of your time. You obviously understand that the committee is undertaking a review. Thank you for coming to give us a presentation today. I understand that you are not using PowerPoint or anything technical such as that, so I invite you to make your presentation.

Mr Lankshear: Thank you very much, Chair. I was not planning to make a lengthy presentation, having been invited to come to speak on behalf of my colleagues, who are the other three chief probation officers and the four board chairs from the Wales probation areas. I outlined in the paper, which I understand that you have, what we saw as the key issues that needed to be taken into account in any review of police force structures that is undertaken following the Home Secretary's recent statement.

I have outlined in the paper what, for us, are the key issues in terms of the partnership that we enjoy with police forces throughout Wales at the moment. You will be aware, I am sure, that changes are likely to be pending for the National Probation Service as well in the coming months. Although we do not know what the full implications of those are, I am clear that we retain a need, as do the police, to ensure that we have consistency in terms of the way in which we provide our services and that they are also responsive to the needs of local communities and, in the case of the probation service, to local courts.

That is why I have taken the opportunity to lay out in the paper those areas where we have common ground with the police to see, from our perspective, the key nature of those relationships. Again, it is about the balance between those aspects of the organisation where you can achieve some economies of scale and additional value by working on a bigger picture. Those issues must be dealt with on as local a basis as possible. The Home Secretary talks in reference to some things being on almost a ward basis, but I feel strongly that

there is a need for a basic command unit structure linked, as far as possible, to current local authorities insofar as we maintain the current local authority boundaries. I assume that we do so because there are so many other key partnerships of direct service delivery that are focused there. I am thinking of issues such as community safety, child protection, youth offending, which all work pretty effectively at that level of locality.

For us, another key example is around the assessment and management of prolific and other priority offenders and what I have referred to here as the MAPPA, or the multi-agency public protection arrangements, which are a statutory responsibility of probation, police and prisons. Those are best carried out at the local level in terms of a case-by-case basis within each local authority area, but with a degree of consistency that we currently achieve in south Wales by having a south Wales strategy delivered locally in the seven local authority areas. If the structure in terms of overall management of the police were to be on a wider geographical basis, that would still allow us to have the degree of consistency within which you can then have the local operation responding to local issues as far as is possible.

I have then drawn attention to the other areas that need to be taken into account where there is importance for me in having common boundaries—I hate the term coterminosity, but everyone seems to know what it means—within which you can organise consistency of services. For example, in the six months that I have been in my current post, I have seen that to be the case with the criminal justice board in south Wales and I know that that is replicated in the other three police force areas at present, which allows for Her Majesty's Courts Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Prison Service, probation and police to work jointly towards common targets and objectives for the greater good of all the community. It is vital that, whatever changes happen with the police service, scope for joint collaboration and joint strategy development at that level is maintained.

The last section of my paper makes some references to the changes that are likely to come about within probation, but within a wider context of the reducing re-offending action plan. That plan brings in many other agencies, including a number of arms of the Welsh Assembly Government. It looks at those areas of activity that can best be organised, maybe strategically, on an all-Wales basis and those that might be better done, in terms of viability of operation, at what I have called a sub-region basis—by which I mean the four current police areas—and the balance of that with what is best delivered or commissioned in terms of the 22 current local authority areas. So, it is a bit of a mix and match, but it is important that whatever changes you recommend and seek to support, provide that balance of a strategic, common-ground overview, across however wide an area, with being able to respond flexibly to the differences in different areas. I do not feel like I need to talk further because I hope the paper was fairly self-explanatory, but I wanted to have the opportunity of being here so that I could answer any questions that committee members might have.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much. Your paper was indeed self-

explanatory.

11.30 a.m.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Gwnaethoch y pwynt ei bod yn bwysig bod gan y gwasanaethau yr un ffiniau o ran eu gweithgaredd, fel eu bod yn gallu mynd i'r afael â phroblemau lleol. Bu ichi gyfeirio at y posibilïadau y gall hynny— [*Torri ar draws.*]

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You made the point that it is important that all services have the same boundaries in terms of their activities, so that they can deal with local problems. You referred to the possibilities that that could— [*Interruption.*]

Sorry; you will need the headset.

Mr Lankshear: I do beg your pardon.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: It is okay; I thought that you may have been a Welsh speaker.

Yr oeddwn yn gwneud y pwynt eich bod wedi sôn am yr angen—

I was making the point that you had spoken about the need—

You will need to turn it on. It is okay.

You talked about the need for all of these services to be coterminous so that they can address local issues. The point has been made that, if you had one police force for Wales, for example, as long as you had the regional structures in place and regional accountability, then those elements could be safeguarded. I know that I am now asking you to look at it hypothetically, because if the changes are implemented, what real dangers do you see in terms of some of the services that have been offered on a local basis? What are the dangers in terms of losing some of those, or losing the emphasis on some of those, if we move to a national service?

Mr Lankshear: My query would be about how the basic command unit structure, if we use that as the focus, can provide sufficient autonomy for that commander to respond to local issues, while at the same time achieving sufficient consistency and commonality across the piece. We are talking of maybe 22 basic command units. I think that there are risks that there could be 22 different ways of doing things, which could potentially create inequities and injustices. One of the main thrusts of the current structures is to ensure that we do not have justice or policing by geography; the experience that an individual has in one part of Wales should have a degree of predictability— they should have a similar experience of the police and the criminal justice system whether they are in Flint or Pembroke. I do not know whether that answers the question. My concerns would be about getting the balance right.

Leanne Wood: Can you tell us how the national offender management service will impact on all of this? Do you have any more information on NOMS, as little bits have come out from the Government? Do you know how

probation will be organised in Wales after NOMS comes in? Will there be one, single Welsh probation service that would fit neatly with one unified police service?

Mr Lankshear: The short answer is— [*Interruption.*]

Leanne Wood: I have a couple of other questions.

Janice Gregory: Would you like to answer them individually, as we have plenty of time? Would you like to take them one by one?

Mr Lankshear: Okay. The short answer is that I do not know what the impact will be. A consultation paper is due to be published in relation to the structure of NOMS later today. It has been trailed, and I am sure that people will have seen some of the trailing of that in the press and the media. To get a view on that, it may be better to speak to the director of offender management services for Wales, Carol Bernard, who is housed in an office not a million miles away from here. It is clear that her role will be about commissioning services for offenders and victims from the best people to provide those services. Without primary legislation being introduced in Westminster, that has to be done through the current probation board structure. The short-term answer is to say that structures will not change immediately. If the legislation came in—and I am going slightly off the topic here, but just to brief you—its purpose would be to remove the statutory responsibility for delivering offender services in the community from the current four probation boards in Wales; the responsibility would be passed to the Home Secretary, so that he, through the director of the Offender Management Services office, can commission it from whoever is the best provider. It would take some time for that legislation to be implemented. For the next year or so, the fact is that it will still be for probation services. Thereafter, I go back to what I said in my original presentation that there will be some services that Carol Barnard might feel are best provided on an all-Wales basis, some on the basis of the four sub-regions, and some on the basis of the 22 areas. Again, it would be for her to identify how to get the appropriate level of consistency and quality of that service. I am not sure how helpful that is as an answer.

Janice Gregory: I think that it has raised more questions than it has answered.

Mr Lankshear: That is probably right.

Leanne Wood: I understand your position because there is a lack of information coming from central Government.

Mr Lankshear: If you ask me again tomorrow, the answer might be different.

Leanne Wood: Okay. [*Laughter.*]

Do you have concerns about local intelligence? You mentioned the MAPPA process, but I am also thinking of matters such as youth-offending work,

where there are multi-agency teams. If there was one large centralised police force, would that affect on-the-ground relationships that individual police officers might have with probation officers, for example?

Mr Lankshear: I do not see that it should affect that, provided that there is a sufficiently clear and consistent strategy overarching at whatever level, whether at an all-Wales level or any other level. I do not think that it should affect that, and we must ensure that it does not, because it is that exchange in co-working at the operational front line that is crucial to our communities. Therefore, we must ensure that that is allowed for and that, locally, if it is the basic command unit commander or whoever, there is sufficient authority to make those things happen.

Leanne Wood: My final question impacts on NOMS. You talked about the powers of the Home Secretary. Do you have a view on the devolution of the probation service and the devolution of the police service, and how would that all fit together with the proposals? I do not mean you personally, but I mean as a group of chiefs. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Lankshear: Thank you.

Janice Gregory: That was putting you on the spot.

Mr Lankshear: I was going to plead the fifth amendment then. *[Laughter.]*

I think that there are arguments for saying that, particularly in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government should have a greater input into the work of the probation and police services, because so much of what we do—and by ‘we’ I mean ‘probation’—is inextricably tied up and dependent upon other work streams and funding streams for which you already have responsibility. I am thinking of a number of aspects of health, employment and training and so forth. Whatever happens in terms of NOMS, we need to have a mechanism that ensures that those elements are tied together.

Mick Bates: Thank you for your presentation and the accompanying notes, which were very useful. I do not know whether you want to expand on the fact that you assumed that boundaries of local authorities, for example, will not change. I thought that you gave a wry smile when you said that. Do you want to pursue that at all?

Mr Lankshear: Only to say that I have been around long enough in the public sector to know that nothing is forever. *[Laughter.]*

Mick Bates: I do think sometimes, ‘Let us have some stability and no change’. However, we will not go there. *[Laughter.]*

You made great play of the consistency issue, and, obviously, we agree with that. With common targets, have you seen any correlation between the consistent application of those common targets and the structures that are in control? This whole ‘Closing the Gap’ issue is about structures. What

examples could you give me to show that there is a direct correlation between the structures and achieving those targets in a consistent manner?

Mr Lankshear: There are examples. I have been around in the probation service in England and Wales for many years. The different sectors of the public sector, and even the criminal justice system, often had targets that rubbed against each other. Increasingly, the targets have been set up in such a way as it is in my interest as a chief probation officer to work with other partners, because I cannot achieve my targets on my own. We are interdependent. For example, public protection arrangements, the prolific and other priority arrangements, and youth-offending-team targets can only be achieved through the agencies working together and operating at a level that allows consistent development of policy and practice. I am not sure that I am getting to the detail of your question.

11.40 a.m.

Mick Bates: I appreciate that answer. Partnership working is what we have now, and I am making the assumption that it is reasonably successful. So, the next point is about the geographic dimension that we can bring in. You have explained that all of you work together. So, will a geographic alteration of command structures, as outlined in 'Closing the Gap', improve the consistent delivery of the common targets that you have established by your own partnership working?

Mr Lankshear: I suppose that it has the potential to improve the consistency at strategy and policy levels. At the moment, there are potentially four ways of doing things in the criminal justice system in Wales. My strongly held view is that none of us can afford to lose the co-working and the joining-up work at the local level. Whatever strategic corporate structure overlays the service, we must ensure that there is a joining-up where the delivery happens. I have made it my business to ensure that I can, and do, link with, and can respond to, different needs, emphases and problems in Swansea, Merthyr and so on. We have to ensure that it ties in with any change that is made. I do not think that it is incompatible, but this will take some work.

Mick Bates: You seem to be suggesting that, whatever the national strategic approach and the mission statements that emanate from people up there in the intergalactic space, that does not matter and that the important thing is local delivery and the partnership work. So, if it is four, or one, or six up there, then it does not matter.

Mr Lankshear: In some ways, it does not, as we need to have a degree of consistency because of the issues of natural justice and so on. However, the question that we all have to ask ourselves is at what stage does it become too big and unwieldy for there to be any element of control or accountability that means anything if that structure is going to be viable. I have raised the issues rather than answer the questions. I do not know whether an all-Wales police force would be the right size or too big; I think that other people need to judge that. From the point of view of the probation service, if there were an all-Wales

service, there would be potential economies of scale over some functions. Some issues would be quite unwieldy and difficult to manage coherently, and some of that is about logistics and the geography of Wales.

Mick Bates: I note that 'Closing the Gap', while it argues about the size—with a figure of 4,000 to 6,000—notes that two of the largest forces are poor performers. You seem to be reflecting that in your comments about this being about delivery at a local level.

Mr Lankshear: If that does not work, nothing else matters.

Mick Bates: I agree with you entirely. It seems to me that the whole approach is coming from the wrong end. It starts up there in the intergalactic space when it should be starting with the delivery of services. Do I take it that it will be recorded in the Record of Proceedings that you nodded at that statement?

Janice Gregory: It will now, because you said it.

Mr Lankshear: Your use of terminology has me slightly quizzical—the 'intergalactic' and so on. There is a necessary element that needs to happen at a strategic level, but there is more work that needs to be done on identifying the optimum size of an organisation. Large is not necessarily beautiful.

Mick Bates: You deserve an explanation of my use of the words 'intergalactic space'. The space and the communication between people who write the strategic stuff and the people who deliver it are so big that there is very little recognition of the importance of outcomes at our level.

Finally, do you think that the structural changes will undermine the relationships that have been established with MAPPA and so on, and reduce the effectiveness of the service?

Mr Lankshear: Not necessarily. The relationships and the working systems—certainly in the area for which I have direct responsibility—are sufficiently well embedded that they will be sustained. What threatens the continuity and the achievement of objectives is continued and growing uncertainty about where people belong and what they are part of. It is that uncertainty that I feel—in my organisation and others—is potentially damaging.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, Ian. Even the short time that you have been here has been extremely useful to us while we gather our evidence to present to the Minister. Thank you for your time; it was a pleasure to see you.

Before I close the meeting, which will finish early, I need to mention that the next meeting is an additional one, and will be held on 2 November, at which we will take the last of the evidence. The chief constables, representatives of the Welsh Local Government Association, and the chairs of the police authorities are coming in that day. So, that is on 2 November.

Leanne Wood: Will this be the only agenda item, or will we take other matters as well?

Janice Gregory: It is the only agenda item. Roger and I have discussed the fact that we may slip in the Children and Adoption Bill, and the amendments on that. It will all come to you in an e-mail, and everything will be specific. If Members would prefer to have a brief discussion on it, that is fine, but, if not and if you are happy to do it through e-mail or by chatting to me, then we can do it that way. However, there will be no other item on the agenda—the only item will be with the chief constables and so on.

We have a three-hour slot that morning. Is there anyone else that you can think of? We have finished early today; I have told you that that was because we had a late decline of our invitation and that it was, therefore, too late to put anyone else in at that stage.

Leanne Wood: We have heard a lot from the chiefs in this process, so I would like to hear some more from the indians. Can we ask for representatives of the Prison Officers' Association and of Napo, the probation officers' union, to come to give their views? Their perception may be rather different to that of their bosses.

Janice Gregory: I have already done the timings for the three that are coming on 2 November, but I am sure that we can slot something in, and we can certainly make the offer. Does anyone else have anyone they wish to invite? Our next full meeting is on 16 November. As usual, if you want specific briefings from the Members' Research Service please contact the committee secretariat, and we will do our best to oblige. I think that that is all for today. Thank you all for your attendance, and do not forget the meeting on 2 November.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.48 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.48 a.m.



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfwyio**

**The National Assembly for Wales
The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 2 Tachwedd 2005

Wednesday, 2 November 2005

Adolygiad Polisi: Ailstrwythuro'r Heddlu Policy Review: Restructuring the Constabulary

Janice Gregory: Members will be aware that we have received written statements from this morning's presenters, namely the police authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association and the chief constables.

Following the last meeting, and suggestions from Members, the clerk invited representatives from Unison and the National Association of Probation Officers to give evidence. They were unable to attend today's meeting, but they have made written submissions.

I welcome the police authority representatives and presenters. They are: Councillor Don Evans, the chair of Dyfed-Powys Police Authority; Geraint Price-Thomas OBE, chair of the Gwent Police Authority; Councillor Ian Roberts, chair of North Wales Police Authority; Alan Fry, chief executive, clerk and monitoring officer of South Wales Police Authority; and Jean Wilding, treasurer of Dyfed-Powys Police Authority. Thank you all for taking the time to come to committee this morning, and for your written presentation, which has been circulated to Members. I understand that you, Mr Price-Thomas, will lead on the supplementary to the written evidence, and I invite you to do so now.

Mr Price-Thomas: We are delighted to be here. I was allocated that short straw at a pre-meeting yesterday evening. I am pleased that you have had that written paper, and I apologise on behalf of the police authorities for its late arrival. We have been under some pressure in terms of the time constraints of this review, and there were some local difficulties last week in the context of north Wales. I am sure that my colleague, Ian Roberts, will expand on that later. However, we were anxious that you had a paper that was right up to speed, as it were, and I am pleased that you have been able to circulate it to committee members.

As the Police Authorities of Wales, we welcome your interest in this subject, and welcome the opportunity to provide evidence by way of written and oral submission, particularly in a Welsh dimension. I think there is a great opportunity for us, as part of this major review, to develop a Welsh dimension to the whole exercise. There are opportunities for improving policing throughout the principality, and for bringing together a lot of the loose ends whereby community safety and policing responsibilities can perhaps gel better in the future.

I would like to make a few statements on the concerns that we have as the Police Authorities of Wales—which has been going for some 10 years—surrounding the review and where we are now. The first point relates to the timetable and the haste that appears to be involved in this process. Today, we are 45 days into a 95-day review process, which will take us up to Christmas Eve. As the Police Authorities of Wales, we have concerns about our ability, and that of our colleagues, to deliver an effective review and statement in

terms of Welsh policing within that timescale. We warmly welcome your initiative in trying to seek an extension of time from the Home Secretary, so that we can do a far better job. I was very pleased to be at a meeting of the WLGA council last Friday, where I heard that local government is concerned about the speed and pace of this review, and also has more general concerns about it. I suspect that there will be little extension of time, because it appears to us that there is a determination at central Government, at the Home Office, to deliver a strategic structure of forces throughout England and Wales in the shortest possible timescale.

Therefore, we have concerns at the timetable, which has prevented us as police authorities from providing effective up-to-date engagement with the Welsh public and with our external stakeholders. Given the time constraints, we have not been able to deliver that consultation so far, and you will see from the appendix to the paper that one of the key responsibilities of the four Welsh police authorities is providing that bridge between the police forces and our communities. We very much regret, because of that time constraint, that we have not been able to deliver an effective mode of consultation.

You will note, somewhere in the written paper, that we have plans over the next four weeks to deliver an intensive public consultation exercise. We looked initially at some form of a MORI opinion poll throughout Wales, but we have not, for several reasons, been able to deliver that kind of mechanism. So, over the next four weeks, we will deliver, as best we can, a structure of consultation with the Welsh public, so that we have its views as to these fundamental proposals to change the structure of policing. They are probably among the biggest changes of the last 30 or 40 years, therefore we have concerns, as do many of our partners, about the timetable, and about the pace and the rush to change.

The second issue that we are concerned about is the potential costs of moving from the present structure of four police forces in the principality to, probably, a new structure of strategic forces, be it one or two. We have touched on the prospect of major costs in our paper. However, you will notice that we have added to our team the treasurer and acting clerk at Dyfed-Powys Police Authority, who I hope can perhaps flesh out a little more the implications of potential change as far as the costs of moving to a new structure of policing are concerned, and the effect that the changes could have on the policing precept and council tax levels in Wales.

The other concern that we have, and it is tied in with the aspect of cost and structural change, is the critical need that there must be an effective and efficient structure in place of local and neighbourhood policing. If you are building a house, you do not start with the roof; you have to ensure an effective bedrock below that. We firmly believe, with the driving out until 2008 of neighbourhood policing throughout Wales, that that has to be sustained and protected so that the new strategic dimension can effectively produce an answer to the Government's concerns with the level 2 gap, as it were, in terms of protective service delivery. So, there is a critical need, not only to protect, but to enhance the resources that are available for local and

neighbourhood policing.

Another major concern of our ours, and it is tied in with the consultation mechanism as well, is the need to ensure that, at every level of policing in Wales in the future, there are effective arrangements for governance so that the public and communities can have an appropriate say, a responsibility and an input in policing policy and development as the years unfold. So, we have started, and Alan Fry, our secretary, has placed before you, I believe in appendix B, a model of a potential structure of regional governance arrangements in the principality in terms of a strategic force, whether one, or possibly two. We will have to develop that over the coming weeks before we are in a position to put forward a preferred option.

9.40 a.m.

Finally, we have not, as yet, had an opportunity to address our concerns about the implications of reform for the 12,000 employees in the policing service in Wales at present. We are mindful of our responsibilities as police authorities, as employers, towards our employees, and it is something that we, as the four chairs of the police authorities, are particularly cognisant of and want to develop as the months unfold. The basic message this morning is that we are not yet halfway through the initial process. The pace of change has thrust many responsibilities upon us.

However, in a Welsh dimension—and I also sit on an Association of Police Authorities committee—the experience and information that I am gleaning is that Wales is further down the road towards delivering a model or models in an effective organisational way than they are in the nine English regions. That is a credit to the police forces and police authorities of Wales, because we have voluntarily collaborated to a large extent. We had a framework in place that we were able to put in motion to address this issue. It is a credit to the forces particularly, and to the police authorities that we have that team spirit—and linking in to the WLGA, the Welsh Assembly Government et al—to deliver an effective review as far as the principality is concerned.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much; that was a comprehensive supplementary to your also comprehensive paper. The committee completely understands the issue of timescale, and Members have voiced the same concerns. However, when the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration was asked by the Home Secretary to make known to him the views of the Assembly, we were only too pleased to take up that opportunity. As you said, it is difficult to carry out a comprehensive consultation, and we understand your concerns.

Sandy Mewies: This may be a bit premature, as Ian has not yet stated the north Wales option in full. There is undoubtedly a link between north Wales and Cheshire and Merseyside. I hesitate to say why, but there are obvious reasons why it happens, and the forces work closely with each other. What is your opinion on the fourth option that has been put forward, taking a strategic view? I understood that the link was procedural rather than strategic, and that

it would perhaps be decided by service level agreements. I do not know how that happens. Do all the options except the fourth rule that out?

I am particularly concerned that the north Wales regional element and identity be preserved. That is very important. If the all-Wales option came about and there was a Wales headquarters, is there any reason at all why that should be based in south Wales?

I take your point about community service offices and community beat managers. They work very well indeed in north Wales, but, again, I think that this is a procedural rather than strategic issue. Is there any reason why those should be lost under any of the options that you mentioned today?

Last, but by no means least, you raised the issues of funding, the disparity between Wales and England, and the disparity between forces. Therefore, is this strategic review opportune? Should we be looking at a complete overhaul of the way in which we fund policing in Wales? There is no doubt that the Welsh forces produce better results with less money than some of their counterparts, so is this the time for a complete review of the way in which policing in Wales is funded?

Janice Gregory: We have plenty of time this morning, so if each of you would like to answer, that would be fine.

Mr Price-Thomas: Having lived in Gwent for the past 23 years, of course I am a man of Gwent. However, my mother was from Flintshire, so I feel that I have a certain affinity with the Cheshire and north-west of England logistical issue. It is absolutely right to say that north Wales, and particularly north-east Wales, looks towards Cheshire and the north-west of England. My family on my mother's side ended up in Manchester, Liverpool and Chester, so I am a kind of a human clone in terms of that particular issue. It is absolutely right that the North Wales Police Authority last Friday came to the conclusion that it did and that it had the opportunity of placing that option before the Home Office. As the Police Authorities of Wales, we work as a team, but we are individual authorities in our own right, and it is absolutely correct that the North Wales Police Authority had the opportunity to submit that option. Whether, in the context of the review and the criteria set out, that option will get that far will be interesting to see.

Just to remind you, Chair, and the committee, the options, as they are now on the table, after all the assessments carried out during October, are down to three all-Wales options. The first is that we retain the status quo—that there is no change and the four existing police authorities stay in place. As chairs, we were adamant at a recent meeting with our chief constables on 19 October that, notwithstanding pressure from the Home Office and elsewhere, those were not baseline options, but a true option, and that is our view as of now. So, the no-change option is on the table.

We have come to the view that there is a prospect of having two forces in Wales by amalgamating North Wales with Dyfed-Powys on the one hand, and

Gwent and South Wales—a traditional prospect for amalgamation—on the other. However, we must also concede, in the context of the evaluation that was carried out very professionally by the police forces in Wales, and with stakeholder colleagues, including the Welsh Local Government Association, that the strongest option that came out in terms of the criteria and the evaluation process, was a single police force for Wales. Having said that, we fully accept the right of North Wales to put forward that fourth option, and, as I understand it, the North Wales option is a variation on option 1—the status-quo option—whereby North Wales will explore and evaluate retaining North Wales as a force, but will also develop close partnerships with Cheshire.

That comes back to the point that I made earlier, Chair, namely that the three forces in southern Wales, as of now, have extremely good collaborative arrangements in place. We are familiar with Operation Tarian and Tarian+, the regional asset recovery group, and we carry out work in terms of air support, presently, between South Wales Police and Gwent Police. We are also looking to explore the possibility, with Don Evans, of bringing Dyfed-Powys into that air support mechanism.

This is not only in terms of level 2 issues, but also in terms of back-office arrangements. I did a bit of research, as one does before coming before an august committee such as this, and checked with our back-office people and, in Gwent, we have a tremendous range of collaborative arrangements, not only in a Welsh context, but with the south-west of England; we have about nine arrangements with Devon and Cornwall, three with Dorset, a number with Avon and Somerset, and Thames Valley. There is an ethos and a culture of collaboration to date, but, in the context of this protective services debate, and the concerns at political level post 9/11—and that is fundamental—Government has concerns that, as of now, the service is not fit for purpose, and we are not able to deliver that level. So, I am afraid that whatever voluntary collaboration we have in south Wales, and indeed in north Wales, which has strong collaborative arrangements with Cheshire, that is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of Government.

The difficulty that I believe that North Wales Police will have is this. Quite a useful question-and-answer paper was sent out from the central team that the Home Office has now set up to evaluate the various options that will come before it; I do not know whether you have seen it. One question put was whether forces and authorities could work alone in developing and submitting proposals, and, with your lead, Chair, I will read from that. The Home Office says that it accepts that a very small number of forces may wish to develop and submit proposals on their own. It expects this to be due to exceptional circumstances. Again, forces will be expected to provide evidence that their going-it-alone option can deliver the same or a better outcome as the strategic force option. Forces that will be operating in this way are also expected to engage with, and contribute to, the work of other forces, which will be developing a strategic force option. Forces should not be working in isolation. So, although we, as co-chairs, totally respect, and would support the North Wales line in putting forward the option that it considers is right for its part of the principality, I am indicating, and I think that the chair in North Wales also

understands, that there are constraints and difficulties in delivering that as a final solution. I know that I have not picked up all the questions, but perhaps my colleagues—

9.50 a.m.

Sandy Mewies: Would you mind if I came back to the unanswered questions, because this is the one opportunity that I have to ask them?

Mr Price-Thomas: Yes, of course.

Sandy Mewies: I know that the guidance is that forces can come up with a separate option, though they have to have a very good business case for it. What I was trying to get from you is whether the authorities overall have a favoured option, and I think that your answer to that is 'no'.

Mr Price-Thomas: We do not have one yet.

Sandy Mewies: The other thing that I was asking was whether you see a restraint, or constraint, on any of the options because of the Cheshire question, that is, would any of the other options not work with Cheshire? As I suggested previously, could it be done by service level agreements? I am still interested to know whether you feel that an all-Wales force could only be directed from south Wales. Also, there was the funding issue.

Mr Price-Thomas: In terms of the all-Wales force being centred in south Wales, I do not see the need for that, and it has not been discussed in any event. We are very early in this particular process. However, in terms of modern technology, there is no need for the centre to be in south Wales. This probably is a question best raised later in the morning with my chief constable colleagues.

Sandy Mewies: It will be.

Mr Price-Thomas: Personally, in terms of the technology that is available today, I see no reason for an all-Wales police headquarters, were it to be established, to be in south Wales. There may well be arguments to place it elsewhere, but that is a matter for another time, and, possibly, another audience.

Janice Gregory: I know that not all of the questions have been answered, but I will call in Ian, who is chomping at the bit there, I think.

Mr Roberts: Somewhat.

Janice Gregory: We will return to the other questions later, Sandy.

Mr Roberts: From a north Wales perspective, we have our own identity, as you have in south Wales, but seemingly more so. There has been quite a lot of reaction to the suggestion that we form one strategic force. One of the

issues that Sandy alluded to is whether the four forces in Wales were deemed to do the job of this one force, with a partnership with Cheshire. I take it that that is the way you are looking at it.

Sandy Mewies: I understand that your option is not an amalgamation as such, anyway.

Mr Roberts: It is not.

Sandy Mewies: That is why I would have liked to hear from you first. My understanding is that it is not an amalgamation.

Mr Roberts: It is not an amalgamation.

Sandy Mewies: I wanted to know whether that option would rely on service level agreements, and whether that is what you do now. However, given that there are other options, do you see that service level agreements would not be part of the other options, if that is the way it goes? Like you, I feel that there is a strong linkage in with Cheshire and Merseyside.

Mr Roberts: In terms of the other options, there would be service level agreements with Cheshire. That is obvious; we work with Cheshire now, and collaborate with Cheshire on a number of things. That cannot stop; we cannot be isolated, as we would feel we were. You could not support us in north Wales from south Wales if we had an emergency. That certainly would not happen. So those options would be there and service level agreements would have to be built up. I have no problem with that.

If we are to keep the North Wales force alive, then we have to follow a different option. The option of staying as we are is not an option. We have been told that as a stand-alone force, we do not have a chance. However, we have put an extra word in: 'partnership'. That has not been one that has been identified before, so we might as well use it. Partnership with Cheshire provides another option, and I feel that that option is one that we can go forward on the basis of and make sense of. We would like it scored, particularly against an all-Wales force.

Mr Fry: May I come in here?

Janice Gregory: Yes, certainly, but who is going to answer the question about funding?

Mr Fry: Jean will.

Janice Gregory: Let me call you next, Alan, and then Jean.

Mr Fry: Thanks, Chair, because it is on this point, in a way. The important point to emphasise at the moment is—you mention process or procedure—that this is being taken in phases. The Home Secretary has laid down deadlines and a timetable for us, and at the moment we have just covered off

phase 1, and no police authority in Wales has yet come to a decision on whatever the preferred option might be. North Wales has given a very strong indication of where it wants to lie, but the others have not reached a decision yet. We have just identified the options that are put into this paper. It will not be until the end of November that we will put to our individual authorities where we stand and which way they want to go.

It is right that North Wales is making this point about the collaboration, if you like, across the border, because that is the pattern of criminality and so on, but it is important to point out that this equally applies in southern Wales. I will not say 'south Wales', but southern Wales. In Gwent, south Wales and Dyfed-Powys even, criminals are clearly travelling along the M4 corridor from Birmingham and Bristol and so on. So, the arrangements with Avon and Somerset and Gloucester will also continue. We will not just pull up the drawbridge and remain in Wales.

Janice Gregory: Ian, did you want to make a point?

Mr Roberts: Yes. There was an indication that there was a preferred option in certain wings. There is no preferred option from North Wales at the moment. We have accepted the options put in by the all-Wales board, but we have put an extra option in, which we had to do by the twentieth to have it accepted.

Ms J. Wilding: On the specific issue raised of whether this was an opportunity to look at police funding differently in Wales, currently, police funding is not a devolved matter, it is still managed by the Home Office. At this stage, there is currently a formula review in England for local government generally and for the police element that covers England and Wales. We are currently awaiting the outcome of that consultation. However desirable it may be considered to be to look at a different funding solution for Wales, I cannot see that that is an option in the short term with regard to what we are looking at now.

Catherine Thomas: Sandy has touched on a number of the points that I wanted to raise. However, going back to the options—and I understand what you are saying at this stage, that you are not really in a position to state what the preferred option may be—I would like to know in more detail your views on the options before you. What do you see as the problems and the advantages of each option at this stage? You must have views that you can share with the committee without stating your preferred option.

Mr Evans: On behalf of Dyfed-Powys Police Authority, we accept totally that the main priority is to have the best qualified police service and efficiency. If we are told by the professionals, as we have been, that we are not fit for purpose in relation to level 2 crime, we have to take that on board very seriously. I would say that our main priorities are to maintain the local contact with the public that we pride ourselves on in Dyfed-Powys—and I know that the other force areas are the same—and to ensure that the basic command unit is very strong. We consider that to be the most important element. They are our main concerns. We do not have any level 2 serious matters, and our

priorities are to maintain that local project.

10.00 a.m.

Ms J. Wilding: If I could just add to that, in terms of the Dyfed-Powys position, but representing the Police Authorities of Wales, an issue that we drew attention to in the report, and to which Geraint referred earlier, was that of resources. The current submission at the end of phase 1, for which we had less than a month, makes it quite clear to the Home Office that the objectives that were set out by the Home Secretary, namely to close the gap in respect of level 2 and to deliver the neighbourhood policing objective, will not be delivered without an injection of central resources. The savings that will be achieved by any of the options that we have looked at are not sufficient to offset the additional resources that will need to go into delivering the service that we would all be happy to see. At this stage, it is too soon to try to work out what may come from central resources to meet this additional requirement but, in phase 2, which, effectively, is the work that we have to do in November, we will be seeking to obtain assurances in terms of what part of that additional cost of delivering the enhanced service will be met from central resources, because the balance will have to be picked up by our council tax payers. Before we can have meaningful consultation, we need to have a strong position in order to go forward on that. So, whichever option we look at, we will have concerns about where the additional resources will come from before we can go forward and express a preference, because it is a key issue.

Mr Roberts: I will go through the options; I have them in front of me. We would be limited with the 'no change' option. We would not get any change and we would not progress on level 2 or anything else on that basis. I think that there is an acceptance from all on that.

Having two forces by merging the North Wales and Dyfed-Powys forces and the South Wales and Gwent forces leaves us in north Wales exactly where we were before. There are a large amount of mountains in between us and there are logistical and funding problems, because, again, we do not meet the targets of 4,000. Even if the two forces were put together, we would still be limited to about 3,300 or something like that, which is quite a low figure. So, it just does not meet the criteria.

I will take out the third option, because that is not there. On the option of having a single police force authority for Wales, there would be logistical problems. I think that at the time I said that it would be a logistical nonsense. It would be completely ridiculous. There would be issues around accountability and governance and, mainly, funding, because we would see funding being pulled to where level 2 crime is and, obviously, that would be an area in south Wales, so there would be an impact on basic command units in our area and in everybody else's area if this happened in the way that has been suggested.

Mr Price-Thomas: From a Gwent perspective, we are very much keeping a level head on this so far. We have an open mind about it. The attitude of my members, having seen the papers coming out of the Home Office, is that

when you see an elephant on your doorstep you realise that you have to address the issue. We have had a couple of reports to our police authority and, in fairness to them, my members have embraced the review process. Frankly, we are awaiting further details to go before the full police authority at the end of November. In Gwent, we will be participating, as I say, in a consultation exercise. There has been quite a vociferous local campaign led by the local newspaper to save the force and we can do no wrong at the moment, but it will be interesting to see how things pan out in terms of having a more sophisticated consultation exercise with our local audience. However, I suspect that the majority of people will feel comfortable with what they have and with the service provided by the Gwent police force throughout our area. We are driving forward the neighbourhood policing and community agenda with our chief constable, and I am pleased to say that we more or less have that structure of neighbourhood policing in place in Gwent as of now. I think that this is a matter of biding our time, getting more details in on stage 2 as this process develops and then coming to a preferred choice as an authority, like our colleague authorities, by the end of November.

Mr Fry: I have apologies to make from the outset. I should have conveyed the apologies of the chairman of the South Wales Police Authority, Councillor Ray Thomas. He is sunning himself in Cyprus and, I am sure, enjoying himself.

As I mentioned, from the south Wales point of view, we have not come to a preferred option yet. The three options that are before you have gone to our authority, which has not signalled that it prefers any particular one at present. As Geraint has just said, starting tomorrow, we will be embarking on a full consultation process throughout south Wales, and I have no doubt that that will also happen in the other forces.

In the paper that we are putting out to the public, we have provided a commentary on each of those particular options. That is a very brief commentary, but I think that it is objective as it does not show any form of bias from South Wales Police Authority, because we want the public to inform the decision that the authority will arrive at on 28 November. If you bear with me, Chair, I will just read the comments, because they give a neat summary of each option. So, option 1, as we show it, would be the four forces, which would mean no change. The comments on this option are:

‘Criteria for offering adequate protective services in Wales is not met. Limits scope for future cost and efficiency savings through rationalisation of back-office services. Limits opportunities for sharing information and introducing compatible systems,’

particularly in terms of ICT. However, we also say that it maintains local accountability and identity and that no disruption is caused through restructuring.

In terms of option 2, which means having two forces, the comments are:

‘The minimum criteria for protective services is only met by one force (South

Wales/Gwent). The other merged force (North Wales and Dyfed Powys) would however be capable of offering an improved service compared with the existing provision. Intelligence management would improve by moving from four forces to two, but there would still be the potential for difficulties with sharing of information. Some costs savings should be possible with only two forces in Wales compared to the existing four.'

Also, importantly, we state that this option maintains some local identity and accountability but that it is not as strong as the existing structure.

On the option of having one strategic force, the comments are:

'This option would provide a national police service for the country of Wales, with a significant increase in capacity to provide protective services across the whole of Wales. Ease of sharing of intelligence would be significantly improved with all police officers using the same information systems.'

This option offers the biggest cost savings by not duplicating services across Wales, but there are difficult transport, cultural and geographical communications between north and south Wales. Other comments are:

'Significant start up costs and need to address equalisation of Council Tax levels. Loss of local accountability and identity with strategic Police Authority and Chief Constable being remote from the communities they serve.'

Hopefully, that crystallises or summarises the position.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, Alan. Mick?

Mick Bates: Thank you for your presentation and the paper. First, I would like to pursue the analogy that Geraint gave us about when he went house building and he built the roof first—no, I know that you did not build the roof first. I would like to examine that principle, because it appears to me that the more we hear about this, the more very large strategic issues are being brought out, which a restructuring process actually overlooks in detail. The haste with which this review is being undertaken appears to me to be politically driven and is not based on a fit-for-purpose strategy. So, first, I would like to put it to you that it may be better for us to have a royal commission to sort out all these issues prior to sitting down and saying, 'This is the structure'. I would like to hear the views of each authority on that, because the issues are so grave.

Secondly, I wish to refer to the issue of costs. Jean has mentioned costs previously, and, of course, there is a Home Office grant of around £13.8 million that comes to Wales in the form of a special grant, which assists us—I believe that English forces look at that with some jealousy. However, I would like to hear more about the point that you made, Jean, that we do not yet have a full business plan on which we can base any judgment about the options in front of us. The costs are hazy. There is a suggestion that there may be a cost saving in option 2, but the scale of that saving is unclear. I wonder whether

you could cast some light on that.

Finally, on the consultation process, due to the haste, I am concerned that the democratic process that you represent is actually being undermined. I wonder how you are going to overcome that in your various areas. We have already heard from Alan that he has a paper prepared for consultation, and I wonder, in the interest of scrutiny, whether whatever papers that you have could be given to others to see what consultation you are doing and what recommendations you would make in terms of consultation, given that the Home Secretary, I think, wishes to make an announcement on 23 December.

Janice Gregory: Let me ask Jean to come in on the second specific question that Mick asked.

10.10 a.m.

Ms J. Wilding: I hope that I did not say that the costs were hazy at this stage. The challenge for phase 1—work that was carried out in October—was to deliver a short list of options that would be appropriate for Wales. To identify those options, an outline business plan and an initial look at costs had to be undertaken. As we say in the paper, those costs were produced, but the assumptions regarding both the costs and the savings were broad due to that initial timescale. During November, we need to look closely at those assumptions and at the detail of the figures for all options to ensure that we are comfortable with them. It was a very detailed exercise that was based on those broad assumptions. It emerged that, for each of the three costed options that are in this document, regardless of which option you look at, although savings could be achieved—more savings if you look at the one strategic force—they were outweighed by the additional costs of meeting level 2 and the neighbourhood policing. In phase 2, we will tell central Government that we have delivered in phase 1 our options in terms of delivering what was asked for, but there are additional resource requirements, and we need to know what the input from the central pot will be, so that we can consider the options further. That is where we are in terms of the overall costing. Does that answer your question?

Mick Bates: It does. I would like to ask one further question. You said that you undertook a detailed study of the cost analysis in October—

Ms J. Wilding: Detailed work was carried out, but on broad assumptions regarding both costs and savings. In terms of those costs and savings, the parameters that were set by the Home Secretary regarding the submission at the end of October asked us to produce the outline costings based on the assumption that all the set-up costs would be incurred in year one, that is, 2007-08. It was also assumed that the savings that would accrue would also do so from year one. We are concerned, as treasurers of police authorities, about the reasonableness of that assumption. That had to go forward for this case because that was the parameter set for us. During November, we will ask the team that produced this work to give us the figures on the assumption that, perhaps, the savings will not be realised until year two or year three,

because that will certainly have an effect on the initial costs and the kind of money that we would need for a transitional phase.

Mick Bates: This raises a series of questions regarding the amount of capital necessary to put all of this in place—someone mentioned IT systems, which are always problematic. Does the detailed analysis go as far as the capital requirement for each of the options?

Ms J. Wilding: Yes, the assumptions have been made in respect of IT systems. A whole range of systems would be needed for each of these options. As I said, the assumptions are fairly broad at the moment, and those will be worked up. However, we feel that they were sufficient to inform the stage that we have to get to by the end of October.

Mick Bates: On the financial point, there has been much discussion about these costs and the impact on council tax, which, as you are aware, is a sensitive issue. What is your view about taking an average figure of council tax and assessing the impact of each option on the level of council tax in Wales?

Ms J. Wilding: It is a little too early to make that statement, although we have flagged up that significant additional central resources would be needed. If those additional resources did not come from central Government, then there would be a substantial impact on council tax levels if the cost had to be met solely by council tax payers in Wales.

Janice Gregory: I am sure that the Welsh Local Government Association will have a view on that when Steve comes to the table later on.

Mick Bates: Finally, on the financial issue, could you give us an indication of the level of funding that is needed?

Ms J. Wilding: Because we still have the three costed options and the one that has not been costed, we are looking at a net additional cost of between £47 million and £57 million per year for the full implementation of this system, which would effectively be in 2008-09, when the neighbourhood policing programme is fully rolled out. That represents 8.9 per cent of our current budgets. If all of that fell on council tax, it would be a very significant increase. At this stage, I do not think that it is reasonable to assume that it will all fall on council tax. It is certainly something that we will be pursuing during this next month.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, Jean. Could you answer Mick's first question, if you can remember it? I am happy to ask Mick to repeat the question, to put him on the spot.

Mr Price-Thomas: There is no need to repeat it. It was a question relating to the desirability of a royal commission or equivalent. Personally, my answer would be 'yes'. With the largest change to policing structures and organisations since the Police Act 1964, in the normal course of events you

would expect something akin to a royal commission or equivalent to fully evaluate, investigate and analyse it. The difficulty, as we have hinted throughout, is that there is a political imperative with the need to bridge the level 2 gap. This has emerged from the O'Connor paper. There is a political drive and it is interesting in terms of the pace of change.

I can indicate that I understand that the central team at the Home Office, which has received all of the options from the nine regions of England and the Welsh national options, is briefing Ministers tomorrow afternoon on the likely way ahead. By this time next week, we, as the four Welsh police authorities, will have already received central team responses to our initial submission of options. You can tell that there is dynamic and a pace of change which is—to cut across your third question—the element of democratic involvement. The consultative process is putting us in tremendous difficulty. Alan Fry has done a tremendous amount of work here on our behalf as honorary secretary of the Police Authorities of Wales. In a south Wales context, he has delivered a package of consultative processes which we are adapting and applying to our different parts of Wales. I am sure that we would gladly share that information and the material that has gone out with your committee, Chair.

Janice Gregory: That would be most useful. Thank you, Geraint.

Mick Bates: Chair, would—

Janice Gregory: I am sorry, Mick. It is always fatal for me to say at the beginning that we have plenty of time; we are now very much constrained for time. Unless anyone has a burning desire to add anything to Geraint's comments, I will call Mark Isherwood.

Mark Isherwood: In respect of costs, thank you for giving us the objective figure which you have just identified. I agree with you, wholeheartedly, that looking at almost any precedent in terms of mergers and amalgamations, you will not get the savings in the first year. Even the first two or three years, possibly, could be ambitious. It can often take a decade for those full efficiencies to work into the system and for the new ways of working and new human resource aspects to bed in. Therefore, I think that the costs of restructuring have to be considered in the short term as well as the longer term costs that you refer to. Where do you think that that funding will come from, assuming that we do not get the savings in the first year? Will we be looking at precepts? Looking at the range of precepts between the four forces, are we talking about a potential levelling up exercise or, conceivably, could those four—particularly North Wales, which has the highest precept—be required to drop to a lower, compromised level? What impact could that have on service delivery?

Moving on from cost, one of the comments that Geraint made was that there must be effective arrangements for governance at every level of policing in Wales. If there is an amalgamation, and looking at the way in which ambulance services have developed, with a national trust but with a regional structure, are you therefore looking at some form of governance at a regional

level? Do you feel that we should, at that level, retain some form of 'top cop' accountable, not just to you or the new authorities, but to the public at large?

Again, with regard to the cross-border aspect and the North Wales proposals, in which I am interested as someone who lives in north-east Wales, how would a close partnership arrangement differ from the collaboration that you have already identified? Are you talking about federation by another name? How would you see this model differ from the current close co-operation which has to exist? Clearly, crime knows no border between north Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside.

Finally, perhaps the most important point is the impact on crime, which is what this is all about. I have the latest Home Office figures here for recorded crime showing quite a range of different results in different categories across the four police forces. According to these figures, since devolution—which is a good cut-off point—to 2004-05, the variation is an overall fall of 8 per cent within the South Wales authority to an overall increase of 31.81 per cent in Dyfed-Powys. Are these figures being recorded differently, or, if you are recording on the same basis, how do we reconcile those differences in performance?

10.20 a.m.

Mr Price-Thomas: There was a point on finance, which I will gladly defer elsewhere.

Janice Gregory: I thought that you might do that. I will ask Jean to answer that point, and then we will move on to the other questions.

Ms J Wilding: As I understood it, there were two parts to the question on resources. The first was the question of where the funding for the set-up costs will come from. We are as anxious as you are to establish this, in terms of what the Home Office has in mind with regard to any initial funding. We have received no indication yet as to whether that is going to be funded in any way. To my mind, we need to pursue that in November, rather than speculate what additional council tax that may generate at this stage. We would, obviously, be very concerned if, by the end of November, we do not have significant assurances in terms of what funding is likely to come for this exercise, because that will make it very difficult for police authorities to evaluate which option, if any, makes sense in terms of going forward. So, we will be pressing for that.

On the second point, in terms of council tax, I would remind you that we have three costed options, and a fourth option identified by the North Wales authority, with no preference stated at this stage. If there were one strategic force for Wales, with the substantial differences, there would be more issues around equalisation than with some of the other options. I would suggest that that is something for us to look at in detail during November for phase 2. I will leave it at that.

Mr Price-Thomas: In terms of the regional dimension and this critical issue of governance arrangements, I would refer the committee, Chair, to the appendix to our paper, 'Connecting Policing to Communities—A Model for Wales'. I refer to this as the Fry model, which Alan has been working on for a number of weeks. In an all-Wales sense, we recognise that if a strategic force was deemed to be the solution to future policing requirements in Wales, we would certainly consider that there is a need for a regional tier of governance, so that a bridge is provided between that strategic force and authority and the local basic command unit and neighbourhood policing arrangements. So, we are certainly minded to suggest at this stage that if there will be one strategic force for the principality, then, given the varied nature of Wales, there needs to be a regional connotation to this. I was pleased to be at a meeting of the WLGA council last Friday—and I am sure that Steve will expand on this—at which the council agreed to move down the road of establishing a regional committee structure in the principality. That is the strength that we have, and the first point that I made was about the potential that we have to deliver a Welsh dimension to this exercise. There are great strengths in that, and, at this stage, we would certainly ask you—and I think that we have in the written paper—to seriously consider adopting this model. Perhaps Alan would like to add a little to that.

Mr Fry: I have just one point to make, as I know that time is short and that a number of these points will be pressed by the WLGA and the chief constables. The important point in terms of governance and accountability—this is in the paper, but I would like to emphasise it—is that the word that we are getting from the Home Office at the moment is that if we do move to one strategic police authority for Wales, then it is likely to be modelled on a typical current police authority. In other words, those 72 police authority members that Wales currently has will come down to 19. The nub and rub of that will be having, on that basis—and you have rightly been raising these concerns with regard to council tax and the budget—only 10 councils represented on the police authority. We have 22 local authorities in Wales, and 12 of those would not have any say in the precept and the budget setting. I cannot see that as being right or acceptable.

Mr Roberts: To answer the question about what Cheshire would have and whether it would be federal, I do not think that any of us know what 'federal' is the moment, but I am talking about partnership, and, hopefully, everyone will have some sort of understanding in that regard. Initial discussions are taking place. We need to save some money somewhere, and, whatever happens, we need to bring more into level 2, so that would mean some collaboration on back-room staff and so on. However, as far as North Wales and Cheshire are concerned, collaboration is already going on in an operational sense, so there will not be a lot of difference there—there could be odds and ends each way, but that is going on already. Back-room staff, human resources training, and firearms, or whatever, are the kinds of things that we should be talking about, but, again, I stress that these are initial discussions with Cheshire, and I do not know at the moment whether Cheshire wants to play the game; it is certainly in the pot, but I do not know whether it will play the game fully.

In addition, what we are trying to put against all this is that we have a scoring mechanism and we can put that forward as a case. In the end, if we have not scored it ourselves, we do not know what we are doing, and if a one-force Wales comes out better than us, then we must think about going down that road, but I do not think, in this case, it will score better. As I say, the logistics, the geography, the culture and everything else scores highly in North Wales, and bringing our links with Cheshire into it must make a difference as far as the scoring mechanism is concerned. So, that is where we are coming from at the moment; they are initial discussions, and I do not know where they are going.

Janice Gregory: Don, did you want to make any comment on Mark's questions?

Mr Evans: I am grateful for the opportunity to add our concerns about the cost of the whole process, and, indeed, at a meeting of our finance committee yesterday, I was given a mandate to please ensure that I mentioned our concerns about from where the finance is going to come for this whole, expensive project, because we feel that it would be a great burden on taxpayers, and until we know specifically what the Government is going to come up with by way of capital money, we will remain in a no-win situation.

Mr Price-Thomas: On the issue of the impact upon crime levels that any potential changes might bring about, I respectfully suggest, Chair, that that question is probably more appropriately addressed to our Association of Chief Police Officers colleagues at 11.30 a.m..

Janice Gregory: As Sandy has said, everything will be on the table for that presentation.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You have all referred to the fact that this whole discussion is being politically driven and it is to do with level 2 crime, but, for the majority of the public, the important things are the protective services and the neighbourhood policing that the police offer, of which I am well aware, living in the Dyfed-Powys area. You referred to the financial implications and the possible changes in structures, but what about the human resources? In order to carry out those protective services and the neighbourhood policing, what are we talking about in terms of numbers? Are we talking about increases in the number of policemen and policewomen?

Mr Price-Thomas: This is something that we have to work upon, now that the options are with us in our initial stage 1 during October. Those options are in, and, by next week, we will have a response from the Home Office as to the likely way forward in a Welsh context. I think that it is at that stage that this critically important, and highly responsible, question must be addressed in some depth.

Janice Gregory: It is a concern. Ian?

Mr Roberts: Our local services and neighbourhood policing are at such a

high level in north Wales that we would not want to lose them from the position that we are in at present. I think that we are only about 50 short of having community policemen serving every ward in north Wales. We do not want to lose that, and a paper was put before us last Friday which suggested that quite a number of extra police officers needed to be put in place to come up to the level 2 services that we need.

Ms J Wilding: In terms of the question on resources, as far as the outline business plan is concerned, the assumption is that more officers would be needed in the costed options to deliver level 2. What is also costed in there is the delivery of the neighbourhood policing programme, which involves significant additional police community support officers being in place by 2008-09. So, we are talking about additional resources at the local level to deliver that.

10.30 a.m.

Janice Gregory: No-one else has indicated that they wish to speak, so that brings your part of the presentation to an end. Thank you all very much for very frank and in-depth answers to the in-depth questions that you were asked. As I have said, we, as a committee, understand the issue about time constraints, which also apply to us, because we have to get to the position of a Plenary debate on this review in early December. I understand the situation, and, as Chair, I take your point about the fact that you have just concluded phase 1 and are moving into phase 2.

Would you pass on to the committee any further evidence and information that you would like to share? I am sure that the committee members would agree with that request, as I am also sure that they would like to see the results of the consultation, issues about finance and the Home Office response to the very pointed questions that Paul will be asking. They will be of interest to the committee members. I do not want to overburden you with having to send information on, but I can then circulate it to the committee members, and it can form part of the debate in December.

Mr Price-Thomas: We are more than content to do that, Chair.

Sandy Mewies: When you look again at the costings and the business planning for each option, could we have copies of that? I think that that would be the most useful financial tool that we could have.

Janice Gregory: Yes, we would like to see all the finances. [*Laughter.*] Not your finances, as such, but all the issues surrounding the finances. It has been evident, this morning, from your comments and those of committee members that that is a source of concern for this committee. So, could you send whatever you feel is relevant?

Mr Price-Thomas: We will do our best.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much, and thank you for taking the time to

come to committee today.

Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.32 a.m. a 10.43 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.32 a.m. and 10.43 a.m.

Janice Gregory: Welcome back. I remind you all that, if you turned on your pagers, telephones or BlackBerry devices during the break, to turn them off now. The second part of this morning's evidence-taking session is with the Welsh Local Government Association. I am delighted to welcome to committee Ann Jones, who is Chair of the Local Government and Public Services Committee. Ann said earlier that we have never seen her so quiet. Mick cannot see you, Ann, so that is how quiet you have been. Ann is here because the Local Government and Public Services Committee has an interest in the question-and-answer session, so she is here to listen, especially to the answers that we will receive. I am also delighted to welcome an old friend, in the nicest sense of the word 'old', Steve Thomas, who is the director of the Welsh Local Government Association, and Naomi Alleyne, who is the head of equalities and social justice at the WLGA.

Thank you for your paper for today's evidence gathering. There were several questions in the previous part of this session that touched on council tax. I felt, as Chair, and I know that Members agreed, when we drew up the list of attendees to the committee meeting, that it was vital for us to have representation from the WLGA on how it views the restructuring of the constabulary. Steve, do you want to give a preamble to your presentation?

Mr Thomas: I do not particularly want to repeat the points made by the police authorities, but I will stress a couple of messages. The timescale is lunatic, and everybody knows that. We are working, however, in a context set by the Home Office, and trying to make the best of a bad job in terms of the timescales. The other thing that I would stress is that the WLGA council discussed the options on Friday and endorsed the three options, which are no change, the two-force option and the single-force option. We did not endorse the North Wales-Cheshire partnership option because it was not available to us. I must also say that there would be some discomfort on the part of some of our membership about the North Wales-Cheshire option because many in north-west Wales feel that that is not the way forward, when it comes to individual local authorities. I hope, in one sense, that the no-change option facilitates the North Wales option with regard to our views. We could not, as of Friday, choose a preferred option—we did not expect to. However, we will report back to the WLGA co-ordinating committee in November; whether we agree on a preferred option or not, there are many issues in here that we must debate at length.

From our point of view, we see this as a fundamental issue. It is also fundamental from your point of view because, although you may not be aware of it, you have put up an alternative model, and it is called 'Making the Connections'. You have put in place a vision for public services in Wales that is not about structural change to bring about reform, but is about voluntary collaboration to bring about reform. Therefore, in one sense, you have

'Making the Connections' versus the Home Office. The collaborative model is interesting and has been considered with regard to police reform, but the Home Office view is that the collaborative model does not move fast enough. Your view, as an Assembly Government—the First Minister has stated this publicly—is that all other devolved public services in Wales have five years to get their act together with regard to voluntary collaboration. Therefore, you can compare these two models as you go along because you will have one based on structural change and another based on voluntary collaboration. It will be an interesting social experiment for us all.

The other thing that I would say, with regard to this process, is that we in the association are grateful to police authorities in Wales and the police team, led by Deputy Chief Constable Paul Wood, for engaging us throughout this process. I was present at the Llangoed Hall meeting at which officers from police staff associations, the commanders of basic command units and heads of service were present to undertake an organisational assessment. I can vouch for the integrity of the process. I think that the police, that day and throughout the process, have gone about evaluating the options in a professional and rigorous manner.

Option 4, which was known as the 'horseshoe' option, which was the rest-of-Wales police force and South Wales Police on its own, was dropped subsequent to that evaluation, but the three options that were supported by us and the Police Authorities of Wales remain in place. In terms of the organisation and evaluation—and I think that the chief constables will make this point later—the no-change option failed to meet the baseline test. Part of the reason for that was down to the scoring criteria, but also to the fact that the police force structure for England and Wales, with 43 police forces, has been in place for 30 years. I think that it is an outdated structure and we have to accept that.

The other thing that I would say with regard to the O'Connor report is that it contains some marvellous assumptions about 4,000 being the optimum size for a police force. O'Connor tries to justify that, but I think that that number is interesting. There is some analysis behind it, but it is inevitably a subjective view—why not 3,500 or 3,000? You could argue for any number that you chose. Since the Scottish Executive is not pursuing it, it does not necessarily make it the right number, does it?

10.50 a.m.

On the argument that the status quo is not an option, I know that Mick is a great fan of Bob Dylan, and, in *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, Bob makes the point that you do not need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. Change is afoot here, and I almost sense a *fait accompli* in that a single force clearly presses all the right buttons in terms of the evaluation criteria, and will be scored highly on the methodology that has been employed. It will score highly in any case; when it comes to economies of scale, the merger of back-office support services and elements such as protective services, that clearly outscored every option that day. That is something that you must take into

account in terms of your evaluation, because it did not just outscore the other options—it blew them out of the water.

As an association, we will be asking for more time—the timescales are ludicrous. We will be getting our members to come forward with their own views from individual authorities. Individual authorities have not yet had the time to really consider this. I know that many have taken it into reports this month. We are looking to ensure—and Naomi will speak on this—the integrity of basic command unit structures. Quite frankly, Joe and Josephine Public do not give a damn about strategic, regional or whatever type of police forces you put in. What they really care about are the basic command units, the police on the ground and the local community safety agenda. From our point of view, that is absolutely sacrosanct. The boundaries of the basic command units are sacrosanct, and Naomi will touch on that point.

We also want to ensure—and this goes back to the last point that Alan Fry made with regard to the local government input—that it is essentially a local government service. We have a voice on all policy authorities, which are the strategic bodies that set the budgets and the direction for the forces. To see any diminution of local authority representation on the authorities would be totally unacceptable to us. The idea that 22 councils set council tax levels and yet there is no representative on the strategic police authority from all councils is frankly ludicrous. While 43 police authorities may seem to be a somewhat large number, it is no larger than some of the smaller unitary authorities in terms of representation, and we should be relaxed about it.

If we choose the single-force option, we also need a regional structure to underpin that to ensure that there is a regional presence in Wales, which is absolutely key to the way in which we go forward.

Janice Gregory: Naomi, you wanted to pick up on some of the issues that Steve mentioned.

Ms Alleyne: I have just a couple of points. Our members discussed this issue at the council meeting last Friday, and there were a number of issues of concern that they wanted to ensure were reported to committee, and which underpins any discussions around this issue. Steve has touched on the first point, which is about maintaining the coterminosity between basic command units, community safety partnerships and local authorities. Within Wales, good relationships have been established at this level, and they are proving to be delivering in terms of reducing crime and disorder, and also dealing with wider community safety issues. Our members are keen to ensure that these structures, which would offer some stability while ever-larger changes were taking place, underpin, and are key factors stressed in, any feedback around the different options.

One authority has also come up with an idea, building on the issue around how large the strategic police authority may be, of the possibility of each basic command unit having a statutory board, which would perform a scrutiny role in respect of the BCU's performance. It would look at how the unit and its

commander was performing, and ensure that there is local representation from all local authorities, community councils and other stakeholders within the board at BCU level. So, different options are available in terms of the governance and the accountability arrangements that could be looked at in terms of any preferred option that goes forward.

Neighbourhood policing was touched upon by the police authorities, particularly from a local authority perspective. It is a commitment that the WLGA has made in its manifesto not only to support the roll-out of neighbourhood policing, but also to look at it as a neighbourhood policing partnership model, which would give an additional dimension. It would ensure that the opportunity for tackling local issues and local priorities happens at that level. So, there is a commitment from the Home Office to ensure that it does not affect other reform agendas but, again, I think that we need to stress that neighbourhood policing is starting to deliver where it has been piloted. North Wales Police mentioned the work ongoing there and we would want to ensure that that is maintained.

Going back to the basic command units, members were keen to ensure that any feedback for the Home Office stresses that funding for BCUs is ring-fenced and enhanced over time and there have been discussions around the costings of this and, particularly, the role of BCUs and the need to enhance the funding that they have to deliver at that local level.

The last point picks up on feedback from the police authorities this morning, namely that our members felt that any structure that is put in place needs to have clear communication and consultative links with local authorities, ensuring that they can undertake their role of representing local communities. Those were points that members wanted to stress in any discussions that take place.

Janice Gregory: Thank you both very much. I will take questions from Sandy and Catherine, then Rhodri Glyn and Mick.

Sandy Mewies: Steve, funding is an issue and the Welsh Local Government Association must have some concerns about that. Police authorities have done an initial costing but I am slightly concerned that, as we heard this morning, that can change when they start looking in more detail or with more knowledge at the next options. How difficult do you think having a single authority would be in terms of the way in which the precept is levied differently now? How do you think that that could be handled? Have you looked at that in any way?

Mr Thomas: I would make two points on that. First, if you recall, Sir Michael Lyons gave evidence to the Local Government and Public Services Committee. There is a debate on the future of the police precept. Lyons is due to report next year and it will be interesting to see what his observations are. So you must bear that in mind in terms of your deliberations.

A national precept is clearly possible but there are ranges in terms of the

current precepts that would require a levelling up or a levelling down. In the evidence from the police authorities in Wales, you have the bottom precept, namely that for south Wales, which is £120 per annum, and the top precept, namely that for north Wales, which is £158 per annum. The good council tax payers of Wales have taken the view in recent years that they do not like their council tax going up very much and they quite rightly fail to make a distinction between the police precept and the council tax; they see them as interchangeable. The prospect of the council tax going up on the back of police reorganisation would again be unacceptable. We would hope, for example, that if the fourth option of a single force were the way forward, while I do not want to get dewy eyed about savings in the short term, in the longer term, we would see a police precept that would be set at a medium level across Wales. In one sense that would provide some assurance to some of the Welsh authorities because it would be a standard precept across Wales and it would allow greater effectiveness and certainty in the local authority budgeting process. So, there are some advantages. The disadvantages, however, clearly centre on cost. Levelling up or levelling down will be an issue for us all.

Sandy Mewies: May I raise a couple of other issues?

Janice Gregory: Very quickly.

Sandy Mewies: There has always been this issue about the public not differentiating between the police precept and the council tax precept. In people's minds, that is the bill that they pay. I do not know whether you feel that something ought to be done about that or if there is anything that can be done about it.

You touched on the north Wales option and Cheshire. Could you outline what objections might arise? I know that you have not been able to discuss it in full—none of us have. The other thing that we have not talked about today, except to say what a good thing it is, is neighbourhood policing, community beat managers and so on. Have you looked at the implications for personnel in that? We are told that, contrary to what some people might think, jobs may be lost rather than gained in this. Have you looked at the implications of that for local areas?

11.00 a.m.

Mr Thomas: To answer your last question first, the implications of that are absolutely fundamental. What we have submitted in our evidence is a clear demand for the basic command unit funding not only to be ring-fenced at its current level, but to be enhanced into the future. You cannot talk about an agenda that is about pushing resources into the frontline and take money away from basic command units. That would be ludicrous. To be fair, all the senior police officers whom I have spoken to not only subscribe to that view, but would like to see more resource at that level.

Regarding the north Wales-Cheshire link, we have not had a chance to

discuss it, but what would seem to be difficult to me in terms of the link is—and let us put our cards firmly on the table—that the National Assembly may want to have the police devolved in future. That is an option that the Welsh Local Government Association would actively consider supporting. We do not have a position on it, but we would be interested in that debate. It is not going to happen in the next five or 10 years, but I suspect that it will happen.

If you were to have a statutory arrangement with Cheshire, that would be problematic. We are also subject to two separate finance systems, and your Ministers in Westminster are far more prone to cap police funding than Welsh Ministers are. Would you be in a position, for example, if north Wales and Cheshire set a very high budget, whereby the Cheshire end was capped and the north Wales end was not? I would also be fascinated to see Cheshire's Welsh language scheme, which would be another issue that it would obviously have to take on board.

So, there are a range of issues there, and they are just the tip of the iceberg. I think that it would be very difficult to cross that border. For once, on this one, I think that the Home Secretary is absolutely right. There are some real and significant issues in terms of crossing the border. However—and all due respect to Councillor Ian Roberts, who is pushing this very strongly—that is not to rule out a collaborative agenda that does not involve a formalised merger. Clearly, you could do that under the current situation.

Sandy Mewies: That is an operational matter.

Mr Thomas: Absolutely.

Catherine Thomas: Thank you for both presentations. Steve's in particular contained some very interesting comments, especially in reference to 'Making the Connections'.

The question that I wish to ask you is similar to that which I asked the authorities. I understand that you have not reached a preferred option yet, but you have touched upon your views, especially on the first option and the one-force option. Can you give a bit more information now in relation to what you see as the pros and cons of each option? I do not think that you have really touched much on the two-forces option.

Mr Thomas: Again, the chief constables will know this better than I, but in terms of the scoring of the options, the organisational assessment was undertaken on a number of factors, most notably capacity, capability, geography, identity and so on. Geography and identity did not have a weighting that was as high as the other two. Quite frankly, even if they had a weighting that was as high as the other two, that still would not have negated the fact that the single police force option would have scored the highest in terms of the criteria set out.

With regard to your question, Catherine, I think that there are some real difficulties with any change option. In 1996, I was a reorganisation manager

for Caerphilly County Borough Council, and we were sent on courses and taught not to break down with laughter when we were told that no costs would be incurred as a result of reorganisation.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: It is cost neutral.

Mr Thomas: Absolutely. In particular, the use of the phrase ‘seamless transfer of service’ was the cause of great mirth for us. There is bound to be a cost. Take the basics of changing livery and logos, for example; with all these things there is a cost. My understanding of the options undertaken, particularly when it comes to accountancy mechanisms, such as net present values, is that the short-term cost is there, and the Home Office, if it wishes to do this, will have to meet that cost and would have to do it, I suspect, through additional grant funding, because you cannot put this onto the council tax. There should, however, in the medium and long term, be savings on the single-force option and the two-force option.

The no-change option has no costs in one sense, but there must be costs associated with not doing anything. However, at the same time, there must be a greater level of collaboration on the no-change option; there must be a situation where the forces themselves look to set in place centres of excellence, so that, in one sense, we could see a short-term saving. However, whether or not it would produce the type of effectiveness and efficiency that you desire, both in your case and in that of the Home Office, is highly debatable. Level 2 may not be such an issue for Welsh police forces as it is for some of the English police forces. However, it clearly is a big issue and policing and police policy is drifting in that direction. If responsibility for the police were devolved to you and you were told that your level 2 capacity and capability was not up to the job, you would be in deep trouble.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you both for your evidence. Some of your remarks were very illuminating and I would not disagree very much with what Steve has said about the cross-border partnerships and their financial implications. The only thing that I would disagree with is that it might not take 10 years to devolve the powers for responsibility over the police force to the Assembly.

On the evaluation criteria, we all know that this is politically driven. It is driven by level 2 policing—you create the criteria to get the equation to get the answer that you want. That is how the process works. However, you referred to the Scottish model and the difference there. I know that Scotland’s situation is totally different because it has a different legal system, quite apart from anything else. However, I would be interested, if you have that information, to know how things are going to pan out in Scotland. Is level 2 not an issue in Scotland?

Mr Thomas: I think it is, but there is a different philosophy in terms of the organisation of the police force in that area, so, as I say, the O’Connor report applies to England and Wales. He has set criteria that you must have 4,000 officers with 2,000 personnel alongside them. He has evaluated that as a

model and it seems robust to me, but I am sure that if you got a consultant in, you could also get a consultant to evaluate a different type of model. However, at the same time, there is a common-sense dimension to this argument. I should have given apologies on behalf of councillor Bob Bright—our community safety spokesperson—who wanted to come along today. Bob has been very robust in recent years in talking about the Gwent police force and its strategic capacity. It cannot do some of the things that the larger forces can. The south Wales force has been very active in terms of its ability to get Home Office grants in place—in the way that some of the other forces cannot—because of its size and scale.

This is a silly anecdote, but I will quote it: I worked for one of the largest local authorities in Wales and we were surrounded by some of the smallest in Wales. We could do things in the larger authorities that some of the small authorities could not because we had the capacity and capability to do them. There are some real benefits when it comes to scale and economies. That is not to argue that big is beautiful, but it is a clear and objective recognition, and I think the police reached a similar conclusion, that there must be some tangible benefits to the merging of forces or having a single force. That is almost an objective statement. However, the problem is that if you are expecting savings in the short term, as local government proves, I doubt that you are going to get them, because they are more medium to long term.

Mick Bates: Thank you for your presentations. You made reference to Bob Dylan, of course, and I cannot resist picking that up. ‘Subterranean Homesick Blues’ is from the album *Bringing It All Back Home* and we all realise that, in the long term, control and power have to be here in the Assembly, so thank you for that, Steve. The analogies could go on, Chair.

Janice Gregory: Not with me in the chair.

Mick Bates: The word ‘lunatic’ was also well-placed.

There are two serious issues here: one is to do with the costs and we just heard from Jean Wilding, treasurer to Dyfed-Powys Policy Authority, that business planning so far has projected an extra requirement of possibly £47 million to £50 million. What processes are taking place for that information to be shared with the WLGA, for example, so that, when discussions take place up to this critical announcement, you are in a position to understand the financial implications of ‘Closing the Gap’. I am not convinced, at the moment, that there is enough robust financial information, and I would like to hear your views about that.

11.10 a.m.

Naomi mentioned the concept of coterminousness. There are some places, like Dyfed-Powys, where not all services are coterminous. Can you expand on what you see as a strategic view for possibly all blue-light services? Is it the WLGA’s long-term aim to bring all of these services together, possibly physically, or is it an IT command structure that you are aiming for when you

mention coterminosity?

Ms Alleyne: In terms of coterminosity, members are keen to ensure that the structures that are in place are maintained. In the appendix of Alan's evidence, which looks at the regional committees, initial discussions have focused around following the three fire and rescue service boundaries. We are not looking to bring all emergency services into an all-Wales structure at this time. That is not something that is currently being discussed or considered. The need to bring more consistency to the structures that are used—again, changing some of the initial structures—particularly around the regional agenda, is something that would underpin that, hence the wish to ensure that what is already in place, and what works, is maintained. The other option would be a regional structure that reflects the police-force boundaries as they stand now. We feel that that would reinforce some of the issues and concerns. Therefore, the fire and service boundaries structure is being considered at the moment, and there have not been discussions about trying to change that structure. The fire and rescue service is keen to maintain its boundaries.

Mr Thomas: In terms of costs, the police have made a good fist of getting together a model that stands up to scrutiny in the time available. At the same time, I do not think that anyone would claim that, within a period of around two months, you can get a model in place that is robust and rigorous and which answers all of the questions; it is not possible. We are obviously deeply interested in the finance processes, and we want to ensure that the WLGA has a full part to play in this. I can do nothing but praise the police team on this, as deputy chief constable Paul Wood and his team have sought to involve us at every stage in the discussion on police structures. I sat in on a very honest discussion at Llangoed Hall, where there were members not only of the south Wales force, but of all forces. They were debating, very honestly, options that would affect their future in a very radical way. It was not about protectionism or about having to keep the current structure; they were using the model available to try to come forward with a valid evaluation. I think that they did that. I pay tribute to them. I thought that what they did was very good.

The cost models are the reason that we need an extension; it will be difficult to evaluate. However, in 1996, local government hired Touche Ross and told the company to come up with a model that showed cost savings, which it did. It is possible to do things. This will cost money. The Home Office must accept that, if it wants this, there will be a short-term cost, but there may be medium-term and long-term savings.

Leanne Wood: Many of the points that I intended to make have already been made, but I have a few more. You said that there are some benefits to a large service, but have you thought about the effects on local communities, particularly with regard to intelligence links and so on? What have your local councillors said about that; I am aware that they would probably be concerned? The point was made about this being conducted with undue haste, but what do you think of the idea of keeping the status quo until police services are devolved to Wales and then allowing the National Assembly to

decide on the structure within Wales?

Mr Thomas: To answer the last question first, I think that that is a sensible suggestion, but it is not going to happen. The Home Office is not going to do that. I am sorry, but it just will not. It is a suggestion worthy of evaluation, but it will not happen.

There are clearly some disbenefits of large forces. That is why the basic command units are so key to this debate. The basic command units are the police in Wales, and they are what the public identify with. Sitting in Ebbw Vale, I do not identify with a building when you talk about the police in Cwmbrân. I identify with the local police station in Ebbw Vale town centre. The basic command units must be sacrosanct and they must be the units taking forward front-line policing. In one sense, the strategic structure over that is almost a debate about siting police headquarters and such matters. You have to ensure that you get the nucleus right and everything else flows from that. There are disbenefits from large organisations. They become more remote. There are four chief constables at present who have an ability to be recognised at a local and regional level and clearly link into those areas. At the same time, I can imagine a situation where you could have a chief constable for Wales and deputy chief constables for regions who would also have that same level of identification. If you went on the basis, for example, of having three regions also based on the fire authority regions, you would bring together the emergency services in Wales.

We in local government are currently thinking about four regions. It would not be a giant leap of imagination on our part to go to three regions. You could tidy up the regional map in Wales, which is an absolute disaster at present. There are 57 varieties of regionalism out there. This could have some positive benefit in terms of tidying up the regional map. There are disbenefits and benefits. That is why we are so keen on the role of the basic command units. We must never lose sight of their importance.

Ms Alleyne: I will just pick up on the local links. Our members are very keen on this, particularly around why we would want to see the neighbourhood policing model so successful. With neighbourhood policing, and officers within each ward, it gives the opportunity for communities to build up those links with officers. Those links are not just around identifying local priorities; they will help to gather local intelligence about a whole range of issues, particularly the range of issues that are also important to the protective services. Within that, I think that there is a view that the neighbourhood policing model, so long as that is effectively underpinning any change that happens in terms of the strategic forces, will be where the real issue around intelligence gathering will happen in any case. Therefore, maintaining the neighbourhood policing model, ensuring that it rolls out effectively and ensuring that there are close links between the police and local people is important.

Mark Isherwood: Clearly, the times, they are a-changing and the options are blowing in the wind, but—[*Laughter.*] I apologise, Chair.

For reasons of history, geography and transport, north Wales, from west to east, has socio-economic links stretching from Ireland to Merseyside and Cheshire, in particular. However, we now have north-south political links and the challenge for all of us is to link that up. I think that you put some helpful comments on the negative side of the fourth option. However, notwithstanding that, would you agree that the Welsh language does not stop criminals crossing the border, that co-operation in some form is essential, and that we benefit from building upon that? The partnership does not deter local authorities with different financial situations and different Governments co-operating with each other and with other partners in their own communities. There could be a way of accommodating this. Could that be accommodated, not only in terms of the fourth option, but with a regional structure within a newly amalgamated force? That would be a regional link but still developing cross-border relationships. Do you think that that is feasible?

Again, looking at the regional structure, you said that the use of regional presence is key to the way we go forward. Who should be accountable for that presence in the absence of a chief constable figure?

11.20 a.m.

My final point, with regard to costing, is on your statement that a levelling up or levelling down of a precept is likely. Do you agree that that is going to be a very urgent decision at the outset, as any savings are not likely to impact for some time after the new system beds in?

Mr Thomas: To take the north Wales and Cheshire model, I can see some advantages. There is, clearly, some collaboration between those two forces at the moment; there are linkages. I listened intently to our councillors on Friday, and one of the reasons given for not having a single force is that it would be ludicrous for police from south Wales to attend a disturbance in Wrexham. However, there is a statutory duty of partnership between forces that would not disappear whatever you do. Logistically, if such a disturbance occurred again the police would be drawn from the nearest neighbouring force. That clearly points to existing partnerships.

Accountability at a regional level is tricky, is it not? A police force requires a police authority—a single police force would require one police authority. What we have said, and what the Fry model says, is that on a voluntary basis you can do something quite different. On a voluntary basis, there is the idea of regional boards which can take account of some local and regional issues at particular levels in Wales. I once joked that if you leave a car in Swansea, there is a good chance that it might not be there when you come back, but if you leave a car in Powys, there is a good chance that someone will have washed it for you when you come back. There are different levels of crime and ways of policing in different parts of Wales. The regional structures would reflect that. That is a very important model. The question that you must assess, as Assembly Members, is whether the regional model is an extra tier of bureaucracy or what amounts to a set of added-value tiers of government within a police structure. Many would say that it may be an extra tier of

bureaucracy. I would say that, in terms of local accountability and democratic legitimacy, it is absolutely essential.

Janice Gregory: Thank you. I have heard some references to the differences between Swansea and Powys, but that was not one of them, and it was interesting. Leanne?

Leanne Wood: On the issue of devolution, you said that the chances of this happening were more than slim. If we, as a committee, came to the conclusion that that was what we wanted, and your organisation and the chief constables wrote in your submissions that that was what you wanted, thus creating a body of pressure in Wales for that, do you think that the Home Office would find it difficult to ignore? I accept that there are difficulties, as you say, but do you think that that is a possibility?

Mr Thomas: In the longer term police devolution in Wales is inevitable. It will happen. As always, it is a question of timing. As an association, we do not have a formalised position in wanting the police to be devolved, but we recently published a manifesto saying that we wanted to discuss and evaluate the issue. There are pros and cons to police devolution, which we would need to examine. I doubt whether we can get a head of steam in this current reorganisation to push the issue of police devolution. In fact, I am convinced that you cannot do that. I do not think that it is on the agenda at the moment; it may be sometime in the future.

I would give a warning from the local government context, which, again, is from personal experience: you need to get the structure right before talking about police devolution. We, in local government, reorganised in 1996, setting up the new authorities on 1 April of that year. On 2 April 1996, we started arguing about the next reorganisation. We got the structure of local government wrong at the time, and everyone knows it. We have been given, in terms of 'Making the Connections' this five-year window of opportunity to get it right; no doubt that if we do not get it right, the structural maps will come out again. In terms of the police forces, there is a chance to get this right, and perhaps the structural debate is the precursor to police devolution—perhaps you need to do one to do the other. I think that you must consider that. I would ask people to reflect and think about that, because I might have it wrong and you might have it right, and we need to get some thoughts together. Whatever we think about in terms of this debate, police devolution in the longer term must be something that you, as a committee, consider in a very radical way, and it is something that local government will want to influence and shape in how that develops. It is a debate well worth having.

Janice Gregory: Thank you very much for attending this morning, and I am sure that I speak for all Members in saying that we found your evidence, both written and oral, very interesting, and, indeed, very thought provoking. Thank you very much for your time.

We will just take a minute while we await the chief constables. Once we have taken this evidence, as this is our last evidence-gathering session, Roger will

draft a paper for consideration at the meeting on 16 November, because we need to get our heads around some recommendations. That will probably be the last item on the agenda, and I will try to devote as much time to it as I can, but I ask you to bear in mind that it will be an ordinary committee meeting, so there will be other business that we will have to get through in the first part of the meeting. We will finalise the report after that meeting, so everybody will have an opportunity to provide their input. I am given to understand that a Plenary debate on this is scheduled for early December. If anyone has any ideas that they want to put to me or to the clerk before the meeting on 16 November, it would be useful to hear from you.

Mr Chaffey: Yes, please.

Janice Gregory: Yes, that would be useful. Hopefully, by then, we will have had the other information to be fed in from the police authorities in Wales, as well as anything from the Welsh Local Government Association, which I propose to circulate to Members as and when it arrives. I think that Leanne is the only one who is listening to me. Leanne knows all of this. [*Laughter.*] It will be easier to do that as it comes in because a fair volume of information will be coming through.

As always, I ask whether anyone wants a Members' research briefing on any specific topics—I will have covered everything in the Chair's brief this morning; you will be delighted to know that I am going through it item by item. I see that there are no further comments.

11.30 a.m.

I welcome all the new arrivals. I reiterate that if you have any pagers, mobile phones or BlackBerrys, you will need to turn them off because they interfere with our sensitive recording equipment. The headphones in front of you are for simultaneous translation and amplification of sound. Thank you for taking time out of your busy diaries to come to committee today. We felt that it was vitally important that we received the views of the police in Wales in terms of the review that the Minister has asked the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee to undertake.

The witnesses present are Richard Brunstrom, Chief Constable of North Wales Police, Mick Giannasi—I hope that I pronounced that correctly—the Deputy Chief Constable of Gwent Police, Terry Grange QPM, who is Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police, Barbara Wilding QPM, who is Chief Constable of South Wales Police, and Paul Wood, who is Deputy Chief Constable of South Wales Police. Good morning to you all. I understand that Terry will lead on this. As you will not have seen the proceedings earlier this morning, I will just inform you that Members will ask individual questions of you all, but I may be wrong about that; I am afraid that it is a bit of a moveable feast in this committee. However, Members have asked questions of individual presenters this morning. Terry, could you give us an overview of the evidence that you have so far?

Mr Grange: As you know, the Home Secretary directed the police authorities and police forces to take account of the paper written by Denis O'Connor on level 2 policing and protective services back in September. We were given, frankly, very demanding time frames within which to prepare papers and to come up with various options to enable the police service in England and Wales to match the requirement for improving level 2 policing. In Wales, as you know, we have already had the Tarian collaborative exercise on one aspect of level 2 policing, which was successful. However, the Home Secretary was not convinced that collaboration was the way forward and was much more minded to the restructuring of police forces.

The four chiefs of the forces in Wales put together a team, lead by Paul Wood, to examine the various options for the change required within the time frame required by the Government. On 28 October, we put a paper to Government, outlining various options, the first of which is that the four forces remain as they are, but must meet the level 2 requirement, which is emphatically not 'steady state'. What that means is that, somehow or other, each of the forces would have to provide the protective services required. Examples of that would be strong federations or collaborations between forces across and outside Wales. A well-known example would be north Wales and Cheshire. A similar example could easily have been West Mercia and my force, because we share a 95-mile border. That option is being examined; it has costs to it.

The second option was to have two forces, with the Gwent and south Wales forces combining and the north Wales and Dyfed-Powys forces combining. That is also being examined. It will be examined in detail, as will the third option, which is a single force in Wales. By the end of November, we have to prepare a paper for the Home Office that explores, in much more depth, the consequences in financial and operational terms and in meeting the protective services requirement, and with, if possible, a statement of preference. I could go further, Chair, but that is where we are. We are now examining the options to see where they take us. We should have a paper ready by the end of November, which will go to the Home Office with a stated preference, or possibly without. At this time, I do not know.

Janice Gregory: Thank you. I have questions from Catherine, Sandy, Rhodri Glyn, Leanne and Mick.

Catherine Thomas: This is a little bit like 'Groundhog Day' for me because I have asked the same question to the authorities and the WLGA. However, going back to the options, would we be able to have your more detailed views on each one. I understand that you cannot come forth with the preferred statement at this point, but there must be some clear feelings about the options, and I would welcome more information in that regard. We have also just heard evidence from the WLGA, whose representatives said that, perhaps, this structural debate is a precursor to devolution of the police force. Would you like to comment on that as well?

Mr Grange: As far as views on the options go, you know that we have

undertaken a preliminary study, and that paper has gone to the Home Office. The paper shows that one police force in Wales, insofar as it would meet the protective services requirement, is the option that scores best. We have to examine more than that, because we are also charged with bringing in neighbourhood policing in the same time frame. Therefore, we have to examine the protective services option and the neighbourhood policing option, see how the two meet, and see what the additional costs to meeting both would be. As to whether I have a preference at this time, I have to say that I would not state it because it seems to me that, as the professional lead for my force and, in a sense, this review, we should examine the options in detail before we go around stating preferences.

Catherine Thomas: Surely, at this stage, you must have views on each option in more detail, and on the advantages and disadvantages of each one. I would have thought that you would have been able to say something at this stage.

Mr Grange: To get a measure of the teams' views on the pros and cons of each one, I would defer to Paul Wood. However, if you were to ask me about my views on a single police force in Wales as measured against two police forces, I would say that the two police forces option at this time suggests to me that it would be very difficult to meet the requirement for level 2 policing. You would have a police force that stretches out across all of rural Wales, it would not meet the numbers requirement, and I am not too sure how you would meet the funding requirement to get the level 2 policing. In my view, we can encompass the neighbourhood policing, because neither force is too far away from the Government's neighbourhood policing requirement.

On the first option of forces staying separate, the costs and legal and technical difficulties of in-depth collaboration are such that, if you get yourself into a position whereby, hypothetically, my force is more than 50 per cent collaborating on everything with south Wales, then, in my view, we might as well become one force. The single force option meets the level 2 requirement better than others, and, right now, I would go no further than that.

Janice Gregory: Paul, would you like to answer Catherine's question, where you can answer it?

Mr Wood: The one thing that I would stress is that we are actually trying to come up with a structure for the future of policing in Wales. It is not a matter of where we are now, but of where we will be in the future. We are mindful of the fact that we already see neighbourhood policing provided very well by all four Welsh police forces, and we do not want to lose that. But, this level 2 requirement is there, and it will be there in the future, and the options that we are exploring require us to meet what is called the level 2 gap. So, all three options are change options. There is not an option there for us to stand still. Even with the first option, which is for four forces, those four forces would have to change significantly, and I think that Mr Grange is right in saying that we have to go through a process. At this stage, it is too early to say which one we have a preference for.

11.40 a.m.

Mr Grange: Devolution in Wales is an ongoing political process. This exercise is about meeting the level 2 requirement for policing in England and Wales. In my view, devolution has nothing to do with this exercise; this is about restructuring policing to meet the requirements of level 2 policing and, at the same time, to improve neighbourhood policing. The devolution of policing and other matters may come, but that is not a part of this exercise and it is not something that I would comment on as part of this exercise. I believe that that is best left to politicians and police authority chairs.

Janice Gregory: That was very diplomatic.

Catherine Thomas: Could your other colleagues also answer the questions that I have put?

Mr Brunstrom: I am going to disappoint you and say very much what Terry said. We are here because we are united on this matter. There are no do-nothing options; this is about additional policing. It is not the same as we are now, it is not just a reconfiguration or a reorganisation of the deckchairs; it is an additional requirement. Personally, I think that the Home Secretary is right to identify this need. I think that there is a need for the UK public to receive this level of policing and the current system will not provide it.

Looking at the three options, I am with Terry again on this matter. On option 2 of two forces, I currently have difficulty in seeing enough benefit from that to make it worth serious consideration—we would get all the disbenefit of reorganisation and geography with very few of the benefits. On the option 1 of staying as four separate forces, again, I am entirely with Terry. To stay as four separate forces, we would have to set up formalised collaboration ventures—call them federations, collaborations or whatever you wish—across borders and, in my case, that would be with forces in England, if we were to stay as we are. You will get to the stage, as Terry said, when you will have gone so far in collaborating that you might as well merge. There are pros and cons to consider.

As Terry said, the option that is scoring by far and away the highest marks at the moment, on level 2, is the all-Wales force, but it is not that simple because that concerns only level 2 policing. There is a context to put around this, including the social situation, the geographical dimension, and what is best for Wales in the longer term, which is not just an argument about devolution. It is a more complicated debate than that, and I do not want to go into it any further either because I want to buy as much time as possible to consider the matter as a senior police officer. This has been done in a great rush, every day counts, and I do not want to pre-judge the debate. So I am afraid that, like Terry, I will go no further because I really have not yet made up my own mind. I want as much time as possible to consider this matter and, of course, there is not much time.

Mr Giannasi: Chair, may I first of all apologise for the chief constable's absence? He is being awarded the Queen's Police Medal and has gone to the palace today to collect it—that is the only thing that would have kept him away.

At the risk of sounding repetitive and boring, the position of Gwent Police is that we are fully committed to the joint approach. One of the strengths of policing in Wales is the cohesion between chief officers and police authorities. We have seized on that and taken the opportunity to work together. From a Gwent perspective, we have every confidence in the central team, to which we contribute, to come up with a systematic process for us to go through. We are committed to the process that we have embarked upon. It is systematic and we are systematically working our way through all the viable options. In leadership terms, we think that it would be unwise for us to make presumptions or assessments that are not based on full information. Like the other forces, we can see the reality of the situation, and we do not believe that doing nothing is an option. The two-force option has its difficulties that are immediately apparent and the one-force option, certainly on the basis of an assessment of level 2 capability, appears to offer the best opportunities. We are conscious that many operational practitioners would also see the benefits of that.

We come at this matter with three principles in mind. Whatever the outcome, and whichever option is preferred, we want to achieve what is best for the people of Wales and, in particular, the people of Gwent, as that is where our allegiance lies. We have a particularly strong emphasis on neighbourhood policing—we have committed significantly to it, as have all forces—and we are concerned that whichever option emerges, as well as creating a level 2 capability, neighbourhood policing must be not only sustained, but strengthened. The third principle is that we recognise that the current arrangements do not deliver sufficient level 2 capability and that needs to be addressed. Therefore, we are committed to finding the option that does that best. Again, without appearing to be avoiding the issue, we want to wait and see what the final outcome is. We are conscious that the assessment that has been done so far is based around what is best at level 2. We now need to look at the bigger picture before we come up with some firm options.

Ms B. Wilding: I do not want to be repetitive, but I adopt everything that my colleagues have said and I would like to make two comments. Firstly, we do collaborate at the moment, both with English forces and between forces. However, I wish to emphasise Terry's point that we are being asked to grow that degree of collaboration. Everyone who has come to the table to look at what is required, indeed, to grow that level to capability, recognises that we would have to grow that degree of collaboration to an extent that we would need to have the same IT systems, the same estates strategy, the same HR strategy and the same operational practices to the point of saying 'Why do we have four people trying to do one thing?'. So, that is the look that we have had at the current options in delivering that level 2. You get to a point where you say that it is no longer viable to have separation because you are in such commonality.

Collaboration is not without its difficulties. We have undertaken collaboration to the stage that we have, and we have had to surmount a number of difficulties and one or two are insurmountable without legislation change. So, we have learned from our collaboration, and the staff and our officers who have come to the debate thus far to help in the scoring process bring that experience to bear in the way in which they have looked at this issue.

The second point that I would like to make is that, looking at the additionality that Richard refers to, and level 2 policing, we must also look at what is happening in parallel, and that is the drive from the Home Office for greater neighbourhood policing. We are all signed up to that, and we did so before this particular debate started. I went before the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs last year and said that I could not foresee one force for Wales. That was then. Since then, life has moved on significantly, particularly in the area of the announcements by the Government of more police community support officers—and there are some issues around funding in that regard—the focus on neighbourhood policing and now the focus on protective services. I come from a protective services background, but I have come back to local policing towards the end of my service because I see a need to work in parallel. You cannot devolve one from the other. Like my colleagues, I can tell you only where the scoring mechanism is at the moment, and that it shows on the three options that the single-force option is the one that stands out among the others, but we have yet more work to do. In terms of the finance, it has been—as is necessary at this time—only at the higher level, so we need to look at that more clearly, and get indications from the Home Office in terms of its opinion on the report that we have put in to date, and whether it is prepared to support it. I understand that we should hear about that early next week.

Sandy Mewies: None of you has mentioned the fourth option yet, which is the North Wales Police Authority's preferred option. It was discussed last week, namely it is partnership collaboration with Cheshire Police by North Wales Police. We all accept that there are police issues that involve collaboration, not just with Cheshire Police, but also with Merseyside Police and so on. Similar collaborations also happen in other parts of Wales. We have heard different views today. The chair of the North Wales Police Authority pushed the fourth option very strongly, as one would expect—that is what it wants to do. He talked about it as a partnership not as an amalgamation. He also said that talks have not yet been undertaken in any depth with Cheshire Police to see what possibilities there would be.

Another viewpoint has been put to us which I would like to have clarified, namely that that partnership must go on, as must the other partnerships. I wish to clearly establish that they can go on because you do it now and will continue to do it in all parts of Wales, because collaboration is collaboration. Presumably, you will do it through service level agreements or however that comes out.

11.50 a.m.

The Welsh Local Government Association also made the point that there is a statutory duty upon police forces anyway to co-operate when necessary, and that seems to be an overarching fact. I do not know which way it is going to go, but if there is a single police force or two police forces, that out-of-Wales collaboration will continue and will perhaps be enhanced.

It was interesting when Barbara was talking about the consensus of views that you have, and I think that you are quite right to wait and see how the arguments develop, but you were talking about a consistent approach throughout Wales, which I think is a jolly good idea for any service that we provide in Wales, not just policing. However, this begs the question of whom you collaborate with, given that you have adjacent, border forces. Will you be looking to achieve the same sort of consistency? I am talking about information and communications technology, human resources policies and so on.

The third thing that you mentioned—and this is very successful in north Wales and I am not saying that it is not anywhere else, but my knowledge is of north Wales—is neighbourhood policing. We do pretty well in north Wales. It has been a great success. We have talked today about preserving the integrity of the basic command unit and enhancing it in future. I have been quite concerned about the talk of personnel going rather than being enhanced. If you are going to preserve the integrity of what we are doing, we need to enhance the BCU. What sort of pressures do you think that you can bring to bear on that?

If it came to an all-Wales police force, we would have to have some sort of regional structure to reflect the very clear regional identities that we have and we would have to have local accountability. Some of the structures that have been put forward have 10 local authorities represented. Ten local authorities will not work, because 22 local authorities are paying precepts for policing. So, what sort of structure do you think would have to be put in place to reflect that regional identity and accountability and how would that work? There are some difficulties even now with tracing the accountability from local authorities to the police and back again. How would that work?

Mr Grange: I will start with the final question, because it is the most fresh in my mind. Regional structures for political accountability are a matter for politicians and I do not think that any one of us would have a view particularly about how politicians should sort out their local accountability arrangements, either in county or in Wales. As far as operational accountability goes, it would be an issue were there one or two police forces in Wales. I will cop out here, because on Sunday, 6 November, the four chiefs are meeting to discuss this very subject, and that is the preliminary discussion. You know that there are a variety of ways in which you could do this, but we need to explore it in depth to see what would work professionally. Above that, what would work in terms of political accountability, for me, is a matter for politicians.

You mentioned the fourth option, Sandy. We would not see that as a fourth option but as the first option. That is that the four police forces remain as they

are but meet the level 2 requirement. That will be explored—

Sandy Mewies: It is a change, though.

Mr Grange: No, what the Government has asked us to prepare is a paper that was rashly defined as ‘steady state’, which was all 43 forces remain but you meet the level 2 option. The only way in which you can do that if you are a force of fewer than 4,000 is by making in-depth collaboration and federal arrangements, as described in Denis O’Connor’s paper, with another force or other forces, which is what will be explored, as I understand matters. When they have explored that, it will be scored against the other three issues and we will see where that takes us, and no more than that. It is not a separate option, because if you did that, you would then have to consider another option, namely what you would do with the other three forces. So, you could then end up with ever more options, which is not what we want. We are trying to refine it down.

So, the single police forces meeting level 2 is one option, and the north Wales-Cheshire issue is part of that. However, it would not be north Wales and Cheshire; it would be north Wales and whatever structure Cheshire was a part of. This takes us on to collaboration. Currently, there are collaborative arrangements—I know that the three southern forces in Wales are involved, but I am not sure whether north Wales is—with the western region of England’s police forces on uniform and many other matters. So, there are 10 or 11 forces with collaborative arrangements for purchasing certain things. It is the same with vehicle fleets.

We are moving more smoothly now towards a better arrangement for IT across the country. The first national IT product that every force took was the violent and sex offender register. That was this year. Within the next two years, the information management, prioritisation, analysis, co-ordination and tasking programme will put out many other things that every force in the country will be taking, not only in England and Wales, but in Scotland. That side of it will be encompassed whether or not changes take place. However, of a certainty, in terms of the operational collaboration that south Wales and Gwent have with Gloucester and Avon and Somerset will remain, however they are shaped in the future, because it is in our professional interest for that to remain. So, that will happen. We merely need to know how our structures and how we are shaped collaborates with forces across the border in England. However, it will continue. I have strong arrangements with West Mercia and the West Midlands, because that is of value to me. West Midlands does not border my area, but we have guests from there regularly.

On protecting and preserving the BCUs, I do not think that you can preserve anything. Once you preserve something, it goes into stasis and never improves; it just stays as it is. If you are arguing that we should ensure that our BCUs are not damaged by this process, I agree with you totally.

Sandy Mewies: I think that I said ‘enhanced’, actually.

Mr Grange: We will enhance them as best as we can, but that will depend totally on the funding arrangements for neighbourhood policing and level 2 policing. None of us can sit here and guarantee you that the number of officers and staff who are on a BCU now will be there in a few years' time. It will not be true because we are all going to get extra police community support officers. We are not sure how they are going to be funded, but we are going to get them. The issue for us is about enhancing with the appropriate funding, and where that comes from. I think that I will stop there, but my colleagues may have more to say.

Janice Gregory: Does anyone wish to add to that?

Mr Brunstrom: I am entirely content with what Terry said.

Ms B. Wilding: You made one point about personnel going. Of course, clearly, it is a part of the requirement to look for efficiency savings over time. When one is looking at back-room services, traditionally, that is where one will make savings and efficiencies. My estimation is that that is exactly what we would be doing in the future. It is far too early to talk about whether that could be accommodated through waste. However, I do not think that we should ever close our minds to the fact that making efficiencies usually impacts on those back-room services. The bottom line is that, through the process that we are following, we are committed to improving the operational delivery locally and above that, and whatever we do at level 2 always has an impact on the local delivery of policing and criminal markets.

So, it is about improving policing, quality of life and the environment that people live in, and improving Wales. In the protective services assessments that were conducted nationally, South Wales Police only just came slightly below the level that was required. However, we are saying that by looking at the delivery of an improving service we have contributed to that debate and we have not sought to be parochial in any way.

Sandy Mewies: May I just come back on that?

Janice Gregory: Briefly.

Sandy Mewies: It is not being parochial, but if there was an all-Wales service, it does not necessarily have to have headquarters that are based in south Wales. At least that is the view that has been expressed to us. Do you share that view?

Mr Grange: I think that the view that we would take is that the headquarters could be anywhere in Wales. That does not matter. With good IT and good communications arrangements, the location of the headquarters is largely irrelevant. Using a good modern building would be a good idea. I have a few of those, by the way—[*Laughter.*]

12.00 p.m.

Ms B. Wilding: I think that we have to examine the concept of 'headquarters'—what on earth is it? With technology and so on, back-room services can be delivered from anywhere. The chief constable in any structure here, be it a two-force structure, which covers a large geographical area, or a one-force structure, will have to be peripatetic and will have to have offices in several locations to be able to see the staff in terms of internal leadership and the outward leadership available to those communities across the whole area. So that is not being rooted in a headquarters or something called a headquarters. Looking at our estate strategy recently, in talking about enhancing our current site at Bridgend, I said that I wanted us to stop using the term 'headquarters'. That, frankly, is just a collection of service delivery points. In terms of where the top team meets, again, there is technology and transport. There are difficult transport arrangements between north and south Wales, but that will have to be overcome and not just now, but for the future.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I am intrigued by this figure of 4,000 officers and its significance. You could ask what the difference is between a force of 3,999 and 4,000 officers. Is that just an arbitrary figure? Does a force have to be a certain size in order to be functional or does the figure have some other significance?

On human resources, your protective services and neighbourhood policing, do you have any thoughts about the additional numbers of officers that you would need to carry out those responsibilities?

Mr Grange: You have to accept that the figure of 4,000 has been quoted extensively. The point being made is that if you are to provide the kind of protective services that are now deemed necessary, you need a certain critical mass and unless you are of that area, you do not have the critical mass. Whether it is 3,999 or 4,000 is irrelevant; a number had to be picked and it was picked. However, the reality is that you have to be the size of Barbara's force to even get close. Barbara's force has, what, 3,500 officers?

Ms B. Wilding: Thereabouts.

Mr Grange: So, the 4,000 is just a number, but you have to be a certain size. The number picked was 4,000; it could have been 4,001, but it would not have made any difference to 20 forces in the country.

There is no promise from the Government of extra police officers for neighbourhood policing. I have seen no discussion that suggests that there would be. There will be extra police community support officers. We have each been given an idea of what that number would be. If we are to do neighbourhood policing in the way described in the original documents, that would present problems in a rural area. However, the people from the National Centre for Policing Excellence, who are examining our capability to do this, are telling us that there is no model that means that for every ward, you have to have a set number of police officers. You have to tailor things according to your circumstances. Urban policing in those circumstances is very different from rural policing. I do not know if we will get any extra police

officers for neighbourhood policing. To do it right, we will have to, as best we can, find resources from within whatever structure we end up with, following on from the decision next January. I think that that is where we will find the resources.

Leanne Wood: Given that this level 2 protective services issue is driving the agenda on this, it seems to me from what you have said about the points scoring, that the one-force option is the one most likely to be implemented. I know that you do not want to tie your views to the mast on that, but I think that that is where things are going. Do you have concerns—these have been expressed by a number of others—about the links to communities and local intelligence? Do you think that there could be a contradiction between what is being proposed and neighbourhood policing? If we are moving to a more centralised system, there is an argument that you are moving away from communities. Secondly, in view of the fact that this is being done with undue haste—and I think that everyone agrees that it is being done very quickly—what do you think about the idea of maintaining the status quo and trying to build up a head of steam within Wales to put an argument to the Home Office that Wales has special circumstances and that it should consider devolving police services to the National Assembly and, therefore, leave it up to Assembly politicians to make the decision? Do you think that that could buy us the time that we need to get this absolutely right?

Mr Grange: I am a professional police officer, and my job is to provide policing within the circumstances set by the Government. It is not for me to debate publicly whether we should take a set of circumstances and use it as a weapon to further the course of devolution in Wales. Frankly, I would not do so publicly; I do not see that as my place, and I would not, therefore, get engaged in that debate. On whether level 2 is complementary to neighbourhood policing, they are inextricably linked; there is not a large gap between level 2 policing and neighbourhood policing. From neighbourhood policing, which is about local issues and local crime, you drift through into level 2 policing, and then up to national policing. The intelligence that you derive at all levels can be used at all levels. Therefore, the two things are absolutely complementary. How you organise them is a matter of professional judgment, as assisted by political judgment. I believe that if we get our arguments right for the three options as they currently stand, we will see clearly which is the best option professionally. I would want to ensure that the best option meets the needs of neighbourhood policing—as in basic command units, not the neighbourhood policing concept that the Government is arguing—and provides a proper approach to travelling criminals and other dangerous people, which is what level 2 policing is about.

On the need to ensure that BCUs and their links with the local public are maintained, you will have seen in our paper that south and north Wales have police community boards. Strangely enough, so do we. That is how that element will be maintained: by strong links between the local chief superintendent, the chief executive of the council, the political authority at the council, and then down through the lower levels. As an example, Llanelli Town Council and the local inspector mirror exactly what is happening

between the chief executive of Carmarthenshire County Council and the chief superintendent. That is what will maintain those links. Whatever the structure, be there one chief constable, two, or even four, their duty would be to ensure that that is what is enhanced, and that the necessary backup is provided in terms of financial support—if we can get it—moral support, and technical support, to ensure that that level of policing is improved year on year, while we provide the level 2 policing, which has to be provided.

Mick Bates: Thank you for your written evidence and the evidence that you have provided so far. It is worth reminding everyone that, in terms of performance and the detection of crime, the collective rate of Welsh forces is more than 10 per cent better than the average in England. You should be congratulated on that.

The analogy was made this morning that the process that we are undertaking is rather like putting the roof on first when building a house. That is wholly unacceptable. So many of you are talking about structures, but, within this, there is the fundamental issue of configuration—the processes, the relationships and structures that we want for our police forces in the future. I can see you nodding your heads at that last statement. In view of that, we have this unnecessary haste in this process of closing the gap. What are your views on whether we should have a more fundamental review of policing in the form of, say, a royal commission, before we start to restructure.

The second issue is one of costs. I think that many of us were surprised this morning to hear a guesstimate from the treasurer of the Dyfed-Powys Police Authority that the extra requirement for funds in 2008 may well be in the region of £50 million. That obviously has a massive impact. I would like to hear what processes you have undertaken within the force for business planning to obtain robust figures so that, whatever the outcome on the options, the Home Office ensures that the money is there for you to do your job properly.

12.10 p.m.

Mr Grange: If I take the last point first, my director of finance is leading the team on assessing the costs and working with treasurers. We are at the £47.2 million figure as we speak. On all of the options, over the next two to three months we will be burrowing deeper into the costs as we see the funding issues for the long term to reach a more consistent, acceptable figure in which we are absolutely confident. However, that will take two to three months and will go with the final paper. Even then, what we believe to be the costs will be examined at the Home Office, which might take a different view on whether we have understated or overstated the costs. The history of public and private sector reorganisation is consistently understating the costs and overstating the benefits, and this has to be acknowledged.

In terms of the royal commission, I am due to retire in approximately 18 months and I think that Mick is the youngest of us, and if we had a royal commission, I suspect that he would be retired five years before we got an

answer. We deal with reality, and the reality is that we have been told where the roof is and to now do the rest. As professional police officers, that is all we can do to the best of our ability, which is what we will do.

Mick Bates: Thank you for the responses, Terry. To pick up on the final point, I am somewhat confused: we are talking about structures driven by 'Closing the Gap', particularly on level 2 policing, but the repercussions are immense. These are fundamental issues. I read in a speech recently that this is a pivotal point in history for policing in the UK. To me, that is fundamental.

This is a politically driven process, called 'Closing the Gap', but it contains fundamental changes in how policing will occur. If we look at how we interact with police in a remote rural area, we do not have within this process any guarantees that, for instance, a local police station will be there. There seems to be a force here to say, 'Let us examine first where we want to be before we put in a place a programme which simply changes structures'. That is where I see the need for something of an independent assessment of where we want to be, rather than a political assessment.

Mr Grange: I take your point entirely, Mick. It is not actually an issue that chief constables can deal with. The Association of Chief Police Officers has expressed its view and now we carry on with what we have been required to do. Let me take your point about the guarantee, in a rural policing area, that there will be a police station. Currently—put harshly—that is at the whim of the chief constable. Pardon me as I digress, but the reality is that, two years ago, the Home Office neither knew nor cared where Crymych was. Then, I opened a police station there, and now I cannot change the opening hours of that police station without writing to the Home Secretary first just to advise him. So, there is some protection once you open a police station. However we are structured, it will still be the case that it will be a matter for the police authority—whatever that is—and the chief constable or chief constables as to how many police stations and offices there are and where they are. In my view, that will not change from restructuring.

Mick Bates: Pursuing that issue, Terry, there is a question of remoteness if an all-Wales force is established. There will be an issue of perception, and perceptions are very important in this case. We often deal with that in trying to get police to patrol certain areas, particularly rural areas. I am concerned that there would be some remoteness in terms of a single police force. Do you think that that would be a morale issue within the force?

Mr Grange: That is the hub of the issue that we will commence discussing this coming Sunday and which will be about the professional structure that you set up to manage any change that takes place. That would include the debate about one police force, whether or not you would need regional command, how that would work, what the cost would be and how that would fit in with any political authority that existed. That debate is taking place, and we are acutely aware of those dangers. If you run a large rural police force, you are already acutely aware of them, and the same applies if you run a very big urban police force, as Barbara does. It is about your visible leadership and

that of your chief superintendents and other senior managers. However we are structured, we can encompass that in Wales, because we are doing pretty well already.

Mark Isherwood: This morning, we heard from police authorities their figure for increased costs of £47 million to £57 million per annum by 2007-08, if the Welsh forces were to achieve level 2 service levels. Does that tally with your own assessments at this time? We have also heard that the likely savings from increased collaboration or amalgamation would not be made in the first year, or even in the second or third years—they may take a number of years to feed through. How do you foresee that being funded? You have been very diplomatic in what you have said so far. Could you be a little more specific, particularly with reference to precepts and council tax? We again heard reference from the WLGA this morning to a need to level up or level down across Wales for all the regions and forces. Could we have your opinions and comments on how we could achieve that, and what the operational impact could be, given the difference in range between the four forces at the present time?

Moving to my second point, both the WLGA and the police authorities this morning proposed a regional structure within whichever one of the options that went forward. This would be desired even within an all-Wales option. The WLGA representative said that regional presence is key to the way in which we go forward, and the police authorities said that there must be effective arrangements for government at every level of policing. Will you comment on whether you feel that we should be accommodating a regional level within an amalgamated force, and on who should be accountable for that, in terms of boards and police officers? Should there be a senior officer responsible for that region, and should that officer be accountable to a regional, as well as a national, board?

On option 4, the north Wales/Cheshire/Merseyside option, political decisions should be reconciled with operational reality, which, for reasons of geography, history and transport links, is, that the north Wales force works far more closely with Cheshire and Merseyside than with the other Welsh forces. This morning we heard that the proposal from the police authority for closer partnership arrangements could include, for instance, collaboration on back-room services and even firearms units. Can you comment on that? Could that be accommodated, not only within option 4, but within some form of regional structure within an amalgamated all-Wales force?

My final point, and, I suppose, the key to all this, is that policing is about deterring, detecting and dealing with crime and disorder. What really matters is the output at the end. This is true for the public and those who may be minded to commit crimes on both sides of the border, but particularly within Wales. The latest Home Office figures that I have for detected crime show a difference in performance across Wales since devolution—from 1998-99 to 2005-05. That ranges from an overall fall of 7.91 per cent in crime in south Wales, to an increase of 31.81 per cent in Dyfed-Powys. Could you comment on that? Is this because you compile figures differently? How would you

reconcile that range in performance within a new force structure?

12.20 a.m.

Mr Grange: I will take the final issue about recorded crime. At the risk of upsetting people here, recorded crime figures probably change every 18 months or 2 years, because someone decides, pretty regularly, to change how they are recorded. Over time there is no way of comparing crime rates; it just has to change what it is recorded as a crime, and it does that pretty regularly with what it calls 'common assault'. One year it is a crime, the next year it is not recorded as a crime. The most recent change was that violent crime began to include people shouting at each other in the street, and if you record that faithfully, and record it as you should, your crime rate for violent crime will increase radically. Previously, we did not record people shouting at each other in the street as a crime. If, as has happened in virtually every force in the country, you start to properly record domestic violence, your violent crime rate soars. Previously, we did not record child abuse as a crime because people did not talk about it, but they do now, and there is this impression that it has gone up. Believe me, it used to happen; we just record it now. So, the crime figures are not actually the best way of measuring things, particularly over a 10-year period because the types of crimes that are recorded have changed radically in 10 years, and so have approaches to recording them, not least the national crime recording standard.

Mark Isherwood: I am referring to the difference in range over the same period, with the same factors, between the four forces.

Mr Grange: I would need to see those papers because I would probably spend half an hour amusing myself with them, and should not. Going back to the very beginning, on costs and council tax, the figure that was quoted by the treasurers was actually prepared by the directors of finance, and currently—and bear in mind that we are one month into this—hovers between £47 million and £57 million. In my personal view, it will probably go up. How it will be met is a matter for the Home Office and the National Assembly. We receive funding in three ways—the Home Office grant, business rates and council tax. If one goes up, the others stay static or thereabouts, and it is purely in the gift of the Government as to how that will occur, and I am really not able to speculate on it. I can tell you that we are predicting—I think we have been told—that there will be a 5.1 per cent increase in Government spending next year. How that will apply to the police, I do not know. We can only work from that figure as it comes down to policing, so I could not really speculate on the impact on council tax. I am aware of the studies that have been done, and if it all applied on council tax, that would make me pretty nervous too, but I am not sure what will occur, and I have to be honest there.

So far as the regional structures are concerned, we are meeting on Sunday to discuss what we think a professional structure would be. When we have had the meeting and worked our way through it, we will probably put it in the paper we present to the Home Office towards the end of the year, and no doubt you will see that. So far as political structures go, working up from wards, through

councils, to regions and to Wales itself, that will be a matter for the police authorities of Wales and what the Home Office will accept. I could not predict what the Home Office will accept, and there may well be a very lively debate between the Home Office, the 22 unitary authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government as to what would be acceptable political authority for policing in Wales. As a chief police officer, I wish you well in that debate, but I really could not get into it.

On your other point, which, despite my desperate attempts, Members keep describing as option 4; there is no option 4. The option is that the police forces remain as they are and meet the level 2 requirement as demanded by the Home Secretary, and that would necessarily entail strong collaboration and federal arrangements, across Wales and into England, but it is not a separate option.

Janice Gregory: Thank you, Terry. No-one else has indicated, so does anyone else wants to make any comment before I bring this section to a close? I see that no-one does. Mark said that you were diplomatic; I thought that you were very honest. As you said, you are all professional police officers, and certainly, as Chair of this committee, I would not expect you to voice a political opinion, and, in fairness, it is unfair for anyone to ask you to do that. I thank you for your diplomacy and honesty in what you were able to answer. I am sure that all Members, myself included, will be interested to see your final paper to the Home Office, and as you said, no doubt we will have sight of that; as Chair, I will ensure that we have sight of that paper before it goes. I thank you once again for taking the time to come to the committee and this section is now closed. I have told Members everything I need to tell them before I end the meeting. The next meeting is on 16 November, where we will be discussing our recommendations and our report to Plenary. Thank you all very much indeed; I declare the meeting closed.

**Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.25 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.25 p.m.**

Annex 7

WRITTEN STATEMENTS RECEIVED IN SUPPORT OF ORAL EVIDENCE TO COMMITTEE

REF	ORGANISATION
SJR RTC A	Probation Service Written Statement
SJR RTC B	Police Federations of Wales Written Statement
SJR RTC C	Police Authorities of Wales Written Statement
SJR RTC D	Police Authorities of Wales Written Statement - Annex B1
SJR RTC E	WLGA Written Statement
SJR RTC F	Police Forces of Wales Written Statement

SJR RTC A

POLICE AUTHORITIES OF WALES

EVIDENCE TO THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY INTO THE RESTRUCTURE OF THE CONSTABULARY

Introduction

1. The Police Authorities of Wales (PAW) welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee's Inquiry into the Restructure of the Constabulary.
2. Police Authorities of Wales (PAW) is a representative body of the four Police Authorities in Wales: Gwent Police Authority, Dyfed-Powys Police Authority, North Wales Police Authority and South Wales Police Authority. The main aims of PAW are to:
 - Consider and act upon issues affecting policing in Wales, particularly those that are under the control of the National Assembly for Wales.
 - Maintain a broad Welsh prospectus on police matters.
 - Promote and protect the interests of member Authorities.
 - Seek to influence the policing agenda at a national level on behalf of Police Authorities and local communities in Wales.

- Support Police Authorities in securing efficient and effective policing services across Wales.
 - Enable Police Authorities to improve.
 - Promote awareness of policing needs and the role and achievements of Police Authorities.
 - Uphold and champion the principles of local accountability and policing by consent.
3. The Statutory responsibilities of Police Authorities are attached at **Appendix A**. As an overview, however, Police Authorities are responsible for:
- Setting the budget for their police force, including the levels of council tax.
 - Appointing and dismissing the Chief Constable.
 - Determining the strategic direction for local policing through 3 year and annual plans.
 - Consulting local people about what they think are the most important things the police should be doing and setting local and policing priorities in light of that consultation.
 - Setting their force challenging targets to drive performance higher.
 - Continuously monitor force performance against those targets and regularly report to local people on how well the force is doing.
4. Police Authorities are made up of Councillors, Lay Justices and Independent Members, and essentially they provide the link between the community and the Police Force.

Background

5. HMIC's report, 'Closing the Gap: A Review of the 'Fitness for Purpose' of the Current Structure of Policing in England and Wales' provides a professional assessment on the preparedness of the 43 Police Forces in England and Wales to deal with the long term issues around protective services. Protective services are defined as:
- Counter terrorism and extremism
 - Serious organised and cross border crime
 - Civil contingencies and emergency planning
 - Critical incident management
 - Major crime (homicide)
 - Public order
 - Strategic roads policing
6. The report framed its work within the three-tier model of criminality commonly adopted across the police service, where:

Level 1 behaviour and a Local issues – usually crime, criminals, anti-social concomitant need for reassurance – that can be managed within a Basic Command Unit (BCU).

Level 2 criminality, major Cross-border issues; usually arising from organised incidents and events affecting more than one BCU and potentially across boundaries into neighbouring forces. This can also include issues of wider public disquiet, notwithstanding that the original incident might otherwise be categorised as Level 1.

Level 3 activity operating Serious and organised crime, terrorism or other extremist on a national or international level. This can also include major incidents, events and other issues of widespread national concern, often with national media coverage, that can seriously undermine confidence on a wider scale.

7. While the four Police Forces in Wales are performing well, especially in terms of Level 1 crime, the HMIC report raised question marks over the capability and capacity of the Forces, to deliver protective services in Wales (Level 2). The view of the report was that in order to meet the required standards across the seven protective services measured, a minimum of 4,000 officers or 6,000 officers/staff combined was required.

8. In light of its findings, HMIC recommended the restructure of the 43 Forces in England and Wales. The report puts forward a set of options for change, supported by a number of design considerations which could enable the creation of a strong configuration which supports dynamic protective services and the necessary development of neighbourhood policing.

9. The five options for change as detailed in the report are as follows:

- Collaboration
- Lead force for specialist capabilities
- Lead regional forces
- Federation of forces
- Strategic forces

10. HMIC concludes that of the five options, the creation of strategic forces with the appropriate accountability mechanisms at the strategic and local level 'offers the best business solution. It offers the best potential,

within reasonable time-scales, of improving protective services and providing better value for money.'

11. The Home Secretary accepted the findings of the HMIC report and its conclusion that the creation of strategic forces offered the best solution. Police Forces and Police Authorities have been requested to consider future policing structures in three key phases:
 - By the end of October 2005 – to identify a shortlist of the most promising options for change within each region.
 - By the end of November 2005 – to narrow initial submissions to one favoured option.
 - By 23 December 2005 – to produce a final report and outline business case for the preferred option for change.
12. The parameters set by the Home Secretary are:
 - That the probable solution is for 'strategic forces' with a minimum of 4000 officers or 6000 officers/staff combined
 - That the proposals should not split existing Forces
 - That proposals should not cross Government Regional Office Boundaries
13. The Home Secretary has indicated that he is prepared to consider proposals which did not meet the above parameters, but that a compelling business case would have to be made.
14. In response to the Home Secretary's request the four Welsh Police Forces and Police Authorities have been working together to address the many issues involved in the proposals for restructure. All four Police Authorities are represented on a management board comprising the four Chairs and four Chief Constables. The Board is assisted by a project team which includes specialists from policing across Wales led by Deputy Chief Constable Paul Wood and also the Secretary of PAW, Mr Alan Fry.
15. A number of meetings, conferences, seminar and workshops have been held to identify, evaluate and assess all the options for policing structures in Wales in the future. As part of this process a range of stakeholders have been engaged from across the police service and authorities, as well as from the Welsh Local Government Association, SOLACE Wales, Local Criminal Justice Boards, Crime Reduction Director and the Welsh Assembly Government.
16. The evaluation and assessment of options for change has had to be done against a standard assessment framework, against which each

option has been scored. The attributes and weightings of the framework are as follows:

- Capacity 5
- Capability 5
- Performance 4
- Criminality 4
- Geography *3
- Co-terminosity 4
- Identity *3
- Governance 5
- Economic 4
- Risk 4

17. The framework allowed for local discretion as to the weightings of any two attributes and as such increases were made to the Geography and Identity attributes to help take account of the particular dimensions of Wales.

18. As a result of this assessment process, the three options which scored the highest, along with the option for no change, which will be automatically submitted as a proposal to the Home Secretary, were considered by the Management Board at a meeting on 19 October 2005. The four options were as follows:

- No change: maintaining the status quo as four existing police forces/authorities
- Two forces: a merger between North Wales and Dyfed-Powys; and a merger between South Wales and Gwent
- Two forces: a merger between North Wales, Dyfed-Powys and Gwent; with South Wales remaining as a stand-alone force/authority
- A single police force/authority for Wales

19. Based on the strict assessment model set by the Home Office, the option for a single Police Force/Authority scored the highest by a considerable margin.

20. Following discussions at the meeting of the Management Board, it was agreed to remove the option of Two forces with South Wales standing alone as a force/authority. The remaining three options for change have now been put forward in a report for consideration by the Home Secretary.

Police Authorities of Wales – Key Principles Underpinning Change

21. Police Authorities of Wales (PAW) acknowledges that the structure of policing in Wales has to alter in order to ensure a police service which is fit for the purpose of policing in the 21st Century. PAW recognises that we need much more effective, more streamlined command/control and governance structures above the current force configuration.
22. At the same time, however, PAW would stress that any changes must be locally developed and owned if they are to be effective and should be underpinned by the following principles agreed by the Association of Police Authorities (APA):
- One size does not fit all: there is a need for a well-argued business case for change
 - Any new structural arrangements must be robust and supported by appropriate resourcing, and include:
 - Development of robust performance monitoring arrangements for protective services
 - A serious consideration should be given to:
 - Co-terminosity with other local public services
 - Need to be able to respond to local pressures
 - Accountability at all levels – force, BCU, CSP
 - Chief Officers to be accountable to and appointable by the Police Authority
 - There needs to be clear mechanisms and balances to support good governance within the context of a tripartite structure
 - There will need to be evidence that new structures will provide effective and efficient delivery service with positive outcomes for the public and robust internal systems that identify the links between levels 1, 2, 3
 - Ultimately the need to ensure whatever is put in place provides a quality police service for all.
23. Any proposed changes should also take account of consultation with local communities and partners. Any changes to policing in Wales are going to need public support and an understanding of the issues involved in a major re-organisation of the kind proposed. Moreover, Police Authorities have a duty to consult with communities and provide a policing service which communities want. The four Police Authorities take this responsibility very seriously and will do their best to obtain the views of communities and feed them into the review process to ensure they help influence any final decisions made on policing in Wales. This, however, is a difficult process, not least due to the extreme speed of the review. PAW firmly believes, however, that it is imperative that the public are fully involved in any changes to their policing service. PAW

has agreed to undertake a national survey involving a series of “Ask the Audience” meetings to be arranged soon as is possible. Additionally, each Police Authority will be using its own consultative mechanisms to supplement the national work. However, all Police Authorities have concerns that due to the timetable and key milestone dates set by the Home Secretary, a proper meaningful community consultation exercise has not been possible.

Neighbourhood Policing and Accountability

24. While the impetus for change is to ‘close the gap’ in tackling level 2 crime, PAW is adamant that focus will be maintained on developing the neighbourhood policing agenda and will ensure that during any reorganisation, policing at the local level becomes embedded and strengthened. To ensure this, PAW will be recommending that the accountability structures in any new organisational arrangement starts at the neighbourhood level.
25. Connecting policing to communities and to civic leadership is vital. Police authorities are currently local enough to make the connections but also able to see the bigger strategic picture. The more remote the accountable body, the less in tune it can be with the communities it serves.
26. PAW see police authorities as playing a key role in enabling and facilitating neighbourhood policing – which is still in its infancy – to fully engage with citizens and ensure that the service listens and responds to all the different strands of opinion and views locally. We see, for example Policing/Community Safety Boards at BCU/CSP level of the sort which some authorities are currently piloting (North Wales and South Wales) with APA support, interacting with those neighbourhoods and with local government and other partners, to set a credible local policing agenda led by local stakeholders.
27. CSPs, comprising the Executive Heads of local services should, of course, continue to run the day to day business of joint tasking and implementation of services, but should do so in line with priorities set by local communities through these Policing/Community Safety Boards. This would help tackle the lack of responsiveness, accountability and transparency to local people identified in the recent Review of the Crime and Disorder Act. In Wales, for this to work effectively, consideration will have to be given to providing the CSP's with a legal identity, which is missing at present.

The Welsh Dimension

28. PAW also believes that in considering the HMIC report and its recommendations for restructure, the distinctions and differences that exist between England and Wales need to be fully acknowledged. When you apply some of the criteria used to assess forces in the HMIC

review such as size of force, capacity and capability to meet demand; and consistency with regional boundaries to specific areas on the map, they do not easily fit the position in Wales.

29. There needs to be a clear recognition of Wales' distinctive position and the different environment in which we are working in Wales. Due attention needs to be given to the political environment in Wales, not least the role and interests of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the more immediate prospect of the review into public services in Wales being conducted by Sir Jeremy Beecham needs also to be considered. Interestingly, Sir Jeremy in a recent article for *Agenda* made the following point:

'The policy and governance context in England is different from Wales, but the concern with delivery is the same, including the increasing focus on communicating more effectively with people at local level. I'm learning rapidly that the devolved context and geography present a set of challenges and opportunities that are unique to Wales.'

30. In addition to the political context, Wales also possesses a strong sense of national identity alongside significant local and cultural differences. Ultimately, it needs to be recognised in Whitehall that Wales is a nation and not a region. Moreover, this fact affects the way the national criteria may need to be applied in Wales.
31. Should the option for the creation of one, or even two, strategic forces be put forward as the preferred option for change following the second phase of the review, PAW is of the view that some sort of regional governance and accountability structure would have to be implemented above the neighbourhood level and below the strategic level. A draft Governance and Accountability Model for Wales was discussed at a meeting of PAW on 14 October 2005. This model (attached at **Appendix B**) sets out how PAW sees governance and accountability arrangements operating from the neighbourhood to the strategic level. The Model also includes, for illustration purposes only, how the composition of a strategic Police Authority underpinned by Regional Committees might be shaped.
32. It is absolutely essential to have a regional tier of administration for the following reasons:
- We have a devolved Government and must work in partnership with both the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association. Our regional committees would be based on the their Regional Partnership Boards which are themselves currently under review;
 - To 'close the gap' that would otherwise result in a huge geographical and diverse area; and
 - To provide effective and streamlined day to day administration of the Strategic Police Authority's policies, practices and directions.

- To reflect regional differences in Wales.

- 33. PAW would also emphasise that there are currently 72 Police Authority Members serving on the 4 Police Authorities of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales. In the White Paper “Building Safer Communities” the Government were critical of the fact that Police Authority Members were often seen to be remote and little known to the public. It is understood by the APA that the Home Secretary will only allow for marginal increases in the standard size of Police Authority membership (i.e. 17/19 Members) for a new Strategic Police Authority which contradicts the Government’s findings and will compound the situation. It would also result in a significant number of local authorities failing to secure representation should there be only one Strategic Police Authority for Wales. This would be a far from acceptable situation particularly at budget and council tax setting time.**
34. PAW hopes that both the WAG and the WLGA supports this Model as it believes that a real opportunity now exists to set a common Regional map for effective collaborative working between public bodies in Wales.
35. PAW also has concerns with future funding arrangements that may flow from any restructuring proposals. Although in the long term savings may accrue from efficiencies and economies of scale realised through rationalisation of back office facilities, significant start up costs are inevitable and have to be provided for if policing in Wales is not to suffer. The current submission to the Home Office states that the objectives set out by the Home Secretary will not be delivered without the injection of central resources. It must be stressed that work carried out to date by the Project Team has been based upon very broad assumptions regarding costs and savings due to the very short timescale set by the Home Office. There are also a number of underlying issues of concern regarding the funding of policing in Wales and these are set out at **Appendix C**.
36. Similarly the issue of equalising Council Tax may have to be addressed. At present the Council Tax precepts for policing in Wales vary significantly, as the following Band ‘D’ levels for 2005/06 show:

South Wales -	£120 per annum
Dyfed Powys -	£143 per annum
Gwent -	£145 per annum
North Wales -	£158 per annum

North Wales

37. The three options which have been put forward by the Programme Board for further consideration have been put forward with the approval of the 4 Police Authorities. However, North Wales Police Authority have also submitted a fourth option which is the retention of the North Wales Police Force and the development of a close partnership arrangement with the Cheshire Constabulary.
38. No preferred option has been expressed and the fourth option will be explored and evaluated along with the other three options.
39. However, North Wales does have strong links with North West England in terms of transport links, movement of people and, regrettably, criminality and those links are stronger than with other Force Areas in Wales. North Wales already has a close working relationship with the Cheshire Constabulary and the combined workforce of Police Officers and Staff is in excess of the figure of 6,000 identified by HMIC. Whilst a merger with the Cheshire Constabulary would clearly not be an acceptable option, North Wales Police Authority will be exploring the merits of developing partnership arrangements in order to address the need which the Home Secretary has rightly identified, to provide protective services.

Next Steps

40. Feedback on the three options, plus North Wales' fourth option submitted to the Home Secretary are expected in early November. By the end of November, after further discussions and opportunities to work up models and options in more detail, the Police Authorities and Chief Constables in Wales will try to narrow their initial submissions to one favoured option and provide a rationale for this decision. The final report must be presented to the Home Secretary by 23 December 2005. It is understood that the date proposed for the implementation of changes in the structure of the Constabulary is April 2007.
41. The four Police Authorities have considered their involvement in the review thus far, to be vitally important and are committed to continuing this participation. PAW will seek to ensure that views of Police Authorities continue to be sought, valued and given full consideration.
42. The Police Authorities of Wales are grateful for the opportunity to submit evidence to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee and hopes that the above is helpful. PAW would be happy, however, to elaborate or provide further information which may be of benefit. Should this be required, first contact should be made with our Policy Officer:

Ms Rachel Morgan
Welsh Local Government Association

Local Government House
Drake Walk
Cardiff
CF10 4LG

TEL: 029 20 468651

EMAIL: Rachel.Morgan@wlga.gov.uk

Chair of Dyfed Powys Police Authority

Councillor Don Evans

Chair of Gwent Police Authority
Thomas OBE

Mr Geraint Price-

Chair of North Wales Police Authority **Councillor Ian Roberts**

Chair of South Wales Police Authority
Thomas

Councillor Ray

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF POLICE AUTHORITY STATUTORY DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

The Police Authority's three key functions are:

- To secure an efficient and effective Police Service (Section 6, Police Act 1996).
- To secure Best Value i.e. continuous improvement in the way (its functions) are exercised having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Section 3, Local Government Act 1999).
- To make arrangements for obtaining:
 - the views of local people about the policing of their area; and
 - the co-operation of local people in preventing crime.
(Section 96, Police Act 1996)

The Authority has a whole range of statutory duties which underpin these functions. The following is not an exhaustive list – in particular, it does not detail procedural matters under Local Government legislation or those relating to the appointment or responsibilities of Police Authority Officers/Staff under Police/Local Government legislation. Instead, it focuses on key responsibilities that the Police Authority is required to fulfil as part of its functions. These are:

1. To determine the local priorities for policing – after consulting local people and the Chief Constable (Section 7, Police Act 1996).
2. To publish an Annual Policing Plan including Ministerial Priorities, local policing objectives and any performance targets set by the Authority and including Best Value Performance Plan (Section 8, Police Act 1996 & Section 6, Local Government Act 1999 and associated Regulations).
3. To report back to the community at the end of the year on the extent to which the Policing/Best Value Performance Plan has been met (Section 9, Police Act 1996).
4. To appoint and dismiss the Chief Constable and subject to the approval of the Secretary of State (Section 11, Police Act 1996).
5. To appoint and dismiss the Deputy Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constables (Section 12, Police Act 1996 and Police Regulations).
6. To hold the Police Fund and maintain accounts (Section 14, Police Act 1996 and Section 40, Local Government Finance Act 1992).
7. To nominate one or more Members of the Authority to answer questions on the discharge of the Authority's functions at a meeting of a relevant Council when given reasonable notice of this by the Council (Section 20, Police Act 1996).
8. To collaborate with other Police Authorities to jointly provide equipment, premises, to other material facilities, where appropriate (Section 23, Police Act 1996).
9. To decide the charges for the provision of special Police Services (Section 25, Police Act 1996).
10. To provide advice and assistance to an international organisation, institution or a police body outside the UK (includes secondment of Police Officers), subject to the consent of the Home Secretary (Section 26, Police Act 1996). The Authority can charge for such advice/assistance.
11. To comply with any direction given by the Secretary of State on performance targets for Ministerial priorities (Section 38, Police Act 1996).
12. To comply with any Codes of Practice issued by the Secretary of State relating to the discharge of Police Authority functions (Section 39, Police Act 1996).
13. To comply with any direction made by the Secretary of State following an adverse report by HMIC i.e. that the force is not, or will cease to be, effective or efficient (Section 40, Police Act 1996).

14. To comply with any direction made by the Secretary of State as to the budget requirement (Section 41, Police Act 1996).
15. To comment on any HMIC report on the Force and any comments made by the Chief Officer about the report and to publish those comments (Section 55 Police Act 1996).
16. To investigate complaints about the conduct of ACPO officers (Section 68, Police Act 1996) or where appropriate refer complaints to the PCA (Section 70, Police Act 1996).
17. To keep itself informed of the workings of the complaints and discipline procedures (Section 77, Police Act 1996).
18. To have regard to any guidance issued by the Home Secretary on complaints or disciplinary matters (Sections 83 & 87 Police Act 1996).
19. To pay out of the Police Fund, in such cases and to such extent as it thinks appropriate, any damages or costs awarded against the police in respect of torts or in relation to the settlement of a claim (Section 88, Police Act 1996).
20. To receive grants from any local Council which falls wholly or partly within the Authority area either unconditionally or, subject to conditions agreed with the Chief Officer of Police (Section 92, Police Act 1996).
21. To accept gifts of money or gifts and loans of other property, including commercial sponsorship of any activity of the Authority or force on such terms as appear to it to be appropriate (Section 93, Police Act 1996).
22. To conduct Best Value Reviews of its functions in accordance with any order made by the Secretary of State (Section 5, LGA 1999).
23. To publish any audit report on its Best Value Performance Plan (Section 9, LGA 1999).
24. To work with other 'responsible authorities' in formulating and implementing crime and disorder audits and strategies for each Unitary Council in its area (Section 5, Crime & Disorder Act 1998).
25. To exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998).
26. To comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
27. To have due regard of the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations of persons of different racial groups.

(Section 2, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)

28. To maintain an effective Independent Custody Visitors Scheme.

29. To maintain an effective Animal Welfare Visiting Scheme (non-statutory).

CONNECTING POLICING TO COMMUNITIES – MODEL FOR WALES

POSSIBLE COMPOSITION OF MEMBERS

Strategic Police Authority

There are 22 local authorities in Wales. Each should have at least one representative particularly when debates surround setting of the precept and Council Tax.

There is, of course, an argument that larger local authorities should have a proportionately greater representation based on their population but for this exercise this factor is ignored.

The Police Act 1996 allows the Home Secretary to determine the membership of a Police Authority within prescribed parameters. If he is persuaded by the argument above then the 22 Councillor Members would, in accord with existing legislation, have to be joined by 14 Independent Members and 7 Magistrates.

This would take the overall membership of the Strategic Police Authority to 43; it would not make a streamlined efficient administration but would have a strong measure of democratic legitimacy. It does, however, pointedly show the need for Regional Committees to implement the day to day administration of the Strategic Police Authority's policies.

Regional Committees

The composition would be determined on the number of regions; which in reality are probably either three or four.

By way of illustration only the position based on three regions reflecting the Fire Service boundaries in Wales could produce the possible (and approximate) compositions:

South Wales	-	10 Councillors, 3 Magistrates and 6 Independents	Total = 19
Mid & West Wales	-	6 Councillors, 2 Magistrates and 4 Independents	Total = 12
North Wales	-	6 Councillors, 2 Magistrates and 4 Independents	Total = 12

Footnote: *the Councils which comprise the above areas are as follows:*

South Wales: - *Monmouth, Torfaen, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Bridgend (10).*

Population: 1,394,00

Mid & West Wales: - *Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (6).*

Population: 846,000

North Wales: - *Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham (6).*

Population: 663,000

CONNECTING POLICING TO COMMUNITIES – MODEL FOR WALES

DIVISION OF SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Police Authority

1. The Body Corporate (Statutory Functions, acting as Employer, holding property etc.,)
2. Maintaining an effective and efficient police service.
3. Holding and setting the budget.
4. Working with national agencies.
5. Setting policy and strategic direction.
6. Issuing an Annual Plan and Annual Report.
7. Ensuring Best Value.
8. Appointing and dismissing Chief Officers.
9. Investigating complaints against Chief Officers.
10. Appointing Independent and Lay Justice Members.
11. Establishing a Code of Conduct and maintaining high ethical standards.
12. Establishing a Race Equality Scheme for Wales and responsibility for all diversity matters.
13. Establishing and promoting a composite Welsh Language Scheme.

Regional Committees

1. Closing the significant geographical/cultural governance and accountability gap between strategic and BCU levels.
2. Administering and implementing strategic Police Authority's policies at regional and BCU levels (i.e. acting on delegated powers with no direct functional responsibilities).
3. Working with WAG/WLGA and other partners at regional level.
4. Monitoring of regional and local performance.
5. Providing accountability and scrutiny at BCU level including holding Community Safety Partnerships to account.
6. Setting and overseeing effective and consistent consultation and engagement with the communities within the region to take account of local diversity.
7. **Producing and disseminating information to the public so that within the region there is good understanding of how policing is being delivered and how the public can access, engage and influence local policing.**
8. Consulted upon appointments of Divisional/BCU Commanders.

BCU/CSP Boards

1. Facilitating and co-ordinating community engagement within neighbourhoods.
2. Setting and monitoring local targets, objectives and priorities in tune with local communities wishes.
3. Harnessing local support, assistance and involvement.
4. Participating in "trigger mechanism" when public dissatisfaction displayed with local service delivery.

Appendix C

Underlying issues of concern relating to police funding in Wales

1. **Each of the Welsh Forces is currently below the "floor" in terms of the settlement position. This has necessitated the Home Office having to allocate a Special Grant to Welsh forces amounting to £13.873m.**

English authorities have protested at this special treatment for Wales and the four Welsh forces are understandably concerned that this funding could be removed.

2. The adverse position for the Forces in terms of formula settlement described above has meant that there have been significant increases in Council Tax levels over the last three years. These levels of increase are not sustainable.
3. A review of the Formula Grant system in England including the Police Grant for police forces in England and Wales has produced draft proposals that are largely detrimental for all forces except South Wales.
4. The four forces have historically delivered in terms of efficiency plans. It is, however, becoming increasingly clear that continued achievement would not be sustainable without greatly increased degrees of collaboration particularly in terms of back office functions. Whilst Wales has a good record in terms of collaboration across many areas, the present legislative framework and different IT systems have tended to militate against any collaboration on a large scale.

SJR RTC B

POLICE FEDERATIONS OF WALES

Written evidence to

The Welsh Assembly Government

1. The Police Federations of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales welcome the opportunity to place on public record its concerns and aspirations in response to the HMIC report "*Closing the Gap*" (*A Review of the 'Fitness for Purpose' of the Current Structure of Policing in England and Wales*) and for this information to be utilised fully through the devolved government structures in Wales.

2. The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) was established in 1919 by the Police Act and is currently governed by the Police Federation Amendment Regulations 2004. It is the representative body for all police officers up to and including the rank of Chief Inspector, this equates to a total in excess of 141,000 officers of which 7,613 serve in Wales.
3. The four Police Federations of Wales are united, in line with PFEW, in calling for a Royal Commission into Policing and in their commitment to work with Chief Officers, Police Authorities and Ministers to ensure that any transition from the current to the future structure will be as smooth as possible.
4. Our statutory duty is to safeguard the welfare of our members and ensure the efficiency of the service and in light of that remit we are concerned that the source of funding for restructuring has not as yet been established. Early indications from The Association of Police Authorities in Wales and WACPO suggest a figure of between £47 million and £57 million with funding only available from Central Government, business rates or council tax precepts.
5. We consider ourselves to be a major stakeholder in this process and in pursuance of our desire to properly inform the debate, the PFEW has commissioned a report by Professor Roger Seifert, who comments on the 'Closing the Gap' document. This document makes very interesting reading and is attached at Appendix 'A'.
6. We believe it is vital that if reform is to take place, it is carried out on a basis of improved operational effectiveness not just financial efficiency.

The public must be left with a superior, more effective police force that is able to deliver a better service.

7. In order to properly understand the requirements of our communities, we strongly urge Police Authorities to engage in structured and meaningful public consultation in line with Key Action 3 in APA circular 52/2005 (Appendix 'B')
8. It is essential that prior to any change due cognisance is given to the latest HMIC baseline assessments for the Welsh Police Forces, which cover ALL services and not only those 'protected services' referenced in the 'Closing the gap' document. It is against these levels that future delivery will be measured to ensure that progress is in the right direction.
9. These assessments identify areas of best practice and performance, which could be adopted across the country to ensure a consistency of approach. We see this as a positive opportunity for the Police service in Wales to develop. There are many areas of existing collaboration and partnerships within Wales, involving the four Welsh Forces and these arrangements invariably extend to Forces outside of Wales.
10. It is essential for the improved welfare and efficiency of our members that best practices in relation to health and safety, resources, equipment and the supporting infrastructure is viewed as a priority and implemented appropriately. We already have several "centres of excellence" in Wales delivering driver training, firearms training and information technology and we must ensure that the advancements in such areas are not lost in the rush to restructure.

11. The ultimate aim for such major restructuring must be to dramatically improve the quality of service delivered to our communities. We are concerned that failure to manage the process effectively may result in some areas experiencing no improvement or worse still deterioration, with resources being drained from all our communities particularly in the area of Neighbourhood Policing. There is a genuine concern amongst Officers and within the communities we serve, that the creation of such a Strategic Force would mean the depletion of resources from the more rural areas that are already being policed with minimum staff. The Police Federation would require firm assurances from Government that resources will not level out, but will increase in real terms – and in all forms- to meet the surging demands placed upon a modern service in both urban, rural and post industrial areas across Wales.
12. We remain concerned that the time period set out by Central Government, for consultation and delivery of proposals fails to take cognisance of the magnitude and expense of the project and would strongly urge that a Royal Commission is commenced.
13. Since the publication of the ‘Closing the gap’ document we are pleased to acknowledge that there has been considerable and meaningful consultation with Chief Officers (WACPO), local Police Authorities and yourselves, which has allowed us to represent the views of rank and file officers across Wales.
14. You will be aware that in order to comply with the constraints set out by Central Government, the Chief Officers of Wales have reduced the original seven options for change to three. That being said, there remains a belief that the outcome will be ‘Strategic Force for Wales.

15. Creating such a Strategic Police Force in Wales in order to be able to respond to serious and organised crime must also assess the impact upon the traditional methods of policing across Wales.
16. We would seek to ensure that the increased emphasis on tackling serious and organised crime does not detract from the core function of community based policing, which is currently provided by our Local Basic Command Units. The structure of these BCUs allows the police to be held accountable at a local level across a spectrum of urban, rural and post-industrial areas.
17. It is vitally important that the service we provide to our communities is protected and wherever possible enhanced.
18. We should maintain the resilience inherent within officers who have forged strong local links and not rush to withdraw them from their communities without fully assessing the impact.
19. The “latest risk” approach to setting priorities for policing has introduced the regular shifting of targets and objectives. The Tony Martin murder case highlighted a gap in the policing of rural communities and our focus moved to “filling the rural policing gap”. The events in Soham led to the Bichard Report and again gave a new priority in relation to information exchange and the use of information technology. We must ensure that in the rush to fill the Level 2 gap we do not undo or undermine the improvements and results we have gained in other areas of policing.
20. Currently the 7,613 officers across Wales are striving to provide the quality of service, which they feel the public deserve. The ethos of ‘what gets measured gets done’ is driving the focus of command teams

to direct resources in a manner that creates ad hoc squads and units at the expense of core policing.

21. In recent research conducted by PFEW across Forces in England and Wales, Alan Gordon our National Vice-Chairman says he has found *“A dramatic picture of under-resourced units, staffed in the main by probationary Officers, vastly over worked, under supervised and working under intolerable strain to finish one job and move on to the next. It has been the case for as long as I have been a Police Officer that the 24/7 shift response Officer has always been under-valued and under resourced by the majority of senior managers and with the advent of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) this problem has been exacerbated. On one Division in one shire Force a variety of new units have been formed to implement NIM. These are staffed in the main with experienced response team Officers leaving the shifts depleted and with an average length of service of 1.6 years.”*
22. Wales as a country has wide-ranging and varied crime and disorder problems across a huge geographic area and there is a concern that the new structure could simply lead to increased bureaucracy and poorer communications, not better local results. What works in Meirionnydd or Monmouth does not necessarily work in Cardiff or Carmarthen; we must not lose sight of that fact. There are huge cultural differences across Wales and with no suitable road links across the Country any efforts to overcome such difficulties would be seriously frustrated.
23. Neighbourhood policing is recognised as the foundation of our success in Wales. We have local structures and partnerships in place to deliver a service that needs to be enhanced and developed.

24. We have a real concern that there appears to be an impetus for replacing patrolling police officers with non-attested staff and Community Support Officers (CSO). Despite the repeated requests of the Police Federation, there has still not been any evaluation of the CSO role. Even across Wales CSOs have different roles, powers, training and rates of remuneration. There is not even standardisation or consistency across some Force areas.
25. We urge that before there is any further increase of CSO numbers, there must be an independent review to establish the full impact they have upon policing at all levels which could form part of the remit of a Royal Commission.
26. A full activity based costing exercise, that is open and transparent to all parties, most importantly the public, should be a priority. It is our contention that at a cost of at least £28,000 per annum CSOs do not represent good value for money.
27. This is a real opportunity for 'conjoined working' by the four Welsh Forces and key stakeholders, which may lead to economies of scale. We must ensure that any savings are utilised towards the delivery of improved performance by an increased number of fully trained, well-equipped professional sworn Police Officers and not lead to a de-skilling of Police Officers.
28. The officers and staff of the four Welsh forces are their most valuable resource and staff needs and expectations will require careful management to ensure a seamless continuance of delivery at current levels of performance. Structural reform is accompanied by financial reform aimed at reducing labour costs. This has typically meant more intensive working, worse promotion chances, less clear accountability,

deskilling of officers, endless references to leadership and good management without the requisite training and understanding; and lower overall real pay. In other services this has created low staff morale, higher turnover, early retirements, greater use of discipline as a management control tool, and unclear operational objectives.

29. Whatever the outcome of restructuring, the Police Federation is committed to maintaining the ability to negotiate officers' pay and conditions through the existing structures of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) and the Police Advisory Board (PAB). A position that is reported to be supported by the Superintendents' Association and the Independent chair of PNB (Police review 30th September 2005)
30. Police Regulations have been nationally agreed and if managed correctly are not the inflexible regulatory barriers to effective management that some senior officers have publicly stated. We will strongly resist any attempt to dilute them.
31. It is vitally important to our members that the protection currently afforded to them under Regulation 21 (not to be posted outside of their current force area upon amalgamation) is retained.
32. The Police Federation is an apolitical organisation and as such it would be inappropriate for us to comment on the Devolution of Policing at this time.
33. The structures of the Police Federations' of Wales may have to evolve to accommodate this reform. However, we have taken the view that the representation of our members is our priority and believe it is too early to comment in any meaningful way at this time.

National Assembly for Wales

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

Policy Review: The Structure of Police Forces in Wales

Written Evidence Submitted by:

Dyfed-Powys Police
Gwent Police
North Wales Police
South Wales Police

Lead Contact:

Deputy Chief Constable Paul Wood

Introduction

In 2005 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary undertook a professional assessment of the ability of the current structure of policing in Wales and England to provide effective and sustainable 'protective services' (also known as organised and Level 2 services) to a national common standard.

The report framed its work within the three-tier model of criminality commonly adopted across the police service, where:

- Level 1** **Local issues – usually crime, criminals, anti-social behaviour and a concomitant need for reassurance – that can be managed within a Basic Command Unit (BCU).**
- Level 2** **Cross-border issues; usually arising from organised criminality, major incidents and events affecting more than one BCU and potentially across boundaries into neighbouring forces. This can also include issues of wider public disquiet, notwithstanding that the original incident might otherwise be categorised as Level 1.**
- Level 3** **Serious and organised crime, terrorism or other extremist activity operating on a national or international level. This can also include major incidents, events and other issues of widespread national concern, often with national media coverage, that can seriously undermine confidence on a wider scale.**

Protective services in this context are made up as follows:

- Counter terrorism and extremism;
- Serious organised and cross border crime;
- Civil contingencies and emergency planning;
- Critical incident management;
- Major crime (homicide);
- Public order;
- Strategic roads policing.

The findings of the review were produced in the report entitled ‘Closing the Gap: A review of the fitness for purpose of the current structure of policing in England and Wales’.

The report set out three primary responsibilities for policing below national level:

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

The review concluded that whilst at a local level the Basic Command Unit arrangements and neighbourhood policing provided a solid platform for the future, the current 30 year old, 43 force structure - with forces of varying sizes and capabilities - did not.

The review went on to say that for the future there would be a requirement for a more efficient, integrated operating platform above BCU level and that the organisation of service delivery must be on a scale large enough to respond dynamically but local enough to understand the diverse context within which it operated:

'In creating a structure that is fit for purpose the overall goal should be the creation of organisations that are large enough to provide a full suite of sustainable services, yet still small enough to be able to relate to local communities.'

It also said that to achieve this would require a significant rationalisation of the way that protective services and support processes were organised to put them on a stronger and more efficient footing

The Home Secretary accepted the findings of the HMIC report and invited forces to develop options for force restructuring which would best suit future service delivery. This work was to include key stakeholders.

Further, the Home Secretary set out his view that the HMIC report was unambiguous in its conclusion that the establishment of strategic forces - where forces were re-

grouped against a framework of design considerations that include size, patterns of criminality and geography - offered the best long-term business solution. He did not rule out other solutions but indicated clearly that a very compelling case would have to be made out by forces putting forward alternative options for change.

The forces and police authorities in Wales adopted a unified approach to considering all available options for Wales. A joint project team was established with representation from all forces reporting to a programme board whose membership consists of the four Chief Constables and the Chairs of their respective police authorities. It should be stressed that the project is not looking at BCUs.

The Project Team is led by DCC Paul Wood and is based at Brecon Police Station.

The remainder of this document sets out the methodology and findings of the Project Team to date.

Context

The following factors are pertinent to any debate about policing in Wales:

Political

- **Wales is a country in its own right with its own language, culture and national identity. It has its own National Assembly and devolved responsibility for a number of key services including local government, education and health.**
- **Within Wales each force has its own strong local identity within the national context. At the operational level Basic Command Units in Wales are coterminous with unitary authority boundaries, offering excellent**

opportunities for partnership working which the police service and its partners have not been slow to grasp and develop over the last few years.

- The current proposed reorganisation does not presuppose the devolution of policing to Wales, nor envisage change to the BCU structure that is the bedrock of local partnership activity.

Economic

- The three principal cities in Wales lie along the M4 corridor. Cardiff is one of the fastest growing capital cities in Europe and is regarded as the political, commercial and business centre of Wales.
- The majority of economic activity lies along the M4 and A55 corridors and in parts of Wales there is still a significant legacy resulting from the decline of major industries such as coal and steel production. Income levels in many areas remain below national averages and many parts of the country have Objective One status.
- The foot and mouth epidemic had a significant impact on the rural economy of Wales.
- Precept levels vary significantly across the country.

- There is a growing tourist industry within Wales.
- Links with Ireland for freight and transport are strong in both the north and south of the country.

Social

- The landmass of Wales is 2,074,203 hectares.
- The population of Wales is 2,952,500 with the greatest population densities in the south of the country. The area served by the South Wales Police, for example, covers 10% of landmass and is home to 46% of the people.
- This inevitably gives rise to great variation in population density which in itself has implications for policing.
- There are a large number of long established communities in rural areas and in many the Welsh language is the primary means of communication. Welsh is currently spoken by 27.8% of the population overall and is now a core subject on the GCSE curriculum as part of a longer term aim to establish a truly bilingual nation.
- Multi-racial communities are predominantly located in south Wales and Cardiff in particular has 8.4% of its population from minority ethnic groups.

- Unemployment levels in Wales average 4.7% and vary across the country from 2.3% in Powys to 7.5% in Blaenau Gwent. There are high levels of deprivation in both urban and rural areas. Sickness levels in some areas are well above UK averages and there are significant levels of long-term unemployment.
- North Wales historically has strong links to the north west of England. Similarly, South Wales and Gwent have linkages to Bristol and the south west of England.

Technical

- Many rural parts of mid and north Wales suffer technical difficulties in relation to mobile communication.

Environmental

- The distance from North to South Wales is approximately 155 miles. The journey takes some four hours as the arterial road links from the North to South of Wales are relatively poor and the road infrastructure does not easily lend itself to collaborative working.
- Density of population across the country varies significantly.
- The main rail links internally in Wales run from east to west.

- Wales has one international airport, near Cardiff. Other primary airports used by people in Wales other than London tend to be Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham. The use of air travel for business within Wales remains in its infancy.
- Wales has a coastline of some 1,680.31 miles including islands. The primary ports are Holyhead, Fishguard, Milford Haven and Swansea.

Legal and/or Logistical

- The devolution settlement means that most public services fall under the aegis of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).
- The Welsh Language Act requires English and Welsh to be dealt with on an equal basis.
- There are a number of pan-Wales organisations including Wales ACPO, WLGA as well as varying regional structures. There is a Police Authorities of Wales (PAW) committee.
- The Courts Service is organised on a Wales and Chester basis. There is a small body of Welsh administrative law but the legal system is essentially a Wales and England one.

Service Performance

- Recent baseline assessments conducted across the country by HMIC showed the following position in relation to the Welsh forces:

	SOUTH WALES	NORTH WALES	GWENT	DYFED POWYS
Reducing Crime	Good Improved	Good Stable	Fair Stable	Excellent Stable
Investigating Crime	Good Stable	Good Improved	Good Deteriorated	Fair Deteriorated
Promoting Safety	Good Improved	Fair Improved	Good Stable	Fair Improved
Providing Assistance	Fair Stable	Good Improved	Good Stable	Fair Stable
Citizen Focus	Fair Improved	Fair Stable	Fair Stable	Good Stable
Resource Use	Fair Improved	Good Improved	Fair Improved	Fair Stable
Local Policing	Fair Stable	Good Stable	Fair Stable	Good Stable

Other

- The British Transport Police has a total of 3,002 officers across Scotland, England and Wales and is split into 7 regions. The Wales & West Region extends west from Birmingham and includes Wales and the south west of England. The Region has a total of 281 officers and 79 police staff, though only a small proportion of these are based in Wales. For this reason their

numbers have not been considered with any of the options.

Drivers for Change

There are a number of drivers for change in the main arising from the work undertaken by HMIC. These include:

- Improved protective services across the country;
- Opportunities for better intelligence gathering;
- Opportunity for service re configuration that will generate economies of scale and improved service resilience;
- Improved implementation of the neighbourhood policing initiative;
- Opportunity for closer alignment with political and partner structures.

Stakeholder Engagement

A project team was assembled with representation from all four Welsh forces. A programme board was established comprising the four Chief Constables and Chairs of police authorities in Wales.

An early conference and workshops were held during October 2005 to identify possible options for change. These were attended by BCU commanders, heads of Crime, Operations and Community Safety, heads of profession from the support services and representatives of the staff associations (UNISON, Superintendents Association, Police Federation) and police authorities.

The Programme Board met thereafter to decide which of the options identified were to go forward for a protective services and organisational assessment.

A protective services assessment was undertaken in a workshop attended by Heads of Crime, Operations and Community Safety.

The organisational assessment was undertaken in a similar way by Heads of Crime, Operations, Community Safety, a number of BCU Commanders, heads of support services, representatives of staff associations, police authorities and WLGA. Other partners were invited but due to tight timescales found themselves unable to attend.

WLGA, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and PAW were also consulted.

The Programme Board then considered an initial business case prepared to meet the deadline of 31st October 2005 for the first submission to the Home Office. The business case is a joint submission by police authorities and forces across Wales.

It should be noted that at the time of writing time constraints have seriously restricted debate and in particular have not allowed for effective consultation with the public - both for forces and police authorities - though some attempts have been made on a localised basis. A meeting in Wrexham was attended by over 50 people. Their perspective was not to support any restructuring of forces in Wales and to retain the North Wales Police boundaries and identity.

It is intended that a more extensive consultation exercise, a key driver to inform decision-making, will be undertaken via a public opinion survey after the Home Secretary has considered the merits of the initial business case submitted.

There has also been little or no opportunity to fully engage each local authority and other partner agencies. This will also be addressed in the next phases.

To date the following external service stakeholders have been engaged:

- Crime Reduction Director for Wales;
- Director of WLGA;
- SOLACE
- Wales Office;
- Local Criminal Justice Boards.

The following internal stakeholders have also been engaged in the process:

- PAW;
- Chairs and members of police authorities;
- Chief Constables of the four Welsh Forces;
- BCU Commanders;
- Heads of Crime, Operations and Community Safety;
- Heads of support services;
- Staff Associations and Trades Unions.

All four police authorities have been engaged throughout the process by the Project Team. All have concerns regarding the time-scales of the process and the barrier this has presented to effective engagement with the public of Wales. Additionally, many in North Wales remain unconvinced of the need for change. All authorities were concerned over the governance structure for Police Authorities that would exist in the future.

A report has been prepared on behalf of the four police authorities on the way in which Police Authority governance and accountability could be adapted and can be seen in the attached Appendix 1.

Their report argues that moving to a Strategic Police Authority (be it one or two) would require efficient administration to be undertaken through a tier of Regional Committees.

Staff have been kept informed through staff association involvement in the initial identification of options and the organisational assessment of the protective services options. This will continue in subsequent phases of the exercise. In addition, internal and external press releases have been made at key points in the process to keep staff and the public informed of progress.

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Options for Change – Identification and Assessment

Despite the success of all four Welsh forces in delivering local policing and the significant investment made through their police authorities, the HMIC report shows that, from now on, policing in Wales will need to encompass the ability to provide Level 2 protective services to a higher standard as well as improved neighbourhood policing. This will require further investment and the current review of structures aims to identify the best way of organising policing above BCU level to achieve this.

Standing still is not a viable way forward and the ‘no change’ option did not pass the protective services assessment for effective Level 2 service delivery.

Again as previously stated, key stakeholders were invited to assist in the identification of options for change. These options were then presented to the Programme Board. Initially, no options were discounted.

The options discussed and considered in relation to moving forward to a formal assessment process were:

- No change;
- Cross border amalgamations between English and Welsh Forces;
- Collaborative arrangements amongst the forces in Wales;
- The selection of a 'lead regional force' – which in this context would involve the identification and resourcing of one force within the region to host the personnel, finance and logistics of the regional protective services requirements on behalf of the other forces in the region;
- The selection of a 'lead force for specialist capabilities' – which would involve one force in the region leading on the investigation of specific categories of crime;
- A federation of forces where, against an agreed regional framework, forces could reform by contracting together to be served by a common set of protective services that could extend to the brigading of support services;
- Strategic Forces. Examples for consideration were:

- Three forces based on, for example, Fire Service boundaries;
- Three forces with South Wales Police standing alone and two other forces;
- Two forces – Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) and North Wales Police (NWP)/ South Wales Police (SWP) and Gwent Police (GP);
- Two forces – DPP, NWP and West Glamorgan (currently part of SWP) as one force and GP, Mid and South Glamorgan (SWP) as the other;
- Two forces – SWP/ DPP, NWP and GP;
- One Strategic Force for Wales.

The Programme Board considered that the following options should be discounted:

- Amalgamations between English and Welsh Forces;
- Collaboration;
- A lead force;
- A lead specialist force;
- A federation of forces.

Broadly these were discounted at this stage because there was little if any compelling evidence to support taking these options forward to the scoring stage of the process. This was largely because of deficiencies in the arrangements for

governance and command. It was felt that the existing collaboration in Wales was not sufficiently effective and that to move to a federation would simply be collaboration by other means - with ambiguous governance. The evidence set out in 'Closing the Gap' was felt to apply to Wales as much as in any other area. This evidence posed significant questions regarding the ability of the options listed above to deliver fully effective Level 2 services.

The Programme Board approved the following seven options for formal scoring at the protective services assessment:

- The 'no change' option;
- Three forces based on, for example, Fire Service boundaries;
- Three forces with South Wales standing alone and two other forces;
- Two forces -
 - DPP and NWP;
 - SWP and GP;
- Two forces -
 - DPP, NWP and West Glamorgan;
 - GP, Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan;
- Two forces -
 - SWP;

- GP, DPP and NWP;
- One strategic force for the whole of Wales.

The process for the protective services assessment was set out in Home Office guidance. It involved a panel of senior managers, with professional knowledge in the seven service areas, assessing the viability of the options under consideration to support the delivery of protective services to nationally accepted standards. In relation to each option for change each protective service was scored in turn against a set of standard attributes set out in the guidance. Recent independent assessments of each force undertaken by HMIC were also taken into account.

The attributes assessed were:

Capacity	Capability
Performance	Criminality
Geography	Coterminosity
Identity	Governance
Economic	Risk

Only the following options passed the protective services assessment and were considered for the next stage of the process - the organisational assessment:

- No change (failed the protective services test but was required as a baseline);
- Two forces –
 - DPP and NWP;
 - SWP and GP;
- Two forces –

- SWP;
- GP, DPP and NWP;
- One strategic force.

The same process was subsequently applied for the organisational assessment with increased weighting for geography and identity. This increase in weighting was supported by the Programme Board in recognition of the strong identity of Wales and its difficult geography.

The four options subject to organisational assessment were presented to the Chairs of police authorities and their Chief Constables on 19th October 2005. After discussion, one option, which involved South Wales Police standing alone, was withdrawn as it was felt that this was not in the best interests of Wales as a whole.

The following three options have been submitted to the Home Office:

- No change;
- Two Forces:
 - SWP / GP;
 - DPP / NWP;
- One strategic Force for Wales.

SJR RTC D

PROBATION SERVICE

National Probation Service for England and Wales

Comments from Chief Officers and Board Chairs in the Wales areas.

The organisation of the Police Service in Wales is a matter of great importance to us because of the nature of the working partnership we enjoy and which is crucial to our responsibilities and those that we share with other organisations.

There must also be awareness that any governance, structural and geographic change that impacts on the Police will in due course have potential to be reflected in the work of other criminal justice and related organisations.

The key issues for us are:-

1. There will be some specialist operational and 'support' within which economies of scale can be achieved through closer sharing. Examples might include elements of serious crime investigation, and personnel/training functions.
2. Police need to be able to respond to local authority strategic development and have representation in these at a level that can commit the organisation in terms of policy and resources.
3. Local operations of key services need local coordination and management with partners. For Probation, these would include the Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPPA) and work in identifying and supervising/monitoring prolific and other priority offenders.
4. Links to local Courts that allow for consistency of approaches and responses across areas but with sensitivity to local priorities and problems must be maintained. This speaks to the retention of a Basic Command Unit Structure that allows some local flexibility within a consistent overall framework; e.g. for coverage of Community safety Partnerships, Child Protection, Youth Offending Team management.
5. Co-terminosity with other agencies has been important for us in achieving coherent joined-up approaches to local issues in strategic and operational terms, e.g. via Local Criminal Justice Boards and Strategic Management Boards for MAPPPA.
6. Current partnership arrangements work well and need to be retained.
7. There is clearly logic to ensuring that, whatever structure exists for Police in Wales, that overall policing in Wales is managed within a context of the geographical and political boundaries of Wales.
8. The publication shortly of the Wales Pathfinder Report will identify elements of the ongoing Reducing Reoffending Action Plan for Wales and all agencies need to be able to engage in this agenda at local (22) as well as at sub-Region (4) and all-wales level. The full implications of this and the forthcoming development of the National Offender Management Service need to be taken account of in any changes to the working arrangements, management and Governance of Police activity in Wales

Statement prepared on behalf of the Chairs and Chief Officers of North Wales, South Wales, Dyfed/Powys and Gwent.

17 October 2005

SJR RTC E

UNISON WALES

RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY – CYMRU/WALES

1. UNISON welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation by the Welsh Assembly Government on the HMIC report Closing the Gap.
2. UNISON National Police Service Group has responded directly to the HMIC report to the Home Office in September 2005 outlining a number of concerns which effect our members, Police Staff as follows:-
 - Protection of Services and Jobs
 - Enhancement of the local accountability of Police Authorities through better connection with the communities they serve.
 - Full involvement of UNISON as a stakeholder in the consultation process
 - An acknowledgement from the Government that reorganisation is costly (concern from UNISON is expressed regarding the eventual knock on effect of the costs of reorganisation being borne by the people of Wales through the Local Authority costs).
 - A commitment to use reorganisation to further the Police Force Modernisation Programme and built Force capacity.
 - Early confirmation of the legal position regarding TUPE and the applicability of the Code of Practice for staff transfers in the Public Sector.
 - Establishment of a Statutory Staff Commission to handle the staffing and HR/IR issues arising from reorganisation.
 - Home Office acknowledgement of its social responsibility to protect staff interests.
3. UNISON Cymru/Wales Police Service Group have also expressed concerns regarding the time scale imposed by the HMIC, with in our view, a sense of haste appears to emerge, with timescales being unrealistic to have an effective consultation with all stakeholders.
4. In the event of any decisions to have a restructuring of force(s) in Wales UNISON have indicated to the employers through the joint discussions that opportunities should exist to enhance the service provided by the Welsh Forces and to use the same opportunities to ensure staff are treated equitably during the process.
5. The staff have expressed concern regarding the cost of the proposals. If early release of information is to be believed, it appears the figures of £47-57million is the starting figure.

A few of the many questions that this raises:-

Where is this money coming from?

What funding is being made available from Central Government and is the funding conditional?

6. Will the Welsh Assembly Government be making representations to the Home Office to ensure that people of Wales will not be expected to pay for this proposal?
7. UNISON also calls on both the Home Office and the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that any changes in the current structures should be used to deal with the issues of Common Pay, Terms and Conditions which includes the matter of Equal Pay, an issue which has been outstanding in the four Forces for some considerable time.
8. UNISON has called for an establishment of a Statutory Staff Commission which would deal with all staffing issues on a National basis. However, there is also the desire to enhance any such commission by having a mirror arrangement for Wales.
9. UNISON is committed to working with the Chief Officers and Police Authorities to ensure that any transitional arrangements work as smoothly as possible.

JEAN BRADY

Regional Head of Police

14 November 2005

**SJR RTC F WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATION**

INTRODUCTION

1. **The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members.**
2. **It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.**

- 3. The WLGA welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee's Review into the Restructuring of the Constabulary.**

Background

- 4. The HMIC report, 'Closing the Gap: A Review of the 'Fitness for Purpose' of the Current Structure of Policing in England and Wales', was published on 16 September 2005. The report provides a professional assessment of the ability of the current structure of the 43 police forces in England and Wales to provide effective and sustainable protective services to a common standard in the future. Protective services have been grouped under the following 7 headings:**

- Counter terrorism and extremism**
- Serious organised and cross border crime**
- Civil contingencies and emergency planning**
- Critical incident management**
- Major crime (homicide)**
- Public order**
- Strategic roads policing**

- 5. The report sets out an analysis of the current key issues on capability and capacity of protective services, the economics of policing and risks posed by organised criminality. The report concludes that while Basic Command Unit (BCU) arrangements and neighbourhood policing provides a solid platform for the future, the current 30 year old, 43 force structure of widely different sizes and capabilities does not.**

- 6. While we accept the rigour of the report many of our members feel that the case constructed for force sizes**

based on 4000 officers and 2000 personnel is somewhat arbitrary. In the Welsh context this does not pay enough attention to the difficult geography/topography of Wales which inevitably means that no matter what size of force is put in place, cooperation with English forces will be the reality when it comes to major incidents, for example, in North East Wales or in Gwent. Similarly the “one size fits all” assumptions do not explain the performance variations which demonstrate that some small forces deliver protective services satisfactorily or well while some larger forces’ performance falls short of this.

- 7. HMIC found the need for a more efficient, integrated operating platform above BCU level. The report stresses, however, the importance of ‘community affinity’ to local services in providing a wider recognisable role and an accountable face in localities, and that any new structure must be small enough to relate to local communities. From the local government viewpoint this is the key factor in the debate and we would wish to see the funding for BCUs ringfenced and enhanced in any proposed structure, and examination of the possibility of statutory partnership boards at this level.**
- 8. The report puts forward a set of options for change, supported by a number of design considerations which could enable the creation of a strong configuration which supports dynamic protective services and the necessary development of neighbourhood policing.**
- 9. In a letter to Chief Constables and Chairs of Police Authorities in England and Wales on 22 September 2005, however, the Home Secretary outlined that the**

government shared the view that “the establishment of strategic forces offers the best long term business solution”. The letter also stated that they believed that this option would lead to “enhanced capacity and capability in the provision of protective services, economies of scale and commensurate efficiency savings, and clarity of responsibilities and governance” and that there was a prospect of strategic forces being established over the next 18 to 30 months. It is the firm view of WLGA members that this timetable is totally inappropriate to allow proper public consultation on the one hand and undertake the necessary organisational shift on the other. Even at this late stage it is vital for the Assembly to keep pressing the case for more time.

- 10. The Home Secretary has requested Police Forces and Police Authorities to consider future policing structures in two key phases:**
 - By the end of October 2005 – identify a shortlist of the most promising options for change within each region.**
 - By 23 December 2005 – produce a final report with the preferred option for change.**

- 11. The parameters set by the Home Secretary are:**
 - That the probable solution is for ‘strategic forces’ with a minimum of 4000 officers or 6000 officers/staff combined**
 - That the proposals should not split existing forces**
 - That proposals should not cross Government Regional Office Boundaries**

- 12. The Home Secretary has indicated that he is prepared to consider other models put forward, but that a compelling case would need to be made for models which do not meet the above parameters. Currently none of the Welsh Police Forces meets the required minimum figures of 4000 officers or 6000 officers/staff combined although, as stated above, we do not necessarily accept that this criteria reflects the situation in Wales.**

The Response by Police Forces and Authorities in Wales

- 13. In response to the Home Secretary's announcement of plans to enhance policing structures across England and Wales, the four Welsh Police Forces and Police Authorities have been working together to address the many issues involved in the proposals. A project team has been established which includes specialists from policing across Wales. The project team has been working to identify, evaluate and assess all the options for policing structures in Wales in the future, in line with the criteria set out by the Home Secretary.**
- 14. Following a number of meetings drawing on the expertise, experience and knowledge of specialist police staff and officers, and also involving other bodies, including the WLGA, three options for the future policing structure in Wales have been submitted to the Home Secretary by the project team. These are:**
 - No change: maintaining the status quo as four existing police forces/authorities**

- **Two forces: a merger between North Wales and Dyfed-Powys; and a merger between South Wales and Gwent**
 - **A single police force/authority for Wales**
- 15. The Management Board (consisting of the four Chief Constables and four Police Authority Chairs) had previously agreed to dismiss another two force option, namely the merger of North Wales, Dyfed Powys and Gwent, with South Wales standing alone.**
 - 16. Following a meeting of the North Wales Police Authority on 28 October, North Wales have also submitted a variation of option 1 (no change), namely the retention of North Wales Force and the development of close partnership arrangements with Cheshire. The WLGA council met on this the same day as the North Wales Police Authority and therefore was not able to discuss this proposal, although we feel that in essence the model is essentially encompassed in the “no change” option.**

Key Issues for Welsh Local Government

- 17. Members of the Association discussed the findings of the HMIC report and the proposals for the future policing structure in Wales at the meeting of the Association’s Council on 28 October 2005.**
- 18. At the meeting, members of the Association agreed to endorse the three options submitted to the Home Secretary by the Project Team.**

19. The work undertaken by the Project Team led by DCC Paul Wood has been inclusive and extensive in the limited time available and this Association can vouch for its integrity through our active involvement. The Association's involvement with the review in Wales is largely a reflection of the positive and effective relationship which exists between us and the Police Forces and Authorities, rather than as a result of any directive from the Home Office. The Association, however, is a representative body and our views can be no substitute for proper consultation with individual local authorities on the proposed changes and by implication for their communities. Consequently the Association has called on the Home Office to send a clear and unequivocal message on the importance of engaging with individual local authorities on this subject.

20. There are also a number of other issues arising out of the review which are of importance and/or concern for local government. Namely, we want to ensure the following:

- Co-terminosity with BCUs, Community Safety Partnerships and local government boundaries and support coordinated working by all partners across community safety is given prime importance;
- That, where possible, historic boundaries are protected;
- That any restructuring of the police in Wales should not impact on the accountability arrangements or boundaries of emergency services that have been devolved such as Fire and Rescue Services;
- Synergy with other police reform agendas such as Neighbourhood policing;
- Assurances that the resources available to Basic Command Units are ring fenced and enhanced over time;

- The proposed strategic police forces have accountability structures in place at a local and at the regional level which must include all local authorities in Wales i.e. no loss of representation on any strategic police authority;
- The potential formation of strategic police authorities must include representation from all constituent local authorities;
- Clear consultative links to local authorities and the communities they serve; and
- Any new performance management framework reflects local needs and does not lead to any additional burdens.

21. The Association is insistant that the Home Office needs to be acutely aware of the different political and cultural environment that exists in Wales, and that what might be right and appropriate for areas in England, will not necessarily be so in Wales.

22. The Association has argued to the Assembly that it is imperative that central government needs to be mindful of the political agenda in Wales. Namely the Beecham Review of Public Services in Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government's "Making the Connections" agenda. Indeed the latter approach points to a different philosophy on the part of the Assembly based on the encouragement of voluntary collaboration as opposed to wholesale structural reform. Similarly the Association raised the issue of police devolution in its recent manifesto "Leading Reform in local services" and while we have not yet debated the full implications of this the possibility of police devolution in the future should be a real consideration in the debate.

23. Based on the strict assessment model set by the Home Office, the option for a single strategic force scored the highest during the assessment and evaluation process and by a

considerable margin. Should the option for one strategic police force and authority be put forward as the preferred option in the final report on the 23 December 2005, further discussions would need to be held as to developing the detail of how this would operate in Wales.

- 24. There is currently a strong sense that some sort of regional governance and accountability structure between the strategic force and BCU level would need to be implemented. The formation of a regional tier is imperative not only to reflect the political context, the geography and the diverse cultural differences that exist in Wales, but also in terms of ensuring democratic and local accountability. The model produced by Alan Fry, the Chief Executive of the South Wales Police Authority, is a very useful and thoughtful attempt to map the implications of new governance arrangements which has been endorsed by the WLGA council as a possible way forward in the event of the rejection of the “no change” option and the establishment of a strategic force(s).**

- 25. The Association would want full discussions with regards to the cost implications of any final proposal for restructuring. The view of this Association is that savings in all the change options will result in significant short term additional cost pressures and will require the injection of more central resource support to assist the reorganisation process. We have not yet seen police calculations on the projected net present values of the various options but we would expect the merger options to deliver real savings in the medium and long term.**

- 26. We also understand that Sir Michael Lyons, currently conducting a review into local funding, raised in his recent evidence to the Assembly the need for a debate on the future of the police precept. This will need to feed into this debate when he reports at the end of 2006.**
- 27. The option for a single national force also raises the concept of a national precept or in the dual force option two regional precepts. It is a fact that pressure is already intense on the council tax and that force restructuring should not exacerbate this. If as anticipated significant economies of scale flow from these options then there is a need to maintain real discipline on cost pressures. At minimum this should result in a precept based on a weighted average of the current precepts across the 4 police areas relating to the number of Band D equivalent properties on which council tax is payable. The prospect of any restructuring costs falling on the council tax payer must be avoided at all costs.**

**WRITTEN STATEMENTS RECEIVED IN SUPPORT OF ORAL EVIDENCE
TO COMMITTEE**

REF	ORGANISATION
SJR RTC 1	Caerphilly County Council
SJR RTC 2	Carmarthenshire County Council
SJR RTC 3	Ceredigion County Council
SJR RTC 4	Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership
SJR RTC 5	Chief Fire Officer North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
SJR RTC 6	Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
SJR RTC 7	Conwy County Borough Council
SJR RTC 8	Denbighshire County Council
SJR RTC 9	Gwynedd Council
SJR RTC 10	Her Majesty's Court Service
SJR RTC 11	Isle of Anglesey County Council
SJR RTC 12	Llanddyfnan Community C
SJR RTC 13	Llandridnod Wells Homewatch
SJR RTC 14	Dr. John Marek AM
SJR RTC 15	Monmouthshire Community Safety Partnership
SJR RTC 16	Newport City Council
SJR RTC 17	National Offender Management Service
SJR RTC 18	North Wales Criminal Justice Board
SJR RTC 19	Pembrokeshire Local Health Board
SJR RTC 20	Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales
SJR RTC 21	Powys County Council ECR Directorate
SJR RTC 22	Powys Community Safety Partnership
SJR RTC 23	Safer Bridgend: Bridgend Community Safety Partnership
SJR RTC 24	Stonewall Cymru
SJR RTC 25	Gwenda Thomas AM
SJR RTC 26	Together Creating Communities
SJR RTC 27	Torfaen Community Safety Unit
SJR RTC 28	Vale of Glamorgan Council
SJR RTC 29	Victim Support Wales
SJR RTC 30	Voluntary Worker in Torfaen
SJR RTC 31	Wales Association of Community Safety Officers
SJR RTC 32	Welsh Language Board
SJR RTC 33	Wrexham County Borough Council

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

SJR RTC 1

CAERPHILLY COUNTY COUNCIL

7 November 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee – Restructuring of Constabulary

Thank-you for your letter of 28th September and the opportunity to submit comments on future structural arrangements for police services in Wales.

I have had discussions with Cabinet Members and relevant officers on this issue and there is a general feeling of inevitability that we are moving towards larger police service areas, with an all-Wales force seen as the most likely outcome. The need for a strategic approach in a number of key areas is recognised and understood. The critical issue at the local authority level, though, is that the Basic Command Units (BCUs) remain in place following any such restructuring. Indeed, we see the potential for **devolvement of more powers to BCUs** working in **close partnership with local authorities**.

At present, the Chief Constable for Gwent is relatively **accessible** to local authorities for a range of issues. It will be important when working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities that we do not find it more difficult to achieve joint decisions with the Police at the 'Greater Gwent' or other levels. This is particularly relevant in the context of '**Making the Connections**' which is encouraging public services to work together. Some of the discussions about having a regional tier of police administration to bridge the gap between BCUs and one (or two) large service(s) may take on a particular relevance in this respect.

Inevitably, there will be **costs** associated with any re-organisation and it will be important to be able to demonstrate clearly that these costs will be outweighed in the medium term by efficiency savings from moving to a smaller number of service areas. Furthermore, we would like reassurance that BCUs' existing resources will not be diminished as a result of any changes, and that at least part of any efficiency savings will be reinvested at the BCU level. This would apply particularly to BCUs that cover more than one local authority area as there would be a need to build their capacity and strengthen their **performance** as effective local bodies. We would be concerned if efficiency savings were to be channelled primarily into the establishment of Wales-wide strategic teams and would certainly be opposed to any transfer of funds from BCUs to the 'centre'.

Below I have included some further comments relating specifically to the terms of reference as set out in your letter.

Relationship between police and the communities they serve / identity

There is a danger, at a time of trying to get closer to the community, that the creation of a larger service will be seen as a backwards step. However, if local relations with the BCU are maintained/strengthened, this should lessen such fears. It will be important that performance at the local level does not suffer as a result of any changes - and this includes performance in terms of alleviating fear of crime. The continued emphasis on **neighbourhood policing** is welcomed in this respect and any opportunity to strengthen this approach should be taken.

Impact of any change on Community Safety Partnerships and other partnership arrangements

Linked to the above point, the switch to a Wales-wide police authority would cause us some concerns given our representative system of democracy. With the likelihood of only ten local government seats on such an authority, clearly 12 local authorities would not be directly represented. (The different population size of local authorities should also be taken into account as a factor when determining representation).

This again leads us to seek a strengthening of relations at the local level. There is the possibility of introducing a system of accountability directly between the BCU commander and the Local Authority as part of this re-organisation.

The Community Safety Partnerships may offer another option, although, of course, there are presently two Community Safety Partnerships (for Caerphilly county borough and Blaenau Gwent) linked to a single BCU.

The changes under consideration could be linked to giving local Partnerships more flexibility to agree their own performance targets instead of having these set nationally.

Relationship between the police and those services which fall directly within the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government

As part of its Social Justice remit, the Assembly already has some responsibility for issues including substance misuse and domestic violence. Having a single Wales service could lead to more consistent practice instead of having potentially four different 'takes' on national policy.

I trust that the above comments are helpful. If you have any queries on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Malgwyn Davies

Chief Executive.

SJR RTC 2 CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

There has been considerable success in recent years in reducing crime within Carmarthenshire. This has, in part, been due to the close working relationship between the police and the local authority, and other key partners and there is inevitable concern that this may be undermined by the proposed changes.

While there remain many challenges yet to resolve in this area, we believe that the proven success over the past few years in tackling prolific offenders and in generally reducing crime statistics would suggest that the current structure would best enable us to face these challenges.

Based purely on local considerations, the relationships between the police and the local authority – and the local community – within Carmarthenshire do not merit changes and we would support the retention of Dyfed Powys Police as it is currently structured.

In particular, we would be completely opposed to any change in the Basic Command Unit structure which is co-terminous with the local authority boundary. Ultimately, should re-structuring take place, the major concern for this authority is that we retain Carmarthenshire as a Basic Command Unit with sufficient resources and delegation in order to address the very real concerns of the community in this area on crime and anti social behaviour in the county.

That said, however, the ability to liaise directly at force level with Dyfed Powys Police has also been a real strength and the loss of this relationship is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the teamworking and joint response to major issues which has worked so well in the past.

Of the four options contained in the report we would, therefore, favour the status quo.

The proposal to establish two forces – one for South Wales and one for the rest of Wales - seems to us to offer no merit whatsoever.

The alternative of combining North Wales Police with Dyfed Powys Police would be preferable, but would still produce, geographically, a very large unit.

If change is inevitable, there would seem to be no merit favouring either of the “two-force” options over the apparently preferred “all-Wales force” option.

However, we would restate our opinion that we feel change is being instigated on Dyfed-Powys for entirely external and economic reasons with the potential to upset what has been a real success story over recent years.

Although the all-Wales model has emerged as the option which fares best on evaluation, this is only because the evaluation is geared to a methodology which weights certain factors above others and does not adequately deal with the identity, geography and topography of Wales.

SJR RTC 3

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Ailstrwythuro'r Heddlu – Adroddiad Cyngor Sir Ceredigion i Bwyllgor Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfywio Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Mae'r Cyngor Sir wedi ystyried y gwahoddiad a gynhwyswyd yn eich llythyr dyddiedig 28 Medi 2005 am sylwadau ar Ailstrwythuro'r Heddlu drwy banel sydd yn cynnwys pob parti a chyflwynir y sylwadau canlynol ar gyfer eu hystyried gan y Pwyllgor. Wrth lunio'r cyflwyniad, ystyriwyd hefyd farn Partneriaeth Diogelwch Cymunedol Ceredigion a'r trafodaethau sydd yn cael eu cynnal gan Chymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru.

Mae'r Cyngor Sir yn argymhell yn gryf y dylid datganoli pwerau a chyfrifoldeb dros yr heddlu drwy Gymru i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol. Mae'n credu fod hwn yn egwyddor pwysig a ddylai ategu unrhyw ymarfer ailstrwythuro yn y dyfodol. Byddai datblygiad o'r fath yn dod â phob gwasanaeth argyfwng yng Nghymru o dan reolaeth y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol gyda'r holl fanteision a fyddai'n dod yn sgîl y cydweithio a'r cydlynw.

Unwaith y byddai hyn wedi ei sefydlu, byddai'n darparu fframwaith genedlaethol ar gyfer y drafodaeth ar y dull mwyaf effeithiol o drefnu'r heddlu yng Nghymru. Mae'r Cyngor Sir yna'n cytuno gyda Phartneriaeth Diogelwch Cymunedol Ceredigion y byddai trafodaeth o'r fath yn seiliedig ar y "blociau adeiladu hanfodol" a grewyd gan yr Unedau Gorchymyn Sylfaenol a byddai'n argymhell i'r Pwyllgor y farn a fynegwyd gan y bartneriaeth yn eu llythyr dyddiedig 27 Hydref 2005 y dylai'r rhain ffurfio sail unrhyw strywthur yn y dyfodol.

Gan ystyried y dyletswyddau a roddir ar y Cyngor Sir gan Ddeddf Trosedd ac Anrhefn 1989 a'r strwythur sydd yn ei le yng Ngheredigion ar gyfer hyrwyddo cydweithrediad a chydlyniant rhwng yr asiantaethau perthnasol, byddai'r Cyngor Sir hefyd yn argymhell i chi y prif faterion a bwysleisiwyd gan Gymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru parthed rôl awdurdodau yn ailstrwythuro, sef;

- Cadw at yr un ffiniau â'r Unedau Gorchymyn Sylfaenol, Partneriaethau Diogelwch Cymunedol a ffiniau llywodraeth leol a chefnogi gweithio ar y cyd gan y partneriaid i gyd yng nghyswllt diogelwch cymunedol.
- Synergedd gydag agendâu eraill ar gyfer diwygio'r heddlu megis Plismona Cymdogaeth
- Sicrhod fod yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i'r Unedau Gorchymyn Sylfaenol yn cael eu neilltuo.

- Mae gan yr heddluoedd strategol arfaethedig strwythurau atebolrwydd yn eu lle ar lefel leol ac o bosibl ranbarthol ac mae'n rhaid cynnwys awdurdodau lleol.
- Cysylltiadau ymgynghorol clir ag awdurdodau lleol a'r cymunedau a wasanaethir ganddynt
- Bod cynrychiolwyr awdurdodau lleol yn cael eu cynnwys parthed rheolaeth dros unrhyw ardaloedd newydd yr heddlu
- Bod, lle bo hynny'n bosibl ffiniau hanesyddol yn cael eu diogelu.
- Dylai unrhyw fframwaith rheoli perfformiad newydd adlewyrchu anghenion lleol ac ni ddylai arwain at unrhyw feichiau ychwanegol.

Miss EMB Morgan
 Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol a Chyfreithiol
 Cyngor Sir Ceredigion
 4 Tachwedd 2005

SJR RTC 2

TRANSLATED VERSION

Restructuring of Constabulary – Submission of Ceredigion County Council to the National Assembly for Wales Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

The County Council has considered the invitation contained in your letter of 28 September 2005 for submissions on the Restructuring of Constabulary by way of an all-party panel and the following comments are submitted for the consideration of the Committee. In formulating its submission, it also took account of the views of the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership and the discussions underway at the WLGA.

The County Council strongly recommends that the National Assembly should be given devolved powers and responsibility for the police force throughout Wales. It believes that this is the important principle that should underpin any future restructuring exercise. Such a development would bring all emergency services in Wales under the control of the National Assembly with all the benefits of more effective cooperation and coordination this would entail.

Once this was established, it would provide a national framework for the discussion on the most effective way of organising the police force in Wales. The County Council then agrees with the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership that such a discussion should be based on the "critical building blocks" created by the current Basic Command Units [BCU] and would commend to the Committee the views expressed by the Partnership in their letter of 27 October 2005 that these should form the basis of any future structure.

Being mindful of the duties placed on the County Council by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the structure in place in Ceredigion to promote

cooperation and coordination between the relevant agencies, the County Council would also commend to you the key issues highlighted by the WLGA in respect of the role of local authorities in any restructuring, namely:

- Co-terminosity with Basic Command Units, Community Safety Partnerships and local government boundaries and support joined-up working by all partners across community safety
- Synergy with other police reform agendas such as Neighbourhood Policing
- Assurances that the resources available to Basic Command Units are ring fenced
- The proposed strategic police forces have accountability structures in place at a local and possibly regional level which must include local authorities
- Clear consultative links to local authorities and the communities they serve
- That governance of any new police areas includes local authority representation
- That, where possible, historic boundaries are protected
- Any new performance management framework reflects local needs and does not lead to additional burdens

Miss EMB Morgan
Director of Corporate and Legal Services
Ceredigion County Council
4 November 2005

SJR RTC 4 CEREDIGION COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Dear Mr. Chaffey,

Restructuring the Constabulary

I refer to your letter dated 28 September, 2005, inviting written submissions to the Committee on this topic.

This matter was considered by the members of the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership at an Executive Board Meeting held on 13th October, 2005, the Members having had sight of the HMIC Report "Closing the Gap" - A Review of the "Fitness for Purpose" of the current structure of policing in England & Wales", and other related correspondence including a letter from the Home Secretary to Chief Officers in England and Wales and Chairs of police Authorities in England and Wales entitled "Police Force Structures",

and a letter from the Director of Policy to Home Office Regional Directors and Chairs of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

In essence, the views of the Members of the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnerships were strongly supportive of the observation contained in the executive summary of the HMIC report at 1.45, that Basic Command Units (BCU's) are the critical building blocks of the current structure and must continue to be so under any future structure. In this regard Members were mindful of the Government white paper "*Building Communities, beating crime, a better police service for the 21st century*" which had set out three overarching objectives. Firstly the spread of neighbourhood policing to every community with improved police response and client service. Secondly, further modernisation of the police to equip them to deliver these changes and thirdly, greater involvement of communities and citizens in determining how their communities are policed,

The Members also recognised the considerable advantages of BCU's having already secured co-terminosity with local political and partners boundaries, and expressed the desire for this arrangement to also be preserved under any new structure. This is of particular importance, given the Review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002. This review recognises that success in the long term in addressing the underlying social, economic and environmental causal factors of crime and disorder requires coordinated, community based action taking place within an enabling legislative framework, supported by Local and Central Government. The Government has already stated that its overriding aim is to make Community Safety Partnerships the most effective vehicle for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in their respective communities, and clearly BCU's play, and must continue to play, a major role in this strategic approach.

Lastly, the Members stressed that the Ceredigion BCU must continue to be retained and adequately resourced at levels commensurate with the delivery of a quality, everyday policing service to the population of the County.

The Community Safety Partnership expressed its concern that a move to a bigger structure should not diminish in any way the ability of the BCU to deal with aspects of crime prevention and detection on a local basis. Any move to centralise staff and operational resources would be subject to strong objection.

The Ceredigion BCU was inspected by HMIC Wales and Central England Region in February, 2004. The following extracts from the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the inspection report are pertinent;

"Ceredigion BCU covers a huge geographical area with a varied demand placed on its staff arising from policing sparsely populated rural areas in contrast to busy town centres, other urban conurbations and two universities. Demand also varies seasonally with an estimated 850,000 visitors in the area during the spring and summer months. Despite these issues, Officers and

Staff are justifiably proud of an excellent performance record for a number of years in the key Crime and Community Safety areas.

"The contribution of partnership working to this long term positive performance is evident and key partners and staff of the area can reflect on excellent progress in what can sometimes be a difficult arena. The strategic and tactical integration achieved so far must be built upon by further marketing to BCU staff, the availability of support from various working groups set up under the Community Safety Strategy."

These extracts eloquently describe the extremely cooperative and harmonious relationship that exists between the Ceredigion BCU and the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership, which the Members with considerable justification feel would be the envy of many.

In conclusion, the relationship between the Ceredigion BCU and the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership is the product of many years, and whilst the Partnership accepts that in this instance change is inevitable, it must be carefully weighed and introduced in such a manner as to ensure that confidence, trust and commonality of purpose are maintained and strengthened.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Watkin
Chair, Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership
Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council

SJR RTC 5 **CHIEF OFFICER -**
NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

31st October 2005

Dear Roger

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION
COMMITTEE**
Restructuring of Constabulary

Thank you for your letter of 28th September 2005 inviting the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to comment on the Home Secretary's proposals for police restructuring. I am pleased to advise you that the matter was considered by the Executive Panel of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) at its meeting on 26th October and the following represents Members' views.

1. The FRA would urge that due recognition is given to the existing boundaries of North Wales, which have a long history and are clearly understood by the people who live within those boundaries. The fire and rescue service in North Wales is the only one of the three that has a co-terminous boundary with its police force and this has resulted in innovation and efficiency through collaboration. Prime examples of this would be the development of a tri-service control arrangement and a tri-service estates management project, both of which (as the name implies) have ambulance service involvement as well. The FRA would not wish to see the effectiveness and operational benefits from the large scale collaborative projects currently underway being reduced or removed by police restructure. In addition, there have been local initiatives such as the Community Safety Partnerships which have proven records of success.

2. The ability of the fire and rescue service in North Wales to operate efficiently depends on effective joint working with the police service. The FRA would not wish to see any diminution of that ability through police restructuring. This includes work at all levels, up to and including Chief Fire Officer/Chief Constable, where the close working relationship between senior managers has been crucial to the projects mentioned in paragraph 1.

3. The Home Secretary's proposals advocate forces of no less than 4(XX) police officers. This clearly leads, in a Welsh context, to either one or two police forces for Wales. Whilst it is understood that the numbers referred to are considered to be optimum numbers for effective policing, it cannot be correct that the number of officers is the sole criteria for change. There must be consideration of local links, the existing relationships with other agencies such as fire and rescue and the local authorities, the culture of North Wales and the significant issue of the Welsh language. Additionally, the geography of Wales must surely mean that the comparatively poor communications and travel links between South and North have to be a factor.

4. The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has committed to the retention of three fire and rescue authorities for Wales, a view shared by the North Wales FRA. It should not necessarily follow that a restructure of police force boundaries in Wales results in a corresponding change to fire and rescue boundaries.

Please feel free to contact me if you need further clarification.

Yours sincerely
Simon A Smith
Chief Fire Officer
cc Ian Miller, Clerk to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

**SJR RTC 6 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER -
 SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE**

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.

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

SJR RTC 7

CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

9 November 2005

Dear Mr. Chaffey

RE: Restructuring the Constabulary

The Council's Community Safety Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet have now considered this issue. Members expressed disappointment at the poor consultation process, having received no direct contact or details from the Home Office, and Members considered that the timescales given were unrealistic if they were to give this important matter the consideration it deserved. Policing and community safety issues are very high on the agenda in the community and with elected representatives.

Having regard to the importance of the issue, Members were of the view that a Royal Commission should be established to look at policing throughout the United Kingdom and in particular, to look at the possibility of a two level policing arrangement. One UK wide force to be responsible for issues of national importance, with a secondary tier providing local policing which could be based upon unitary authority areas in Wales having local accountability. This type of policing model appears to be in operation in other areas within the European Community.

Councillors were particularly concerned to ensure that local accountability was retained in North Wales for the body responsible for delivering the policing services for the area. In particular they noted that currently the Police Authority is composed of 17 representatives which makes equitable representation through the area difficult under the current arrangement., and if retained would again be likely to cause problems under any new arrangement.

Yours sincerely,
Derek Barker
Chief Executive

SJR RTC 8

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Dear Roger

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee Restructuring of Constabulary

Thank you for your letter of 28 September.

I attach a copy of my Leader's recent letter to the Chair of North Wales Police Authority. This represents the provisional response that she has made on behalf of Denbighshire County Council. The full Council will be meeting on 22 November to finalise its comments, which falls after your deadline for submissions.

Yours

Ian Miller
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

Dear Ian,

POLICE FORCE STRUCTURES

Thank you for your letter of 30 September. In the inadequate time that has been allowed by the Home Office for this very significant process, there has not been the opportunity to arrange for the County Council formally to consider its views. While I have consulted some key colleagues, it is intended that the full Council should consider the matter at its meeting on 22 November and therefore the enclosed comments have to be regarded as provisional. I hope that you find them helpful. If you would welcome a discussion about this, please let my office know.

Yours sincerely,

Cynghorydd/Councillor Rhiannon Hughes MBE
Arweinydd / Leader

POLICE FORCE STRUCTURES

Provisional comments from Denbighshire County Council – October 2005

1. There has been inadequate time allowed by the Home Office for this major process, particularly in terms of seeking input from partner agencies and the general public.
2. There is concern that the "one size fits all" nature of the approach - that police forces should be above a stated minimum size - means that other factors have been overlooked such as accountability, local links, cultural issues and relationships with other statutory agencies.
3. For example, the suggested minimum size of 4,000 officers must, ultimately, be a subjective view. We suspect that there are some smaller forces that deliver some of the protective services satisfactorily or well, and equally there may be some larger forces that do not deliver a universally satisfactory or good service. And where is the clear evidence that a force of 3,900 or even 3,000 officers cannot deliver? If the Home Office's proposals are "right", why is the Scottish Executive not pursuing similar changes?

4. There does not seem to have been adequate exploration of all alternative solutions to creating a pattern of strategic police forces. For example, if it is accepted that some matters are best dealt with on a "national" basis such as major crime inquiries, civil contingencies, terrorism, etc. while other can best be handled locally, is another possible solution to move to a "national" police force while retaining a pattern of local police forces (which could be on an even more local footing than now)?

Retention of separate police force for North Wales

5. We perceive the following benefits of retaining the present North Wales Police force and authority:

- there is a strong feeling of identity within North Wales, which the boundaries of the police force and authority reflect;
- there are common boundaries with the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, which promote collaboration and joint working. An example is the joint control room project which is being implemented;
- the chief constable, other senior officers and the police authority are accessible and accountable to local people: far more so than would be possible in a larger force;
- . North Wales is a sufficiently large geographical area already for policing purposes. Merging it within an even larger area would raise concerns, not just about remoteness and accountability but about whether resources and posts would be removed from North Wales and deployed elsewhere, with a consequent impact on performance in tackling crime and disorder and on the economy. This would be disappointing when four of the six counties are in the Objective 1 area;
- such a merger would undermine again the status of North Wales as a region within Wales. This is not a trivia! point when the capital and the seat of the Welsh Assembly Government are at the other end of the country;
- merger with other areas would endanger the positive approach that North Wales Police takes on matters relating to Welsh culture and language;
- it avoids need for changes to regions of the Criminal Justice Board and National Offender Management Service: the North Wales region has been established in only the last 12 months or so and has not had time to "bed down".

6. We recognise, however, that retention of the North Wales Police on its current footing does not meet many of the criteria that the Home Secretary has set. On the assumption that change will be required to meet them, we do not believe that lead authority or other collaborative approaches would be easy to negotiate and secure in the time that has been allowed. Our remaining comments therefore focus on options that would involve mergers with other forces.

Merger with Cheshire

7. We strongly oppose this option. It would not meet the criterion about staying within the boundaries of Government Offices for the Regions (although there is no such Office for Wales). There are also the following substantial practical objections:

- a cross-border force could not be accommodated within the separate local government finance systems for Wales and for England. Who would be responsible for capping its council tax precept, for example?
- a cross-border force would not be as likely to deal satisfactorily with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act as a force based solely in Wales; while we recognise the UK Government's position that it has no plans to devolve responsibility for policing in Wales to the National Assembly, a cross-border police force would make such a step impossible. We do not believe that such a development in the Assembly's powers should be ruled out for all time.

Merger with Dyfed Powys

8 While this would produce a police force near to the suggested minimum size, we are concerned about:

- what its name would be. Mid and North Wales might be workable but would ignore South West Wales;
- Its poor alignment with other structures. No single organisation would share precisely the same boundaries. While some organisations would fall wholly within its area (e.g. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service), others would not (such as Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service);
- Its large size: if such an approach were to be adopted, there may as well be a single police force for Wales;
- There would need to be changes to accountability arrangements (see below).

Merger with Dyfed Powys and Gwent

9 This would produce a police force above the suggested minimum size. We would be seriously concerned about this option, however, for the following reasons:

- no obvious name. "Rest of Wales police force?"
- its extremely poor alignment with other structures;
- there is no logic that Newport and Llanelli would be served by one police force while Cardiff and Swansea would be served by another;
- South Wales police would not meet the criterion for minimum size, so why should other forces in Wales have to merge?
- There would need to be changes to accountability arrangements (see below).

Single police force for Wales

10 If a separate police force cannot be retained for North Wales, then a single force for Wales would seem to be the next best option. However this would be conditional on significant changes to the accountability arrangements that presently apply under the Police Act 1996:

- The police authority should consist solely of members appointed by county and county borough councils, with a minimum of one member appointed by each council. This would underline the role of the police within the local government family, given the impact that police spending has on council tax levels across Wales, and ensure that the Home Secretary

concentrated on the strategic legislative, policy and funding framework. Any model of police authority which did not allow direct representation by each of the 22 councils would be unacceptable given that the police is partly funded through council tax;

- Each Basic Command Unit in Wales should have a statutory board which would perform a scrutiny role in respect of performance of the BCU, its commander and the police authority member(s) who represent the area. The majority of members of the BCU Board should be appointed by county and county borough councils, with other partners in Wales such as community councils and the National Assembly appointing the remainder. Members of the police authority would not be eligible for appointment.

11 It would also be essential that, if a Wales-wide police force were formed, it should have no impact on the structure of the fire and rescue service in Wales. This is the devolved responsibility of the Assembly: the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has repeatedly made clear that the Welsh Assembly Government has ruled out changes to the number of fire authorities or a merger of their three control rooms.

- 12 In pursuance of this point, we would also be opposed to any change that impacted on the tri-service joint control room project in North Wales, which is nearing implementation. This is an excellent example of collaboration across the emergency services, in line with the agenda set in "Making the Connections", and will provide a robust, accessible service for people in North Wales. Technology should mean that, even if North Wales Police is merged with other police forces, emergency calls can continue to be dealt with in North Wales by call handlers who are familiar with its geography.

SJR RTC 9

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

27 Hydref 2005

Annwyl Mr Chaffey

Ail Strwythuro'r Heddlu

Cyfeiriaf at eich llythyr dyddiedig 28 Medi. Nodir fod sylwadau a wneir, oherwydd yr amserlen dynn i ymateb heb dderbyn sêl bendith y Cyngor. Fe'i hadroddir i Fwrdd y Cyngor ar 15 Tachwedd a phetai unrhyw newid neu sylwadau pellach mi gysylltaf â chwi eto.

I ymateb i'r ddogfen hoffwn wneud y sylwadau canlynol:-

- a) teimlir nad oes gwybodaeth ddigonol wedi'i gyflwyno i wir argyhoeddi yr angen i newid.
- b) Os yw'r angen i newid yn cael ei dderbyn rhoddir ffariaeth i sefydlu heddlu i Gymru yn hytrach nag unthyw opsiwn fyddai yn uno unrhyw un o heddluoedd presennol Cymru gyda Heddluoedd o Lloegr.
- c) Ynglwm i'r awgrym o heddlu i Gymru nodwyd y pwyntiau canlynol:-
 - i) pryder y byddai adnoddau yn symud allan o Ogledd Cymru i ardaloedd y de
 - ii) y dymuniad i brif swyddfa'r heddlu newydd gael ei lleoli tu allan i Gaerdydd
 - iii) u dymuniad i weld strwythur a phresenoldeb rhanbarthol Gogledd Cymru amlwg gan sicrhau dim lleihad perfformiad yn lleol

ch) yn ychwanegol i'r uchod mi fyddai angen sicrhau atebolrwydd clir i heddlu traws-Gymru. Mae gan y Cyngor gynrychilwyr ar Awdurdod Heddlu Cymru a disgwylir i Lywodraeth Leol gael cynrychiolaeth ddigonol i sicrhau atebolrwydd ar gorff llywodraethu newydd.

d) mae'r ddogfen yngynghorol yn datgan nad oes bwriad newid trefniadau ar lefel yr Unedau Rheolaethol Lleol (Basic Command Unit) ac felly cymerir nad oes newid hefyd i drefniadau Partneriathau Diogelwch Cymunedol.

Yn eiddoch yn gywir

D.P. Lewis

Cyfarsyddwr Strategol - Gofal

SJR RTC 4

TRANSLATED VERSION

Dear Mr Chaffey,

Restructuring the Constabulary

With reference to your letter dated 28 September, please note that, due to the tight deadline for responses, these comments haven't been given the Council's seal of approval. I will report to the Council's board on 15 November, and, should there be any changes or further comments, I will contact you.

In response to the document, I would like to make the following comments:

- a) We feel that there has not been enough information presented to convincingly demonstrate the need for change.
- b) If change is inevitable, we would favour the establishment of a Welsh Police force over any option that would merge any of the existing Welsh forces with forces in England.
- c) In relation to the suggestion of a Welsh Police Force, we make the following points:-
 - i) There is concern that resources would move out of North Wales to southern regions;
 - ii) We would recommend that the headquarters of the new force be situated outside Cardiff;
 - iii) We would like to see a conspicuous North Wales regional structure and presence whilst ensuring that there is no diminution in local performance.

- d) In addition to this, clear accountability for an all-Wales police force would need to be ensured. The council has a representative on the North Wales Police Authority and expects Local Government to have sufficient representation to ensure accountability on any new governing body.
- e) The consultation document states that there is no intention to change the organisation at the Basic Command Unit level, and so we take it that there would be no changes to the organisation of Community Safety Partnerships.

Yours sincerely,
D.P. Lewis
Strategic Director - Care Directorate

SJR RTC 10

HER MAJESTY'S COURT SERVICE

4 November 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE
RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY**

I am very grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to its policy review into the recommendations of the report *Restructuring of Constabulary*. The redrawing of police boundaries potentially has significant implications for Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) and the workings of the criminal justice system as a whole in Wales. While I appreciate that criminal justice is not a devolved function, the Committee will wish to be informed of those implications and possible changes to the delivery of court services that may follow from changes to police structures.

HMCS in Wales

HMCS is an agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. It is responsible for supporting the judiciary in the administration of the courts in England and Wales. The organisation is administered through 7 regions; the courts in Wales being run by the Wales and Cheshire Region, of which I am the Director. Since 1 April 2005, each Region has been further divided into areas whose boundaries are co-terminous with those of the 43 police forces of England and Wales. The Wales and Cheshire Region therefore has 5 areas, each led by an Area Director (Cheshire, Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales). The Areas are the key units of operational management of the Courts Service, each Area Director being responsible for the delivery of all court services (High Court, Crown Court, county courts and Magistrates II Courts) in his or her Area.

The services are currently delivered through 98 court buildings in Wales and Cheshire with a staff of 1,600 supporting 75 salaried Judges, 180 fee paid judiciary and about 3,000 lay magistrates.

The Principle of Co-terminosity

The unification of the courts under HMCS from 1 April 2005 enabled the courts system to reflect the boundaries of the 43 police forces in England and Wales for the first time in line with other criminal justice agencies (e.g. Crown Prosecution Service, Youth Offending Teams, Probation). Each police area has a non-statutory Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) which brings together the Chief Officers of those agencies to improve the operational delivery of justice in the area (i.e. the Chief Constable, Chief Probation Officer, Chief Crown Prosecutor, HMCS Area Director etc). The LCJBs are overseen by the National Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) for England and Wales, supported by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform. The LCJBs are set performance targets and monitored against their delivery by the NCJB; for example, in respect of speed of disposal of cases, victim and witness care and fine enforcement.

The importance of the LCJBs to the effective operation of the Criminal Justice System as a whole cannot be over-emphasised. They provide fora in which the Chief Officers can work together to ensure that the end-to-end criminal justice process works as smoothly and speedily as possible. The Chief Officers are generally close enough to the front line to identify practical problems and rubbing points on the ground. They also have the authority to make change happen in their respective organisations. The Board provides a forum in which each can challenge the others honestly and robustly to ensure all work to deliver their common goals. The Boards are often supported by sub-groups of local criminal justice agency representatives to review and improve processes and develop specific local initiatives.

The creation of the LCJBs has had a real and measurable impact on the performance of the criminal justice system in Wales. There is, of course, ample scope for further improvement. This is the reason why the co-terminosity of criminal justice boundaries is an important principle. It is co-terminosity which has facilitated greatly improved joint working between the agencies and thereby contributed to steady improvement in service delivery to the public. It is vital if further improvements are to be made to the performance of the criminal justice system that this capacity for effective joint working at a reasonably local level is maintained.

North Wales / Cheshire

Since the creation of the Crown Court in 1972 the Crown Court centres in North Wales have been run from Chester. The same is true of North Wales civil and some family work. A result of this is that over the years there has been investment in courts on the terms that Cheshire and North Wales form one area. At present there is insufficient courtroom capacity in North Wales for all criminal, civil and family work originating there to be heard there and in consequence a proportion of the work is dealt with in Cheshire.

We are in the process of moving the administration of North Wales work from Chester to North Wales and we are also developing plans to improve our courtroom accommodation in North Wales by reorganising present courts and seeking funding for new builds. We have not yet secured funding for all necessary works and it will be some years before we can guarantee that all work originating from North Wales will be heard in North Wales.

Restructuring the Constabulary

The reorganisation of the Constabulary therefore has significant potential consequences for the Wales and Cheshire Region of HMCS. If the Home Secretary's injunction that new police structures should not cut across the English Government Region boundaries is followed, then it must be assumed that the Cheshire Constabulary would be merged with another force or forces in North West England. Were the principle of co-terminosity to be maintained, then HMCS (and other agencies) would have to give serious consideration to realigning their structures to mirror those of the police, and Cheshire could presumably become part of a North West Region. In the short to medium term the new boundaries would have to remain porous to allow the movement of cases, Judges and staff, until such time as additional courtroom accommodation and office accommodation could be provided in North Wales. Such an arrangement would not be unique and could be made to work. A not dissimilar short- term arrangement was recently in place for the hearing of cases from Manchester in a Crown Court in Cheshire.

For Wales as a whole, the HMCS interest lies primarily in maintaining co-terminosity of boundaries at the operational level for the reasons outlined earlier. HMCS in Wales would be likely to realign its Area boundaries with any police force structure which facilitated the joint working currently undertaken by the 4 LCJBs in Wales. A move to a single police force would present some challenges but ones we could overcome. Were there a single Chief Constable for Wales then it is likely HMCS would favour the establishment of a Criminal Justice Board that would bring together the criminal justice agencies at an All-Wales level. It should be recognised, however, that such a body would perform a largely strategic role. I do not believe an All-Wales Criminal Justice Board could perform the same function as the existing Local Criminal Justice

Boards which, as mentioned above, are successful precisely because they are local and reasonably close to the front line. I would assume, however, that a single Wales Police Force would not structure itself so as to have the 17 individual Basic Command Units reporting direct to the Chief Constable, but would put in place an operational sub-structure at a more local level. I would regard it as essential to continued improvement in the operational effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Wales for the police to be able to engage with HMCS and other criminal justice agencies at this level.

The Committee may therefore wish to consider the extent to which competing options for police reorganisation in Wales preserve the capability for joint operational working among the criminal justice agencies, whether through a number of separate police forces or the operational sub-structures of a single force.

Were there, under a single All-Wales force, to be a move away from the current 4 Areas to create the new sub-structure, I would suggest the creation of 3 operational sub-divisions:-

1. North Wales

North Wales will need to remain a separate area because of the familiar geographical considerations. Ideally we would wish to include Welshpool and North Powys in this area.

2. South East Wales

The Gwent area is small in size and the cities of Cardiff and Newport are so close that running them as separate areas may be considered inefficient. The Crown Court in Newport, for example, is already administered by offices based in the Crown Court in Cardiff.

3. West and Mid Wales

The Dyfed Powys area is geographically large and predominantly rural without, at present, any natural urban centre. The courts currently send a great many of the cases originating in Dyfed Powys to Swansea for administration and hearing. Although there are, as with North Wales, plans to improve the courtroom capacity in Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Haverfordwest to enable cases to be heard closer to where they originate, there will remain a natural orientation of much of South West Wales towards Swansea and the redrawing of administrative boundaries to make Swansea the administrative centre for an HMCS area covering Mid and West Wales would have much to recommend it.

These 3 operational criminal justice areas - North Wales, Mid and West Wales and South East Wales - would largely reflect the current organisational structures of the Fire and Ambulance services in Wales.

Leaving aside the detail, however, the message I would wish the Committee to take on board is the need for any new police structure to be able to work effectively with other agencies at an operational level between that of the Basic Command Unit and an All Wales structure.

I trust that at least some of this is clear and of assistance to the Committee. I stand ready to provide any further information if required.

N P Chibnall
Regional Director

SJR RTC 11 ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

4 Tachwedd 2005

Annwyl Mr. Chaffey

**Y PWYLLGOR CYFIAWNDER CYMDEITHASOL AC ADFYWIO
AIL STRWYTHURO'R HEDDLU**

Diolch am y cyfle i gyflwyno ymateb i'ch llythyr dyddiedig 28 Medi 2005. Fel y gellir ddychmygu mae'r mater hwn yn siwr o ddod a sylwadau personol a gwahanol gan gorff fel Cyngor Sir ond hyderaf y gallaf gyflwyno i chwi deimladau cyffredinol yn dilyn cyfarfod gyda aelodau'r Cyngor Sir neithiwr.

Er fy mod wedi egluro yn y cyfarfod nad oedd unrhyw fwriad i newid rheolaeth y Basic Command Unit (BCUs), ar y cyfan teimlad cryf aelodau'r Cyngor oedd y dylid cadw Heddlu'r Gogledd fel Uned weithredol annibynnol yn y dyfodol ar sail effeithiolrwydd y gwasanaeth presennol ac ystyriaeth hefyd i ffactorau allweddol eraill megis daearyddiaeth a natur gymdeithasol ac ieithyddol y rhanbarth.

Ar wahân i hyn roedd Aelodau yn gweld nifer o anfanteision amlwg o ganoli'r gwasanaeth Plismona ar sail Cymru gyfan. Yn sicr byddai trefniant o'r fath yn gwanhau atebolrwydd lleol ar symudiad a welwyd ar draws nifer o sectorau cyhoeddus dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf o greu strwythurau sy'n fwy lleol o ran natur ac sy'n dod a gwasanaethau yn agosach at y bobl. Byddai trefniant Cymru gyfan yn gwanhau rol a dylanwad Awdurdodau Lleol fel Ynys Môn o ran dylanwadu ar raglenni gwariant a dosbarthu adnoddau gan y byddai penderfyniadau strategol o'r fath i bob pwrpas yn cael eu gwneud yn Ne Cymru ym marn Aelodau, ac felly mae gwir beryg y byddai adnoddau yn cael eu targedu fwy fwy tuag at yr ardaloedd trefol ar draul ardaloedd gwledig.

Yn ogystal, roedd Aelodau yn cydnabod pwysigrwydd o gadw Heddlu Gogledd Cymru ar sail effeithiolrwydd y gwasanaeth wrth ystyried ystadegau cymharol diweddar sy'n cadarnhau hyn. Hefyd teimlai'r Aelodau fod yna waith da wedi ei wneud dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf er mwyn darparu gwasanaeth plismona sy'n sensitif i anghenion cymunedol lleol Gogledd Cymru a dylid parhau i ddatblygu a gwarchod hyn i'r dyfodol.

Beth felly yw'r rhesymeg dros geisio creu strwythur sy'n llawer mwy na hyn sydd gennym yn barod yng Nghymru, a pham chwalu "rhywbeth sy'n gweithio'n dda" yng Ngogledd Cymru?

Wrth gydnabod bod y Swyddfa Gartref yn mynnu sefydlu Awdurdodau Heddlu sydd yn galu ymateb i Drosedd Lefel 2 (h.y. Anti terrorism ac yn y blaen), oherwydd natur y Gogledd, a fuasai'n bosib ystyried cydweithio gwell gyda Heddlu cyfagos neu greu gwasanaeth "ffederal" i faterion strategol?

Hyderaf y bydd y sylwadau hyn o gymorth.

Yn gywir

G. F. Edwards
RHEOLWR GYFARWYDDWR

SJR RTC 11 - ENGLISH VERSION

4 November 2005

Dear Mr. Chaffey

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE POLICE RESTRUCTURING

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your letter dated 28 September 2005. As you can imagine this matter is sure to elicit various and personal observations from organisations such as County Councils but I trust that I will be able to convey to you the general feelings following a meeting with the members of the County Council last night.

Although I explained in the meeting that there was no intention to change the management of the Basic Command Unit, the members of the Council generally felt strongly that the North Wales Police Force should be kept as an independent operational unit in future, based on the effectiveness of the current service and given various other factors such as the geography and social and linguistic nature of the region.

Apart from this, members felt there were a number of obvious disadvantages of centralising the Police service on an all-Wales basis. Certainly, such an arrangement would weaken local accountability and also impact on the movement across a number of public sectors in recent years whereby structures have been created in order to bring services closer to the people. An all-Wales arrangement would weaken the role and influence of local authorities such as Ynys Môn in terms of influencing spending programmes and allocating resources because strategic decisions of that nature would, to all intents and purposes, be made in South Wales in members' opinion, and there is therefore a real risk that resources would be increasingly targeted towards urban areas at the expense of rural areas.

In addition, members acknowledge the importance of retaining the North Wales Police Force due to the efficiency of the service as is evidenced by recent statistics. Members also felt that good work has been done over the past few years in providing a Police service which is sensitive to the needs of

local communities in North Wales and this aspect should continue to be developed and protected for the future.

What therefore is the thinking behind attempting to create a structure which is considerably larger than we have at present, and why change "something which is working well" in North Wales ?

In acknowledging that the Home Office is insisting on establishing Police Authorities which are able to respond to Level 2 Crime (i.e. Anti terrorism and so on), due to the nature of North Wales, would it be possible to consider improved collaboration with nearby Police authorities or creating a federal service for strategic matters ?

I trust that these observations will be of assistance.

Yours faithfully

G. F. Edwards
MANAGING DIRECTOR

SJR RTC 12 LLANDDYFNAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANDDYFNAN

Yng nghyfarfod y Cyngor nos Fawrth diwethaf, 18 Hydref 2005, datganwyd cryn bryder am drefn newydd arfaethedig y gwasanaeth plismona yng Nghymru.

Dyma restr o rai o'r pryderon a godwyd:

1. 'Roedd y Cyngor ar ddeall fod y Cynnulliad yn ymgynghori gyda Chynghorau Sir ar y drefn newydd o blismona yng Nghymru - sef cael un "Heddlu i Gymru".
2. Oes bwriad gan y Cynnulliad neu y Cyngor Sir i ymgunghori â Chynghorau Cymuned ar y mater?
3. Ers tua 1999 mae Heddlu Gogledd Cymru wedi adrefnu o 6 adran i 3 adran dearyddol. Pe bai creu " Heddlu i Gymru" yn mynd yn ei flaen, a ydym yn wynebu adrefnu pellach a cholli cysylltiad gyda'r prif swyddogion?
4. Dangoswyd pryder mawr am adleoli Pencadlys yr Heddlu i Gaerdydd, Busai hyn yn amddifadu'r Gogledd unwaith eto o wasanaeth sydd eisoes yn annigonol ynghyd a cholli swyddi.
5. A oes rhesymau digonol am greu "Heddlu i Gymru", neu ceisio arbed arian ye'r nôd?
6. Ers yr adrefnu yn y Gogledd mae adran Môn wedi colli dros ddeg o heddweision. A oes unrhyw sicrwydd y ceir gwell gwasanaeth gan yr heddlu ar yr Ynys o dan y drefn arfaethedig?
7. Pa effaith fyddai creu "Heddlu Cymru" un gael ar sefydliadau canolog yr Heddlu - e.e. "National Crime Squad", "Special Branch" ac yn y blaen?

Edrychaf ymlaen am eich sylwadau os yn bosib, cyn ein cyfarfod nesaf nos Fawrth 15 Tachwedd 2005.

Yn ddiolchgar ac yn gywir iawn,
Jean Roberts
Clerc i'r Cyngor

SJR RTC 12 - TRANSLATED VERSION

Llanddyfnan Community Council

In the Council meeting last Tuesday, 18 October 2005, we discussed the restructuring of Police services in Wales.

Here is a list of some of the concerns raised:

1. The Council understood that the Assembly was consulting with the County Councils on the restructuring of the police in Wales - in effect to have one 'Welsh Police Force'.
2. Does the Assembly, or the County Council intend to consult with Community Councils on this matter?
3. Since 1999 North Wales Police has reorganised from 6 geographic areas to 3. If the proposed Welsh police force were to go ahead are we facing further reorganisation and losing connections with the chief officers?
4. Great concern was shown about locating the Police Headquarters in Cardiff. This would deprive the North again of a service that is already inadequate as well as causing job losses.
5. Are there sufficient reasons for creating an all-Wales police force, or is saving money the aim?
6. Since the reorganisation in the North the Anglesey area has lost over ten policemen. Are there any assurances that there will be an improvement in the provision of police services on the Island under the proposed reorganisation?
7. What effect will creating a Welsh Police Force have on the Police's central institutions i.e. National Crime Squad, Special Branch etc.

We look forward to your comments, if possible, before our next meeting on the evening of Tuesday 15 November 2005.

With thanks and yours very sincerely,
Jean Roberts
Clerc to the Council

SJR RTC 13 LLANDRINDOD WELLS HOMEWATCH

Dear Sir.

Restructuring of Constabulary

Following your written request of 28/9/2005 I submit my observations on this issue

which are based on 15 years involvement with crime prevention and interaction with both Homewatch members and members at all levels of the Police Force within Wales.

I am at present Chairman of the Llandrindod Wells Homewatch Association, National Neighbourhood Watch Association Representative to the Dyfed/Powys Police Force and Homewatch Key Co-ordinator for the county of Radnor which operates under the auspices of the Dyfed/Powys Police (AC.P.O. 7) based at Police H.Q. Llangunnor Carmarthenshire.

If I can be of any further help please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Clive Taylor

Without Prejudice

Social Justice And Regeneration Committee

Police Regeneration Report.

Restructuring Of Constabulary

The attached comments refer mainly to the operation of the Dyfed/Powys Police force

with which I am mostly involved. The comments are based on experience and are mainly subjective.

General Comment.

The efficiency and operation of this force is excellent The force is highly professional

with a solid and enthusiastic leadership. The moral of officers at all levels appears to be good and results in terms of a low incidence of crime and a high detection rate speak for themselves. There seems to be a good general working relationship with members of the public and this force co-operates with Homewatch (Neighbourhood Watch) extremely well being both co-operative, supportive, and helpful.

Response To Terms Of Reference

(1)

The police can only service any community if they have the co-operation and support of members of the public. To achieve this there has to be a practical chain of communication between police and the public. Good public relations are essential. The most effective way to do this is to have as many policemen on the local beats as possible with direct and regular contact with local people. There should be less personnel in police offices with less paper work and less red tape. The police should be seen by the public both on the street and round the clock. I identify the following areas worthy of note

- Beat officers should be more visible at critical times such as closing time at public houses particularly on Friday and Saturday nights
- Local schools should have regular visits from beat police to make friends with young people and to gain their support

- Local police Stations should have round the clock access to the public. "Holes in the wall" telephone access are not liked and have proved to be generally ineffective. The public want visual response supported by quick back up action. A policeman to be seen will generate a more positive response from the public. Many incidents are not reported by the public because they cannot get immediate and visual response.
- More C. C. T. V. cameras should be installed at critical problem areas. , . Local issues are best dealt with by local policeman. When police walk areas they see and learn more from local inhabitants about local issues
- The public are appalled by peppercorn sentences given to criminals by magistrates. More support should be given to police observations concerning those charged than by "do-gooders" and non professionals. It is said in many quarters that lawyers seem to condemn the police at the expense of justice and to procure the release of those charged. This must demoralise the police in the execution of there duties. An appeal procedure should be available to police who feel they have been pilloried with a right to compensation for proven bullying and abuse.
- Communities will respect the police if they see local policemen complemented publicly for there actions.
- Policemen are berated by the public for motoring offences which is unfortunately seen as persecution or minor errors in driving. This could be eliminated if a special body was used for traffic control. Such a body could be paid significantly less than the police employed to reduce crime and would reduce bad feelings with the police

(2).

There does seem to be too many quangos paid out of public funds who claim to have a finger in the reduction of crime. Crime can only be controlled by on-hands involvement. Money and time are wasted in non essential bodies who seem to be talk shops and who do not actively walk the streets to help to reduce crime.

Some organisations receive remuneration for anti-crime involvement where others do

not This causes resentment Increased use of unpaid volunteers can have a useful role to play and it would be constructive if those actively involved could have a small retainer to encourage them in their unpaid work.

Community safety partnerships can only work if they involve all organisations peripheral

to crime reduction and do not become embroiled in paperwork, red tape, and employed

staff looking to justify paid employment through bureaucracy

(3)

The police should not be forced to involve themselves in extensive liaison with government which in many cases is time wasting and must detract from the war on crime. The police should be autonomous with an open brief to account for their actions and policies. Members of the public in my opinion want a minimum of officialdom, a maximum involvement on the ground to reduce

both criminality and adverse public behaviour and results divulged through local police liaison groups - the statistics of which could be made available

SJR RTC 14 DR. JOHN MAREK AM

Clerk to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

It is clear that restructuring will happen and that in all probability we will have a national Welsh police force imposed upon us. I am sure that in due course the management of the police will become a devolved matter with responsibility passing to the National Assembly and then being delegated to the First Minister. It is undesirable for this to happen, for exactly the same reasons that we do not have a national police force within Great Britain. Whilst the Home Secretary may say that policing will not become a devolved matter, it will nevertheless be wise for him to give it consideration as a devolved police force in Wales could be proposed in the future.

The public are very much against the amalgamation of the North Wales Police with forces in south Wales. This is a serious consideration as policing is effective if it has public consent. I am not suggesting that the public would actively withdraw consent, but a police force run from south Wales would not have the same level of cooperation and support that our police force presently does have. The Home Secretary should not lightly disregard public opinion. The North Wales force cooperates very closely with forces in Cheshire and the North-West. This is for operational reasons as for much of the crime that occurs there are cross border links and connections. This cooperation will continue. But there is cooperation on service levels as well. For example, when police horses were needed recently in Wrexham, where did they come from? Not Cardiff, but Manchester for obvious reasons!

This is the third reason why it makes no sense for our force to be amalgamated with forces in south Wales. It is Cheshire and the North West that are important, and will continue to be important in these regards. We cannot have restructuring across the Welsh-English border, so it seems to me that the best solution is for the retention of the North Wales police force with good cooperation continuing and being developed between it and forces across the border in England.

Finally, most of the present agenda is being driven by the threat of terrorism. As with all "political" questions, there is a balance to be struck. If we consider terrorism to the exclusion of other important matters such as crime, local policing, traffic regulation etc. we will have a worse police force as a result. Yes, by all means improve efficiency in servicing the police, but do it sensibly. I hope you will make the necessary representations to the Home Secretary and give consideration to the argument above in doing so.

Yours sincerely,
Dr John Marek AM.

**SJR RTC 15 MONMOUTHSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP**

17 November 2005
Dear Mr Chaffey

RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY

The Monmouthshire CSP has monitored the debate in relation to the restructuring of the police in Wales. The Partnership is committed to working closely with the police and will continue to do so within obviously work within the finalised structure. Closing the Gap, in setting out the options for the future indicated a preference towards an all Wales police service. It would be for the individual partner agencies to comment on these options in detail however it is paramount that any final decision should take full cognisance of the necessity for this Partnership and other Community Safety Partnerships to be allowed to work effectively towards fulfilling their strategies.

The Monmouthshire CSP has always enjoyed the full support and commitment of the Police basic command unit. The police divisional community safety dept and local authority community safety dept work very closely and we feel this is reflected in the partnerships performance and has enabled us to engage fully with all partners. The Partnership currently has a sound management and delivery structure. In addition, with the advent of neighbourhood policing, the relationship between the police and the community is improving, this is of particular concern in Monmouthshire where its rurality can lead to problems with isolation. This CSP has taken full account of the findings of the AUDIT Commission Report on CSPs. We are aware that other respondents have mentioned it, but we too find it essential to take into account the findings. A key concern is that "Partnerships that focus too narrowly on national issues alone will not serve their communities well". This is shared by the Monmouthshire Partnership and has been a key principle in our work to date and would remain so for the future. We would not wish to lose the gains we have made and hope that any new structure would ensure that the focus is not taken away from the community.

2

Whatever structure is adopted it is important to the Monmouthshire CSP that:

- the CSP and YOT structures remain the same
- the BCU has a strong community identity
- the BCU remains the same size and remains co-terminus with the present Local Authority boundaries.
- the BCU commander remains as joint Chair of the CSP
- the reconfigured Police Authorities are represented on the CSP
- the drive towards Neighbourhood Policing is maintained and that neighbourhood officers are dedicated to their posts
- clear links are forged between the BCU and the overarching structure to ensure public protection
- the principle of partnership working are supported and enhanced in any associated reviews.
- The structure takes into account the rurality of Monmouthshire and other similar areas in Wales.

Once the matter has been settled the issue of the relationship between the “Responsible Authorities” the Home Office and the National Assembly CSU is clarified and the relationship formalised.

We have restricted our comments to the possible effect of restructuring on the work of the CSP and although time has prevented us from consulting the wider Partnership we have attempted to set out a consensus view.

Yours Sincerely

Colin Berg
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Chief Superintendent Paul Symes
B DIVISION GWENT POLICE

SJR RTC 16 **NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL**

18 October 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Restructuring of Constabulary

Further to your letter of the 28 September, I set out the views of this Authority:-

Newport has enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the Gwent Police Force and we have partnered most successfully in addressing community safety issues in the City. Our key working relationship is at the Divisional level and we are most concerned to ensure that the role and resource base available to the BCU is strengthened. Hence, any proposal to break up BCUs or dilute their role should be resisted. We further believe that the focus currently being given to Neighbourhood Policing needs to be strengthened. This is an essential element in the reassurance agenda and enabling an effective partnership approach to low level crime and anti-social behaviour. This is the number one issue for our communities.

With any major change to Force structures the issues of local profile and accountability need to be addressed. Related to this is the need to strengthen the role of Local Elected Members at Police Authority level and in working with Divisional Commanders.

We also recognise the need for Police Forces to be adequately resourced to deal with level two serious crime. We note the report's recommendations relating to minimum Force size and see no reason to disagree with these. Hence, this Authority will support any appropriate Police Force structure that enables a more effective resolution to level two crime and at the same time gives further resources and authority to the BCU.

Referring to your terms of reference, I believe that my response addresses item 1. As far as item 2 is concerned the key relationship between this Council and the Police, within the Community Safety Partnership, is at the Divisional Commander level. While there may be connectivity between Fire Service and Police Service boundaries, I do not believe that this should necessarily be a key driver for structural change (your item 3).

I am happy for this submission to be available for public scrutiny.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR RAY TRUMAN
Cabinet Member Community Safety and Sustainability

**SJR RTC 17 NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICE
(NOMS)**

4 November 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

**SOCIAL JUSTICE & REGENERATION COMMITTEE: Restructuring of
Constabulary**

Thank you for your letter of 28 September which was forwarded to me by Claire Griffiths on 26 October, inviting comment on the Restructuring of Constabulary.

I hereby provide a written submission setting out the views of NOMS Wales. I would welcome the opportunity to make an oral presentation to the Committee.

We fully support the proposal for an all-Wales Police Force. Part of the role of NOMS Wales is to reduce re-offending through working with key partners such as the Police, Criminal Justice Agencies, Prisons and Probation. It would provide a coherent approach to both Home Office and Assembly joint working to tackle crime, the determinants of crime and reducing re-offending for Wales. There remains a strong need to retain the Basic Command Unit infrastructure. The Reducing Re-offending agenda requires this as a backdrop to real delivery of offender management in the community, especially for public protection issues such as PPO's, MAPPA and Drugs. This would also ensure that Local Government's relationship with the Police forces is on a consistent basis throughout Wales whilst taking account of specific local needs.

Co-terminosity is of the utmost importance in developing a strategic approach to criminal justice and reducing re-offending. Therefore any decisions on the regional configuration employed to support the overarching structure will have significant implications for the organisation of criminal justice agencies such as NOMS. As such I would welcome the opportunity for on-going dialogue on these issues. I hope these comments are useful. I am happy to discuss these issues if necessary.

Yours sincerely

Carol Bernard CBE

Director of Offender Management Service Wales

SJR RTC 18 NORTH WALES CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

4 November 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

RE: Consultation on Police Structures

Thank you for inviting the North Wales Criminal Justice Board to contribute to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee's consultation on the implications of the current review of Police Structures.

The Board has considered the proposals and has also taken the opportunity to consult with our own Consultative Group Members. A number of potential implications for the delivery of Policing and Criminal Justice Services in North Wales have been identified in the light of the Government's stated preference

for larger strategic forces which in Wales would translate to a single strategic force in Wales.

- ◆ Geographic Implications; A single Police Force for Wales would meet the capacity criteria identified in 'Closing the Gap' but the geographical size of Wales and North/South transport links could result in a transfer of resources from North to South leaving North Wales with a reduced operational capacity and the consequent risk of becoming a satellite to the South.
- ◆ Criminal Markets; North Wales has strong commercial and economic links with Cheshire and the North West and consequently the 'flow' of serious crime is historically influenced by criminal activity along the A55. Operational links between North Wales Criminal Justice Agencies and the north west are well established and would be adversely affected by a move to an All Wales Force which became South Wales orientated.
- ◆ Coterminosity; The principle of coterminosity has become the guiding principle of the Criminal Justice System and is one of its strengths. Considerable progress has been made in developing joined up strategic and operational approaches to improving the delivery of justice. An All Wales model would be too large to support the continued 'joined up' agenda to problem solving and BCU's would be too small for joining up the key criminal justice agencies. The current 'sub regional' coterminous model which underpins local Criminal Justice Boards achieves the balance enabling strong leadership from Chief Officers translated into increasingly collaborative, joined up operational delivery.
- ◆ Identity; North Wales does have a distinct identity which is reflected in the presence of a lead sub regional newspaper (Daily Post) and operational presence of broadcast media (BBC/HTV Television and Radio). The cultural, economic and social differences between North and South Wales have been well documented over many years. The Welsh Assembly's Government's recognition of the need to establish a presence and base in North Wales is itself recognition of the importance of decentralised structures for government and public services.
- ◆ Economics; The desired outcome of the Police reforms is to maximise efficiency benefits to free up resources to improve protective services. At this stage there is inadequate supporting evidence (i.e. business model) to demonstrate how or if this can be achieved. The concern is that marginal 'back office' efficiencies would be achieved if a fully centralised model was implemented. In Wales some degree of sub regional decentralised support and back office infrastructure would be required. The risk of such 'local' support capacity being based on BCU's is a consequent longer term overall increase in support costs.

A further potential economic consequence of a single strategic force for Wales would follow if resource allocation at operational level was prioritised away from neighbourhood policing to level 2 priorities. This could have significant implications for North Wales communities where

crime is reducing but local confidence in policing is linked to lower level anti social behaviour and visibility of the police.

- ◆ Administration of Justice; Historically the administration of Justice within the Crown Courts has been delivered within the Cheshire and Wales Circuit. There are no barrister chambers in North Wales and court business is conducted between Courts in Cheshire and North Wales. Legal representatives express disquiet about the potential risk to ensuring North Wales residents have access to high quality advocacy services.
- ◆ Governance; There are serious concerns within the Criminal Justice sector and our partners that the local dimension of governance for the police will be undermined by any move to an All Wales Strategic Police Force. There is strong support for governance arrangements continuing at a sub regional 'Area' level. A single strategic authority for Wales would reduce the ability to determine strategic priorities for the different Areas in Wales. Supporting a single strategic Authority with consultative or advisory panels at BCU level would not deliver the accountability framework which the current structures provide. There is therefore a significant risk of a governance and accountability deficit in the Government's preferred approach.
- ◆ Local Community Safety Links and Partnerships; North Wales has a track record of building effective partnership arrangements at local (Local Authority) and pan North Wales level (Chief Officer Strategic Community Safety Forum). It is critical that the outcome of the proposed changes to police structures retains and supports such sub regional strategic leadership initiatives.
- ◆ Political Implications; There are clearly different political implications for Wales than exist in England. A single strategic Police Force Authority for Wales working collaboratively with the Welsh Assembly Government could be a critical stepping stone to devolved responsibility for policing (and other Criminal Justice Agencies). However the current drivers for change to deliver large strategic forces able to provide effective protective services creates a significant number of risks for communities in North Wales. Any such shift would need to demonstrate;
 - What real efficiency savings would be achieved given the need for decentralised budgets and some decentralised support functions.
 - How North Wales would be protected from a shift of resources to the more populated South.
 - What effective sub regional strategic structures would be put into place to bridge the gap from a central command structure and local BCU's.
 - What Governance arrangements would be created at the All Wales and sub regional/local level to avoid a governance/accountability deficit.
 - What flexibility would exist to enable collaboration on operational

and technical/support services with the North West.

Conclusion

- ◆ The North Wales Police Authority have identified their priority as building on the strategic links with Cheshire and the North West. For the Criminal Justice Board and Criminal Justice community the overriding priority is ensuring any future structure retains business stability to provide strategic leadership and delivery of the justice across the North Wales area and an ability to retain business partnerships across the border with Cheshire. If the outcome of the restructuring is the creation of a single strategic Police Force for Wales the retention of a sub regional structure between the Wales Authority and Headquarters with local representation on a sub regional governance body would be an imperative.

Yours sincerely

Carol Moore

Chair – North Wales Criminal Justice Board

SJR RTC 19

PEMBROKSHIRE LOCAL HEALTH BOARD

14 November 2005

Dear Mr Chaffey

SOCIAL JUSTICE & REGENERATION COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY

Thank you for your letter of the 28th September inviting views on the above. In response, it is hoped that any restructuring of the Constabulary would not affect local identity. Pembrokeshire has very good partnership working with local Police within the Dyfed-Powys structure, and while it is a matter for the Constabulary themselves to design the appropriate Police Force structure, the need for local partnership is imperative.

I trust that the brief comments above will assist the Committee in its considerations.

Yours sincerely

BERNARDINE REES

Chief Executive

SJR RTC 20

**POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF
ENGLAND AND WALES**

Restructuring of Constabulary

The Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales represents 1,557 officers of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent rank.

The objectives of the Association are:-

1. To lead and develop the Police Service to improve the quality of our service delivery to local communities.

2. To influence practice, policy and decision making at Chief Officer and Government Level.
3. To provide appropriate support and advice to members to maintain and improve upon the professional status of the rank.

The invitation to contribute by providing a written submission to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee has been forwarded to me as Vice President of the Association. I have recent experience of operational policing in Wales as a Chief Superintendent, B.C.U. Commander immediately prior to taking up my full-time appointment with the Superintendents' Association.

In relation to the terms of reference for the Review I would respond as follows:

The relationship between the Police and the communities they serve in Wales and matters of local identity.

The move to an all Wales Strategic Force to provide a better response to Level 2 Criminality and Terrorism should not impact upon the relationship between the Police and the local communities they serve. Local policing is currently delivered through Basic Command Units with locally identified Commanders who hold Chief Superintendent rank.

The Governments' Neighbourhood Policing Agenda with the quest for greater consultation with communities and better performance in respect of contact with the general public, will continue to be a priority for our members but there is a genuine concern that in order to provide the "Protective Services" to deal with Level 2 Criminality, officers will need to be transferred from Basic Command Units to Central Squads.

Her Majesty's' Inspectors Review of policing in England and Wales – Closing the Gap – A Review of the Fitness for purpose of the Current Structure of Policing in England and Wales clearly identify that the current configuration of Forces cannot respond to the threat of cross-force criminality.

Our members are intrigued as to whether EXTRA resources will be provided to address the identified gap.

Local identity is crucial in terms of the relationship between the Police and local communities. There is an argument that communities identify more easily at a local level with their police and that the FORCE Badge is of secondary importance.

The impact upon any change on Membership of Community Safety Partnerships and other Partnership arrangements.

The constitution of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (more recently titled Community Safety Partnerships) should not be affected in any way.

The interaction with the Local Authority and other Partnership Agencies is conducted at Basic Command Unit Level and the vast majority of Crime Reduction and Community Safety Initiatives are organised and implemented at Chief Superintendent/Local Authority Chief Executive Level. However, consideration will have to be given to those structures and committees that currently operate at a County level.

The relationship between the Police and those services which fall directly within the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Policing in Wales is a Westminster and Home Office responsibility but liaison and joint working with other services which fall within the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government cannot and should not be adversely affected.

Ian Johnston Q.P.M.

Vice President

Superintendents' Association of England and Wales

SJR RTC 21

POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Powys County Council ECR Directorate Comments on Restructuring of Constabulary in Wales

Coterminosity has played an important role in the context of the Community Strategy in Powys, particularly where Powys holds a strong and well established link with the Powys Police Command Unit and the Powys Community Safety Partnership, which itself acts as one of the five Thematic Partnerships in the Community Strategy Structure.

This identity is vital within an all-Wales structure in order to fulfil the objectives and actions that the Community Strategy in Powys has set for its communities, by its communities.

The Carnegie (UK) Trust has recognised the effectiveness of community involvement in the Community Strategy process in Powys, where community safety and neighbourhood policing have been some of the key issues raised, and the profile of this recognition may well become more apparent in the future.

On a wider regional level, the Mid Wales identity is well established, both through the Mid Wales Partnership and its links with Carmarthenshire and Gwynedd, and significantly through the Wales Spatial Plan's Central Area theme, recognising that the heartland of Mid Wales, with its special situations of rurality, requires a different dimension of policing to that of the urban centres.

Whilst an all-Wales Constabulary may make strategic, economic and operational sense, the effectiveness of current Policing and Community Safety measures in Mid Wales must be properly recognised and resourced accordingly if it is to react effectively in the context of the Assembly's Plan Rationalisation programmes.

We would therefore not wish to object to the proposal in principle, since the concerns are largely operational. In the context of the Community Strategy process and partnership working generally, it is important that the structuring of the Constabulary is sensitive to local needs. This requires continuing and effective senior officer representation on the Community Strategy Partnership and Steering Group, and measures to secure effective engagement at community level. This applies both to the Community Strategy process and partnership working, and is clearly relevant particularly in Communities First areas and with the Local Community Forums.

Edgar Jones

Senior Manager, Community Regeneration and Support Services
ECR Directorate

1st November 2005

SJR RTC 22 POWYS COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Dear Roger

I write on behalf of the Powys Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in response to your letter dated 28th September seeking written comments relating to the restructuring of Constabulary in Wales

There is a real concern that re-distribution of resources will occur to the benefit of urban areas and to the detriment of rural areas like Powys. The Powys CSP would like to emphasise that there is a need to ensure that rural environments, that are striving to make an impact on already existing low crime figures, are properly resourced to achieve negotiated targets.

Secondly, there is a certain amount of local identity with the current structure that will need to be tackled sensitively. In the eventuality of any force combination, Powys CSP would wish to retain a Mid Wales identity particularly due to the co-terminosity of current good working practices and community feeling associated with this.

The Powys CSP also feels that it is vital for the Basic Command Unit (BCU) structures to be retained and even strengthened, together with the tools and resources available to deliver neighbourhood policing and the mechanisms for partnership working. Without the retention of the Powys BCU, the Powys CSP questions the impact on target setting when there is already a feeling that not enough local autonomy exists in order for the CSP to allocate resources where they are needed. Therefore, the CSP stresses that in the restructuring process, the Police Reform White Paper proposals for BCUs are taken into consideration.

Finally, there are concerns that an all Wales Police force would result in a change in police accountability. It is clear that cross-border crime is a major issue for Powys and therefore devolved powers in this context could complicate effective cross border working. Working concurrently in non-devolved and devolved areas will also most certainly impact negatively on CSP target setting and funding streams.

I hope that these observations will be of assistance to the review that the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee is carrying out.

Yours sincerely

Louisa Kerr
Powys Community Safety Officer

SJR RTC 23 SAFER BRIDGEND

4 November 2005

Dear Roger,

In considering your letter dated 28th September 2005 to Bridgend Community Safety Partnership in respect of the above subject.

Exploring the options to restructure the constabulary the most favoured move appears to be that of an All Wales Force.

The benefits of such a change for Wales would be a Police Force better able to deploy resources effectively to tackle issues of serious crime, terrorism and major incidents.

There is no doubt that such an identity change will create a challenge to the Police Service however at what cost to the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice system.

The fact that we might have one All Wales Police Force instead of the present four will only concern people from the point of view that will such changes improve the accessibility and visibility of the service.

From a Community Safety Partnership perspective the Police are seen as a key Partner therefore local identity and accountability are vital in setting objectives and outcomes for the Partnerships Crime and Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategies.

It is therefore important local consultation is not lost in the bigger picture. Communities provide real areas of information which must be taken into consideration when a strategic approach is adopted.

Yours sincerely,

John Davies

Bridgend Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator

SJR RTC 24

STONEWALL CYMRU

Stonewall Cymru Consultation Response to Social Justice and Regenerating Committee consultation on Restructuring of Constabulary of Wales.

As a basis for this response Stonewall Cymru have consulted with lesbian, gay and bisexual [LGB] people who are members of the police / lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender [LGBT] consultation groups in the Dyfed Powys, South Wales and North Wales police force areas, and some of the police officers involved in diversity liaison.

Closing the Gap

Stonewall Cymru appreciates the point made in the Home Office paper *Closing the Gap* that the UK police service needs a major development to deal effectively with the increase of international terrorism and the domestic volume of crime. We understand the argument that police forces need to be of a large enough size to be able to respond dynamically to complex, volatile threats to individuals, neighbourhoods and businesses. We particularly support the view that such a re-organisation must also remain local enough to understand the diverse context within which it operates and consequently are focusing our response on this issue.

In Wales there are particular issues around the geography and topography of the country and the languages and culture of the people. The topography and consequent poor transport links between the North and South has led to a much greater flow of traffic by the general public both for social and cultural connections on the East-West latitude. For instance LGB people in the North who are fearful of being 'out' in their locality will travel to Chester, Liverpool and Manchester to socialize, in the Mid the movement is towards Birmingham, and the M4 corridor is used in the South with very little movement North. It could also be said that the access of criminality to Wales is through this East – West flow of traffic, for instance the possibility that house robberies increased across the North at a pace with the development of the A55.

We understand that the establishment of an all-Wales police force is the favourite solution and would seriously regret the reduction of 3 police forces to Basic Command Units and the consequent loss of local expertise in recognizing and addressing issues in particular regions. An all-Wales police force, probably with headquarters in the South, would be striving to work on the logistically much weaker South – North meridian to the inevitable detriment of the rural more sparsely populated parts of Wales.

The *Closing the Gap* paper makes reference to stakeholders views and public identity with their local police forces and some people feel this is a particular issue for North Wales and would favour a joining of the North Wales and Cheshire forces to achieve the recommended figure of 4000 officers and best policing of the North.

Terms of Reference particularly considered:

- (i) The relationship between the police and the communities they serve in Wales, and matters of local identity
- (ii) The impact upon any change on membership of Community Safety Partnerships and other partnership arrangements

In view of the history of sexual orientation and past discriminatory legislation local police link work with members of the LGBT community is vital in developing confidence and trust to increase the reporting of homophobic hate crime. The issues are illustrated in the Stonewall Cymru's Counted Out survey 2003 which found 1 in 3 people had been the victim of physical violence or bullying with over 50% feeling unprotected by the law,

Discreet police / lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender [LGBT] consultation groups with local police forces has been in operation in the UK and Wales since the 1980s. Over the years each of the 4 Welsh police forces has worked with LGBT consultation groups although, as is often the case with volunteers, some have been more active than others at different times. The groups of both the South and North Wales police forces have been sustained throughout the last twenty years. Two years ago, under encouragement by Stonewall Cymru, the Dyfed Powys police LGBT consultation group was set up and in Gwent although currently there is not such a group in operation there has been one in the past and discussions are underway to re-establish. This partnership work on community safety issues for LGBT people has led to the development of self-reporting hate crime forms, policy development and practical partnership policing of public sex locations and assistance in officer training up to senior levels on LGBT community issues. This communication has led to changes in attitude and a more open, understanding policing approach and although the reporting figures of homophobic hate crime are still very low across Wales there has been a steady increase in the numbers of recorded reported incidents of hate crime (eg: in North Wales figures increased from 50 in 2000 to 400 in 2005).

The concerns raised by members of the police LGBT consultation groups are:

1. Influence to effect change - currently local police LGBT consultation groups can speak directly to the senior police management to recommend and effect change in the way issues for LGBT people are policed. An example of local influence would be a meeting that took place with a Chief Constable, after a newspaper reported the use of an inappropriate word by the Chief Constable in an internal meeting and his apology, which led to a frank discussion with representatives from the LGB community, his increased awareness and offer to meet with some of the young LGBT people in the area.

But if there was just one police force in Wales that chance of influence would be greatly reduced for people living in areas away from the police headquarters. The onus would be put on to the groups to travel for what could be up to 5 hours across Wales to a meeting, which would be impossible for unfunded voluntary peer support groups, or that the opportunity was only available to people local to the police headquarters.

2. Police Authorities – currently there are 4 police authorities across Wales giving many opportunities for community representation to provide a voice and guidance in police policy and practise. If there was an all-Wales police

force with one authority this would considerably reduce community participation.

3. Model for policing – There were concerns that the model for policing LGBT people in one geographical area in Wales was very unlikely to be appropriate for another region, for instance there are likely to be issues around policing homophobic hate crime in the context of rural isolation being ‘out’ in small villages can be very different to urban life with gay clubs and larger number clusters of LGBT people.

There was concern about an all-Wales police force needing to prioritise services by population numbers and a consequent reduction of policing in rural sparser populated areas.

4. Geography & topography – As transport systems across the whole of Wales favour movement East-West an all-Wales force will have logistic difficulties in organizing consultation groups. For example the Dyfed Powys police force currently has considerable difficulties in getting community representatives to travel from the South to the North of Dyfed Powys and vice versa to attend their Service Equality delivery meeting (aka Under Represented Groups) this would increase considerably with one force.
5. Response time for follow up work - There was concern that there would be an increase in the time taken to undertake any incident follow up work leading to convictions between the police and the CPS due to the distance between the headquarters and the rest of Wales.
6. Reduced confidence in police - There was concern that there would be an overall reduction of confidence in the police as a result of an increase of distance between the headquarters and the rest of Wales.
7. Support from LGB community - the developments of GPA branches in the 4 police forces has received considerable support from the LGBT community across Wales this link could be lost through restructuring.

Response from a Member of the South East Wales Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community Police Liaison Group (formerly BLAG) to the Proposed Changes to the Infrastructure of the Existing Police Forces in Wales: –

Our community in Cardiff values highly the expertise and experience that has accrued in the Minority Support Unit in the city under the auspices of Bridget Daly and her fellow officer Richard Paines. I would be extremely concerned if the changes to the police forces in South Wales led to this expertise being diluted or withdrawn. I know that the community values above all else the fact that the MSU is accessible and known to us with a visible and regular presence in such events as Mardi Gras, the South East Wales LGB Forum and other launches and happenings. This greatly increases the likelihood of members of the LGBT community reporting crime to the MSU or referring others to them to report crime or seek support.

From an LGBT point of view the changes would have to take close account of the necessity of officers working in this field having in depth knowledge and

appreciation of local social groups and the local commercial scene. Obviously this type of knowledge and presence would be undermined if the unit were removed from the locality.

Recommendations

- That consideration be given to retaining and developing the partnership work between the police and LGBT people.
- That consideration be given to the major issues of regional differences and the transport, logistics and cultural links across Wales.
- That consideration be given to increasing the effective ways of community safety partnership working together to the advantage of all across Wales.

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SJR RTC TOGETHER CREATING COMMUNITIES

Dear Mrs Gregory

Re: Proposals to merge police forces and potential effects on North Wales

I am writing in alarm at the unseemly haste with which these proposals appear to be being progressed. Please will you do all in your power, as Chair of the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee, to slow matters down in order that proposals and consequences can be properly considered by not only by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Home Office, politicians, police and police authorities but also by members of the public and their representatives, such as Community Councils, Local Authorities as well as none statutory community groups. The police force is ours, paid for by the community from various public purses, therefore we have every right to be involved in such far reaching decisions which will inevitably affect us all.

I represent the Wales Broadbased Community Organisation, TCC (Together Creating Communities) that has thirty member groups across Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire. We represent thousands of people from faith and secular organisations.

Ideally we would contact each group with information about the proposed mergers and with the concerns that have emerged from the TCC group that works with the Wrexham PCCG. We would canvas a group opinion as well as ensuring everyone has the opportunity to think the issues through and respond individually if they choose. It would appear that we do not have time for this democratic process.

Some of the issues we would like the opportunity to discuss include:

- At present there are strong operational links between North Wales and N.W. England, these appear to work well both practically in terms of support in emergencies and for solving crimes. Would we still benefit from these links or would they be severed if the Wales forces had to merge? How disadvantaged would we be if another riot occurred in Wrexham and we had to wait for support from mid or South Wales?

- In North Wales we have chosen to pay a higher police precept in our Council Tax which has enabled us to have a considerable number of CBM's. Is this the case in other forces? How would the finances be evened out? Would everyone share the same level of services? Would everyone pay the same amount? Or would we have less CBM's?
- Relationships and accountability between the police force and the public have been built up over a period of time. Would this change. Who would the public in North Wales hold accountable if there was no longer a North Wales force? Who, outside North Wales, would listen to the concerns of the people of North Wales?

We all need time to understand and consider these issues before coming to sound judgement. Please will you both request the time needed and seek answers to the questions raised above.

Yours sincerely
Christine Pilsbury
Mrs C Pilsbury
Senior Organiser for TCC

SJR RTC 25 GWENDA THOMAS AM

Dear Janice

RE: REORGANISATION OF POLICE FORCES IN WALES

I write to offer my thoughts on the possible options for the reorganisations of Police Forces in Wales.

I understand that there has been no evidence presented to the Social Justice Committee that would allow a child perspective to be considered.

In my view, some vulnerable children have been placed at extra risk due to the incompatible policies between current forces. This has been particularly worrying in regard to policies that deal with paedophiles. I have been aware of these difficulties living as I do in the vicinity of the boundary between the South Wales Police Force and The Dyfed Powys Police Force. One force's policy would support informing the public of the whereabouts of a convicted paedophile on his release from prison the other's policy would not.

I am also concerned that children who find themselves "within the system" have often been "lost" because of inadequate cross boundary co-operation both between Police Forces and Social Services.

It also seems to me that considering the welfare and rights of children both as victims and perpetrators of crime should be an important consideration during this debate.

In conclusion, I believe that considering the child perspective should be a priority and that the welfare and protection of children should be paramount. All of the options therefore should be examined with a view to establishing which option would best protect our most vulnerable children.

I have sent a letter in these terms to Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, Janice Gregory AM, Chair of Social Justice and Regeneration Committee and Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children.

Yours sincerely
GWENDA THOMAS AM

SJR RTC 26 TORFAEN COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

Dear Chaffey

RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY ,

The Torfaen CSP is aware of the debate over Police Reform and will obviously work within the new structure once it has been finalised. Closing the Gap is a comprehensive document which sets out numerous options together with a leaning towards a preferred option. It would be for the individual partner agencies to comment on these options in detail but with regard to the terms of reference for the review there are matters which will effect the ethos of the Torfaen Community Safety Partnership and issues which will effect its ability to work effectively.

The commitment of the Divisional Police to the Torfaen CSP has always been excellent. Partnership working can hardly be improved and we work within a sound collegiate structure. In addition, with the advent of neighbourhood policing, the relationship between the police and the community is fast improving. In essence, the CSP has witnessed a steady encapsulation by all agencies, but especially the local police, of the findings of the AUDIT Commission Report on CSPs. See in particular Par.40 Page 12 which refers to the tension between national and local priorities and the fact that, "Partnerships that focus too narrowly on national issues alone will not serve their communities well". We would not wish to lose the gains we have made, or lose the momentum we have accrued, and we most certainly would not wish the focus to be taken away from the community.

Whatever structure is adopted it is important to the Torfaen CSP that:

- the CSP and YOT structures remain the same
- the BCU has a stronger community identity
- the BCU remains the same size and remains co-terminus with the

Local Authority

- the BCU commander remains as joint Chair of the CSP
- the reconfigured Police Authorities are represented on the CSP
- the drive towards Neighbourhood Policing is maintained and that neighbourhood officers are dedicated to their posts
 - clear links are forged between the BCU and the overarching structure to ensure public protection
 - in time - other partnership arrangements are reviewed especially secondary commissioning arrangements for health; co-ordination for domestic violence, the Fire and Rescue service and youth services

Once the matter has been settled there is the issue of the relationship between the "Responsible Authorities" the home Office and the National Assembly CSU. This needs to be clarified and the relationship formalised. We have restricted our comments to the possible effect of restructuring on the work of the CSP and although time has prevented us from consulting the wider Partnership we have attempted to set out a consensus view.

Yours Sincerely .

Alison Ward Chef Superintendent Paul Symes

Chief Executive of Torfaen
County Borough Council

B Division Gwent Police

SJR RTC 27 VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Dear Mr. Chaffery,

RE: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE: RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTABULARY

I refer to the policy review being undertaken by the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee regarding the 'Restructuring of Constabulary'. The key issues, which need to be considered as part of this review, can be summarised as follows:-

Any restructuring proposals for the Wales Constabulary must provide added value. There should not be restructuring because it is perceived as a good idea. The key issue that should be addressed is around collaboration between Police authorities and other agencies. It will only be through innovative collaboration, putting our communities at the centre, that there will be significant change. Restructuring of the Constabularies in Wales will not guarantee there will be significant change.

At a local level it is important that the Police divisional structure continues to (mirror local authority areas. However, it will be important, that there is collaboration across/between local community safety partnerships. The work beginning to be developed in South Wales, through the Overarching Leadership Group (OLG) around Preventative Services for 4 - 11 Year olds is a good example of collaboration at a local/regional level.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES W CAWLEY
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

SJR RTC 29 VICTIM SUPPORT WALES

Response to the Welsh Assembly consultation on the restructuring of the Police Constabulary in Wales

Victim Support is the national charity for victims and witnesses. Last year, the five Victim Support charities in Wales supported more than 60,000 victims and 20,000 witnesses. We not only provide practical and emotional support to victims of crime and to witnesses attending court, but we also seek to ensure that the rights of those victims and witnesses are protected in all aspects of criminal justice and social policy.

Victim Support Wales is the umbrella organisation for Victim Support charities in Wales. Victim Support Wales seeks to develop additional capacity to meet the needs of victims and witnesses throughout Wales.

Victim Support in Wales consists of five Areas: Dyfed, Gwent, North Wales, Powys and South Wales. Each is an independent charity and member of the National Association of Victim Support Schemes (NAVSS). Areas are responsible for the delivery of services to victims and witnesses in their area. Together we promote the development of strong and safe communities, reducing the fear of crime and encouraging confidence in the criminal justice system in Wales. We achieve this by promoting the rights of victims and witnesses and by co-ordinating the delivery of high quality support services to victims and witnesses throughout Wales.

Five years ago, the National Association of Victims Support Schemes, of which the charities in Wales are part, undertook a re-structuring programme, which saw over 500 charities being reduced to 47 larger 'Area' based charities. In Wales over twenty local Victim Support charities, which were

roughly based on County Boroughs, were amalgamated into 5 area charities that are co-terminus with their local criminal justice areas. With the sole exception of Dyfed and Powys, that remained separate due to the challenges of managing such a geographically large area. Victim Support's area structure now mirrors that of the current Police Service area structure. One of the main drivers for this reorganisation was the need to have a structure that matched the statutory services that we work so closely with. This has reduced duplication and ensured improved and more effective communication between our organisations.

Any restructuring of the Police Service may result in our organisation having to consider restructuring the charities again, which would certainly have a significant financial and organisational cost. Currently we would be hard pressed to meet those costs.

Many Victim Support charities, receive significant Local Authority funding which they depend on to supplement the Home Office grant to deliver our current service. We run the risk of losing this additional funding if we were to re-structure into a larger charity and were then seen by Local Authorities as not providing 'local services'.

There could be some advantages for Victim Support if there were to be a move to a Wales-wide Police Service. Currently there is wide variation in the way each Police Service in Wales refers victims to Victim Support. Some Police Services refer the majority of victim of crime to Victim Support having a policy of requiring victims to 'opt out' of passing on their contact details to Victim Support. In other areas an 'opt in' policy is used and the victim must specifically request help from Victim Support before their details are passed on. In practice this can mean a difference of thousands of victims gaining access to Victim Support's services based on which Police Authority they live in. A single Police Service for Wales would have the obvious advantage of reducing these anomalies and ensuring a greater degree of consistency of service for Victims and Witnesses across Wales.

We believe that any consideration of Police restructuring in Wales must consider the following points

- All victims and witnesses in Wales should have access to consistent, services from the Police, which are timely and appropriate to their needs and which recognises any local, social and economic issues, which may affect their recovery from the effects of crime.
- There must be the same accountability for local issues even if those charged with the management of a larger structure, are removed both personally and geographically from the people they serve.

There are both advantages and disadvantages for creation of a single Welsh Police Service. However whatever changes are finally agreed upon, what we do know is that they will have a significant knock on effect upon the voluntary sector and particularly for organisations who work closely with the Police.

Jon Trew
National Officer
Victim Support Wales
4th November 2005

due to illness I have been unable to submit an extended response to this item but I wish that this brief response is given the attention it deserves.

As a voluntary worker with prisoners and offenders in Torfaen, I have been urging since 1995 that there is no continuity in strategies to reduce crime. Within the last year I became involved in a campaign to save a local community school on a deprived, communities first estate. I took an interest in other policies that were being implemented and discovered that the local needs assessment was inadequate. Unfortunately, this needs assessment was being used to inform other strategies. At the same time I had only just made contact with Mr Paul Symes, divisional commander, Gwent Constabulary. I have not yet been able to discuss my concerns with him. however, I understand that Mr John Weston, member of the performance team, the Wales Audit Office, has been tasked with auditing the health, social care and wellbeing strategy across Wales. He is working specifically with local government including Torfaen. part of his remit is "reviewing the needs assessment and how it links to the corporate plan and other strategies".

I have grave concerns about the efficacy of partnerships when I consider that the local needs assessment does not reflect the true depth of deprivation in these communities. without a true understanding of local needs policies can actually exacerbate existing social problems. Local Police need to be aware of social problems within their force area, which understandably may differ for varying reasons. I consider that to amalgamate current forces into larger authorities at a time when it has become all too obvious that "tough on crime tough on the causes of crime" has still left deprived communities without the assistance they need to reduce the incidence of offending would be detrimental to community relations.

Police forces are expected to protect communities. The best way to protect is to reduce the need to offend. The inquiry by the audit office will indicate and confirm the anomalies I identified ten years ago. I would therefore prefer to build on the contact I have made with my local force in addressing these local social problems which could then be shared with other forces.

I would therefore urge that until the audit office has completed its research across Wales it would not be advisable to reorganise police forces which are currently linked to all local community safety partnerships.

Gaynor Daniel

SJR RTC 31 WALES ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Dear Roger,

POLICE RESTRUCTURING IN ENGLAND AND WALES

I have been asked by members of the Wales Association of Community Safety Officers (WACSO) to provide written comments to the Social Justice & Regeneration Committee for the policy review relating to the restructuring of the four Welsh forces.

After consulting our membership, it is clear that the majority of community safety officers across Wales do not have any strong opposition to the creation of an all-Wales police service – the most likely final option to be presented to the Home Secretary.

However, members are unanimous in their view that the current Basic Command Unit (BCU) structures must be retained and strengthened, together with the police commitment to deliver neighbourhood policing and partnership working at both electoral ward and sub-ward levels. Indeed the placing of BCUs on a statutory footing is something we welcome.

Members are also of one voice in calling for greater autonomy for BCUs, particularly in respect of their ability to set targets and priorities (thereby ensuring allocation of adequate resources) that better reflect the needs of their respective community safety partnerships. It is therefore essential that the Police Reform White Paper proposals for BCUs contained within *Building Communities, Beating Crime* are not lost in the restructure.

WACSO recognises the difficulty that would arise in the creation of a new all-Wales police authority and the need to ensure democratic representation on that authority from all 22 unitary council areas. There is also recognition that if every unitary council is afforded a representative it cannot be equitable for smaller authorities such as Merthyr Tydfil, Ynys Mon and Blaenau Gwent to have the same level of representation as Cardiff, Swansea and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

WACSO would therefore want to ensure that the new police authority structure would recognise and accommodate both regional and local accountability and enable the 22 councils and community safety partnerships to maintain clear and real links and communications with the authority.

In fact the restructure may provide the ideal opportunity to bring the police authority “closer to the people” by using the CSP structure as a network of local area boards, with each council’s executive or cabinet member for community safety sitting on the partnership’s overarching or strategic group as well as being the police authority appointee (as suggested by *Building Communities, Beating Crime*). Why try to create a totally new structure when it might be easier to adapt existing ones.

If it proves necessary to limit the membership of the new all-Wales police authority, it would then be feasible for a middle tier of regional boards – perhaps reflecting three geographical areas of Mid & West, North and South Wales – to sit between the CSPs/local boards and the new all-Wales police authority executive.

WACSO recognises that regional and cross-border crime does not conform to boundaries such as the English/Welsh border and that there are coherent arguments for trans-national mergers, such as North Wales and Cheshire/Merseyside, South Wales and Gwent with Avon & Somerset/Gloucestershire and Dyfed-Powys with West Mercia. However, the benefits of such cross-border mergers may very well be outweighed by the complications this causes for police strategic management teams working simultaneously in devolved and non-devolved contexts. It could also result in adding to the chaos of existing community safety partnership funding arrangements and target-setting and monitoring procedures.

There is a strong local identity in all four areas of Wales that form the current footprints of the police forces. This identity is not only traditional but also cultural. Any move to an all-Wales Force or other combination of forces would need to ensure this identity must be kept. Otherwise the communities currently served by these forces will undoubtedly express their displeasure. This could be overcome by introducing within the all-Wales Force, for

example, regional or area 'Divisions' mirroring the current force boundaries. There would be a need to keep the current BCU structures within these 'divisions' in order to operate the current CSP structure. This would help ensure a seamless transition and provide a business as usual approach. WACSO does have concerns about how the restructuring will impact on other areas of partnership working, such as criminal justice matters. These could range from provision of secure accommodation, jails etc having to be kept within Wales (i.e. South Wales). Similarly barristers currently serving north Wales from the Chester Circuit may not then be available. There are no Chambers in north Wales.

Finally it would be wrong, in presenting a WACSO viewpoint, not to acknowledge the strong feeling against an all-Wales force that has been expressed in some areas (particularly Wrexham), based mainly on the stronger cultural, operational and resource links that the police have with Cheshire and Merseyside. There is serious concern about an all-Wales force being singularly focused on a Cardiff /South Wales centre, with a host of experiences showing that, typically, North Wales loses out. Another question raised by North Wales members was in relation to the setting of precepts and the risks associated with local council taxes going into an All Wales pot.

I trust the views of WACSO members will assist the committee in its deliberations on this matter.

Stephen Carr

Chair

CC: All WACSO members

SJR RTC 32 WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD

23 Tachwedd 2005

Ailstrwythuro'r Heddlu

Annwyl Roger

Diolch i chi am y gwahoddiad i ddarparu adroddiad i'r Pwyllgor yn amlinellu ein barn fel sefydliad ar y broses o adolygu trefniant strwythurol y gwasanaeth heddlu yng Nghymru. Ymatebwn i'ch gwahoddiad isod drwy gynnig sylwadau sy'n berthnasol i'r cylch gorchwyl a nodir yn eich llythyr, gan ganolbwyntio gan fwyaf ar bwynt cyntaf y cylch gorchwyl hwnnw. O fewn ein sylwadau cyfeiriwn at rannau perthnasol adroddiad Arolygiaeth Heddluoedd Ei Mawrhydi ar ailstrwythuro'r Heddluoedd - 'Closing the Gap'.

Hoffwn gynnig y rhestr canlynol o argymhellion i'w hystyried o fewn y drafodaeth ar ailstrwythuro heddluoedd yng Nghymru:-

- **Dylid sicrhau y cynhwysir gofyniad i feddu ar Gynllun Iaith Gymraeg mewn unrhyw drefniadau trosiannol**
- **Dylid ystyried bod plismona lleol yng Nghymru yn golygu plismona yn newis iaith yr unigolion a'r cymunedau a wasanaethir**
- **Dylid ystyried pob ffactor sy'n debyg o effeithio ar ddarpariaeth cyfrwng y Gymraeg**

- Rhaid sicrhau presenoldeb cynrychiolydd dros yr iaith o fewn unrhyw grŵp a sefydlir er goruchwyllo'r broses
- Dylai strwythur newydd yr heddluoedd yng Nghymru sicrhau y gall heddluoedd ymhob rhan o Gymru sefydlu a gweithredu gweithdrefnau monitro safon y ddarpariaeth Gymraeg
- Dylai strwythur yr heddluoedd yn y dyfodol gynnig pob cyfle posib i uwch swyddogion o fewn sefydliadau newydd i feddu ar ddealltwriaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg
- Argymhellwn yn gryf na ddylai unrhyw newid i strwythur heddluoedd Cymru amharu ar allu heddluoedd i gydweithio er cynyddu'r gallu i blismona'n lleol yn effeithiol drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg
- Dylid cytuno ar welliannau trefniadol angenrheidiol fel rhan o'r ail strwythuro hwn er mwyn sicrhau nad yw heddluoedd Cymru yn ei chael yn anodd i gwrdd â gofynion statudol eu cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg o ganlyniad i ddylanwad negyddol sefydliadau cysylltiol
- Dylai unrhyw ailstrwythuro posib anelu i gryfhau potensial partneriaethau i gynnig gwasanaethau sy'n gweddu'r gymdeithas leol, gan gynnwys cynnig gwasanaethau yn Gymraeg
- Dylai unrhyw ailstrwythuro ariannol fod yn gyfle i wella safonau plismona lleol yng Nghymru drwy alluogi heddluoedd i flaenoriaethu'r cyllid er ateb y gofynion lleol

Eglurir y rhesymau am yr argymhellion hyn yn yr adroddiad isod.

Cefndir

Mae cyfrifoldeb statudol, dan Ddeddf yr Iaith Gymraeg 1993, ar bob heddlu yng Nghymru i baratoi cynllun iaith Gymraeg. Mae'r cynlluniau hyn yn nodi pa wasanaethau bydd Heddluoedd yn eu darparu'n Gymraeg ac yn cynnwys targedau penodol ar gyfer gwella'r ddarpariaeth. Mae Cynlluniau Iaith Gymraeg heddluoedd yn offerynnau pwysig dros ben er sicrhau gwasanaethau plismona lleol o safon. Dywed cymal 1.7 canllawiau statudol y Bwrdd ar gyfer paratoi cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg:-

".....bydd yn rhaid i gynlluniau iaith ddatgan y mesurau y bwriada sefydliadau eu cymryd er mwyn trin y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg ar y sail eu bod yn gyfartal wrth ddarparu gwasanaethau i'r cyhoedd yng Nghymru. Mae hyn yn cwmpasu'r gweithgareddau hynny a gyflawnir er budd y cyhoedd yn gyffredinol yn ogystal ag er budd unigolyn neu unigolion penodol. Mae'r ystyr yn cynnwys perthynas cyflenwr/cwsmer rhwng sefydliadau â'r cyhoedd, lle darperir gwasanaethau yn uniongyrchol i aelodau o'r cyhoedd ac unigolion. Mae hefyd yn cynnwys, er enghraifft, cadw cyfraith a threfn....."

Pa bynnag strwythur y cytunir iddo yn sgil y drafodaeth hon, bydd disgwyliad ar y gyfundrefn i weithredu cynllun iaith Gymraeg er cwrdd gofynion cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg. **Dylid sicrhau y cynhwysir gofyniad i feddu ar Gynllun Iaith Gymraeg mewn unrhyw drefniadau trosiannol.**

(i) Y berthynas rhwng yr heddlu a'r cymunedau maent yn eu gwasanaethu yng Nghymru a materion hunaniaeth leol.

Yn eu hadroddiad, rhydd Arolygiaeth Heddluoedd Ei Mawrhydi bwyslais ar blismona lleol. Disgrifia cymal 1.65 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth yr angen am:-
“A force which is big enough to deliver protection, but still small enough to identify with local communities, is an attractive one. Re-configuring for better protection of, and connection with, the public, needs to be seen as part of a package of police reform for this century.”

Cytunwn y dylai gwella'r cyswllt â'r cyhoedd fod yn un o'r prif ystyriaethau wrth gynllunio i ailstrwythuro'r heddluoedd. **Barn y Bwrdd yw bod plismona lleol yng Nghymru yn golygu plismona yn newis iaith yr unigolion a'r cymunedau a wasanaethir.**

Y mae gofynion cynlluniau iaith statudol yn datgan y dylid ystyried gofynion ieithyddol pan fo newidiadau polisi yn digwydd gan symud yn nes at yr egwyddor o sicrhau cyfle cyfartal a manteisio ar bob cyfle posibl i gynyddu darpariaeth cyfrwng Gymraeg. Daw heddweision a swyddogion eraill heddluoedd i gyswllt â chymunedau lleol mewn amryw sefyllfaoedd: ymweld ag ysgolion, ymweld â phobl yn eu cartrefi a cynnal cyfarfodydd cyhoeddus ymysg pethau eraill. Enghreifftiau yn unig sydd yma ond ymhob un o'r sefyllfaoedd hyn y mae angen ystyried effaith unrhyw strwythur newydd ar ddarpariaeth cyfrwng y Gymraeg gan roi ystyriaeth briodol i'r ddarpariaeth. Yn achos ail strwythuro'r heddlu **dylid ystyried pob ffactor sy'n debyg o effeithio ar ddarpariaeth cyfrwng y Gymraeg fel rhan o'r broses o benderfynu ac yna datblygu pecyn o fesurau i gryfhau darpariaeth ddwyieithog.**

Mae'r Bwrdd yn credu'n gryf mai'r unig fodd o sicrhau ystyriaeth briodol i'r iaith o fewn y broses ailstrwythuro, ac yn sgil hynny o fewn holl elfennau gwaith heddluoedd yn y dyfodol, yw drwy **sicrhau presenoldeb cynrychiolydd dros yr iaith o fewn unrhyw grŵp a sefydlir er goruchwyllo'r broses.** Byddai'n bosib i gynrychiolydd sydd â dealltwriaeth o anghenion ieithyddol heddluoedd Cymru ymgymryd â gwaith angenrheidiol er sicrhau bod unrhyw ailstrwythuro yn cynnal ac yn gwella safonau plismona yn Gymraeg yng Nghymru. Byddai hyn yn gydnaws â chymal 5.60 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth sy'n dynodi'r angen i gynnal asesiadau sy'n rhoi ystyriaeth i natur demograffig ardaloedd a wasanaethir.

Enghraifft allweddol 1

Wrth sefydlu canolfannau galw – mae Heddlu Gogledd Cymru ar hyn o bryd yn cydweithio ag asiantaethau eraill i greu canolfan alwadau ganolog yn Llanelwy ar gyfer darparu gwasanaethau ffôn. Oherwydd natur ieithyddol yr ardal a wasanaethir, dynodwyd nifer sylweddol o'r swyddi o fewn y ganolfan yn 'Cymraeg yn hanfodol'. Dylai'r strwythur newydd annog cyfleoedd tebyg i wella'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg sy'n hanfodol er mwyn cynnig gwasanaethau plismona 'lleol' o safon.

Enghraifft allweddol 2

Dywed cymal 1.32 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth bod pobl yn uniaethu â

“.....a discrete neighbourhood, wanting an identifiable, named local officer.”

Dylai strwythur newydd yr heddluoedd ganiatáu ystyriaeth briodol i'r iaith o fewn prosesau recriwtio a hyfforddi, er sicrhau bod gan heddwision a swyddogion y sgiliau ieithyddol priodol er plismona'n llwyddiannus ar lefel lleol. Mae 'An Garda Siochana', Heddlu Gweriniaeth Iwerddon, wedi profi cryn lwyddiant drwy weithredu polisi sy'n ei gwneud hi'n ofynnol i bob heddwes newydd gyrraedd lefel cydnabyddedig o allu Gwyddeleg o fewn cyfnod penodol o amser. Credwn y dylai'r strwythur newydd alluogi heddluoedd yng Nghymru i fabwysiadu arferion gorau o'r fath gan heddluoedd eraill er cynyddu eu gallu i blismona'n effeithiol yn lleol. Mae na enghreifftiau yng Nghymru o heddluoedd yn buddsoddi cryn amser ac arian yn datblygu sgiliau Cymraeg eu staff. Dylai'r strwythur newydd ganiatáu y defnydd gorau o'r buddsoddiad mewn sgiliau ieithyddol gan heddluoedd yng Nghymru er mwyn gwasanaethu cymunedau'n effeithiol.

Byddai'n fanteisiol pe bai'r strwythur newydd yn caniatáu gweithrediad Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg sy'n gosod targedau cyffredin ac amserlen penodol ar gyfer gwella'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg ar hyd a lled Cymru. **Dylai strwythur newydd yr heddluoedd yng Nghymru sicrhau y gall heddluoedd ymhob rhan o Gymru sefydlu a gweithredu gweithdrefnau monitro safon y ddarpariaeth Gymraeg.**

O brofiad, mae cyrff cyhoeddus sydd yn mwynhau cefnogaeth i'r iaith ymysg uwch swyddogion yn gweithredu mesurau cynlluniau iaith yn fwy effeithiol nag eraill. Yng nghyd-destun plismona lleol, mae arweiniad medrus yn golygu medru arwain ar faterion sy'n bwysig i gymunedau lleol. Mewn nifer o ardaloedd yng Nghymru bydd hyn yn cynnwys y gallu i arwain ar faterion ieithyddol ac i siarad Cymraeg. **Argymhellwn felly bod strwythur yr heddluoedd yn y dyfodol yn cynnig pob cyfle posib i uwch swyddogion o fewn sefydliadau newydd i feddu ar ddealltwriaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg.**

ii) Effaith unrhyw newid ar aelodaeth Partneriaethau Diogelwch Cymunedol a threfniadau partneriaeth eraill

Un o feini prawf adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth yw 'co-terminosity', sef yr angen i ystyried ffiniau gwleidyddol a partneriaethol. O safbwynt ieithyddol, gallwn gadarnhau bod heddluoedd Cymru eisoes yn cydweithio er gwella safonau'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg. Mae uwch swyddogion heddluoedd Cymru'n cwrdd a'i gilydd yn grŵp WACPO lle rhoddir ystyriaeth i'r iaith Gymraeg. Mae cymal 1.53 yr adroddiad, sy'n ffocysu ar drefniant 'lead regional force', yn sôn am adeiladu ar isadeiledd, prosesau a threfniadau partneriaethol sy'n bodoli eisoes. **Argymhellwn yn gryf na ddylai unrhyw newid i strwythur heddluoedd Cymru amharu ar allu heddluoedd i gydweithio er cynyddu'r gallu i blismona'n lleol yn effeithiol drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.**

Dywed adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth y dylid ystyried cryfderau gwahanol 'bartneriaid' wrth ad-drefnu. Yng Nghymru, mae gallu heddluoedd i gynnig gwasanaethau cyfrwng y Gymraeg o safon yn amrywio'n sylweddol. Mae Heddlu Gogledd Cymru wedi datblygu polisiâu a gweithdrefnau llwyddiannus iawn ar gyfer plismona yn Gymraeg. O fewn strwythur 'lead force', byddai heddluoedd eraill Cymru mewn sefyllfa i fanteisio ar y gwaith da sydd wedi ei wneud gan Heddlu Gogledd Cymru drwy fabwysiadu'r polisiâu a

gweithdrefnau sy'n berthnasol i'w amgylchiadau 'lleol' hwy. Mae'r iaith Gymraeg wrth gwrs yn rhan bwysig o gymunedau ar hyd a lled Cymru. Mae'r adroddiad yn cyfeirio at oblygiadau posib unrhyw newid ar sefydliadau cysylltiol. Mae'r heddluoedd yn dibynnu ar sefydliadau cysylltiol, sydd wedi eu lleoli tu allan i Gymru, i ddarparu amryw o wasanaethau. Mae anallu nifer o'r cyrff hyn i ddarparu gwasanaethau sydd yn gydnaws â chynlluniau iaith yr heddluoedd yn cael sgil effaith negyddol ar allu heddluoedd Cymru i blismona'n effeithiol drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. **Dylid cytuno ar welliannau trefniadol angenrheidiol fel rhan o'r ail strwythuro hwn er mwyn sicrhau nad yw heddluoedd Cymru yn ei chael yn anodd i gwrdd a gofynion statudol eu cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg.**

Enghraifft allweddol 3

Mae'r Swyddfa Gartref yn darparu deunyddiau a chanllawiau i heddluoedd yng Nghymru, mae PITO'n dparu meddalwedd i heddluoedd, mae Arolygiaeth Heddluoedd Ei Mawrhydi yn arolygu perfformiad heddluoedd yng Nghymru ac mae CENTREX yn gweinyddu prosesau recriwtio heddluoedd yng Nghymru. Hyd yma mae'r holl gyrff canolog hyn wedi anwybyddu'r iaith i raddau helaeth wrth ddylanwadu ar waith heddluoedd, o ganlyniad nid oes meddalwedd Cymraeg ar gael i hwyluso darpariaeth gwasanaethau Cymraeg, nid yw'r Arolygiaeth yn monitro safon gwasanaethau Cymraeg yr heddluoedd ac ni roddir ystyriaeth i'r iaith wrth recriwtio i'r heddluoedd yng Nghymru. Yn sgil dylanwad y cyrff hyn, mae gallu heddluoedd yng Nghymru i gynnig safon uchel o wasanaeth 'lleol', sy'n gweddu amrywiaeth ieithyddol cymunedau yng Nghymru, wedi ei gyfyngu. Credwn ei bod yn hollbwysig felly, wrth ystyried ailstrwythuro'r heddluoedd yng Nghymru, i ystyried hefyd strwythur a dylanwad cyrff fel y rhai uchod sy'n rheoli i raddau helaeth llwyddiant plismona lleol yng Nghymru.

Enghraifft allweddol 4

Datblygu meddalwedd i gofnodi manylion unigolion yn y ddalfa – Datblygwyd meddalwedd cyfrifiadurol 'NSPIS' gan y 'Police Information Technology Organisation' rhai blynyddoedd yn ôl, wedi ei ariannu gan holl heddluoedd Cymru a Lloegr, er cofnodi manylion unigolion yn y ddalfa, ac er paratoi achosion yn erbyn unigolion. Hyd yn ddiweddar iawn, nid yw'r feddalwedd a ddatblygwyd wedi caniatáu heddluoedd Cymru i gofnodi dewis iaith unigolion yn y ddalfa, nac ychwaith i gynhyrchu dogfennau yn Gymraeg ar gyfer achosion cyfreithiol. Dylai'r strwythur newydd anelu i gynnig cyfleoedd newydd i heddluoedd Cymru i sicrhau ystyriaeth briodol i'r iaith o fewn mentrau newydd o'r fath, sydd yn effeithio'n sylweddol ar eu gallu i gynnig cyfle cyfartal i'r cyhoedd yng Nghymru.

Mae'r heddluoedd yn cydweithio'n agos â nifer asiantaethau cyfiawnder troseddol megis llysoedd, carchardai, gwasanaethau prawf a Gwasanaeth Eryl y Goron. Wrth newid strwythur un o'r asiantaethau hyn, fe allai gael traw effaith ar allu'r asiantaethau eraill i gynnig ystod o wasanaethau Cymraeg o safon i'r cyhoedd yng Nghymru. Mae adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth yn rhoi cryn ffocws ar bwysigrwydd datblygu gwasanaethau plismona lleol (cymal 1.7), rhaid cofio bod asiantaethau cyfiawnder troseddol eraill yn cynnig gwasanaethau 'lleol' eu natur hefyd, yn aml drwy gydweithio â heddluoedd.

Enghraifft amlwg o hyn yw gwaith y Partneriaethau Diogelwch Cymunedol.

Dylai unrhyw ailstrwythuro posib anelu i gryfhau potensial partneriaethau o'r fath i gynnig gwasanaethau sy'n gweddu'r gymdeithas leol, gan gynnwys cynnig gwasanaethau yn Gymraeg.

iii) y berthynas rhwng yr heddlu a'r gwasanaeth au hynny sy'n dod yn uniongyrchol o fewn maes cyfrifoldeb Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru

Dywed cymal 1.46 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth bod ffiniau gwleidyddol a phartneriaethol yn ystyriaethau pwysig ar gyfer cynllunio'r strwythur newydd.

Ym marn y Bwrdd dylai unrhyw drefniant barchu natur ieithyddol Cymru.

Credwn bod angen i unrhyw newid i strwythur heddluoedd Cymru anelu at gwrdd ag amcanion Cynllun Gweithredu Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, Iaith Pawb, sef o

".....fod yn genedl wirioneddol ddwyieithog, sef gwlad lle gall pobl ddewis byw eu bywydau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu Saesneg....."

Dylai'r strwythur newydd ganiatáu heddluoedd Cymru i barhau i weithio tuag at gyflawni targed Iaith Pawb o fedru darparu mwy o blismona lleol yn Gymraeg:-

"...ei bod yn bosibl i gyrff cyhoeddus, preifat a gwirfoddol ddarparu mwy o wasanaethau, trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg."

Dim ond trwy ddewis opsiwn fydd yn caniatáu gweithrediad targedau Iaith Pawb fydd hi'n bosibl i roi *".....a human, accessible, accountable face on the imposing institution of policing....."* ar hyd a lled Cymru (cymal 1.42).

Yn y cyd destun hwn y mae gofyn ystyried trefniadau cyllido. Dywed cymal 10.18 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth

"...any move to a more strategic organisation of policing needs to take place in a carefully planned and measured way which reduces the short-term risks as far as possible and keeps a clear line of sight on the benefits to be realised."

Dengys y mapiau ar dudalennau 43 – 47 adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth bod yr angen am wasanaethau amddiffynnol yn llai yn Nghymru nag mewn ardaloedd eraill, gan fod achosion o weithgaredd sy'n gofyn am wasanaethau amddiffynnol yn llai. Dylai trefniannau cyllido heddluoedd Cymru felly ganiatáu darpariaeth uwch o adnoddau ar gyfer anghenion plismona lleol. Fel yr ydym wedi sôn eisoes, un o'r anghenion plismona lleol sy'n gyson ac sy'n cynyddu ar hyd a lled Cymru yw'r angen i gynnig gwasanaethau Cymraeg sy'n ateb gofynion y canran cynyddol o siaradwyr Cymraeg yng Nghymru. Dylid ystyried gwerth cadw trefniadau cyllido presennol, er enghraifft ariannu datblygiad meddalwedd a prosesau recriwtio yn ganolog drwy sefydliadau fel PITO a CENTREX lle nad ydynt yn rhoi ystyriaeth i'r iaith Gymraeg. **Dylai unrhyw ailstrwythuro ariannol fod yn gyfle i wella safonau plismona lleol yng Nghymru drwy alluogi heddluoedd i flaenoriaethu'r cyllid er ateb y gofynion lleol.**

I gloi, credwn bod y penderfyniad i ailstrwythuro heddluoedd yn cynnig cyfle arbennig i wella safonau plismona yng Nghymru. Mae manteision ac anfanteision ynghlwm â phob un o'r opsiynau ar gyfer ailstrwythuro a nodir yn adroddiad yr Arolygiaeth. Yr hyn sy'n bwysig, o safbwynt ieithyddol, yw bod y newid yn seiliedig ar *".....capacity building....."* yn hytrach nag egwyddor o sicrhau arbedion (cymal 1.34).

Mae darpariaeth Gymraeg heddluoedd Cymru'n amrywio'n sylweddol o ran argaeledd a safon ar hyd a lled y wlad. Hyderwn y bydd unrhyw newid strwythurol yn creu cyfleoedd am welliannau i'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg yn

hytrach na chreu rhwystrau i welliant a chaniatáu cynydd mewn cyfleoedd i'r cyhoedd i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg ym myd plismona yng Nghymru. Hyderwn y bydd y pwyntiau a nodir yn yr adroddiad hwn o ddefnydd i chi wrth ystyried a thrafod y broses o ailstrwythuro heddluoedd Cymru. Diolch i chi eto am y cyfle i gael cyfrannu ar y drafodaeth, os hoffech drafod cynnwys ein adroddiad ymhellach cysylltwch â mi a chroeso.

Yn gywir

Meirion Prys Jones

(Prif Weithredwr)

SJR RTC 32 TRANSLATED VERSION

23 November 2005

Restructuring the Police

Dear Roger

Thank you for the invitation to submit a report to the Committee outlining our views as an organisation on the process of reviewing the structural arrangements for the police service in Wales. We hereby respond to your invitation by listing our comments below, which relate to the terms of reference noted in your letter. Most of our comments focus on the first point in those terms of reference. In our submissions we refer to relevant parts of the report 'Closing the Gap' by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies, on the restructuring the police forces.

I wish to submit the following list of recommendations for consideration concerning the restructuring of the police forces in Wales:-

- It should be ensured that the requirement to have a Welsh Language Scheme is included in any transitional arrangements
- Local policing in Wales should be understood to include policing in the language of choice of the individuals and communities served
- All factors should be considered which are likely to impinge on the Welsh-medium provision
- There should be representation for the language interest on any group which may be established to oversee the process
- The new structure for the police forces in Wales should ensure that forces in all parts of Wales can establish and operate procedures to monitor the standard of the Welsh-medium provision
- The future structure of the police forces should offer senior officers within the new organisations every possible opportunity to acquire an understanding of the Welsh language
- We strongly recommend that any change in the structure of the Welsh police forces should not impair the forces' ability to collaborate in order to increase their capacity for effective local Welsh-medium policing
- Agreement on necessary organisational improvements should form part of the restructuring, so that Welsh forces do not find it difficult to meet the statutory requirements in their Welsh Language Schemes

because of the negative influence of associated organisations

- Any restructuring should aim to strengthen the potential of partnerships to offer services which are suited to local society, including the provision of services in Welsh
- Any financial restructuring should be seen as an opportunity to improve local policing in Wales, by enabling forces to prioritise funding to meet local needs

The reasons for these recommendations are explained in the report below
Background

In accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993, preparing a Welsh language scheme is a statutory responsibility of every police force in Wales. These schemes state which services the police forces will provide in Welsh, and include specific targets for improving the provision. The police forces' Welsh Language Schemes are extremely important instruments for ensuring a high standard of local policing. Clause 1.7 of the Board' statutory guidance on the preparation of Welsh Language Schemes states:-

" . . . Welsh language schemes will need to set out the measures organisations propose to take in order to treat Welsh and English on a basis of equality whilst providing services to the public in Wales. This covers those activities which are carried out for the benefit of the public at large as well as for the benefit of an identifiable individual or individuals. The meaning includes supplier/customer relationships between organisations and the public, where services are provided directly to members of the public and individuals. It also includes, for example, the keeping of law and order . . . "

Whatever structure is agreed upon as a result of the current discussions, the resulting regime will be expected to operate a Welsh language scheme in order to meet the requirements. **It should therefore be ensured that a requirement to have a Welsh Language Scheme is included in any transitional arrangements.**

(i) The relationship between the police and the communities which they serve in Wales, and matters of local identity.

The report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies emphasises local policing. Clause 1.65 refers to the need for:-

"A force which is big enough to deliver protection, but still small enough to identify with local communities, is an attractive one. Re-configuring for better protection of, and connection with, the public, needs to be seen as part of a package of police reform for this century."

We agree that improving the connection with the public needs to be one of the chief considerations in planning to restructure the police forces. The opinion of the Board is that local **policing in Wales should be understood to include policing in the language of choice of the individuals and communities served.**

The statutory language scheme requirements state that the linguistic requirements should be considered whenever changes of policy occur, in order to move closer to the principle of ensuring equality of opportunity and to take advantage of all possible opportunities to increase the Welsh-medium provision. Police constables and other officers come into contact with local

communities in a variety of situations: when visiting schools, visiting people in their homes, organising public meetings as well as in other circumstances. These are examples only, but in regard to all of these situations, the impact of any new structure on the Welsh-medium provision needs to be assessed, and due consideration given to that provision.

In the event that the police forces are restructured, **all factors should be considered which are likely to impinge on the Welsh-medium provision**, in the course of deciding on and developing a package of measures to strengthen the bilingual provision.

The Board is strongly of the opinion that the only way to secure appropriate consideration for the language within the restructuring process, and subsequently in all aspects of the work of the future police forces, is through ensuring **the presence of a representative of the language interest on any group which may be established to oversee the process**. A representative with an understanding of the linguistic needs of the Welsh police forces could undertake the essential work of ensuring that any restructuring maintains and improves the standards of Welsh-medium policing in Wales. This would be in keeping with Clause 5.60 in the report of the Inspectorate, which proclaims the need to make assessments which take into consideration the demographic characteristics of the areas being served.

Key example 1

In establishing call centres, North Wales Police are currently collaborating with other agencies to create a centralised call centre in St Asaph for the provision of telephone services. Because of the linguistic nature of the area being served, a substantial number of appointments with in this centre have been designated 'Welsh-speaking essential'. The new structure should encourage similar opportunities to improve the Welsh-medium provision, in order to provide 'local' policing services of a suitable standard.

Key example 2

Clause 1.32 in the report of the Inspectorate states that people identify with

“.....a discrete neighbourhood, wanting an identifiable, named local officer.”

The new structure of the police forces should ensure due consideration for language in recruitment and training processes, in order to ensure that constables and other officers have appropriate language skills for successful local policing. ‘An Garda Siochana’, the police force of the Irish Republic has met with considerable success in implementing a policy which requires every new police officer to attain a specified level of proficiency in Irish within a set time. We believe the new structure should enable police forces in Wales to adopt similar best practice initiated by other forces, in order to enhance their capacity for effective local policing. There are examples of police forces in Wales which have invested considerable time and money in developing the Welsh language skills of

their staff. The new structure should allow for the best use of investment in language skills by the police forces in Wales, in order to serve the communities effectively.

It would be advantageous if the new structure allowed for the implementation of a Welsh Language Scheme which sets common targets and a set timetable for improving the Welsh-medium provision throughout Wales. **The new structure for the police forces in Wales should ensure that forces in all parts of Wales can establish and operate procedures to monitor the standard of the Welsh-medium provision**

Experience shows that those public bodies whose senior officers are more supportive of the language operate their language scheme measures more effectively than others. In the context of local policing, skilful leadership means leadership in matters which are important to local communities. In a number of areas in Wales this will include the ability to lead in linguistic matters and to speak Welsh. **We recommend therefore that the future structure of the police forces should offer senior officers within the new organisations every possible opportunity to acquire an understanding of the Welsh language.**

ii) The effect of any change on the membership of Community Safety Partnerships and other partnership arrangements

One of the criteria applied in the Inspectorate's report is 'co-terminosity', meaning the need to consider political and partnership boundaries. From the point of view of language, we can confirm that the Welsh police forces are already collaborating to improve the standards of the Welsh-medium provision. Senior officers from the Welsh police forces meet in the group WACPO which considers matters connected with the Welsh language. Clause 1.53 in the report, which focuses on the 'lead regional force' arrangement, refers to building on infrastructure, processes and partnership arrangements which already exist. **We strongly recommend that any change in the structure of the Welsh police forces should not impair the forces' ability to collaborate in order to increase their capacity for effective local Welsh-medium policing.**

The Inspectorate's report states that the strengths of the various 'partners' should be considered when restructuring. In Wales, there is considerable variation in the capacities of the police forces to provide Welsh-medium services. The North Wales Police force has developed very successful procedures for policing in the Welsh language. Within the 'lead force' structure, the other police forces in Wales could benefit from the good work done by North Wales Police, by adopting policies and procedures which are relevant to their 'local' circumstances. The Welsh language is, of course, an important part of communities through the length and breadth of Wales. The report refers to the possible implications for associated organisations, resulting from any change. The police forces depend on associated organisations, which are located outside Wales, to provide a number of services. The incapacity of these bodies to provide services which are consistent with the forces' language schemes, is having the negative effect of impairing the ability of the Welsh forces to provide effective Welsh-medium policing. **Agreement on necessary organisational improvements should form part of the restructuring, so that Welsh forces do not find it difficult to meet the statutory requirements in their Welsh Language Schemes.**

Key example 3

The Home Office provides materials and guidance for police forces in Wales; the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) provides their software; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies inspects the performance of the forces in Wales; while CENTREX administers their recruitment processes. So far, all these central bodies, while influencing the work of the police forces, have largely ignored the existence of the Welsh language. Consequently, there is no software available to facilitate the provision of Welsh-medium services; the Inspectorate does not monitor the standard of the Welsh-medium services which the forces provide; and the language is not considered when recruiting into the forces in Wales.

Because of the influence of these organisations, the ability of police forces in Wales to provide a high standard of 'local' service, reflecting the linguistic variability of communities in Wales, has been curtailed.

We therefore believe it is all-important, when considering the restructuring of police forces in Wales, to consider also the structure of bodies such as the ones listed above, which largely control the success of local policing in Wales.

Key example 4

The development of software to record details of individuals held in custody - The computer software 'NSPIS' was developed some years ago by the Police Information Technology Organisation, with finance provided by all the police forces in England and Wales, in order to record details of individuals held in custody and to prepare cases against individuals. Until very recently, the software which was developed did not permit Welsh forces to record the language of choice of individuals held in custody, or to prepare documents for court cases in Welsh. The new structure should aim to offer new opportunities for the police forces in Wales to ensure proper consideration is given to language in any new initiatives of this kind, which seriously affect their ability to offer equality of opportunity to the public in Wales.

- The police forces are collaborating closely with a number of criminal justice agencies, including the courts, the prisons, the probation service and the Crown Prosecution Service. Altering the structure of one of these agencies could have repercussions affecting the ability of other agencies to offer a range of Welsh-medium services of a high standard to the public in Wales. The report of the Inspectorate focuses to a considerable extent on the importance of developing local policing services (clause 1.7). It must be remembered that other criminal justice agencies offer services of a 'local' nature as well, often in co-operation with the police forces. An obvious example of this is the work of the Community Safety Partnerships. Any possible restructuring should aim to strengthen the potential of partnerships to offer services which are suited to local society, including the provision of services in Welsh

iii) the relationship between the police and those services which are the direct responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government
Clause 1.46 in the report of the Inspectorate states that political and partnership boundaries are important considerations for the planning of the new structure. In the opinion of the Board any new arrangement should respect the linguistic nature of Wales. We believe that any change in the structure of Welsh police forces should promote the objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government's Action Plan, 'Iaith Pawb', namely
"*... to be a truly bilingual nation, by which we mean a country where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of either Welsh or English . . .*"

The new structure should allow Welsh police forces to continue to work to achieve the Iaith Pawb target of providing more Welsh-medium local policing:-

"... more services, by public, private and voluntary organisations are able to be delivered through the medium of Welsh. . ."

Only by choosing an option which allows the operation of Iaith Pawb targets will it be possible to ensure "*... a human, accessible, accountable face on the imposing institution of policing.....*" through the length and breadth of Wales (Clause 1.42).

In this context there is a need to consider the funding arrangements. Clause 10.18 in the report of the Inspectorate states
"... any move to a more strategic organisation of policing needs to take place in a carefully planned and measured way which reduces the short-term risks as far as possible and keeps a clear line of sight on the benefits to be realised."
The maps on pages 43 – 47 of the report of the Inspectorate show that the need for protective services is less in Wales than in certain other areas, because cases of activities which call for protective services are fewer. The funding arrangements for Welsh forces should therefore permit a higher proportion of resources to be allocated to the needs of local policing. As we have pointed out already, one of the constant and increasing local policing needs throughout Wales is the need to provide Welsh-medium services which correspond to the requirements of the increasing percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales. The value of retaining the present financing arrangements needs to be considered, for example, funding software development and recruitment centrally, when organisations like PITO and CENTREX pay no regard at all to the Welsh language. **Any financial restructuring should be seen as an opportunity to improve local policing in Wales, by enabling forces to prioritise funding to meet local needs**

To conclude, we believe that the decision to restructure the police forces offers an exceptional opportunity to improve the standard of policing in Wales. There are advantages and disadvantage associated with all of the options for restructuring which are listed in the report of the Inspectorate. What is important, from the linguistic point of view, is that change should be based on "*... capacity building....*" rather than the principle of saving money (Clause 1.34).

The Welsh-language provision cross Wales varies widely in respect of availability and quality. We hope that any structural change will create opportunities for improvement in the Welsh-medium provision, rather than set

up obstacles to such improvement, and that it will lead to increased opportunities to use Welsh within policing in Wales.

We trust the points made in this report will be of assistance to you in your deliberations concerning the restructuring of the Welsh police forces. I thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion; if you wish to discuss the contents of this report further, you are most welcome to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Meirion Prys Jones

(Chief Executive)

SJR RTC 33 WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dear Mr Chaffey

Police Force Structures

Thank you for your letter of 28 September inviting the Council to contribute to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee's review of the above issue.

The Executive Board of this Council debated the Home Secretary's proposals on 18 October and I am writing to summarise our views.

We are very concerned about proposals which would see a move towards larger strategic Police Forces in Wales. We believe that aggregation of current force sizes would lead to a loss of local relevance and jeopardise many of the achievements that we believe have been made in North Wales in recent years. We do not accept that population size can be a paramount factor in deciding this issue. Topography and local regional links are, in our view, equally important. In our experience, when major crises have occurred at local level - e.g. the Caia Park riots of

2003 in Wrexham - it is the Police links between North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside that

have been crucial in ensuring an effective response.

We are therefore deeply sceptical about any proposals that would, for example, see a move to a

single Police Force for the whole of Wales as has been suggested in some quarters. It is

unrealistic to imagine that the same kind of support described above could be provided from Newport or Milford Haven. Wales is a nation not a region of England and, in our view, must assert its right to design policing arrangements that are relevant to its unique character. We think it is essential that North Wales preserves the flexibility and responsiveness of a regional approach to policing.

For the future, we believe that the current Fire Service structure provides a possible model for the future. However, our main priority is the preservation of a North Wales identity for the Police service based on the current six Counties.

We are very grateful to you for offering us the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We are dismayed that the Home Secretary has not included local authorities within his consultation process as we believe we have a unique contribution to make on these issues and I will be writing direct to Charles Clarke at the request of the Executive Board to make this point.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Russell
Strategic Director - Corporate Governance