

HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY

(Special Meeting)

7 APRIL 2006

<u>PRESENT:-</u>	Councillor Stroud in the Chair
Elected Members:-	Councillors Black, Brady, De Freitas, Phillips, Rudd, Stewart, Tress and Uzzell.
Magistrate Members: -	Mr C Palmerley, Mr A Smith and Mr R Stuart.
Independent Members:-	Mr S Abdul Rahman and Mr J Shipley.
Officers: -	Mr J Bates, Director of Performance and Resources, Mr T Hollis, Chief Constable, Mr N Kingston, Assistant Chief Executive, Mr P Wainwright, Performance and Resources Manager, Mr J Mabbett, Consultation and Partnership Manager and Ms S Blair, Better Times Ltd.

The Authority met at Pacific Exchange, Kingston upon Hull.

- 147 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/OFFERS OF GIFTS OR HOSPITALITY** – The Chair reminded Members of the need to record any personal or prejudicial interest in items on the agenda and to disclose any relevant receipt or offering of gifts or hospitality.

No interests were declared or disclosures made.

- 148 **APOLOGIES** – There were no apologies for absence.

- 149 **(103) POLICE FORCE RESTRUCTURING** – The Chief Executive submitted a report that gave an update on the Home Secretary's proposals for creating a Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Police Service and sought views as to whether Humberside Police Authority wished to seek voluntary merger.

The Director of Performance and Resources gave a presentation detailing the timetable of events leading up to the requirement to make a decision on the proposals at this meeting and outlining the outcome of the meetings that had recently been held regarding this issue at local, regional and national level. He detailed a range of concerns in connection with finance in relation to the business case, governance, human resources and precept harmonisation where significant issues remained unresolved and where

negotiations were ongoing.

He also stressed the need to ensure that the costs of any merger would be funded without detracting from the improvements being implemented in respect of Neighbourhood Policing.

The Chief Constable advised that as a moderate sized force, Humberside was never considered to be in a position to make a viable stand alone option and that some form of merger to meet higher level demands would be necessary. He advised that the capacity and capability of the Force had been looked at honestly and, from an operational policing point of view, it was felt that, as he had advised the Police Authority in December, either a 2 force or full regional force would be the best fit for this area. He reiterated however his commitment to neighbourhood policing and advised that this would continue. He acknowledged that the Police Authority had concerns regarding funding, accountability and governance and that these were different to operational issues. He expressed concern regarding the proposed timescales being discussed and indicated that a 2007 deadline would not be feasible and would not allow the changes currently being implemented within Humberside to become fully effective.

The Chairman referred to the many meetings that had been attended since December and wished to place on record his thanks to officers and staff of the Force and the Authority for the tremendous amount of work that they had put in. He suggested that the Authority should not agree to a voluntary merger but should put forward credible reasons to ensure that Humberside remained within the negotiation process. He also indicated that by not volunteering this would open up a 4 month period during which organisations and individuals could object to the Home Secretary's proposals. The Home Secretary would then have to respond to these objections and the matter would be debated in both Houses of Parliament.

A Member indicated that he felt that a 4 force merger for the area would not be beneficial to the community and suggested that the Government should be looking at creating a national force, which they should fund, if they felt that the current force structures were not sufficiently large to deal with higher level crime.

The Authority received a report on the national picture based on the outcome of discussions at the APA Plenary where there was little appetite for merger and some clear concerns raised.

Members discussed the importance of neighbourhood policing, ensuring local accountability and responding to local demands. They also referred to the Human Resources issues involved in any amalgamation which they felt were not sufficiently advanced to support a merger of this scale raising concerns about the ability to implement proposals in an efficient and timely manner and

without impacting on performance. Several elected Members re-iterated that the 4 month period would allow people and organisations to voice their objections and indicated that they would take the matter back to their respective Authorities in order to engage in the political process. Members also wanted to ensure that local communities would have a voice in the matter.

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Rudd

(a) That Humberside Police Authority does not agree to the voluntary merger proposed by the Home Secretary in his ministerial statement on 21 March 2006 for the following reasons :-

1. Continuing concerns and uncertainty over assumptions within the business case, particularly in relation to:

- (i) Protective services – the costing and funding of additional investment in protective services,
- (ii) Duplication of savings and contingencies – the level and timing of staff savings and the possible impact on front line policing, the potential for savings to be double counted in relation to other initiatives such as shared services and the lack of contingency within the business case,
- (iii) Contract Breakage – lack of provision within the business case for the buyout or termination of existing contracts entered into by the precursor authorities that would be rendered redundant by merger,
- (iv) Staffing – lack of agreement on consistent arrangements in respect of Human Resource issues generally that will ensure fairness, equity and dignity in the treatment of police officers, police staff and staff within police authorities together with the doubt that this casts on the assumptions in relation to associated costs arising from the merger of forces,
- (v) Precept – the lack of information on the mechanism by which precepts will be equalised and consequently the inability to advise Council Tax payers of the potential implications for them,

2. Concerns over representation and governance, namely:-

- (i) the lack of an agreed mechanism for achieving balanced geographical and political representation on the Strategic Police Authority,
- (ii) the lack of clarity over sub-strategic governance arrangements to be able to demonstrate how to bridge the gap from neighbourhood policing at BCU/CDRP level through to the strategic level;

(b) that in view of the likelihood that the failure to agree to merge voluntarily will result in the commencement of the process for a forced merger, the Chairman, Chief Constable and Chief Executive be authorised to maintain the dialogue with their counterparts within the Region and with the Home Office to ensure that there is continuing engagement whilst the bespoke amalgamation order for the merger is being prepared;

(c) that the Chief Constable be requested to press ahead with the engagement of PCSOs and the roll out of neighbourhood policing in line with the agreed timetable, and

(d) that the Chief Constable be authorised to continue to work with and further develop joint working with the other forces within the Region on Level 2 protective services particularly in relation to counter terrorism, cross border crime and roads policing.

It was moved by Councillor Tress and seconded by Councillor De Freitas, as an amendment,

That Humberside Police Authority does not agree to the merger proposed by the Home Secretary.

Amendment lost.
Motion carried.

150 (104) PERSONNEL COMMITTEE/PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/LEAD MEMBER FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE –

The Chief Executive submitted a report that sought (i) the appointment of 2 Members onto the Personnel Committee for its meeting on 11 April and one Member onto the Performance Scrutiny Committee for its meeting on 2 May, and (ii) the nomination of a lead Member for Criminal Justice Issues.

Resolved – (a) That Mr A Smith and Mr C Palmerley be appointed to the Personnel Committee for its meeting on 11 April; (b) that any Member wishing to fill the vacancy on the Performance Scrutiny Committee for its meeting on 2 May advise the Member Support Manager, and (c) that Mr A Smith be nominated as the Lead Member on Criminal Justice Issues, subject to further information being sought regarding the role requirements.