Coventry City Council

Report to:
Cabinet   **1ˢᵗ November 2005**
Council   **1ˢᵗ November 2005**

Report of
Head of Corporate Policy

Title
Police Force Structures

1   Purpose of the Report
1.1   This report seeks your agreement to a proposed response to a recent request from the
       Chief Constable, West Midlands Police and the Chair of the West Midlands Police Authority
       for views on the possible reorganisation of police forces (Appendix 1). Attached is some
       additional background information provided by the Chief Constable (Appendix 2). The
       request was received on 13ᵗʰ October and asked for views by the end of October.
       Therefore, in order to respond within these timescales, this is being submitted as a late
       report.

2   Recommendations
2.1   Cabinet is recommended to consider and amend, as necessary, the draft response
       contained in Appendix 1 to this report and refer it for consideration by full Council on 1ˢᵗ
       November 2005.

3   Information/Background
3.1   Earlier this year the Home Secretary sought reassurance from Her Majesty's Inspectorate
       of Constabulary (HMIC) that the current arrangements for policing in England and Wales
       were fit for the future.

3.2   As a result of this enquiry, the HMIC conducted an inspection and concluded that the
       present structure of 43 police forces of widely different sizes is not sufficiently robust,
       particularly within smaller forces, to provide the appropriate level of 'protective services',
       such as major investigations and civil contingencies that are increasingly necessary. The
       report concluded that '…the 43 force structure is no longer fit for purpose'

3.3   The Home Secretary recognises that there are a number of restructuring options but is
       minded to create police forces of sufficient size to provide effective and sustainable local
       neighbourhood policing as well as a protection to the public against more serious and
       sophisticated activity. In essence, the aim is to create a structure that gets the balance
       between the desire for sustainable local policing with the ability to cope with major
       incidents, serious crime, public disorder and terrorism.

3.4   A review process has been set out by the Home Office and is currently underway. West
       Midlands Police and West Midlands Police Authority are fully engaged and are working to

identify the best possible options for policing communities and the ability to deal with local and protective issues. They have requested us to send our views by the end of October. The Chief Constable and the Chair of the West Midlands Police Authority have been informed that this matter is to be considered by Council on 1 November and that the council's response will be forwarded after the meeting.

3.5   West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the country, covering an area of 348 sq miles and serving a population of almost 2.63 million.   It currently employs about 8,000 police officers and has a total staff of almost 12,000 people.   Approximately 838 police officers and 265 support staff are currently deployed in Coventry, which is served by three Operational Command Units.

4   Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered
4.1   It is proposed to submit a response from Coventry City Council (appendix 1) to the Chief Constable, West Midlands Police and the Chair of the West Midlands Police Authority.

5   Other specific implications
5.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Neighbourhood Management	✠	
Best Value	✠	
Children and Young People	✠	
Comparable Benchmark Data	✠	
Corporate Parenting	✠	
Coventry Community Plan	✠	
Crime and Disorder	✠	
Equal Opportunities		✠
Finance		✠
Health and Safety	✠	
Human Resources		✠
Human Rights Act	✠	
Impact on Partner Organisations	✠	
Information and Communications Technology		✠
Legal Implications		✠
Property Implications		✠
Race Equality Scheme		✠
Risk Management	✠	
Sustainable Development		✠
Trade Union Consultation		✠
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		✠

6   Neighbourhood Management

6.1   Following recent negotiations, it has been agreed that the Police will amend their boundaries in order to align them, where possible, with the neighbourhood management areas. Any strategic developments regarding police structures should be sensitive to local partnership arrangements.

6.2   **Crime & Disorder and the Community Plan**
        The Local Authority and the Police work together very effectively on community safety issues and both agencies are integral members of the Community Safety Partnership, which is a theme group of the Coventry Partnership and signed up to the Community Plan.

6.3   **Children & Young People, Corporate Parenting**
        West Midlands Police are major partners in safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people and any changes made should not have a negative effect on this role.

6.4   **Best Value, Comparable Benchmark Data & Finance**
        Consideration needs to be given to relative performance levels of the police with other forces and the value for money of any new structure proposed – there are currently annual budget discussions between the 7 West Midlands Districts and the West Midlands Police Authority. Clearly these issues also need to be balanced against risk, etc.

6.5   **Risk Management, Health & Safety**
        The effectiveness of any police force structure can have a direct impact on the Council's risk management and health and safety arrangements in the City.

6.6   **Impact on Partner Organisations**
        Clearly, reorganisation of the police will potentially impact on our work with the police as partners.

6.7   **Human Rights Act**
        Any police structures need to enable the police to respond to the requirements of the Human Rights Act.

7   Timescale and expected outcomes

7.1   Views are sought by the end of October, in order for the West Midlands Police and Police Authority to co-ordinate their response by the end of November.

	Yes	No
Key Decision		✠
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)		✠
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)		**1 November 2005**

List of background papers

Proper officer: Roger Hughes, Head of Corporate Policy

Author: Telephone 76832123
Sara Roach, Community Safety Manager, Corporate Policy Unit
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:
Stella Manzie, Chief Executive (tel: 024 76831100)
Kathy Rice, Legal & Democratic Services (tel: 024 76833020)
Ken Gould, Finance & ICT (tel: 024 76832566
Jon Venn, Human Resources (tel: 024 76831125)
Colin Swann, Legal & Democratic Services (tel: 024 76833069)
Janice Nichols, Chief Executive's Directorate (tel: 024 76831097)

Papers open to Public Inspection
Description of paper   **Location: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/**
HMIC Report –
'Closing the Gap – A Review Of the 'fitness for purpose' of the current structure of policing in England & Wales

DRAFT RESPONSE TO WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AUTHORITY   *APPENDIX 1*

Dear

'Fitness for Purpose' of the Current Structure of Policing in England & Wales

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the possible reorganisation of police forces. The City Council acknowledges the HMIC view that there is a need for larger strategic police forces, in order to meet the range of current and future policing needs.

Partnerships with West Midlands Police in Coventry are well established and these relationships have a positive impact on day-to-day service delivery. It is very important that any structural reorganisation provides us with an opportunity to capitalise on this and further strengthen policing at a neighbourhood level, while also providing the local authority and partners with the opportunity to scrutinise the police where appropriate.

As you are aware, we have recently negotiated with the Police and the Fire Service the realignment of boundaries in order to achieve greater co-terminosity between the Council's new Neighbourhood Management Service and the Police and Fire operational areas. This has been a very productive exercise and will provide a good foundation for multi-agency collaboration in the future.

A key consideration regarding the development of strategic forces must be local accountability and governance. It is important that any model of accountability is closely connected to the Local Authority which is the recognised multi-service, democratically elected body which can look at all aspects of community life.

The Police Authority currently provides Local Authorities with the opportunity to influence and ensure that the West Midlands has an effective and improving police service. We would strongly recommend that the development of structures for governance and accountability continue to allow local authorities to be part of and integral to the strategic and operational effectiveness of local policing, but also providing the opportunity for scrutiny of police performance. If there were to be a larger police force the governance arrangements might have to accommodate a local board structure to facilitate that local accountability.

In addition to this, the City Council and the Community Safety Partnership place a big emphasis on the importance of involving the local community in community safety and policing issues. We need to encourage the public's involvement and participation in tackling crime through confidence-building and day to day working practices and ensure that links are strengthened between the community and the police in terms of making police more responsive at the local level. This should underpin the development of a strategic force. There needs to be flexibility for basic command units to ensure that consultation on policing is integrated with other consultation mechanisms in the local authority area, so that there is well-organised collection of data and information and co-ordinated, transparent mechanisms for feeding actions back to the public.

We hope that the above has provided some useful views and contributions to the work you are co-ordinating. We are also very interested in seeing the outcome of your review process and the proposed options. The development of strategic forces should be sensitive to local partnership working arrangements in order to maintain and continue with the positive partnerships with the Police in Coventry.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Stella Manzie, Chief Executive on 024 76831101.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2

'Fitness for Purpose' of the current structure of policing in England and Wales – summary provided by West Midlands Police

Background Information
Earlier this year the Home Secretary sought reassurance from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) that the current arrangements for policing in England and Wales were fit for the future. As a result of this the HMIC conducted an inspection and identified that the present structure of 43 police forces is not sufficiently robust, particularly within smaller forces, to provide the appropriate level of 'protective services', such as major investigations and civil contingencies that are increasingly necessary.

The report, in particular, looked at the fitness of the current structure of policing to provide effective and sustainable protective services. Protective services include counter terrorism, serious organised and cross border crime, civil contingencies and emergency planning, critical incident management, major crime, public disorder and strategic roads policing.

The HMIC report recognised that, whilst 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.

The report concludes that the establishment of strategic forces offers the best long-term business solutions. The Home Secretary shares this view and listed design criteria for force restructuring along with a timetable. He also added that the proposed options will need to demonstrate not only how the proposed arrangements outperform current ones, but also how they would outperform alternative options.

Timetable

- End of September – Establish review teams

- End of October – In conjunction with other forces and authorities in the region, and CJS and local government partners, identify options for restructuring; undertake initial analysis of options and produce a short list.

- November – Work up detailed cost-benefit analysis of short listed options and identify the preferred option.

- December – validate and refine preferred option; commence implementation planning.

Design criteria

Size – to what extent do the proposals for restructuring create units of sufficient size (the HMIC report gave an indicative figure of a minimum of 4000 officers or 6000 total staff) to provide the necessary capacity and resilience in the provision of protective services to meet both current and future demands for such services?

Mix of capability and reduction in risk – to what extent do the prospective partnerships bring together forces with complementary strengths in addressing volume crime and the provision of protective services? To what extent will they enable performance in relation to both to be improved?

Criminal markets – To what extent do the proposals take cognisance of the underlying criminal markets and patterns of cross-border criminality in the areas concerned?

Geography – To what extent do the proposals recognise and take account of particular challenges posed by geography of the proposed force area and the transport links and work patterns within?

Co-terminosity – To what extent do the proposals respect established political and partner boundaries or, alternatively, support the case for the realignment of the boundaries of other partner agencies so the benefits of co-terminosity can be preserved? The very strong starting presumption will be that any new force area should not subdivide an existing force area between two or more new forces and that the new force areas should not cross government office regional boundaries (it follows that very compelling arguments would need to be submitted in support of any merger proposals which went contrary to these presumptions).

Identity – To what extent do proposals build on strong historical or regional identities?

Clarity of command and control structure – To what extent are the proposed governance arrangements for any new entity clear and unambiguous?

Performance – To what extent do the proposals for restructuring minimise any risks to current performance during the transitional period and support further improvements in performance over the medium term? (Assessments under this heading should be made against the statutory performance indicators.)

Costs and efficiency – To what extent will the proposals minimise the costs of change and maximising efficiency savings?

West Midlands Police Commitment

We have set up a team and are fully engaged in the review process, working hard to identify the best possible options for policing our communities and strengthening our ability to deal with protective issues.

The debate is about strengthening our local and regional capability and capacity to meet current and future policing needs. This will also provide us with an opportunity to improve policing at a neighbourhood level.

The HMIC report identified Basic Command Units (called Operational Command Units in West Midlands) as a solid platform to deliver neighbourhood policing. We are committed to continue delivering local policing at a neighbourhood level. It is important to note this is not a budget cutting exercise and any savings will be reinvested into front line policing.

We are at the options stage of the process and would not want to speculate on the outcome but we will play our part in ensuring our communities have the best possible policing structures.

Throughout this process our officers and staff will remain focused on our priorities of reducing crime, reducing disorder and making our communities feel safer. We do not intend to take our eye of the ball.

Regional Information

Nationally there are nine regions, excluding the Metropolitan Police, within which police forces work. The midlands region is made up from the four forces listed below.

Regional information is provided because the Home Office have asked for options to be considered within regions.

Force	Size	Population	Police officers	Police staff	BCUs
West Midlands	348 sq miles	2,630,000	8,057	3,882	21
Staffordshire	1,049 sq miles	1,058,269	2,320	1,360	4
West Mercia	2,868 sq miles	1,200,000	2,389	1,637	5
Warwickshire	764 sq miles	506,200	1,007	622	2

* Correct Jan 2005 – comparative figures by force*

For the full HMIC report on line please visit:

http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/docs/docs/closinggap.pdf

For more information about the police in the region you can visit the following web sites:

www.west-midlands.police.uk

www.staffordshire.police.uk

www.westmercia.police.uk

www.warwickshire.police.uk

West Midlands Region - CDRP and BCU Areas

County	District Code	CDRP Area	2001 population: All people	BCU Area
West Midlands	OOCN	Birmingham	977,087	Birmingham
West Midlands	OOCQ	Coventry	300,848	Coventry
West Midlands	OOCR	Dudley	305,155	Dudley
West Midlands	OOCS	Sandwell	282,904	Sandwell
West Midlands	OOCT	Solihull	199,517	Solihull
West Midlands	OOCU	Walsall	253,499	Walsall
West Midlands	OOCW	Wolverhampton	236,582	Wolverhampton
Shropshire	39UB	Bridgnorth	52,497	Shropshire
Shropshire	39UC North	Shropshire	57,108	Shropshire
Shropshire	39UD	Oswestry	37,308	Shropshire
Shropshire	39UE	Shrewsbury and Atcham	95,850	Shropshire
Shropshire	39UF South	Shropshire	40,410	Shropshire
Staffordshire	41 UB	Cannock Chase	92,126	Chase
Staffordshire	41 UC East	Staffordshire	103,770	Trent Valley
Staffordshire	41 UD	Lichfield	93,232	Trent Valley
Staffordshire	41 UE	Newcastie-under-Lyme	122,030	North Staffordshire
Staffordshire	41UF	South Staffordshire	105,896	Chase
Staffordshire	41UG	Stafford	120,670	Chase
Staffordshire	41 UH	Staffordshire Moorlands	94,489	North Staffordshire
Staffordshire	41UK	Tamworth	74,531	Trent Valley
Warwickshire	44UB	North Warwickshire	61,860	Warwickshire Northern
Warwickshire	44UC	Nuneaton and Bedworth	119,132	Warwickshire Northern
Warwickshire	44UD	Rugby	87,453	Warwickshire Northern
Warwickshire	44UE	Stratford-on-Avon	111,484	Warwickshire Southern
Warwickshire	44UF	Warwick	125,931	Warwickshire Southern
Worcestershire	47UB	Bromsgrove	87,837	North Worcestershire
Worcestershire	47UC	Malvern Hills	72,172	South Worcestershire
Worcestershire	47UD	Redditch	78,807	North Worcestershire
Worcestershire	47UE	Worcester	93,353	South Worcestershire
Worcestershire	47UF	Wychavon	112,957	South Worcestershire
Worcestershire	47UG	Wyre Forest	96,981	North Worcestershire
(West Mercia)	OOGA	Herefordshire County of	174,871	Hereford
(Shrops -West Mercia)	OOGF	Telford and Wrekin	158,325	Telford
(Staffs)	OOGL	Stoke-on- Trent	240,636	Stoke on Trent
West Midlands Region			5,267,308	