PROPOSED MERGER OF BEDFORDSHIRE, ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AREAS: CONSULTATION

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report brings to Members' attention the current consultation being undertaken by the Home Office in respect of the proposed merger of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire Police Forces and seeks Members' comments on that consultation, so that the Council can respond formally by the deadline set, which is 11 August 2006.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 In March 2006, former Home Secretary Charles Clarke announced the proposed merger of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire Police forces. The forces were given 3 weeks to volunteer to merge, but none of the three forces decided to do so.

2.2 The Home Office subsequently launched a consultation on the proposed merger, which is planned to come into effect from April 2008. A copy of that consultation is attached as Appendix 1 and responses are invited on or before 11 August 2006.

2.3 Essex Police Authority have decided to take legal advice about the possibility of bringing a judicial review to challenge the proposals. At the time of drafting this report, no further details on this are available.

2.4 At the same time, the Essex Police Authority and Essex Police have decided to undertake a countywide public consultation exercise on the merger plans. It is proposed to deliver questionnaires to every household in Essex, about 700,000 in total. This exercise is scheduled to commence in June. A series of public meetings across the County is also being arranged to sound out local people's views on the proposed merger. The meeting scheduled for Rochford District is planned for July 19 at the Mill in Rayleigh, commencing at 7:30pm.

2.5 Essex Police and the Police Authority have now provided further details on the merger and a copy is attached as Appendix 2.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Members last considered the possibility that the Police Force might be restructured at the meeting of the former Community Services Committee on 1 December 2005 (min 484/2005). At that time, Members were of the view that Essex Police should remain as a stand alone force, particularly given the projected increase in population numbers over a period.

3.2 The basis for the reasoning behind wishing to retain Essex as a stand along force remain the same today as previously – size, accountability, governance.

3.3 The Police Authority believe we should remain as a stand alone strategic force to enable Essex Police to continue with its new policing style and to give the public the service that it wishes. They believe that it would be difficult to deliver that policing style if the force was merged with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

3.4 Clearly too, any merger would have cost implications, although it is predicted that over a period savings would be delivered. Any merger would also result in further organisational disruption at a time when the Essex Force is itself undergoing change to respond to the neighbourhood policing agenda.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to continue to express support for the case put forward by Essex Police Authority that Essex remains as a "stand alone" Police Force and to respond to the Home Office Consultation accordingly.

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Amalgamation of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire police

Home Office
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Contents

1. Context

In response to growing concern from within the police service about an emerging gap in tackling serious cross border crime, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were commissioned in June 2004 to provide their professional assessment of whether the existing force structure is fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

HMIC conducted an assessment of the protective services provided by police forces, namely serious, organised and cross-border crime, counter terrorism and domestic extremism, civil contingencies and emergency planning, critical incident management, major crime (homicide), public order and strategic roads policing. These are also known as Level 2 services.

Protective services

Counter terrorism and domestic extremism
As well as responding to major incidents such as the 7 July attacks, forces need to be equipped to undertake ongoing intelligence and preventive work against terrorists and extremists, including for example animal rights extremists, extreme right-wing organisations and others.

Serious, organised and cross-border crime
This can take many forms including people and drug trafficking, credit card fraud and identity theft, trade in counterfeit goods and trade in firearms.

Critical incident management
These are incidents where the effectiveness of the police response may have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family, and/or the community. As one force noted in their business case, *"Certain incidents such as suspicious unexplained death, homicide, incidents requiring police firearms response etc. will by their very nature always be critical incidents."*[1]

Major crime (homicide)
Major crime includes homicide and serial or serious sex offences, but must also consider issues such as domestic violence and child protection issues which sometimes precede major crimes.

Public order
The police are required to ensure public safety at planned events, (for example a party conference), and wherever public disorder occurs (for example at a football match) they must protect the public and restore order in a manner reasonable and proportionate.

Civil contingencies and emergency planning
Forces must ensure that there is an effective capability to identify, analyse and assess all potential threats that may seriously damage human welfare, the environment or the security of the UK or a place in the UK. Examples of civil contingencies include flooding, outbreaks of disease such as Foot and Mouth, or a spill of hazardous material.

Strategic roads policing
Policing the road network in a strategic way should protect the national road infrastructure from threats posed by terrorism, disrupt criminals using the roads, confront anti-social behaviour, and make our roads safer and accessible for users, reducing the risk of death and injury.

For all protective services, neighbourhood policing provides the key link between the communities which provide crucial intelligence and the specialist teams which can act on the intelligence. As Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair stated after the terrorist attacks of 7 July, "It is the communities that defeat terrorism, not the police". Locally responsive policing is at the heart of providing a good service to communities, from dealing with alcohol-related disorder at the neighbourhood level, to providing the information which breaks an international drug trafficking organisation.

Each protective service requires continuous work by police forces to gather intelligence, develop prevention strategies and to plan and rehearse how the force would respond in an emergency situation. The diverse and sophisticated nature of the threat from terrorism and organised criminality

[1] Kent, 23 December 2005, *'Closing the Gap: Stage Three Response',* Appendix 1 p.95

demands a response from the police service which goes beyond reactive management of events; a 21st century police service needs to 'predict and prevent'.

Levels 1-3 (adapted from *The National Intelligence Model*, NCIS, 2000)

Level 1: Local issues – usually the crimes, criminals and other problems affecting a basic command unit or small force area. The scope of the crimes will be wide ranging from low value thefts to great seriousness such as murder. The handling of volume crime is a particular issue at this level

Level 2: Cross Border issues – usually the actions of a criminal or other specific problems affecting more than one Basic Command Unit (BCU). Problems may affect a group of BCUs, neighbouring forces or a group of forces.

Level 3: Serious and Organised Crime – usually operating on a national and international scale, requiring identification by proactive means and response primarily through targeting operations by dedicated units and a preventative response on a national basis

In the final report to the Home Secretary (edited version published on 15th September 2005 and available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/new.htm) HMIC outlined their 'stark' findings:

- The current '43 force structure is no longer fit for purpose' and 'in the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing it should change';
- There is a correlation between force size and ability to provide effective protective services. Forces under 4000 police officers or 6000 staff in total tended to fall some way short of the required standards;
- There were a range of options considered but in HMIC's professional view the best business solution was a reconfigured service based on strategic forces of sufficient size to provide both effective neighbourhood policing and protective services.

The confidential national assessment of protective services found that only two forces reached a standard of 3 (on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being the highest) across all seven protective services. No force scored 4 overall. More detail is provided on the assessments in section 4.

Below are some of the weakness set out in *Closing the Gap*:

- At the time of inspection only 13 of the 43 forces had fully resourced Major Incident Teams;
- Less than 6% of over 1500 organised crime gangs are targeted by police in the course of a year;
- The inspectorate's report said that some forces' ability to deal with terrorist or domestic extremist incidents would be strained within a matter of hours;
- At the time of inspection only 7 out of 43 forces deployed special branch alongside neighbourhood teams to capture community intelligence;
- Some officers have several crisis management roles that conflict – for example an officer leaving a fatal traffic accident to go to a firearms incident because no other trained person was available; a ports officer having to leave to man a surveillance operation;
- Some forces have no independent armed response capacity at some times of the day and rely on the ability of neighbouring forces to deploy outside their normal force area;
- Only two forces, (the two with greatest officer strength), scored well in the HMIC's assessment of their ability to handle major and serious crimes. All other forces fell significantly short of what HMIC believe is required in this area;
- Too many forces fail to supply enough good intelligence to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) to help them pursue organised criminals;[2]
- *Closing the Gap* work on the risks facing police forces today found an increased presence of organised criminal networks spreading outside our cities.[3]

[2] *"…for a number of years…too many forces have not supplied adequate and appropriate [organised criminality] intelligence to NCIS"* Closing the Gap

Following these findings the Home Secretary wrote to Chief Constables and Chairs of Police Authorities on 22 September 2005 to ask that they, in consultation with criminal justice and local government partners, come forward with proposals for restructuring in each region which would enable the police service to deliver protective services to national minimum standards without adversely impacting on the provision of policing services at Level 1.

2. Design considerations for reform

The Home Secretary's letter to Chief Constables and Chairs of Police Authorities set out design criteria for proposals, drawn from the design considerations identified in *Closing the Gap*[4].

The design criteria were selected to support delivery of the three core responsibilities of policing identified by HMIC in *Mind the (Level 2) Gap* and *Closing the Gap*:

1. Support for local and neighbourhood policing

2. Provision of protective services to national standards

3. Modern and affordable support services and strategic development

In addition proposals must ensure that the structure is 'future-proofed' against growing demand at Level 2.

Design criteria for proposals (from the Home Secretary's letter of 22 September 2005)

The following are a range of factors which need to be considered in assessing the options for restructuring to meet the gap in protective services identified in the HMIC report.

1. **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?

2. **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?

3. **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?

4. **Geography** – to what extent do the proposals recognise and take account of particular challenges posed by the geography of the proposed force area and the transport links and working patterns within it?

5. **Co-terminosity** – to what extent do the proposals reflect established political and partners boundaries or, alternatively, support the case for the realignment of the boundaries of other partner agencies so that the benefits of coterminosity can be preserved? The very strong starting presumption will be that any new force areas should not subdivide an existing force area between two or more new forces and that 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).

[3] "One of the striking conclusions of the work to quantify the risks facing forces is the emerging picture over the extent to which organised crime has stretched its tentacles beyond our cities. This has not been evident in information passed to NCIS previously, where only a limited number of forces have provided intelligence." *Closing the Gap*

[4] Summarised in *Closing the Gap* at pp.13-14

6. **Identity** – to what extent do the proposals build on strong historical or regional identities?
7. **Clarity of command and control and accountability** – to what extent are the proposed governance arrangements for any new entity clear and unambiguous?
8. **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.)
9. **Costs and efficiency** – to what extent will the proposals minimise the costs of change and maximise efficiency savings?

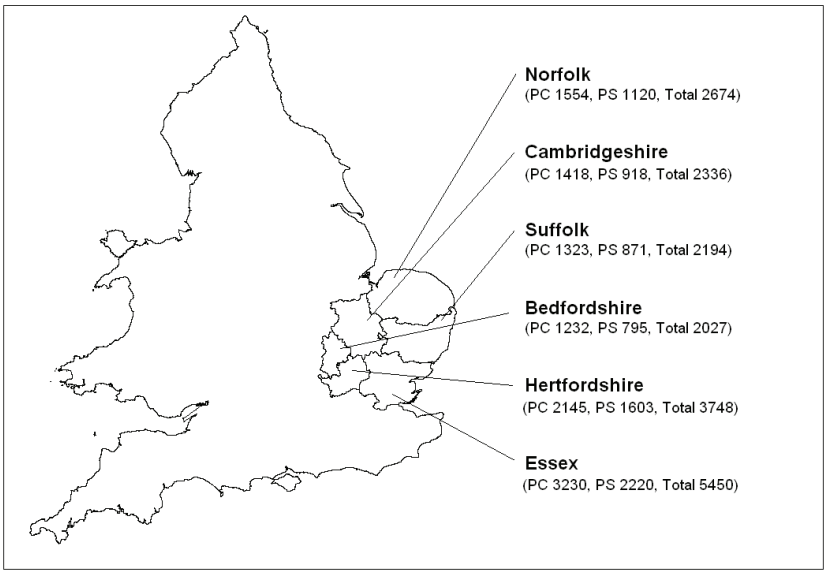
Proposed options will need to demonstrate not only how the proposed arrangements outperform current ones, but also how they would outperform alternative options.

In addition to considering these criteria, the Home Office is conducting a race and diversity impact assessment to understand any impacts of police amalgamations on BME communities and other groups which might be affected.

3. Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire

The protective service assessment of the options for the Eastern Region identified mergers of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex as the options most likely to achieve national standards in protective services and to deliver clear benefits for the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in these areas. The cost benefit analysis has identified that the proposals are financially robust.

Details of the protective service methodology can be found at Annex A. Four options were considered; the merger arrangement recommended above; an alternative split pairing Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, and Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire; a three-force split joining Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire with Essex as a stand alone force; and federated arrangements including Cambridgeshire.



Current forces	Force size (police	Population	Area (square miles)	Rural/Urban composition

	officers)			Urban	Rural
Bedfordshire	1,232	576,218	475	20%	80%
Essex	3,230	1,635,605	1,415	26%	74%
Hertfordshire	2,145	1,041,319	632	40%	60%
Recommended option: Strategic Force	**Force size (police officers)**	**Population**	**Area (square miles)**	**Rural/Urban composition**	
Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire	6,607	3,253,142	2,522	28%	72%

Current position

"As with any other small force there are gaps in relation to protective services."

Outline Business Case, Bedfordshire, December 2005, p.19

"…there would be clear advantages in sharing good practice and knowledge within more strategic forces…" Business Case, Essex, December 2005, p.72

"… 'no change is not an option' in relation to the provision of Protective Services in the Eastern region" Paper by Hertfordshire Chief Constable, December 2005, p.7

The HMIC confidential national assessment of protective services found that within the six forces of the Eastern Region (Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex) no force alone attained national standards in protective service provision. The assessments identified key weaknesses across the three domains of intelligence, prevention and enforcement activity. Of the six forces Essex demonstrated higher levels of enforcement capability but the assessment still concluded that overall its performance in protective services was below national standards. Force performance across the region underpins the need for change. Existing and positive collaborative relationships in respect of protective service provision were apparent between the forces which would fall into a Northern merger (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire). This collaboration was noted to be of benefit by the HMIC assessors and should be considered in building the case for increasing strategic capability and capacity in the region.

Recommended option: Southern Force merger (Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire)

1. Protective service assessment summary

It is acknowledged that two viable options exist within this region for two strategic forces comprising either a North / South split (Northern: Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Southern: Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex) or an East / West split (Eastern: Norfolk, Essex, Suffolk. Western: Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire). It is acknowledged that both proposals would provide the realistic prospect of delivering protective services to national standards. The financial cases for the two proposals and the general policing case do not distinguish greatly between the two. Determining factors in reaching a final recommendation were; the level of current, well established collaboration arrangements across the three counties (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) and the best fit with criminal markets. It is also acknowledged that whichever new force contains Essex will be the stronger force due to its performance and exposure to risk.

The option which provides a logical fit for criminal markets and builds on existing collaborative arrangements was the two strategic force arrangement of a new Northern force (comprising a merger of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk) and a new Southern force (comprising a merger of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex).

The HMIC confidential national assessment of protective services in respect of Essex, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire overall found that none of the forces were able to demonstrate national standards across the range of the seven protective services, in particular serious and organised and counter terrorism. Essex was identified as the strongest of the three forces, particularly in preventative and enforcement activity. None of the forces performed well in respect of intelligence. An area of strength across the three forces was preventative and enforcement activity within roads policing.

The implications for each of the protective services are as follows:

a. Assessed for each protective service

Major Crime: At the time of the assessments, both Essex and Hertfordshire had established Major Incident Teams, in contrast to Bedfordshire which relied upon abstracting staff from BCUs to support major investigations. The merger of the three forces will build exposure and capacity in major crime to address the current shortfall in proactivity and ensure that gaps in resourcing are addressed across the new force area. In terms of major crime this amalgamation will provide a realistic prospect of achieving national standards and improving intelligence, prevention and enforcement activity.

Serious and Organised Crime: Whilst Essex and Hertfordshire were able to demonstrate some limited proactive capability in this activity, Bedfordshire demonstrated a reactive response in relation to prevention and enforcement. The merger, and its profile of investment in this area, will provide a realistic prospect of increasing exposure, capacity and capability to meet national standards. It will reduce boundaries and should improve intelligence sharing, to understand and target criminal markets.

Critical Incidents: Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire did not reach national standards in their HMIC Protective Service assessments. No force offered more than limited proactivity in terms of critical incident management, except Essex who demonstrated significant proactivity in the enforcement element. The merger of the three forces will create a force of sufficient size to offer potential to deliver to national standards and increased capability through shared exposure to risk.

Civil Contingencies: None of the three forces were unable to demonstrate any more than limited proactivity in this area. The merger of the three forces will provide a force of sufficient size to deliver to national standards. It will draw on current expertise and collaboration arrangements, in particular expertise gained in planning and preparation for emergency procedures for the capital.

Public Order: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire were unable to demonstrate anything other than limited proactivity across all three elements of this activity. In contrast, Essex demonstrated significant proactivity in both prevention and enforcement activity. The new force will provide a strong public order capability, with increased resilience and exposure to risk. The expertise within Essex provides confidence that this merger will offer the opportunity to deliver this service to national standards.

Roads Policing: All three forces demonstrated significant prevention and enforcement capability, although all shared a common weakness in the intelligence element, which showed only limited proactivity. The merger of the three forces offers the potential to address the area of weakness, whilst building upon current strong performance in this area.

Counter Terrorism: Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire did not reach national standards in their HMIC Protective Service assessments with each force offering no more than limited proactivity. Hertfordshire provided only reactive capability in terms of intelligence, prevention and

enforcement. Whilst the merger of three forces offers the opportunity to increase capability and capacity in this area the assessment recognised that there may be a requirement for this service to be delivered on a regional basis.

b. Assessed against the design criteria

Size: The three forces together would meet the establishment criteria providing a force of 6,607 police officers and a total establishment of 11,225 staff. The merger offers clear opportunities to increase capacity and resilience.

Mix of capability and reduction in risk: The merger of these three forces will draw together existing expertise and exposure to risk in the current forces. It is recognised that this area presents a higher profile of risk than its Northern counterpart. There are opportunities presented through existing collaborations in the region (in areas such as civil contingencies) to improve expertise by increased exposure. Within the proposed Southern area merger there are also examples of good practice which also offer the prospect of further improving service delivery, (particularly in respect of Essex's performance in civil contingencies, public order, major crime and roads policing).

Criminal markets: The two strategic force arrangements which provide for new Northern and Southern forces provide the most logical fit for understanding and proactively addressing criminality within the region. There are clear links between Norfolk and Cambridgeshire and the resulting Southern strategic force has clear links with criminality emanating from London.

Geography: The north/south split of this region does not appear to present any key geographic or transport issues.

Coterminosity: The three forces within this Southern force proposal sit within the Government Office boundary and share common boundaries**.**

Identity: The three forces involved in this merger share some collaboration arrangements and share criminal market issues.

Clarity of command and control and accountability: The three force merger in the southern part of the region will reduce boundaries and provides clearer lines of responsibility and accountability than currently.

Performance: As with the Northern force, the Southern force merger also provides the opportunity to improve performance within the protective services. In particular the increase in capacity in areas of serious and organised and major crime will help to move the new force towards delivering protective services to national standards. Whilst much of the improvement may be derived from brigading resources together, the investment planned in this merger provides increased resilience to protect neighbourhood policing.

Costs and efficiency: This criteria is considered below.

2. Summary of financial assessment

Business cases received from forces and authorities in December 2005 set out the level of costs and savings they expected to result from amalgamations. A team of independent consultants experienced in mergers worked with the forces and authorities to ensure that these estimates were robust and to make adjustments where necessary. These are indicative, more work will be done to refine the plans and projected costs and savings as the merger is implemented.

To amalgamate Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire is projected to cost around £29 million. This cost will cover, for example, bringing together IT systems of the different forces, investing in supplies and services, and ensuring that any redundancies including those at senior level are handled fairly.

Within a few years, the merger will begin to deliver net annual savings, through ongoing reductions in IT costs, reductions in police authorities and command teams from three to one, and savings in staff through redeployment and some natural wastage. The total annual saving from merging the forces is estimated at around £10 million.

The estimated set-up costs and net savings from amalgamation are as follows:

£m	Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10
Set-up costs for amalgamation	-	11.7	8.5	3.8	2.7	2.7	-	-	-	-	-
Net savings projected from amalgamation	-	(4.3)	(6.6)	(9.9)	(10.5)	(10.5)	(10.5)	(10.5)	(10.5)	(10.5)	(10.5)

Options Not Supported

The matrix below includes a summary of the confidential protective services assessment carried out by HMIC.

Option	Compliant with design criteria	Protective services assessment
East / West Split	✓	The east west split of this region also offers the opportunity for protective services to be delivered to national standards. The difference in policing service to be delivered is not in itself a determining factor, nor is the financial case for each, which are broadly similar. The determining factors in these two proposals are criminal markets and current collaborative arrangements: The criminal market links are clearer with a north/south split in that the southern part of the region are more able to identify with criminality emanating from London and there are clearer criminal links in the north, in particular between Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The current collaborative arrangements of the Three Counties work, between Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, provides a foundation upon which to build.
Essex standalone	✘	This standalone proposal falls short of the minimum resource criteria with 3230 police officers and a total establishment of 5748 staff. Concerns are raised about the option's ability to future proof protective services to national standards. Long term resilience is therefore an issue. This option does not support the overall development of regional capability and would leave some of its neighbouring forces below minimum resourcing criteria and vulnerable in terms of current and projected performance.
Hertfordshire Bedfordshire merger	✘	This merger would create a force of 3402 officers and 5953 total staff and is therefore below the minimum criteria. The business case does not articulate how the new force would develop its capability, capacity and resilience to bridge the gap in protective services. There are also concerns about the ability of the option to future proof and offer long term resilience in protective service provision.

		As there is another viable option within the region which provides this level of future resilience along with increased capability and exposure to risk, this option is not supported.

4. The overall case for change: protecting the public in the 21st century

Closing the Gap conducted a confidential national assessment of protective services, carried out by HMIC with the support of key stakeholders. The confidential national assessment found significant weaknesses in the provision of protective services in England and Wales. The HMIC review team undertook an extensive examination of the 43 forces and produced an assessment for each force considering capacity and capability in each protective service based on key indicators in regard to intelligence, prevention and enforcement. Capacity in this context refers to the level of resources a force has to address an issue; capability refers to the skill and expertise of the force in doing so.

The review found that only two forces displayed "reactive capability with some proactive capability" across all seven protective services.

No force demonstrated "reactive capability with comprehensive proactive capability" across all protective services, although the two largest forces – Greater Manchester Police and the Metropolitan Police Service – achieved this for individual dimensions of intelligence, prevention or enforcement within a protective service.

Weaknesses were evident in all of the protective services and especially in the handling of serious and organised crime, counter terrorism and public order, and particularly in intelligence across all of the protective services.

Evidence from forces and authorities

Business cases provided to the Home Office by forces and authorities in many cases acknowledged the present and growing challenge of providing strong protective services. As part of the consultation and review process, forces and authorities were asked to nominate their own protective service panels to score the delivery of protective services in their own organisations. HMIC and the Home Office provided a scoring spreadsheet along with guidance to forces and authorities to assist them.

Only five forces scored themselves as currently configured above 75% in delivery of protective services. When these scores are regionally averaged, no region as a whole scored above 75% in its current configuration.

These scores were not validated by HMIC and therefore do not include the element of external critical challenge which would ensure that they are robust. Given HMIC's finding that force intelligence assessments of the Level 2 threat in their areas often had substantial gaps, these scores may overestimate the forces' capability to deal with the threat.

A changing policing environment

Closing the Gap found that the current policing environment is characterised by 'widespread enterprising organised criminality, proliferating international terrorism and domestic extremism; a premium on intelligence, expertise and smart use of capacity; and an increasingly risk concerned public and intrusive media'.

In this environment there exists both a greater demand for effective provision of Level 2 services, and more intensive scrutiny of the quality of service by the public and media.

Growing pressure on protective services: Overall crime levels have reduced by 35% since 1997, and the chances of being a victim of crime are at their lowest for 20 years. But despite these

successes police forces face some growing challenges: increasingly sophisticated organised criminality; a greater terrorist threat; and an increased workload to support partner organisations or as new investigative techniques become available. These challenges are likely to get worse rather than better if nothing is done to address the problem.

Following the terrorist attacks of July 7 and 21, anticipated increases in workload caused by national and international terrorism over the next 1-5 years has led to a greater investment in this area of work by the Security Services. In addition the threshold at which intelligence is passed to Special Branches within forces has been lowered. This creates an increased workload for police forces which assist the Security Services and provide intelligence. In light of this ACPO have advised all forces to strengthen and develop their own Special Branch capability.

> *"The anticipated workload in Counter-Terrorism is expected to increase over the next 12-24 months due to…increase in the size of the Security Services and a corresponding increase in workload passed onto the Force."*[5]

The Government 2004 White Paper on organised crime noted that *"…the threat we face from organised crime, often operating across international frontiers and in support of international terrorism, has probably never been greater"*[6] and that:

> *"Trends in society and the world economy suggest that the threat to the UK from organised crime can only increase as criminals seize on new technologies and methods like identity theft and as they forge new alliances with international terrorists. We need to ensure our response not only keeps pace but stays several steps ahead."* [7]

The Home Office estimates the harm caused to the UK by organised crime at over £20 billion annually. Combating this is the responsibility not only of specialist agencies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) but also of local forces who play an essential role in providing the intelligence which feeds the investigation of organised criminals and in carrying out many of these investigations which often fall under Level 2. As the White Paper states,

> *"Local forces with their links to local communities should be providing the majority of all our criminal intelligence."*[8]

In line with this, *Closing the Gap* found that the forces with the strongest intelligence pictures on terrorism and extremism were those who had Special Branch resources located at BCU level providing the necessary 'bottom-up' drive to create a fuller picture of activity.

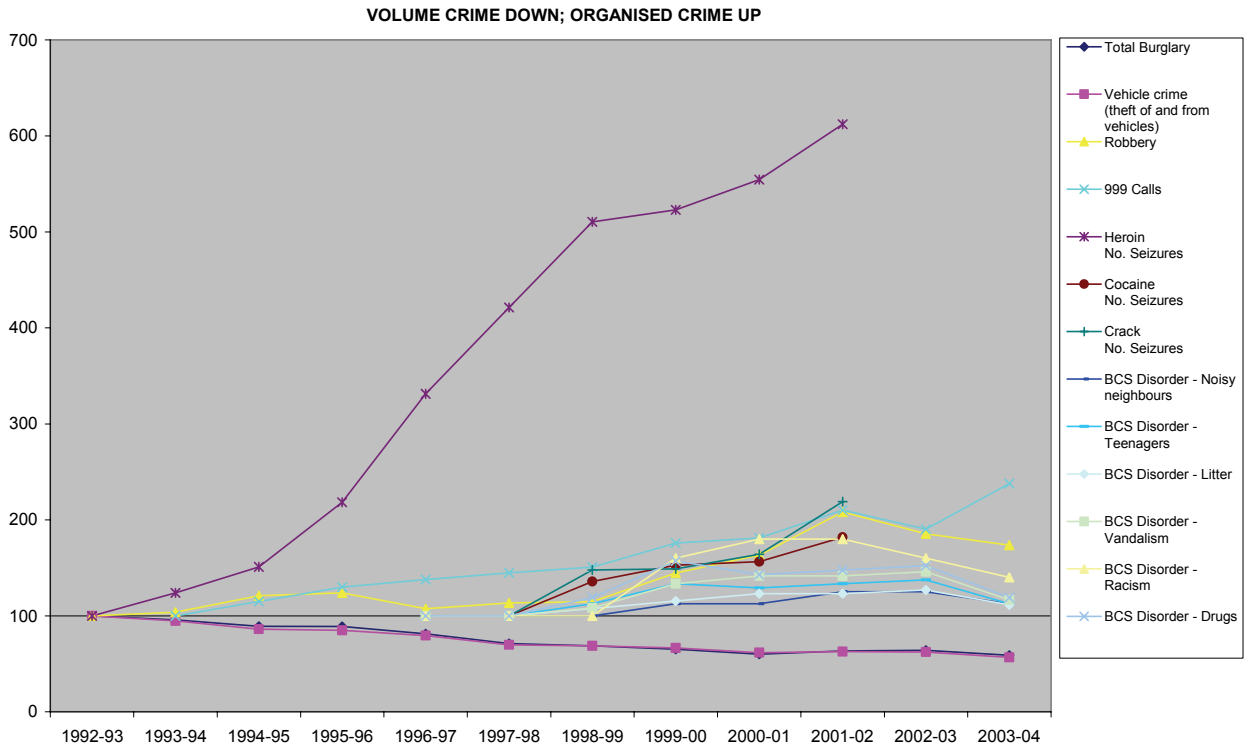
Closing the Gap raised concerns with the quality of intelligence local forces have relating to organised criminal activity. HMIC's assessment of risk around the country researched for the report revealed organised criminality in force areas previously thought to be low risk.

This picture is supported by the rise in Class A drug offences over the past ten years, from 13,910 in 1995 to 36,350 in 2004. Although overall drug offences fell 21% between 2003 and 2004, from 133,970 to 105,570, Class A drug offences rose by 2% over the same period.[9]

Similarly, although the use of firearms in committing crime remains extremely rare (0.2% of all recorded crime excluding air weapons), the five years to 2003/04 has seen the number of recorded crimes involving a firearm almost double.[10] An HMIC study found that from 1992 to 2003/04 the number of operations where police officers were issued with firearms increased from under 5,000 to more than 17,000. The most recent threat assessment from the National Criminal Intelligence

[5] Kent Appendix 1 p.88
[6] One Step Ahead: A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime, March 2004 p.1
[7] One Step Ahead: A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime, March 2004 p.2
[8] One Step Ahead: A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime, March 2004 p.27
[9] HOSB 23/05, 'Drug Offenders in England and Wales 2004' Mwenda, December 2005
[10] Crime in England and Wales 2003/04: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime, Povey, 2005

Service reported a shift in some cases of Class A drugs markets from metropolitan areas to smaller towns and cities following market saturation or successful law enforcement tactics, and noted that, *"where newly arrived criminal groups have threatened the position of existing dealers, possession and use of firearms has begun to escalate."*[11]



This evidence combines to form a picture of a threat likely to increase further if not addressed through improved capacity and capability of local police forces, the key partners in provision of intelligence and very often in terms of the response.

Partner relationships: Police responsibilities and relationships with other agencies have changed as part of the drive for continuous improvement in the fight against crime. These changes provide opportunities to improve services further in the light of restructuring but also have implications for the workload of police forces in the future.

The creation of the Serious Organised Crime Agency and transfer of responsibilities from the National Crime Squad and National Criminal Intelligence Service has changed the policing landscape in terms of the UK's ability to tackle organised criminal gangs operating at the national and international level. As police forces and authorities have noted in their business cases; and as ACPO noted in its most recent strategic assessment, SOCA will require increased assistance and intelligence from police forces in order to successfully combat serious organised crime, representing an additional claim on resources.

> *"The creation of SOCA will increase demand for Level 2 resources."*[12]
>
> *"…the introduction of a new national law enforcement agency, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), may place additional demands on the police service to address national-level crimes and may draw resources away from middle-level cross-border crimes."*[13]

In addition, as *Closing the Gap* noted, the transition from NCIS and NCS to SOCA, which will not cover all of the same issues, may potentially create a vacuum of resources and expertise. The

11 NCIS UK Threat Assessment 2004/5 – 2005/6
12 East Midlands December 2005 business case p.39
13 ACPO 2004 National Strategic Assessment p.3

report noted that this is "evident in the current reliance on the NCS to provide the more sophisticated surveillance, a controller for kidnap and extortion, and support for special command centres".[14]

Similarly, Operation 'Reflex', which is a Home Office led project managed via the Director General of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), and which focused on countering organised immigration crime and human trafficking, will provide funding for police forces only until March 2008, after which this work should be absorbed into the regular work of strategic forces.

Forces will need to be able to access the specialist expertise and the resources to address these demands themselves.

Increasing cost of investigative techniques: *Closing the Gap* notes that "the costs and professional sophistication needed to provide adequate standards of protective services will become ever harder to deliver for smaller forces and we now firmly believe that some reorganisation of forces and reconfiguration of protective services is inescapable."[15]

For example, a joint Home Office, ACPO and CPS stocktake on implementation of the Rape Action Plan 2002 found that fewer than ten forces have dedicated rape investigation teams yet these are regarded as best practice by ACPO. The ACPO working group on rape has noted that smaller forces are less likely to be able to provide these teams.[16]

In addition the cost of expert services is increasing well ahead of inflation – for example forensics at 8% per annum. *Closing the Gap* reported estimates of a rise in forensic costs from £34 million in 1990 to a predicted £200 million in 2006/7.[17]

The implication of this for forces is an increased need to share intelligence effectively and to get the most from existing resources. As one force noted in their business case:

> *"Joining up with regional and international partners will be essential in tackling the technological challenges created by the Internet, criminality and technological developments."*[18]

Bichard Inquiry and IMPACT: The IMPACT programme is a mission critical programme to deliver improvements in the way that the police service manages and shares intelligence and other operational information. A major catalyst for the Programme was the Bichard Inquiry, set up in December 2003 by the Home Secretary following the conviction of Ian Huntley for the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Cambridgeshire in 2002. The Inquiry Report found 'systemic and corporate failures' in the way in which Humberside Police managed their intelligence systems, and found Cambridgeshire Constabulary to be at fault in its failure to request a records check on Huntley. The Report made 31 recommendations to address weaknesses in the management of information by the police service and the multi-agency provisions for the protection of children. The IMPACT Programme is directly addressing 7 of those recommendations.

More broadly, Sir Michael Bichard noted that the disparate development of local IT systems, many of which do not communicate with each other, has inevitably led to real difficulty in accessing all relevant information, which has in turn resulted in poorly-informed decision-making. Police forces need to address these problems urgently where they exist.

As one force noted in their business case for reform:

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[14] *Closing the Gap*, p.32
[15] *Closing the Gap*, p.17
[16] Sept 2005, Home Office/ACPO/CPS, Stock take of implementation of the Rape Action Plan 2002, Results Report (unpublished)
[17] *Closing the Gap*, p.11
[18] W Mids December 2005 business case Appendix B p.29

"Despite both formal and informal collaborative arrangements across the region, the sharing of intelligence and management of offenders across boundaries is increasingly challenging without organisational unity. The existence of … significant defendant movements illustrates the significant gains the single strategic force option would bring to the management of criminality, intelligence and performance."[19]

The IMPACT Programme aims to develop the business change and technical infrastructure across the police service necessary to improve the management and sharing of operational information. It will also secure the longer-term future of the Police National Computer (PNC). IMPACT will enable police forces to access more and better quality information on criminals who have crossed force or business area boundaries, creating the potential to improve prevention and detection of crime and therefore enhance public protection.

To ensure these benefits are delivered, police forces will need to dedicate greater resources to enforcement targeted against those offenders flagged by IMPACT. The system therefore increases the demand on force resources in this area and adds to pressure for change to improve handling of protective services

The establishment of fewer, larger forces will support the Bichard implementation work and underlying issues since it will offer an opportunity to achieve greater national consistency and good practice in the management and handling of information across the police service. Larger strategic forces will have the 'critical mass' necessary to dedicate specialist expertise to this and are more likely to be able to offer teams the necessary level of exposure so that they can embed and improve their skills.

Conversely, IMPACT will assist in force restructuring by providing the technical means of sharing information between disparate systems in the amalgamated forces.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004: Introduced to address the improvements needed in civil protection following the fuel crisis and severe flooding in 2000, the Act places duties on forces to identify, develop and test plans for vulnerable sites and emergencies. The current forces are in varying states of compliance and restructuring provides an opportunity to share expertise across forces and to promote progress towards full compliance with the Act. A key aspect of the legislation is the requirement for cooperation between a range of partners including police, local authorities, other emergency services and NHS bodies.

5. Benefits of change

In order to fill the gap and to provide a full range of protective services forces need to have the attributes set out below. Increased demands on forces to develop these attributes without restructuring would place strains on available resources. To meet the required standard they would need extra resources which could only be drawn from resources currently dedicated to Level 1. Business cases developed by forces and authorities have consistently flagged this point and the views of the forces affected by this business case are quoted in the relevant options assessments above.

Closing the Gap found a correlation between size of force and ability to deliver protective services to the required standard to fill this gap. Smaller forces were less likely to have the capacity, capability and resilience to meet requirements, in particular to do so without abstracting officers from neighbourhood policing duties. The analysis, which scored forces from 1-4, found that although some smaller forces punched above their weight in terms of performance at Level 2, no force demonstrated 'reactive capability, with comprehensive proactive capability' (4) across all the protective services, and only the two largest forces averaged a rating of 'reactive capability, with some proactive capability' (3). Only the two largest forces achieved any ratings of 4 at all.

[19] W Mids Appendix B p.25

Forces which had more than 4,000 officers or 6,000 staff were more likely to be able to demonstrate good reactive capability across six of the seven protective services with some proactive capacity (the exception to this is strategic roads policing, which did not demonstrate a correlation with size of force). It should also be emphasised that the 4,000 threshold is indicative of capacity required taking into account growing future demands on the service. Forces which do not meet this threshold or which are close to it risk finding themselves inadequately 'future-proofed'.

In light of these findings *Closing the Gap* concluded that:

> *"Looking ahead the police service needs not only to deal effectively with volume crime, the current performance focus, but also have demonstrable readiness to tackle complex, volatile threats to individuals, neighbourhoods and businesses. This implies a major development in capability and to achieve this, changes must be made not only to the structure, but the whole configuration of policing at this level."* (original emphasis)

Present force size ranges from 881 officers (City of London), to 31,073 officers (Metropolitan Police Service), with an average of around 2,500 (calculated excluding the MPS to avoid skewing results).

At the time of inspection only seven forces met the 4,000 officer threshold: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, the Metropolitan Police Service, Northumbria, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. The next largest with around 3,800 and 3,600 officers respectively were Hampshire and Kent.

Increasing size of force alone will not guarantee improvements in protective services delivery; restructuring provides an additional opportunity to reconfigure and rebrigade services, to deliver the benefits identified below. Strong governance and leadership will be required in order to ensure that appropriate standards are met. Moreover, it is not just size of force per se that is important for improving level 2 policing. The *scale* of policing operations (in terms of size of population covered) will be important for the effective policing of extended criminal networks and counter terrorism. A larger scale of operations can also deliver effective level 2 services for larger populations at lower cost, a point discussed in more detail below.

Benefits of restructuring

The principal benefit from restructuring will be the creation of a higher level of capacity for delivering specialist protective services. There are a number of examples of specialist teams that currently exist across the different areas of protective services delivery. Examples include:

- Major Investigation Teams (MITs)
- Intelligence gathering and preventive policing
- Armed response teams

Crucially, specialist teams require a *critical mass* of police officer numbers in order to be operationally effective and in order to provide sufficient organisational "slack" to cope with variability in demand. Integrating existing force structures should deliver the necessary critical mass for improved specialization by:

- Enabling a smaller force(s) to integrate with a larger force(s) that has an existing specialist protective service team in place. For this to be effective and efficient it is vital that that sufficient capacity exists within existing protective services teams to cope with the additional demands that would arise through policing a larger population.
- Releasing police officer and other staff time from activities that would otherwise be duplicated within a newly created strategic force.

Police force restructuring is not a pre-requisite for improved specialisation. A significant uplift in the number of protective service teams operating around the country could be achieved within the

current 43 police force structure. This would either require a significant re-deployment of manpower from existing duties (including neighbourhood policing) or growth in police officer numbers.

The development of increased level 2 specialisation through police force amalgamation has two principal advantages:

- **Economies of scale**: restructuring provides an opportunity for delivering an improved level of protective services coverage using fewer specialist teams than would be needed to deliver better protective services under a 43 force structure. This amounts to a more cost-effective use of police resources.
- **Economies of scope:** Fewer specialist teams will also be in a position to deliver a wider scope of service coverage at lower cost. For example, a single intelligence team would have the necessary skills that could be applied to different level 2 policing issues (e.g. counter terrorism, monitoring extremism, organised criminal activity).
- **Avoiding under-utilisation of protective service capacity:** In a 43 force structure there is a risk that specialist teams within certain areas of the country would be significantly under-utilised given the lower frequency of major crimes and other level 2 incidents expected within smaller forces. Police officers can always be redeployed into other tasks while not engaging with their primary responsibilities (conducting major crime investigations, responding to firearms incidents etc.). However, the higher frequency of engagement that would be expected within a larger restructured police force could enhance specialist skills development and ultimately level 2 policing performance if specialist policing skills are partly accumulated through experience, as might be expected.

Creating the capacity to implement specialist protective services should not be viewed as an end in itself, but as a mechanism for offering the potential for overall improvements in level 2 and neighbourhood policing performance.

The benefits of enhanced specialisation

Improvements in level 2 performance

In terms of level 2 policing standards the principal advantages of greater specialisation arise from a "division of labour": specialisation in itself implies less multi-tasking with a greater emphasis on skills development in relation to specific aspects of level 2 policing. In principle this would improve the performance and the quality of service delivery, an effect that should be reinforced within larger strategic forces given that there is likely to be exposure to a greater volume of level 2 incidents and criminal activity: the "learning by doing" effect.

A greater resilience for neighbourhood policing

Specialist teams should offer improved resilience against major officer abstractions from neighbourhood policing duties. Large numbers of officers may be required to handle public order incidents or major emergencies such as a chemical spill or a terrorist incident. More common than such extreme incidents, however, are surges in demand caused by, for example, major crime investigations.

Increasing uncertainty in the demand for protective services will increase the risk of level 1 police officer abstractions. Moreover, there is a tendency for smaller police forces to be faced with a larger degree of uncertainty as measured by monthly variability in level 2 related incidents. For example, in forces with over 4000 officers the highest monthly homicide rate is on average 187% above average monthly homicide rate; however in forces with under 2000 officers it is 486% above the monthly average.[20] Uncertainty can be accommodated by building in additional capacity into

[20] Variation is high since the numbers involved are very low; however it is precisely the combination of rarity and surges in demand which challenges some smaller forces in dealing with this.

MITs and other specialised teams. However, the smaller the force the greater the difficulty in resourcing this "spare" capacity. Furthermore, lower average levels of demand within forces policing smaller populations will mean that additional capacity will be relatively under-used.

Closing the Gap found that success in handling major crime without impacting on performance and capacity at Level 1 largely turns on whether a force has a Major Investigation Team or not. At the time of inspection, only 13 of the 43 forces had a fully resourced MIT.

"Some [forces] have dedicated Major Investigation Teams … whereas others primarily rely upon the abstraction of Divisional personnel … Similarly, the investigative support structures … equally differ, frequently resulting in disruption to front line policing duties. Collectively, this denies a professional approach by skilled personnel to a specialist field of operation, which, if incorrectly managed, not only leaves the reputation of a force open to challenge, but has an adverse impact on sustainable and improve performance in relation to volume crime."[21]

"[Major crime] long term abstractions were causing performance gaps for divisions in terms of detective capability."[22]

Adequately resourced specialist protective service teams will not guarantee a force complete resilience or independence from mutual aid. HMIC are clear that even the largest force, faced with a major emergency spread over several sites, would abstract from BCUs and/or request mutual aid. However, there is a strong professional belief that specialist protective services, most notably MITs, would prevent substantial neighbourhood police officer abstractions currently experienced by smaller forces that have yet to develop a greater level 2 policing capability. Given that there is statistical evidence showing that levels of volume crime are responsive to sudden shifts in policing manpower, the prevention of significant abstractions occurring for significant periods of time could make important contributions to neighbourhood policing performance.

Cost savings through re-structuring

Force integration provides an opportunity for rationalising existing support services and command structures. It is anticipated that important savings could be delivered across the following business areas: HR, IT and communications, finance, procurement, governance, supplies, premises and transport.

The achievement of savings in some areas could in principle be delivered without a major restructuring of the police service – although the rollout of efficiency programmes such as sharing support services across all police forces will be significantly promoted by a reconfigured landscape of fewer, more strategic forces.

However some savings, for example in command teams and those created by bringing together protective service teams from different forces, could not be achieved without restructuring. The following are some illustrative examples of potential savings brought about through economies of scale through restructuring of protective services:

- Annually recurring savings in delivery of protective services. These savings would derive from:

1. Reduction in senior command staff required
2. Redeployment of staff from one protective service area to another
3. Utilisation of existing resources to cover a greater area

[21] *East Midlands Submission,* 23 December 2005, p.41

[22] *Lancashire Final Business Case,* December 2005, p.48

5.1 Summary table of benefits resulting from better protective services

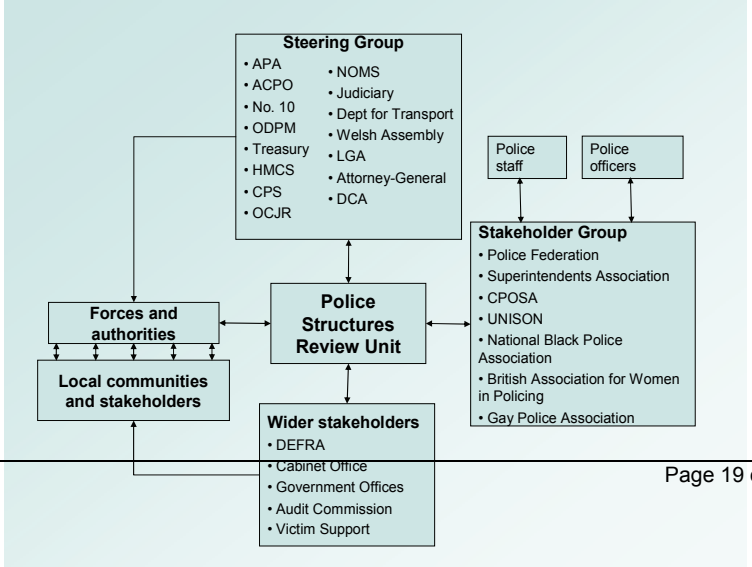
Protective service	How do better protective services deliver benefits to the public?		
Major crime (homicide)	Increased use of specialist and dedicated teams	⇨	Improvement in quality of investigations without adverse impact on Level 1 policing
	Better management and understanding of intelligence	⇨	Increasing the chances of early intervention and prevention of crime
	Clearer direction, leadership and scrutiny of major crime	⇨	Increasing the chances of early intervention and prevention of crime
	Consistent, independent review mechanisms for the review of current and closed cases	⇨	Improving the quality and standards of services
Counter terrorism and domestic extremism	Improved investment in development of intelligence from the bottom up, providing intelligence capacity at the community level	⇨	Increasing the chances of early intervention and prevention of attacks
	Better sharing of information and intelligence between forces	⇨	Increasing the chances of early intervention and prevention of attacks
	Mechanisms for early identification of terrorist and extremist activity	⇨	Increasing the chances of early intervention and prevention of attacks
	Dedicated specialist resources	⇨	Improved capacity to respond to incidents, and greater capacity to practise response
	Increased awareness amongst frontline staff	⇨	Better and safer response from staff who understand the risks, critical issues, and responsibilities
Serious and organised crime	Increased specialist capacity	⇨	Improved quality of investigations Increased capacity to disrupt organised crime groups and prevent crime Increased seizure of criminal assets
	Improved gathering and handling of community intelligence	⇨	Increasing the chances of catching or disrupting organised criminals
	Better sharing of information and intelligence between forces	⇨	Increasing the chances of catching or disrupting organised criminals
	A stronger picture of the extent of organised crime nationwide	⇨	Improving our ability to put resources where the problems are

Critical incident management	Dedicated expert capacity and increased ability to invest in high quality training	⇨	Improving the ability of police forces to gain and keep public confidence through improved handling of sensitive situations
	Increased ability to provide dedicated firearms units not divided between two or more roles	⇨	Improving the ability of police forces to gain and keep public confidence through improved handling of sensitive situations
	Proactively gathering and assessing community intelligence	⇨	A better understanding of communities and thereby early identification of tensions within and between communities. Enhanced links with hard to reach groups/communities.
Public order	Greater resilience	⇨	Increased resources to handle public order events without impacting on Level 1 policing
	Forces operate in a state of preparedness with appropriate and well rehearsed plans	⇨	Timely initial and continued response to public disorder with minimal impact upon local policing
	Greater capacity and enhanced expertise	⇨	Forces consider a wide range of situations that have the potential for public order rather than the traditional areas.
	Increased experience of public order commanders / sufficiently trained, experienced and equipped officers	⇨	Improved quality in handling of public order incidents
	Improved gathering and handling of community intelligence	⇨	Increasing the chance of preventing or minimising disturbances early on.
Civil contingencies and emergency management	Greater resilience and capacity	⇨	Increased resources to handle civil contingencies Increased capacity to rehearse mobilisation plans, leading to a swifter and better response
	Increased experience of emergency commanders	⇨	Improved quality in handling of emergencies.
Strategic roads policing	Greater strategic oversight	⇨	Increased disruption of organised criminals on the roads
	Enhanced resources & expertise	⇨	Development of preventative measures contributing towards casualty reduction.
	Dedicated expert capacity	⇨	Fewer officers taking two or more roles

Annex A: Review Methodology and Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement

Following the Home Secretary's letter of 22 September, the Police Structures Review Unit was established within the Home Office to support forces in developing and



assessing options for restructuring. The Review Unit, directed by a Chief Constable and managed by the Home Office, also included representatives from the following organisations:

- ☐ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
- ☐ Association of Police Authorities
- ☐ Her Majesty's Courts Service
- ☐ Crown Prosecution Service
- ☐ National Offender Management Service
- ☐ Office of Criminal Justice Reform
- ☐ Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy

Core stakeholders including the tripartite partners and criminal justice agencies were engaged directly in the development of the reform programme throughout as members of the Police Structures Review Unit. These agencies were also engaged at a senior level through the programme Steering Group alongside other government departments with a direct interest in restructuring. Police staff associations have been and will continue to be involved in the process through the Stakeholder Group which serves as a two-way channel of communication between police staff and officers, and the Police Structures Review Unit.

At the same time, a wide-ranging review of the potential impacts generated by a move to a smaller number of strategic forces across the Home Office and other Government departments was conducted by a Home Office team. The review covered over 200 teams across Government who have a policy or operational interest in the police, identifying over 500 impacts which have informed the cost, benefit and risk assessments of strategic force options, and will be incorporated into implementation planning.

Consultation with local communities and stakeholders has been driven by police forces and authorities. Details of how they have done so in each case are available in their individual business cases submitted to the Home Secretary in December 2005.

Development of business cases by forces and authorities (Oct – Dec 2005)

The Review Unit wrote out to police forces and authorities on 7 October providing guidance on the development of business cases and assessment of options. The Review Unit recommended that:

> *"…each option (which is judged to be viable) should undergo a staged assessment process which captures both the service level issues (specifically relating to protective service provision) and the strategic organisational requirements to support all aspects of policing." (Home Office Guidance p.4)*

In order to achieve this forces and authorities were provided with a toolkit enabling the application of Multi-Attribute Rating Techniques, Cost Benefit and Risk Analysis to assess options. The toolkits were based on HM Treasury guidance and refined in conjunction with the Centre for Decision making at Leeds University Business School. They were prepared by a joint Home Office and HMIC project team with advice from financial and statistical specialists.

Assessment of business cases by HMIC/Home Office team (January – February 2006)

The assessments were undertaken by a panel of Home Office and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary experts during January 2006 and moderation took place in early February 2006.

The Panels applied the criteria outlined by the Home Secretary in his letter of 22nd September 2005 (in respect of size, mix of capability, criminal markets, geography, co-terminosity, identify, clarity of command and control, accountability, performance and efficiency) and focused on assessing the following issues:

- Predicted ability of each option to meet the national standards in protective service provision (as defined by ACPO and HMIC).
- Each option's ability to maintain and develop the other key functions of policing, including the resilience of neighbourhood policing.
- Overall strategic fit within the regional and national landscape.

The Protective Service Panels consisted of Home Office and HMIC professionals with knowledge and experience of protective service provision and service inspection. The Panel process was supported by Police Structures Review Unit liaison officers with local knowledge of the context in each force and region. The Association of Chief Police Officers and Association of Police Authorities were invited to observe the panel process. The assessments looked at submissions from forces and authorities, baseline assessments by HMIC and protective service assessment.

The findings of the panels were subject to review and moderation by senior Home Office and HMIC personnel to ensure that the Home Secretary's criteria, and panel assessment scores were applied in a consistent way. In respect of protective service provision, the profile of each of the seven protective services within each option was assessed and scored on a scale of 1 – 4. The same criteria were used for this assessment as had been used by HMIC for the protective services assessment in *Closing the Gap,* and this is the same test which will be applied when HMIC review the performance in delivering protective services following any changes, and will therefore be a test of the outcome of any restructuring process.

The assessment also considered whether options met the Home Office criteria for establishment (number of staff) and maintained force, partnership, Government Office and national boundaries, and whether the emerging picture provided comprehensive coverage of viable options, to ensure that no area would be left with gaps in resilience or capacity. In addition, a final assessment was made as to whether an option had local professional support.

At the same time a group of independent consultants was employed to assist the Police Structures Review Unit. Their remit was to assess the outline business cases for change submitted by forces and authorities in December 2005. In particular, they were tasked to assess and report on the plans which the cases were based upon and the associated projections for costs and savings. The aim was to develop a view of the various options for change submitted by the forces and authorities, their robustness and practicality; and to suggest areas for possible adjustment of the cases in the light of the assessments made.

In order to achieve this, the consultants worked closely with forces and authorities, with support from PSRU Force Liaison Officers and Home Office Analysts. The consultants also worked with PSRU staff to ensure a consistent and coherent national picture was built up, based on emerging best practice and operational requirements.

Annex B: Monitoring and success measures

Delivery of these objectives will be monitored through the comprehensive Policing Performance Assessment Framework and by HMIC's annual assessment of protective services:

Enable forces to meet the three core responsibilities of policing:	Success measures	Monitoring

1. Support for local and neighbourhood policing	• Continued improvement in reducing crime, investigating crime, providing assistance and protecting the public • Demonstration of local delivery by success against local priorities • Rollout of the neighbourhood policing commitment by 2008	• Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) • Local policing domain of PPAF, including Neighbourhood Policing Baseline
2. Provision of protective services to national standards	• Improvement in delivery of all seven protective services • Improvement in the 'strategic management' element of baseline assessments	• PPAF Statutory Performance Indicators • PPAF Baseline assessments • HMIC annual assessments
3. Modern and affordable support services and strategic development	• Achievement of local efficiency targets • Improved efficiency and productivity	• Force efficiency targets • PPAF Statutory Performance Indicators (under development)
Ensure that the structure is 'future-proofed' against the growing demand for policing at Level 2	• Increased capability in protective services	• HMIC annual assessments • PPAF outcome focused Statutory Performance Indicators (such as asset recovery)

Annex C: Options considered and discounted by forces

The following only includes those options which were discounted by all forces which considered them.

Eastern region

Option	Discounted	Reason
Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk merger : Essex/Hertfordshire/ Suffolk	Bedfordshire Essex	Lack of fit with criminal market Norfolk as a coastal force has little in common with the policing approach and identity of Bedfordshire No shared border or geographical links between Bedfordshire and Norfolk
Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk merger: Essex/Hertfordshire	Bedfordshire Essex Norfolk	Lack of fit with criminal markets Norfolk and Suffolk as coastal forces have little in common with the policing approach and identity of Bedfordshire No shared border or geographical links between Bedfordshire and Norfolk or Suffolk. Herts on possible merger with Essex: From an operational Hertfordshire perspective any merger must involve Bedfordshire, because of the very significant impact that Luton has on cross border crime with Hertfordshire. No further work has been done on this option.
3 force option: Bedfordshire / Hertfordshire Essex Stand alone / Norfolk/Suffolk/Camb	Bedfordshire Norfolk	<u>Beds – regarding Herts/Beds merger</u> Insufficient police officer and total staff numbers Uncertain fit with the other consequent regional strategic force (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex) <u>Norfolk Re – 3 strategic forces</u> Norfolk Constabulary and Police Authority support the Norfolk, Camb and Suffolk amalgamation. However, Essex Police consists of 5,385 staff and Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police combined consists of 5,639 staff. Therefore neither meets the Home Office design criteria in respect of size a minimum of 6,000 total staff.
Bed, Herts, Cambs, Essex merger	Bedfordshire	Insufficient police officer and total staff numbers in the other consequent regional strategic force (Norfolk and Suffolk)
Regional Federation of forces	Bedfordshire Suffolk	Not felt viable due to command and control issues unlikely that this option would provide efficiency savings or investment opportunities
Bedfordshire /Thames Valley	Bedfordshire	Presents a range of implications for criminal justice and other agencies Would breach Government Office boundaries with no compelling reason to do so, since viable options are available within the region. Not mutually supported; Thames Valley have assessed this option and concluded it as less likely to deliver protective services to minimum standards than other options within their region
Single Regional Force		Although this was viable option there was recognition amongst all force/authorities that there were more

		effective and viable options for the region.
Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire/ Hertfordshire/Norfolk Essex/Suffolk	Essex	Not viable – more effective options that could be progressed.
All Forces stay as they are	Norfolk Suffolk Hertfordshire	Norfolk: This option was generally not considered viable bearing in mind the outcome of the HMIC Closing the Gap report in terms of providing the necessary level of protective service provision. Suffolk in reference to itself: This option fails to meet the suggested criteria in terms of officer numbers or staff size Hertfordshire: Do not have the critical mass to be a strategic force
Beds/Thames Valley Herts/Essex Norfolk/Suffolk/Cambs	Norfolk	Although amalgamating Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire is considered a viable option, there was insufficient evidence to support Bedfordshire going out of the region in view of the requirement to make a 'compelling case'.
Collaboration	Suffolk	Problematic as lines of command may be unclear. It also failed to meet the suggested police staffing criteria. In addition, this option would provide reduced efficiency savings and investment opportunities and was not, therefore, investigated further.
Cambridgeshire merging with Lincolnshire and or Northamptonshire in addition to combinations of forces within the Eastern Region	Cambridgeshire Police Force	No compelling case could be made for mergers with forces outside of the region.

Appendix 2

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Robert Chambers
Chairman

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Roger Baker
Chief Constable

Our Ref: Force Structures Review

Date: 19th June 2006

Dear Mr Warren,

Proposed merger of Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police Forces and Police Authorities

We are aware that you will have received correspondence from the Home Secretary regarding the recommendation that Essex Police and Essex Police Authority should amalgamate with our counterparts in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. The purpose of writing is to outline the foundation of this proposal, to outline the work undertaken since the potential for change was first discussed last summer and to seek your views on the possible outcome.

In September 2005, a report from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary called 'Closing the Gap' was published concluding that police forces with less than 4,000 police officers or 6,000 staff overall tended to have short comings in their ability to provide effective overall policing services. Following this, the then Home Secretary Charles Clarke ordered an immediate review of the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales were structured. It was his belief that the creation of larger police forces was necessary for:

- The continued support for development of local and neighbourhood policing.
- The provision of protective services to national standards[1].
- The organisation of affordable support and strategic development.

The Home Office directed that all forces must consider whether they are able to meet the demands of 21st century policing and report their findings by the 23rd December 2005. Essex Police and Essex Police Authority submitted a joint report to the Home Office evidencing how Essex could remain as a 'stand alone' force and meet the requirement of policing in the future in terms of both capacity and capability. The Chief Constable stated that should the Home Office not agree, then the best option for the communities of Essex would be to amalgamate Essex with Suffolk and Norfolk.

[1] Protective services are defined as Major Crime, Serious and Organised crime, Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism, Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning, Critical incidents, Public Order and Strategic Roads Policing

The Home Secretary considered the submissions and on the 20th March 2006, he announced that he proposed to recommend Essex Police and Essex Police Authority merge with their counterparts in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. In reaching this decision it was acknowledged that Essex had submitted a strong case to 'stand alone' but that:

'The main reason Essex Police cannot 'stand alone' is that the merger of the 3 police force areas would be in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness of policing in the combined area'.

On 11th April 2006, the Home Secretary formally notified Essex Police and Essex Police Authority of his intention to lay an 'Amalgamation Order' before Parliament in the autumn of 2006. If ratified, this order would bring about the structural changes proposed by the Home Secretary. The process of laying the order before Parliament must include a four month period of consultation which ends on the 11th August 2006. By that date any formal objections to the proposed merger must be submitted to the Home Office. We are aware that you have be contacted by the Home Office as part of the statutory consultation process, but Essex Police and Essex Police Authority would also like to understand how the proposals may affect your organisation so that an informed decision can be made on how we should progress.

We know that it is difficult for you to make judgements on matter of such significance without sufficient information and have therefore included a fact sheet to assist in understanding how this proposal may either positively or negatively affect your organisation.

Can we also seek your assistance in making your staff aware of our consultation process as many of them form part of our communities within the area. Further details of our consultation and a short questionnaire can be found at www.essex.police.uk. In addition, a questionnaire has been printed on the reverse of our Annual Report, *'Policing Essex',* that will be delivered to every household within Essex over the next few weeks.

As with everything connected with this proposed restructure, the timescale is extremely tight and so we must ask that you do all you can to provide feedback by **midday on Friday, 28th July, 2006.**

In the meantime we will continue to strive for the best possible policing service for the people of Essex, to make sure that policing services remain locally accountable and to minimise as far as possible any impact the transition may have on performance and short-term costs.

We would welcome your views and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Chambers
Chairman
Essex Police Authority

Roger Baker
Chief Constable
Essex Constabulary

The Creation of a Strategic Police Force. Some Facts:

1.0 The Background

1.1 'Closing the Gap' an HMIC Report

In 2005, Mr Denis O'Connor, HMIC, conducted a review of the 'Fitness for Purpose' of the current structure of policing England and Wales. In summary, his report stated that;

'Specifically, whilst size, scope and structure are not in any sense the only issues for the future of policing, they are extremely important. Put simply, when viewed from the context of the range of challenges and future threats now facing the service and the communities it polices, the 43 force structure is no longer fit for purpose. In the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing it should change. Whilst some smaller forces do very well, and some larger forces less so, our conclusion is that below a certain size there simply is not a sufficient critical mass to provide the necessary sustainable level of protective services (see below) that the 21st century increasingly demands'.

Later determination saw that those forces that had less than 4,000 police officers or 6,000 staff overall were deemed not capable of meeting the new pressures faced within society. Particularly with regard to protective services, being:

1. Major Crime;
2. Serious and Organised crime;
3. Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism;
4. Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning;
5. Critical incidents;
6. Public Order and;
7. Strategic Roads Policing.

A full copy of the report can be found at the web address detailed below.

http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/inspect_reports1/thematic-inspections/closinggap05.pdf

The Home Office gave Forces and Authorities the opportunity to outline how they would respond to the challenges presented within the report.

1.2 The Essex Police Response

Essex Police and Essex Police Authority worked with their colleagues within the Eastern Region to identify how it could provide better policing services to our communities. A number of options were evaluated over this time including:

- One regional force,
- Two sub-regional forces; Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk: Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.
- Two sub-regional forces; Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire: Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.
- Essex as a stand alone 'strategic' force.

On 16th December 2005, the Police Authority met and resolved:

That Essex 'stand alone' is the only option. The Authority will proceed on the following basis:-

> ***(a) Essex to take the lead in seeking to further look into a legally binding Federation[1] of East Anglian Forces.***
> ***(b) In agreement with the other Five Authorities and Forces in the region any savings from such a Federation be ring fenced and put towards the provision of improved protective services.***

In studying the business case members agreed that Essex Police has both the capacity and capability to be classified as a strategic force.

The Chief Constable endorsed the submission of the Authority but added that should the Home Secretary not agree to Essex remaining as a force in its own right, then the best option for the people of Essex would be a merger with Suffolk and Norfolk. A copy of the report submitted for member's consideration can be found following the link below. This document includes a risk/benefits analysis of each option:

http://www.essex.police.uk/authority/dyn_auth.php?group=4&type=29&year=2005

The Home Office considered the submissions made, and on 20th March announced that Essex Police should merge with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and following initial submission said Essex had submitted a strong case to stand alone but that:

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[1] *The Association of Police Authorities define federation a; "A group of forces would join together to provide 'protective policing services' collectively, across the federated area, but would still keep their local identity. Local forces would continue to deliver local policing'*

'The main reason Essex Police cannot 'stand alone' is that the merger of the 3 police force areas would be in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness of policing in the combined area'.

On 3rd April 2006, Essex Police Authority met to discuss the Home Office findings and resolved:

Whatever the outcome of the present parliamentary debate, authorities and forces within the Eastern Region need to do business differently for the benefit of the communities we serve and we acknowledge and support the continuing need for Essex Police, to continue their dialogue and work with their respective colleagues in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

However, we remain of the view that Essex Police can stand alone as a Strategic Police Force and we are asking our Chief Executive to seek Counsel's opinion on the prospect of successfully bringing judicial review proceedings to challenge the Secretary of State's proposals.

Certainly there are a number of outstanding issues on which assurances are still sought from the Home Secretary; therefore this authority cannot support a voluntary amalgamation of Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

A full copy of the report considered by members can be found on the following link:

http://www.essex.police.uk/cms/global/meetings/93_06.pdf

1.3 The Current Position of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

1.3.1 Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire Police Authority held their AGM on Friday 3rd June 2006. At that meeting, there was an almost unanimous vote to further explore a Police Force merger with Hertfordshire as the primary option.

1.3.2 Hertfordshire

On 31st March 2006, Hertfordshire Police Authority rejected Home Office proposals to merge amid Fears over funding and governance of any new Strategic Police Force.

2.0 The Proposal – Some Facts

The following paragraphs include detail on the proposed change timetable, the sub-regional landscape and finance.

2.1 Proposed Timetable for Change

Date	Action
11th August 2006	Those consulted in accordance with statute must inform the Home Secretary whether they agree with the proposal or not.
Autumn 2006	If the Authority does not agree with the proposal, the Home Secretary must state why he has rejected any objections and could force a merger by laying an 'Amalgamation Order' before Parliament. It would have to be agreed by both Houses. If the Authority does agree with the proposal, the Home Secretary would still need to get an Order ratified in both Houses.
December 2006	If the Home Secretary is successful, the new Strategic Police Authority would be established.
Late April 2007	New Chief Constable (Designate) in post.
April 2008	New force structure comes into being.

2.3 Finance

2.3.1 Council Tax Precept

The table below shows the current council tax precept levels for the three forces and the potential additional cost of the amalgamation to the residents of Essex. The Home Office indicated that the equalisation would be phased over a three year period. This increase would be in addition to the annual increase of cost.

	Essex 'Stand alone'	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Beds, Essex and Herts	Average of all 'Shire Forces'
Council Tax Level (Band D)	£111	£118	£124	£116	£133
Budget requirement per 1,000 population	£143	£153	£159	£150	£158
Potential additional costs of Council tax in Essex	-	-	-	£5 / 4%	-

2.3.2 Funding the Amalgamation

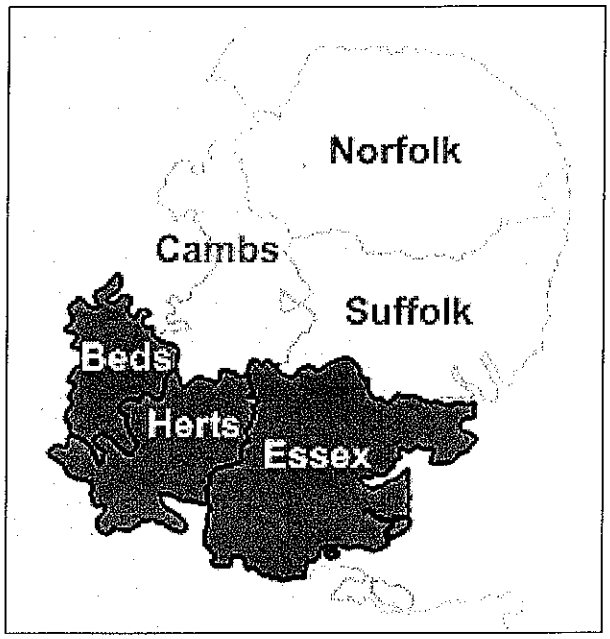
The Home Office has promised to meet 100% of the cost of any force amalgamations net of any reasonable efficiency savings. It has also said that efficiency savings made through amalgamation will be re-invested in front-line policing services.

2.0 Consultation

Essex Police Authority has outlined to the Government its views on the future of policing in Essex but is keen to ensure those views are representative of the communities within Essex. As a consequence a detailed consultation process is being undertaken that includes:

- A questionnaire included on the annual review that will be delivered to all households in Essex and includes a 'freepost' return address.
- A separate questionnaire delivered to households in Essex and includes a 'freepost' return address.
- The questionnaire 'posted' on the Essex County Council and Essex Police Websites.
- Public engagement and feedback at community meetings.
- Media engagement led by the Chief Constable and Chairman of the Police Authority.
- Engagement of our staff and partners / other stakeholders.

2.2 The Sub-Regional Landscape



	Essex 'Stand alone'	Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire
Population	1,622,403	3,229,378
Area (Sq. Kms)	3,670	6,540
Population density (per Sq. Km)	442	494
Number of households (approx.)	742,000	1,080,000
Crimes per 1000 residents (Most recent 3 months figures)	18.8	21.9
Divisions	5 (plus Stansted)	10

Force	Police Officers	Police Staff	Total
Essex 'Stand alone' (By 31/03/07)	3,400	2,438	5,838
Essex Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (figures submitted in December 2005)	6,607	4,095	10,702

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We welcome your opinion

On March 20, 2006 the Home Office announced plans to merge Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces. Essex Police Authority is keen to assess the implications of these planned changes to our policing structure for the communities of Essex. Please send your completed questionnaire to the Strategic Force Review Team, FREEPOST, Essex Police, PO Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6DA or alternatively you are invited to browse our website and fill in the survey on-line at www.essex.police.uk/survey. The closing date for your feedback is Friday, July 28, 2006.

1) In determining what is important to you, please respond to the following statements:

(a) It is important to have a rapid and responsive local policing service.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

(b) It is important to have locally accessible, neighbourhood Police Constables and staff

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

(c) It is important to have a senior police officer responsible for policing services in your local area.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

(d) It is important to have a Chief Constable (the person in charge of the police force) who is solely responsible for Essex.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

(e) I support the proposal to merge Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

(f) It is important to have robust and independent accountability through a local Police Authority (locally elected officials and appointed members of the public).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

2) Prior to the Home Office concluding that Essex should merge with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire a number of options were discussed. Which of these options do you think would best deliver the sort of police service you want?

Please mark your first and second choice with the number 1 and 2 respectively.

- ☐ Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire
- ☐ Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk
- ☐ Essex standalone
- ☐ A regional force (merging Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk)

3) If Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces were merged do you think it would:

- ☐ Cost less
- ☐ Cost more
- ☐ Cost about the same
- ☐ Don't know

4) If Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces were merged do you think the local policing service (neighbourhood policing) would be improved?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

5) If Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces were merged do you think the protective services (those that deal with large scale emergencies, counter terrorism, serious crime investigation and major road policing) would be improved?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't mind
- ☐ Don't know

6) Do you believe there should be a referendum before a decision is made about the possible restructuring of Essex Police?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

We would appreciate your answers to the following questions, however they are not compulsory.

7) Please state your age

- ☐ 21 or under
- ☐ 22 - 35
- ☐ 36 - 50
- ☐ 51 - 75
- ☐ Over 75

8) Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

9) What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Black or Black British
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Mixed ethnicity
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other (please state)

ESSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

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