
ESSEX POLICE AUTHORITY AND ESSEX POLICE BEST VALUE REVIEW – POLICING AND FORCE STRUCTURE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives details of the consultation now produced relating to a review of the structure of the Essex Police Service for consideration and comment.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members may recall that a review of the Essex Police Service last took place in early 2001. The then Chairman of the Police Authority, Mr Anthony Peel, made a presentation to the Council (min 172/2001). At that time, three options were put forward:-
- (i) to preserve the status quo
 - (ii) establish divisions (Basic Command Units) comprising one or three local authorities
 - (iii) establish divisions (Basic Command Units) comprising two local authorities each.
- 2.2 At that time, Members agreed to work with Castle Point Borough Council to effectively lobby for the retention of the Rayleigh Police Division. Following consultation, the Rayleigh Police Division was retained.
- 2.3 A further review of the Policing structure has now been carried out and a copy of the report produced is attached as Appendix 1. Comments are sought from Partners by 25th October.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The attached report indicates that the current structure of nine Divisions (Basic Command Units) would not allow the Essex Police Force to redistribute resources to the frontline at a rate likely to deliver 100 more police officers on the frontline by March 2006 and meet the aims and objectives of the Review. Three options are therefore put forward, of Four Divisions (Basic Command Units); Five Divisions (Basic Command Units); or Six Divisions (Basic Command Units). In all three options, the Rayleigh Police Division, comprising the local authority areas of Rochford and Castle Point, will be merged with the

Southend Police Division. Details on each of the options is contained in the Appendix.

4 OFFICER COMMENT

- 4.1 Whilst the overall aim of providing more officers on the front line is to be applauded, it is suggested that to deliver this through reducing the number of Divisions operating across the County represents but one option. It might be appropriate to look at options which minimise duplication between the existing Divisions and the centre and also look at the potential for joint working with other partners across the County and within the current Divisional set-up.
- 4.2 It is important for any review to take into account the structures and operation arrangements around Local Strategic Partnerships, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, the Drugs and Alcohol Partnerships, the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnerships; Youth Strategy Forums; Supporting People arrangements and the like. The options being proposed do not seem to do this.
- 4.3 It is also important for the police to retain a “local” dimension and presence – as public confidence and assurance are key issues locally. Any proposed structural review which takes the police further away from the local population in terms of larger organisational units and more remote decision making structures is unlikely to be viewed positively by local residents.
- 4.4 Finally, as pointed out at the last review, any proposal which incorporates Rayleigh Division with Southend Division, whilst it might superficially prove attractive in terms of scale, brings together Divisions with different crime characteristics, issues and relationships. Consequently, any such move is likely to be seen as detrimental to the policing needs of this District.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any proposed restructuring will impact on the Council’s ability to deliver the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, in conjunction with main partners, including the Police.
- 5.2 Whilst the promise of more frontline police is to be welcomed, it is important that the wider implications of any proposed restructuring are recognised and public confidence at the local level is maintained and enhanced.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

6.1 These proposals will impact on all parts of the District.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) Subject to any Member comments, to endorse the officer comments above as the Council's formal response to this structural review by Essex Police.
- (2) That both local MPs are notified of this Council's views on the proposals.
- (3) That Castle Point Borough Council be requested to formally support this District Council in its comments on the proposals.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

For further information please contact Paul Warren on:-

Tel:- 01702 318199

E-Mail:- paul.warren@rochford.gov.uk

