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CEREDIGION
Community Safety Partnership

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27th October, 2005

Mr. Roger Chaffey,
Clerk - Social Justice and Regeneration Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CARDIFF,
CF99 1NA.

Dear Mr. Chaffey,

Restructuring of Constabulary

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

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

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

The Members also recognised the considerable advantages of BCU's having already secured co-terminosity with local political and partners boundaries, and expressed the desire for this arrangement to also be preserved under any new structure. This is of particular importance, given the Review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002. This review recognises that success in the

Asiantaethau'r Bartneriaeth / Partner Agencies

- Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council
- Heddlu Dyfed-Powys Police
- Awdurdod Tân Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru/
Mid and West Wales Fire Authority
- Gwasanaeth Prawf Cenedlaethol/
National Probation Service
- Tim Gweithredu ar Gyffuriau ac Alcohol Dyfed-
Powys Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)
- Awdurdod Iechyd Dyfed-Powys Health Authority
- Grŵp Iechyd Lleol Ceredigion Local Health Group
- Tim Troseddau Ieuencid Canolbarth Cymru/
Mid Wales Youth Offending Team

long term in addressing the underlying social, economic and environmental causal factors of crime and disorder requires coordinated, community based action taking place within an enabling legislative framework, supported by Local and Central Government. The Government has already stated that its overriding aim is to make Community Safety Partnerships the most effective vehicle for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in their respective communities, and clearly BCU's play, and must continue to play, a major role in this strategic approach.

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

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

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

"Ceredigion BCU covers a huge geographical area with a varied demand placed on its staff arising from policing sparsely populated rural areas in contrast to busy town centres, other urban conurbations and two universities. Demand also varies seasonally with an estimated 850,000 visitors to the area during the spring and summer months. Despite these issues, Officers and staff are justifiably proud of an excellent performance record for a number of years in the key Crime and Community Safety areas."

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Owen Watkin

Chair, Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership and
Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council