

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council September 2018



Proposed merger of Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police

The Chief Constables of Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police with the Police and Crime Commissioners for each force area have proposed a merger of the two forces, creating the largest police force by geographical area, and the fourth largest by population of the 43 forces in the country. The decision to proceed with the merger will be made at ministerial level within the Home Office, and will require the endorsement of the Police and Crime Commissioners of both forces.

The Council's values as set out in the Council's Corporate plan are not served by the proposed merger process. The Council has committed to provide strong, democratic community leadership in decisions affecting the city, to care about the impact of the actions of others, to be open and champion fairness, and to work with partners to serve the best interests of the city and its communities.

There is insufficient evidence currently available to allow the Council to fulfil its role in advocating for the city and mitigating the potential risks of the merger.

As such, this council agrees to;

- I. Express its severe reservations to the Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners of the Devon and Cornwall and Dorset police forces about the proposed merger of Devon and Cornwall Police with Dorset Police, specifically the proposal's failure to adequately address:
 - i. Essential practice of providing key stakeholders with full details of the proposed merger until the engagement period has concluded. This raises considerable alarm about the lack of transparency and failure to disclose key facts that would enable informed feedback from stakeholders;
 - ii. Opportunities to formally consult with key stakeholders such as Local Authorities on a process that directly impacts local areas and local communities;
 - iii. Financial modelling sufficient to justify the proposal, or to demonstrate value for money to citizens;
 - iv. Discrepancies in how additional income will be generated and allocated as a result of the merger, with specific reference to funding the proposed additional 430 police officers or staff;
 - v. Whether any increase in revenue to the proposed merged force will be reinvested back into the city's policing offer;
 - vi. Whether policing resources will be committed to meet the specific needs of urban areas such as Plymouth, given its status in the force area, and how Plymouth's policing model will be affected;
 - vii. Whether the merger will result in further reductions in neighbourhood policing, specifically Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and neighbourhood beat managers (NBM)s;
 - viii. Whether the city will remain a Basic Command Unit within the new force, and what commitments are made to the visibility of senior police staff and the Police and Crime Commissioner in the city within a greatly enlarged force area;
 - ix. The impact assessment of the merger, specifically with respect to equalities and diversity, and as a result of any potential rise in council tax payments on the city's most vulnerable residents;

- x. The failure to reference any intention to improve the condition and use of the police estate in Plymouth in line with the ambitions of a modern police force.
2. Write to both Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables requesting that they review their arrangements for consultation, endorsing the view set out in 1(i – x) above, to allow Plymouth City Council and other key stakeholders to review a business case that fully addresses all the above concerns prior to its submission to the Home Office.
3. Write to the Home Secretary expressing its severe reservations about the proposed merger between Devon and Cornwall Police with Dorset Police, while highlighting the request to both Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to review their arrangements for consultation to allow key stakeholders to review a business case that fully addresses our concerns prior to its submission to the Home Office.
4. Irrespective of the outcome of the police merger proposal, endorse the following Policing Asks for the city:
 - Investment back into neighbourhood policing, specifically the provision of more PSCOs and Neighbourhood Beat Officers;
 - Improvements are made to local 999 responses;
 - Commitment to improve the condition and use of the police estate in Plymouth in line with the ambitions of a modern police force;
 - A spend profile for Plymouth that reflects the complexity of needs and demands of policing a major urban centre;
 - Retention of the city's Basic Command Unit.

Proposed – Councillor Sally Haydon



Seconded – Councillor Ian Bowyer

