



Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel
5 October 2018
Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONER ON THE PROPOSED MERGER BETWEEN DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND DORSET POLICE

Introduction

This report relates to the exploration of a possible merger between Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police. It provides an abridged version of the Full Business Case for a possible merger between Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police. The Full Business Case provides the information requested by the Home Office. The report also details the rationale for the PCCs decision which is that she does not agree that the business case should be submitted to the Home Office to progress with a merger of the two forces.

Background

An initial assessment of the potential merger was undertaken on behalf of the four corporations sole, namely the two Chief Constables and the two Police and Crime Commissioners in Spring 2018. This assessment explored the opportunity to extend the existing collaborations of the Strategic Alliance by creating a new Police Force for, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset with a new vision, new leadership structure and new operating model.

Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police formally entered into a Strategic Alliance in March 2015 agreeing to work together in the delivery of 26 operational and business support areas.

The scope of the programme was subsequently expanded to consider 38 discrete business areas that account for approximately £122M of the two forces combined annual operating expenditure in 2017/18.

In September 2017, the four corporations' sole announced that they were commencing work to explore opportunities to deepen the existing Strategic Alliance, including the potential of a full merger between the two policing areas. The announcement followed a number of internal discussions and high level engagement with the Home Office and external stakeholders.

The Full Business Case applies the HM Treasury five case model contained within their Green Book appraisal guidance and therefore considers the strategic, economic,

commercial, financial and managerial implications of greater integration. The content and approach for the Full Business Case has been agreed with the Home Office.

Results of Engagement Activities

A summary of the engagement results are attached to this report in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the total number of respondents and headline results relate to the survey findings across all three counties – not Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Figures for the response from Devon and Cornwall respectively are shown in the tables included in the Appendix.

The Decision Making Process

In order for the proposed merger to progress it would need to be unanimously agreed by the four corporations sole that the business case was approved and that the business case should be submitted to the Home Office for approval.

The two PCCs and Chief Constables met on 25th September to consider the Full Business Case in its entirety. The meeting also considered the full results of the public engagement survey over the summer on the merger.

At that meeting both Chief Constables and both PCCs accepted the Full Business Case.

However they have not reached a unanimous decision on the question of whether to submit the Full Business Case to the Home Office for approval.

The Commissioner is minded to say no to the merger and not to agree to it being sent to the Home Office.

The Commissioner's rationale for not agreeing with the other three decision makers is detailed in Appendix 3.

As there is not unanimous agreement the Commissioner has brought her decision before the Police and Crime Panel at this meeting for additional scrutiny.

The Commissioner will confirm or amend her 'minded to' decision by 8th October following discussion at the Panel meeting.

Contact for Further information:

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Appendix 1 Abridged Final Business Case

Appendix 2 Summary of Engagement Results

Appendix 3 Minded to say no decision and rationale by PCC Alison Hernandez

Contact for further information

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