

# **Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner Presentation in Lyme Regis on 17th August 2018**

## **Possible Merger with Devon & Cornwall Police**

*Notes taken by Wendy Davies, not yet checked with PCC*

Important to realise that the idea is coming from the Chief Constables, not politicians as in previous alliances elsewhere, which were driven by financial considerations.

- The two forces have been in alliance since 2015, led by the PCCs
- 25% of staff are already working in joint areas, and have been TUPEd into the other force
- 38 Business cases already joint (eg dogs, HR, marine, Helicopter units)
- this merger is not about money, rather improved efficiency and effectiveness

### **Rising Demand on services**

- There has been a 15% increase in demand this year - not known why other than other services are decreasing
- 30% of 101 calls are not for the police
- for the first time, this year the force has twice been busier than on NYE - traditionally the busiest time

### **Figures for Dorset, Devon & Cornwall police area**

- 2.8million population (870,000 in Dorset)
- 14 million visitor nights
- 7,000 staff
- £425 million annual spend

### **Similarities**

- cultures similar
- coastal
- large conurbations surrounded by rural areas
- similar funding per person (45p a day in Dorset, 46p in Devon & Cornwall, over £1 in London, average 65p)

### **Future Model**

- legally will be one new force
- 3 county HQs - at Bodmin, Exeter and either Winfrith as now or Dorchester
- those at top (including PCC & deputy and Chief Constables) will be halved but most staff will not be affected
- will result in more community policing - the saving (£3.2million saved on day 1) will go into 100- 430 additional frontline staff. (can't be more definite as the size of the savings depend on how Government says Council Tax will be aligned - Dorset currently pays £18 more than Devon & Cornwall)

### **Dorset ahead of the game even now**

- Dorset is the only county with decreasing road deaths
- first drone unit - one to map crash scenes
- digital dog - finds chips by smell, the only police force in Europe to have one
- pioneered body-worn video

## Challenges

- size, will lose connectivity with the public.
  - frontline won't change
  - not yet sure how PCC will still be able to attend as many local meetings etc. Need to find a model, but works in Thames Valley and other large police forces#
- loss of understanding of local issues/culture/geography
  - example of 999 call which was handled in Nottingham by officer looking at Google Earth, member of public unaware not local
- negative effect of merger on staff
  - yes, change is always challenging. all staff will be TUPEd to the new organisation which will be unsettling but will be supported
- how to gauge success
  - best measure will be if there are the promised extra staff

## Next Steps

- Have been consulting for a year. Key stakeholders and policing bodies are supportive
- 12th October 2018 is decision day for police forces to decide to put request to government
- government decision promised by end of year
- If go ahead, November 2019 would see shadow arrangement, with elections for PCC in May 2020

## Points made in response to questions

- PCSO Amanda King works full time, but cannot work 24/7 nor only in Lyme Regis, so police coverage in the Lyme Regis area is part-time from that perspective
- numbers of staff can be decided by the PCC, but where they are actually based is down to the Chief Constable.
- with the anticipated rise in numbers of frontline staff members after a merger, Lyme would stand a better chance of an increased police presence.
- the Community Contract which currently exists in Devon & Cornwall is being introduced to Dorset - this would enable eg a guarantee to be given that the PCC would attend x meetings a year in a certain area.
- Pay rises are decided by but not funded by government - so the recently announced 2% pay rise will have to be funded by redundancies within the Dorset force.
- Given the recent merger of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, Wiltshire Police were naturally consulted but did not want to merge. Since Devon Fire Service has merged with Somerset, in time there may well be a South West Fire & Rescue service covering Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset & Wiltshire. Other presently county-bound services such as the CCGs may follow suite.
- A merger should not result in too heavy a redundancy bill: The Chief and Deputy Constables are on contract, the term of office for the PCCs will have finished, and any payouts due to higher paid staff such as the Chief Finance Officers and Treasurers have been factored in
- on being asked, who will do the work of the posts which will be cut, the reply was that there should be great time savings by cutting duplicate meetings, plus the change management team would no longer be required
- the figures quoted on demand include Bournemouth and Poole. Noted that Bournemouth, Poole and Weymouth account for 75% of the demand

- Do Devon and Cornwall want the merger? Devon mainly does, Cornwall has asked for more detail and more time to consider. But Cornwall has always been independent, and currently only has outside boundaries for its ambulance and police services.