



your ref:
our ref: POL/PC/BM
please ask for: Peter Conniff
direct line: 01234 842064
date: 31st October 2005

Dear Colleague

Force Restructures

The Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority and Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss with them their options for changes to policing within Bedfordshire.

You will be aware by now that the Home Secretary proposes to reduce the number of police forces in the country and create larger strategic forces within the regions with a minimum of 4,000 police officers. He has clearly stated that 'no change' is not an option. This *will* affect Bedfordshire which currently has 1,232 officers, and the other forces in the Eastern Region (Essex, Bedfordshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire).

Reassurances have been given by the Home Office that Neighbourhood Policing and Basic Command Units will remain. Therefore, discussions will centre on the inevitable changes at a strategic level, which deal with serious and organised crime, counter-terrorism, critical incidents, major crime, public order and road policing.

We aim to involve in the debate as many partner agencies and community representatives as possible in the very short time-scale available. However, the opportunity for genuine public consultation is extremely limited so your input is vital.

The Authority has been required to submit an initial list of options to the Home Office by 28th October 2005. A further submission at the end of November is expected to indicate a preferred option and then a final submission is required by 23rd December when a fully costed business case should be submitted. At this stage our four options for change are:

- **Bedfordshire and Thames Valley**
- **Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire**
- **Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex**
- **The Eastern Region**

There is a desire by the Home Office for forces to look to solutions within their own government office regions, however, we are particularly keen to explore the Bedfordshire/Thames Valley option given our geographical position and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Expansion Project and existing collaborative arrangements with Thames Valley.

Four meetings have been arranged where there will be an opportunity for open discussion with our partners. Please feel free to attend whichever one is more convenient for you.

Thursday 10th November 2005, 2.30pm, Flitwick Leisure Centre, Flitwick
Friday 11th November 2005, 10.00am, The Hat Factory, Luton
Tuesday 15th November 2005 6.00pm, Bedfordshire Police Authority, Bridgebury House, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford.
Friday 18th November 2005, 2.00pm, The White House, Leighton Buzzard

For your consideration we enclose a map relating to the Eastern Region and the number of officers in each force together with a questionnaire to make it easier for you to feed back to us your thoughts. We would, of course, welcome any additional views and comments.

We will continue to strive for the best possible policing service for the people of Bedfordshire, to make sure that policing services remain locally accountable and to minimise as far as possible any impact the transition may have on performance and short-term costs.

We do hope that you take this opportunity to contribute to the debate on the future of Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Police Authority and look forward to hearing from you.

Please contact Bridget Murphy (01234) 842964, fax (01234) 842064, email bridget.murphy@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk to confirm your attendance.

Yours sincerely



Peter Conniff
Chairman



Gillian Parker
Chief Constable