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Strategic Director  
Cyfarwyddwr Strategol



CG26/10

Mr Roger Chaffey  
Clerk  
Social Justice and Regeneration Committee  
The National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Your Ref/Eich Cyf	AMR/SR
Our Ref/Ein Cyf	21 October 2005
Date/Dyddiad	Malcolm Russell
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Dear Mr Chaffey

**Police Force Structures**

Thank you for your letter of 28 September inviting the Council to contribute to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee's review of the above issue. The Executive Board of this Council debated the Home Secretary's proposals on 18 October and I am writing to summarise our views.

We are very concerned about proposals which would see a move towards larger strategic Police Forces in Wales. We believe that aggregation of current force sizes would lead to a loss of local relevance and jeopardise many of the achievements that we believe have been made in North Wales in recent years. We do not accept that population size can be a paramount factor in deciding this issue. Topography and local regional links are, in our view, equally important. In our experience, when major crises have occurred at local level – e.g. the Caia Park riots of 2003 in Wrexham – it is the Police links between North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside that have been crucial in ensuring an effective response.

We are therefore deeply sceptical about any proposals that would, for example, see a move to a single Police Force for the whole of Wales as has been suggested in some quarters. It is unrealistic to imagine that the same kind of support described above could be provided from Newport or Milford Haven. Wales is a nation not a region of England and, in our view, must assert its right to design policing arrangements that are relevant to its unique character. We think it is essential that North Wales preserves the flexibility and responsiveness of a regional approach to policing.

For the future, we believe that the current Fire Service structure provides a possible model for the future. However, our main priority is the preservation of a North Wales identity for the Police service based on the current six Counties.

We are very grateful to you for offering us the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We are dismayed that the Home Secretary has not included local authorities within his consultation process as we believe we have a unique contribution to make on these issues and I will be writing direct to Charles Clarke at the request of the Executive Board to make this point.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Russell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Malcolm Russell  
Strategic Director – Corporate Governance