



To: All Members of Parliament

Colleagues

Debate on Future Police Structures - 19 December

The APA has pressed the Government hard to hold a parliamentary debate on the future of policing structures in England and Wales so we are pleased you will have the opportunity to do this on 19 December. The APA has previously circulated to you all a briefing note on the issues which we hope you found helpful.

But there have been some very worrying developments since then.

On 15 December, the Home Secretary wrote to the APA saying that only police authorities who volunteer on 23 December to merge their forces will get some money to do this. That money will be at the expense of funding for those who do not volunteer. The amount involved may be derisory. But this is a blatant attempt by the Home Secretary to bribe and bully us into abolishing our police forces with indecent haste. In our view, that is disgraceful. Policing is crucial to the safety and protection of all our communities. It is not for sale.

This is most disappointing because, police authorities have worked constructively with the Home Secretary since he started this review on 22 September to look at what may be the right answers for policing in their areas. Police authorities have always made clear that we are fully committed to making sure that local people are protected from counter-terrorism and other serious threats. But we are not convinced that policing which is controlled from remote centres which are out of touch with local communities is the right answer when other ways of getting the same results more quickly and cheaply have not been given even a cursory look.

The APA has already made clear that no police authority will meet the Home Secretary's demand for definite merger proposals by 23 December until we get assurances on a range of issues. The Home Secretary's responded by offering money to try to make authorities sign up for abolition of their forces on 23 December at the expense of those who do not.

My police authority colleagues are outraged at the idea that they can be bought off in this way when their sole interest is to make sure that their local communities get the best possible local policing.

I attach a supplementary briefing which I hope you will find of help for Monday's debate. If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact the APA's Executive Director, Fionnuala Gill on 020 7664 3167 or mobile 07956 859 543.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Jones".

Bob Jones

Association of Police Authorities
15 Greycoat Place, London, SW1P 1BN
Tel: 020 7664 3167 Fax: 020 7664 3191
E-mail: Fionnuala.gill@lga.gov.uk
Website: www.apa.police.uk
Executive Director: *Fionnuala Gill*

**Chairman
Association of Police Authorities**

ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AUTHORITIES

Supplementary Briefing on the future of local policing 17 December 05

Who are we: The Association of Police Authorities (APA) - the APA is the national body which represents all police authorities in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

**More ..
See our briefing
15 December 2005**

What is this briefing for: Police Structures Debate , House of Commons, Monday 19 December

Our concerns The APA had already said that no police authority would volunteer to merge on 23 December because we have not had the assurances set out in our position statement of 7 December **attached**.

Annex A

The Home Secretary is now seeking to bribe police authorities to do his bidding. His letter to the APA of 15 December stated that only police authorities who volunteer to merge their forces on **23 December** will get money to do this.

The APA estimates the costs of mergers at £500-600m. This is agreed by **Independent consultants employed by the Home Office** (IPF) to assess the figures.

The money offered is derisory: £50m capital funding in 2006/7 and £75m capital funding in 2007/8. Any other costs will have to be met by local council tax-payers for something they may neither want or agree.

The Government first claimed that none of this was about saving money but that now seems to be the objective – the Government wants to fund both a resource intensive programme of neighbourhood policing and improvements in protective services by mergers.

Our View The APA's view is that is simply not possible if we have to beg steal or borrow to fund mergers in the first place. Policing is crucial to the safety and protection of our communities. We are asking only for

- enough time to give local communities, including partners such as local councils, a chance to give their views on the right solutions locally
- a chance to develop quicker and more effective ways of getting the same improvements in protective service eg through Federated Models
- enough money, so that local people do not have to pay through council tax to set up these new "strategic forces"
- confirmation that local people will still be able to have a say about local policing