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**To: Housing & Community Safety Policy Board
 Renfrewshire Council**

On: 10th March 2015

Report by: Chief Superintendent Jim Downie, Police Scotland, 'K' Division

**Heading: BRIEFING PAPER - STRENGTHENING LOCAL POLICING
 PROPOSED MERGE OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL
 AND BUTE WITH RENFREWSHIRE AND INVERCLYDE DIVISIONS
 (L AND K DIVISIONS)**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide elected members with an overview of the above proposals, the associated benefits and risks, and an update of ongoing consultation and engagement with local communities and key stakeholders.
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2. Background

- 2.1 Divisional Commanders for both K and L divisions have identified a compelling opportunity to merge into one single division. The aim is to improve the delivery of policing services by strengthening local policing divisions, bringing together management and administrative functions where appropriate and ensuring the service continues to be efficient and sustainable in the longer term.

2.2 Perceived benefits

- Streamlining senior management posts removing duplication and becoming more efficient.
- Increased autonomy to Local Area Commanders for their areas, empowering them to have more accountability for local performance, Local Policing/Multi-member ward plans, and greater control of their resources and staff.
- Break down geographical boundaries, ensuring consistency and sharing of best practices across all areas.

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- Co-location of staff with other key partners, enhancing relationships and creating opportunities for more effective partnership working.
- Improve access to a greater number of resources, enhance resilience and flexibility to respond to local issues and increased access to specialist services.
- Greater flexibility to share and support joint initiatives and strategies between local authority areas.
- Increased development opportunities for officers to work within a wider area and specialist departments within a single division, improving skills and experience levels.

2.3 Perceived risks

Failure to consider this proposal could be a missed opportunity to strengthen local policing, ensuring consistency and easier access to a greater number of resources and to specialist staff. This is also an opportunity to seek financial savings, realising efficiencies which are sustainable in the current economic climate.

3. Misconceptions about the proposal

- 3.1 The proposals are not about the centralisation of policing resources, or stripping officers away from communities. Well informed and targeted local policing, responding to the issues and concerns of local residents is at the core of the service we provide. Communities will not see any change to the service already provided, and in fact will have increased access to a greater number of resources and specialist teams should there be an ongoing issue or serious incident.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 These are proposals only at this stage, as we are currently consulting with our communities, partners, key stakeholder and our own staff, ensuring that they are fully informed of the associated benefits and risks. Consultation has so far taken the form of meetings with Local authority representatives, Policy leads in all Council areas, email correspondence to all elected members, MP's, MSP's and chairs for all Community Council groups within both K and L Divisions. In addition, Divisional Commanders have given personal interviews to local media for circulation to the wider public domain. Project teams have also held focus groups with staff ensuring they too are fully informed of the proposals. Consultation is ongoing and includes personal inputs to interested Community Council groups, explaining the background behind the proposals, providing information and reassurance for any concerns raised.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Thank you for taking the time to consider the rationale behind the proposal, and allowing me the opportunity to restate Police Scotland's commitment to strengthening the service we provide to our local communities, ensuring that we continue to keep our communities and people safe.

Jim Downie
Divisional Commander
Renfrewshire and Inverclyde
Police Scotland