

Please ask for: Mrs Christine Durber
Telephone: (01772) 533415
Email: Christine.Durber@lancashire.gov.uk
Your Ref:
Our Ref: CD/FOI/PR&SRB
Date: 24th June 2011

Dear Mr Wise

I refer to your email of 23 May 2011 submitted to the Authority via the What Do They Know website, seeking an internal review of the Authority's response, by e-letter dated 23 May 2011, to your email of 4 May 2011.

This is the Authority's response to your request for an internal review of your request for information.

I understand your original request in your e-mail of 4 May 2011 to be asking the Authority to "provide internal information... in relation to the LPA campaign against the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill" (the Bill).

I understand that the Authority's response is that there is no campaign by the Authority against this Bill and that, therefore, it does not hold information that you have requested.
In your e-mail 23 May 2011 I understand that you cite press releases, a consultation document presented to Parliament and Viewpoint, to be part of the Authority's campaign against the Bill.

I also understand your e-mail 23 May 2011 to say that you feel very aggrieved that there are numerous press releases and materials referring to "the LPA's own research" and yet the Authority says that there is no internal information related to your request.

I have viewed the documents you refer to on the Lancashire Police Authority website (press releases, a consultation document presented to Parliament and Viewpoint) and looked at other Police Authority documents concerning the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill; I have also spoken with Police Authority staff. Having done this, I have found that:

the Bill contains proposals which will mean significant changes to the governance of policing and community safety, transferring duties and powers from a board of 17 people to one individual (a Police and Crime Commissioner);

the Government has consulted about its proposals to introduce Police and Crime Commissioners; the Authority has a duty to consider the implications of the proposals in the Bill for the public Lancashire and the Home Office has indicated that it welcomes the constructive engagement of police authorities as it shapes these proposals;

the Police Authority has considered the proposals in the Bill and responded to the Government's consultation exercise through its document headed "Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People";

the Police Authority is concerned to ensure the best possible outcomes from these proposed changes for the policing of Lancashire's residents; it also wishes to ensure a safe transition from the existing police authority to the new governance structure that is eventually approved by Parliament;

the Police Authority has welcomed some proposals in the Bill; it has expressed concerns and reservations about number of other proposals in the Bill, because it does not believe they will lead to the best possible outcomes for the policing of Lancashire's residents;

the Police Authority has said that it believes that the Government should give further consideration to some proposals in the Bill as the legislation is developed, and it has made a number of constructive comments and practical suggestions about ways in which some of the proposals might be improved; in commenting on the proposals the Authority is properly working within its statutory powers and responsibilities;

the Police Authority has a statutory duty to keep the public informed about policing and to consult with the public about policing;

the Police Authority has a duty to consider the implications of, and to seek the public's views on, the very significant changes which will impact upon policing which are contained in the Bill and to feed back the views it receives to inform the consultation and debate about the proposals;

in the light of these two duties, the Police Authority wishes to explain the Authority's views on the proposals contained in the Bill and their potential impact on the public and key stakeholders in Lancashire; it also wishes to provide regular factual and up-to-date information about the proposals, through a variety of means; this is intended to encourage debate, feedback and interaction on the proposals;

the Police Authority has undertaken research to seek the public's and stakeholders' views about the proposals; the feedback received shows that Lancashire's residents have some concerns about the Government's proposals and the research outcomes are displayed publicly on the LOOP website;

the Police Authority is working with the Government and others nationally, and with partners locally, as the Bill progresses through both houses of Parliament, to ensure the best possible outcomes for policing Lancashire's residents and to ensure that a safe transition to the new governance structures takes place;

the Police Authority takes its duties and responsibilities very seriously; it continues to carry out its statutory duties of maintaining an efficient and effective police force and holding the Chief Constable to account for the policing service delivered and will do so until the day it is replaced by the new governance structure;

I conclude that the Police Authority has expressed both positive comments and reservations/concerns about the proposals in the Bill and these are available on the Authority's website; the Authority is working to achieve positive outcomes from the legislation. I have found no evidence that the Police Authority is running a campaign against the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. I therefore uphold the Authority's response of 23 May 2011.

This completes the review of your request. If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal to the information Commissioner's office at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Christine Durber
Deputy Chief Executive