

No voluntary merger for East Midlands

Nottinghamshire Police Authority has decided not to volunteer for a merger of the five police forces in the East Midlands. The authority voted unanimously against a voluntary amalgamation after considering a report which showed a significant shortfall in the level of funding currently being offered by the Home Office towards the cost of setting up and running the new force and strengthening protective services in the region. Members also expressed continuing concerns over the governance of the new force.

The authority has agreed to talks continuing with the Home Office to try to resolve unanswered questions about the merger, but will also seek legal advice over the legality of the restructuring process. The Home Secretary had invited the East Midlands police authorities to volunteer for amalgamation by tomorrow. The authorities in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire have also declined to volunteer, while Leicestershire and Lincolnshire will decide today and tomorrow respectively.

With a voluntary merger now ruled out, it is expected that the Home Secretary will take the first step towards a compulsory merger next Wednesday by giving formal notice to the five police forces and authorities in the region. This will be followed by a statutory four-month consultation period in which the views of the authorities, local councils and others will be sought.

If the Home Secretary proceeds with the merger following consultation, the proposal will be considered by both Houses of Parliament in the autumn. The new force would come into effect in April 2008.

Capture Cars aim to put brakes on break-ins

Nottinghamshire Police is using new tactics to tackle car crime by deploying vehicles with the technology to trap criminals. It is impossible for thieves to tell the difference between the vehicles, known as Capture Cars, and other cars. But if they break into a Capture Car and steal the valuables deliberately left inside, the police are alerted and the thieves and stolen property can be traced.

The Capture Cars are being planted in Nottingham as part of a joint initiative between the police, the Nottingham Crime and Drug Partnership and One Nottingham, the city's local strategic partnership. The deployment of the vehicles is supported by an awareness campaign in which every household in the city will receive a letter explaining that Capture Cars are in use and reminding drivers to remove valuables from their vehicles when they park.

Enclosed with the letter will be a FORGET IT! dashboard card, which can be displayed inside people's cars when they are parked to tell potential thieves that there are no valuables inside the vehicle. Adverts will also appear on buses to reinforce the message.



New rights for victims of crime

Nottinghamshire's criminal justice agencies are improving the service they offer to victims of crime. The new national Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which came into force this week, sets out the standards of information and support that victims are entitled to receive from the police and our partners in the criminal justice system.

The code gives victims rights to information about the investigation of the crime committed against them. It specifies the stages in an investigation at which they must be notified – such as when someone is arrested, bailed or charged – and how soon this must be done.

Nottinghamshire Police recognises that victims are at the heart of the criminal justice system and supporting them is a key part of our job. We aim to exceed the national minimum standards by updating victims within one day of a significant development in an investigation. If an investigation is ongoing and there is no significant development, a monthly update will be provided.

