



Home Office

Vernon Coaker MP
MINISTER OF STATE
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Cllr Tricia Turner
Leader
Central Bedfordshire Shadow Authority
Priory House
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Dear Councillor Turner,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th of November 2008, asking the Home Secretary to decide the composition of the Bedfordshire Police Authority Joint Committee under Schedule 2 of the Police Act 1996, as no agreement could be reached. The Home Secretary has asked me to look at this matter.

I should firstly say that until the joint committee is required to be composed, on the 15th day after the draft Local Government (Structural Changes) (Membership of Public Bodies in Bedfordshire, Cheshire and Wiltshire) Order 2008 receives parliamentary approval, I have no ability to make any decision as it cannot truly be said that there is not agreement. I have, however, decided to set out my understanding of the issues, and give you an indication of what my decision would be should I be asked to intervene after that date.

Following the Decision made by the Secretary of State in the case of Leicestershire Police Authority in 1996, and Cambridgeshire Police Authority in 2007, population is the key factor in the decision. I do think, however, that the proposal that Luton and Central Bedfordshire agreed to would give Bedford a disproportionately small representation in comparison with Luton.

Therefore if I were to be asked to intervene after the order comes into force, my decision would be to have a larger committee, of eleven members. I would then give five members to Central Bedfordshire, and three each to Luton and Bedford. I believe this to be the fairest split by population.

I should stress that this decision has no legal standing, and I very much hope that the various councils will be able to make an agreed decision before I have to intervene. I am copying this letter to Kevin Crompton, Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council, Mayor Frank Branston – Bedford Council and Joanne Allison, Sandra Hughes-Crean and Jane Anderson at Communities and Local Government.

Yours sincerely,
Vernon Coaker

VERNON COAKER