Sheffield

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Related subject: N/A

As District Commander for Sheffield, I fully recognise the importance of ensuring electoral boundaries remain fair, representative and reflective of local communities. However, I would ask the Commission to consider a number of unintended consequences that significant ward boundary changes can create for policing and wider community safety partners.

Firstly, policing performance, demand analysis and neighbourhood problem-solving are heavily reliant on geographically based reporting structures. Many police systems, performance dashboards, partnership products and analytical tools are configured around existing ward boundaries. Changes to those boundaries frequently require substantial reconfiguration of datasets, reporting mechanisms, mapping products and partnership governance arrangements. These changes can incur significant cost, both financially and in terms of staff resource.

Secondly, there can be a prolonged period where local authority boundaries and policing systems become misaligned. During this transition, considerable manual intervention is often required to reconcile data and produce accurate reports for partners, elected members and communities. This can increase workload for analysts and neighbourhood teams whilst reducing the efficiency and accuracy of performance reporting.

Thirdly, ward boundaries are used extensively in partnership working. Community Safety Partnership structures, local performance meetings, neighbourhood priorities, councillor engagement arrangements, ward profiles and problem-solving activity are frequently organised around recognised ward geography. Significant changes may require the redesign of established governance arrangements and can create confusion for

residents about which neighbourhood policing team or elected member represents their area.

There is also a financial consideration. Changes to boundaries may necessitate amendments to force systems, mapping products, intelligence and analytical tools, communications materials, website content, stakeholder directories and reporting frameworks. Whilst each change may appear relatively minor in isolation, collectively they represent a considerable resource commitment at a time when public sector organisations remain under significant financial pressure.
Finally, from a community engagement perspective, stable and recognisable geographies help support long-term relationships between neighbourhood policing teams, councillors, partners and local residents. Frequent or substantial changes risk reducing public understanding of local accountability and can complicate the communication of priorities, crime trends and community safety outcomes.

For these reasons, I would respectfully ask the Commission to carefully consider the operational, financial and partnership implications of any proposed boundary changes and, where changes are necessary, ensure sufficient lead-in time is provided to allow public sector partners to realign systems, reporting structures and governance arrangements in a planned and cost-effective manner.

Attached Documents:

None attached