

Force merger plan would stretch the resources of Surrey police

MP spells out his agenda for action against crime and bad behaviour

MICHAEL GOVE has been working with Surrey's Chief Constable, our local police authority, local councillors and all the other Surrey MPs to ensure that policing remains close to the people.

He has been leading the campaign locally to resist plans to merge Surrey police into a new regional force. He recently met Liz Campbell, of Surrey Police Authority, to plan how to keep our police force accountable and locally responsive.

Michael also addressed a meeting of local Neighbourhood Watch representatives to spell out his agenda for action to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour.

He outlined his concerns that recent changes to the licensing laws could lead to more drink-fuelled anti-social behaviour. And he gave a warning that recent funding cuts would place an even greater strain on our local force.

Against that background, Michael is convinced that it would be wrong to further weaken the force by merging it with others.

Michael and the Police Authority fear that Surrey would lose more resources and local people would have less of a say over policing priorities.

Michael said: "Our police should be more accountable not less. And their energies should be directed to catching criminals not creating a new bureaucracy. Surrey people pay more for policing than anyone else in the UK, we should keep our force local."

An unfair cop

- Official figures show Government funding for policing in Surrey has been cut by a fifth since 1997.

- It is proposed that Surrey's force should be merged with Sussex. If that happened, Surrey's stretched resources would be pushed towards Gatwick, Crawley and Brighton.



LUTHFUL KARIM

GOVE SPEAKS UP FOR THE POOR: Michael at the Camberley Make Poverty History rally

Rally told poverty is still not history

MICHAEL recently spoke at a rally organised by the Make Poverty History Campaign in Camberley. He addressed a meeting of anti-poverty activists, church representatives and members of other faith groups to outline the steps that must be taken in order to tackle global poverty.

Michael has been pressing the Government to ensure that more aid is matched by a focus on improving accountability in the developing world.

He has also been campaigning for an end to wasteful EU spending so that we can have fairer and freer trade with the developing world.

If you would like Michael to speak at your meeting, visit your event or open any occasion then please e-mail him at govem@parliament.uk

• On January 26, 2006 Michael Gove asked the International Development Secretary to make a statement on good governance in East Africa.

Ask Michael

If you think there's a question the Government should be asked about our local area please e-mail Michael on

Opinion forming

Read Michael Gove's regular column in *The Times*, or online at: www.michaelgove.com

CHANNEL 4



THE RISING STAR: Chantelle, winner of *Celebrity Big Brother*, presents Surrey Heath MP Michael Gove with the award for most promising new MP. He was voted Parliament's Rising Star in a ballot of MPs, and received the award at a ceremony organised by Channel 4.

Michael said: "I am flattered by this generous award, and I couldn't have won it without the support I get from my colleagues who are councillors in Guildford and Surrey Heath.

"Teamwork is vital when you're trying to serve the public and I hope to carry on using the platform I am lucky enough to have in the House of Commons to fight alongside local councillors for the needs of local people."

HOUSE OF COMMONS



MICHAEL'S MAIDEN SPEECH: the new MP makes his mark in the House of Commons

Bagshot battle keeps post office hopes alive

POST OFFICE services in Bagshot could be offered a last-minute pardon after Michael Gove stepped in to co-ordinate a local business rescue effort.

Now the newsagent next door to the old Post Office has put his name forward to take over the licence. If Mr O. Mehak's application succeeds the post office could be relocated one door further along Bagshot High Street.

Michael joined Bagshot councillor Valerie White in organising a petition to help to find somebody to take on the services. The petition attracted more than 1,000 signatures.

Mr Gove said: "Mr Mehak has applied to take over the running of the post office in Bagshot. Everything they have said leads us to believe they want the post office here, and they're not in the business of washing their hands of Bagshot.

"This is a fantastic site and it's wonderful that Mr Mehak, hav-

ing taken on the responsibility of being a newsagent, is now prepared to take on responsibility for the post office services.

"Because Bagshot has always been so full of small, independent shops, the ideal thing was always going to be having one of Bagshot's shopowners running the services.

"Everything that can be done locally has been done and now we just have to wait and see."

Valerie White said: "We must have near to 1,000 signatures and shops are still asking for forms, so we can see how important it is to the people who live here.

"There are 5,500 residents in Bagshot and the majority of people you see walking in and out of Bagshot are elderly, and they are the people who use it.

"It would be very hard for them to get to the next post office. It certainly wouldn't be within walking distance."