

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2011

Three Year Strategic Plan and Annual Joint Policing Plan

1. The Authority has agreed the Three-Year Strategy and Policing Plan, which defines the purpose, aims, priorities and key principles for policing in West Mercia for the period 2011 – 2014. The Joint Policing Plan for 2011/12 is incorporated within the plan and gives particular emphasis to the planned outcomes and priorities for the forthcoming year. A copy of the plan is available on the Authority's website.
2. The Strategic Aims are -
 - Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour remain low.
 - The public have confidence and express satisfaction with the policing service.
 - Communities feel safe.
3. The Priorities for 2011/12 are -
 - Protect people from crime and disorder according to their needs and vulnerabilities.
 - Work with partners to bring offenders to account, acting in the best interest of victims and the public.
 - Ensure accessible to communities.
 - Provide a supportive and effective response to victims of sexual offences, domestic abuse, child abuse and hate crime.
 - Protect road users by working with partners to reduce casualties.
 - Have the capability and resilience to respond to major crime investigations and serious incidents while delivering a resilient local policing service.
 - Provide an efficient and effective policing service which delivers value for money through our Making the Difference Programme.
 - Actively pursue collaboration opportunities with other forces and partner organisations to achieve economies and efficiencies.
4. The Plan was agreed following an extensive consultation programme, which included postal and telephone (victims and witnesses of crime) surveys throughout the year, feedback from Partners and Communities Together (PACT) and other public engagement meetings, including Policing Matters and Your Community Matters events. Four consultation evenings and a live Webcast, using Worcestershire County Council's facilities, were also held during January 2011.
5. The recurring themes highlighted during the consultation meetings and Webcast included:

- The role, cost and value of CSO's and their work in the community.
- The impact of budget cuts upon the visibility of police officers.
- Concerns around the abolition of Police Authorities and timescales for this.
- The benefits and need of true partnership working with other organisations and public volunteers.

6. The top three PACT priorities, from January to December 2010 were:

- speeding traffic
- cars parked illegally/inconveniently
- anti social behaviour (inappropriate gathering/loitering/nuisance – youth related)

7. The Police Authority will monitor the performance of West Mercia Police against the Plan during the year, including at a local level through the Territorial Policing Boards.

Budget 2011/2012

8. The Police Authority has set a net budget of £210.5 million for the financial year 2011/2012.

9. West Mercia's Government Grant will reduce by 17% over the next four years and for 2011/12 the budget has been reduced by £9.8 million. Savings have been realised through the 'Planning for the Future' review (£4.2 million), non-pay reductions (£2.6 million) and vacancy management (£3 million). Reserves will be used to fund the remaining £4.9 million gap in 2011/12.

10. There has been no increase in the policing element of the Council Tax and the payment for a Band D remains at the 2010/11 level of £178.72. 36% (£79.4 million) of the budget will be collected from local Council Taxpayers.

Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire

11. The Police Authority at its meeting on 14 December 2010 approved the development of strategic collaboration with Warwickshire Police and Police Authority. A team has been tasked with developing proposals for more efficient and effective policing services that maintain or increase levels of protection to local communities.

12. West Mercia Assistant Chief Constable Simon Chesterman has been appointed by the two forces to lead a Strategic Alliance programme team. A joint blueprint with recommendations will be presented to both forces and Authorities by June 2011 for their consideration.

13. The key principles for the design of the Alliance are:

- Maximise protection and service provision in line with priorities and the resources available.
- Value local policing.
- Retain the individual identity of the Forces and Authorities.
- Seek to integrate activity in all areas unless there is a good reason not to.

- Consider everything beyond local policing. However, the opportunities arising from shared learning does not preclude changes to local policing albeit this is likely to remain separate and distinct within each Force area.
- Not alter existing precept or finance arrangements. Force decisions on precept levels will be driven by policing plans and budgets approved by each of the two respective Police Authorities.

Monitoring of Policing Plan Aims 2010/11

14. The Police Authority monitors the force against the Policing Plan aims set for 2010/11 and the year end performance will be published in the Annual Report at the end of June 2011.

15. The force is on track to achieve performance well within the target of there being fewer than 75,000 recorded crimes (54,680 as at 31 December 2010). The numbers of domestic burglaries were at their lowest for six years and low volumes of fatalities and serious injuries had also been recorded in relation to road casualties.

16. Confidence in local policing and user satisfaction had increased and data from the British Crime Survey (September 2010) indicated that 7.8% of people perceived Anti Social Behaviour to be a problem in their local area, which was well below the target of 12.5% for March 2011.

17. Areas of particular recent focus had been Serious Violent Crime and the Sanction Detection Rates for Robberies and Burglaries. Over the first 9 months of the year the force had recorded 718 offences of Serious Violent Crime, an increase on 2009/10 of 55 offences (8%). The target for 2010/11 was to maintain / improve on 2009/10 outturn (883 for the full year) and it looked unlikely that the force would improve on last year's position. Further work was being undertaken in this area.

18. Although the Robberies Sanction Detection Rate (SDR) was lower than last year the force performed very strongly last year. The strong performance resulted in a more challenging target for detections being set part way through the year, uplifting the target from 27% to 35%. In this context, the current SDR of 31.2% was acceptable.

19. The SDR for domestic burglary was 2.1% off target and had been one of the spotlight areas at the January Force Performance Group. Items covered included process mapping, interest markers used to identify different types of burglaries, Operation Rectify (linked burglaries in a specific area) and forensic costs.

2009/10 Audit Letter

20. The Authority has welcomed a positive Audit Letter from the Audit Commission for the year 2009/10, which highlighted the excellent working papers and co-operation from the Treasurer's staff and the Finance Department. The report highlighted good practice in relation to the preparation of financial statements, Police Use of Resources and ensuring data quality.

21. An unqualified opinion had been issued on the 2009/10 financial statements, which was set against a background of declining recorded crime, increased sanction detection rates and improved public confidence. The joint HMIC/Audit Commission Inspection concluded that the Authority was 'performing well' and it was noted that

the Authority was making good progress to prepare for the reporting of financial statements under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

22. The report commented that replacing police authorities with Police and Crime Commissioners raised several risks relevant to the key themes of leadership and Value For Money (VFM) and recommended that the Police Authority review its:

- capacity to ensure its members and officers continue to have the vision, drive and ability to deal with the risks, associated with the transition;
- strategic direction to ensure continued focus on key priorities ensuring the Force preserves performance with fewer resources;
- scrutiny role to ensure it continues in both engaging with and challenging the Force to achieve VFM; and
- governance role to ensure it continues.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

23. Following representations to MPs and Ministers the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) was on track for opening later in the year. A site had been secured in Worcestershire together with a Home Office Grant, and funding had been agreed by the Primary Care Trusts. Two other sites were required in the Force area (Joint Agency Interview Facilities), one in Shropshire and one in Herefordshire

Safer Roads Partnership

24. The Authority has received a report on the role of the Safer Roads Partnership in reducing road casualties and the revised funding situation. Although the four funding councils had given notice to withdraw funding from 31 March 2011, the fees generated from speed awareness courses would generate enough income to maintain safety camera enforcement for the next year while consideration was given to the future.

Commendations

25. Retired Detective Constable Alan Roberts has been awarded an ACPO Presidential Commendation. Mr Roberts was a football intelligence officer for ten years up to his retirement and was one of only six uniformed officers selected by the UK Policing Unit to assist with the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Significant Cases and Court Results

26. The Police Authority has been updated on significant cases and court results where successful convictions were secured for a variety of offences including murder and attempted murder, rape, Grievous Bodily Harm/Dangerous Driving, Sex Offences, fraud of the National Health Service and cultivating Cannabis.

Signed on behalf of the
West Mercia Police Authority

Sheila Blagg
Chairman

Further Information

Any person wishing to seek further information on the subject matter of this report should contact David Brierley or Ian Payne on Shrewsbury (01743) 264690.

Further information on the West Mercia Police Authority can also be found on the Internet at www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.

Questions on the functions of the Police Authority

The Authority has nominated the following members to answer questions on the discharge of the functions of the Police Authority at meetings of the relevant councils:

<i>Herefordshire Council</i>	<i>Mr B Hunt</i>
<i>Shropshire County Council</i>	<i>Mr M Kenny</i>
<i>Telford and Wrekin Council</i>	<i>Mr K Sahota</i>
<i>Worcestershire County Council</i>	<i>Mrs S Blagg</i>

List of Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Chief Executive of the Police Authority) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 15 February 2011.