

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2011

Police and Crime Commissioners

1. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 received the Royal Assent on 15 September 2011 and will transfer the role of police authorities to elected "police and crime commissioners". The first police commissioner elections will be held in November 2012, and then normally every four years.
2. The Act also includes the formation on Police and Crime Panels, which will include members from the County, District and Unitary Authorities in each police area. The primary role of the panels will be to scrutinise the activity of the Commissioner, including the setting of the precept and local policing plan.
3. The Police Authority will work closely with the Chief Constable and partners to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements in November 2012.

Planning Process for 2011-12

4. The planning process for the Policing Priorities and Budget for 2012/13 includes a consultation meeting with strategic partners on 15 November 2011 at Hindlip Hall, Worcester and a live Webcast at 7 p.m. 11 January 2012 featuring the Chairman, Chief Executive and Treasurer of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable. The Policing Plan and Budget will be approved at the Police Authority's meeting on 14 February 2012.

National Police Air Service

5. The Police Authority has endorsed proposals to transfer its air support assets to the National Police Air Service (NPAS). The current economic climate requires a more efficient way of delivering air support and the NPAS proposal will provide a consistent and cost effective air support function, whilst delivering a high quality service to the public for twenty four hours a day throughout England and Wales.
6. West Mercia will, under the new arrangements, pay less for air support (currently £546,000 per annum) but at the same time there will be no change in operational flight response times as the aircraft will continue to be based at Wolverhampton airport.

Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire Police

7. The Authority has agreed the Strategic Alliance Chief Officer Team Structure which consists of the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables of the two forces. They will be supported by two Assistant Chief Constables, a Director of Resources and a Director of Finance.

Monitoring of Policing Plan Aims 2011-12

8. The Police Authority monitors the force on the Policing Aims for the current year. Particular attention was given to improving the performance in the areas of Violent Crime with Injury and Serious Sexual Offences. Overall crime this year was down, particularly house burglary and detections on house burglary and robbery were good.

Firearms Licensing Unit

9. The Police Authority received a report on the Firearms Licensing Unit, where there is a significant imbalance between the net income and the staffing and administrative costs. The unit places an average cost of £300,000 per annum on West Mercia Police's budget. Further information is being gathered before deciding on a recommended way forward.

10. A national report had been prepared following the tragedy in Cumbria in 2010 involving the taxi driver, Derek Bird, which might prompt changes.

Public Order

11. The Police Authority received a report from the Chief Constable on the period of serious disorder across a number of major cities in England during the first week of August 2011. This report included information on the West Mercia Police Force national contribution and management of safety in the local area.

12. The Authority also received a report on a major police operation (Operation Crown) in Wellington, Telford which took place on 13 August 2011 and related to a proposed march by the English Defence League, which although eventually banned, still led to protesters attending the town on the day.

13. The cost of the operation was £342,500 and the heavy police presence helped to reduce the incidence of disorder. 42 arrests were made for a variety of offences including public order, assaulting a police officer and carrying offensive weapons.

14. Although business within Wellington Town Centre was disrupted, the overwhelming feedback from the community was an extremely positive one. The community felt safe and reassured that West Mercia Police and Telford and Wrekin Council had given an undertaking to protect them and this promise had been delivered.

15. The Police Authority recorded its appreciation to the Chief Constable and his officers on managing a difficult and challenging period and in so doing maintaining public order in West Mercia.

Commendations and Honours

16. The Force recognises the hard work and dedication of West Mercia Police Officers, Staff and volunteers across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire each year with a Quality People Awards Ceremony. This year's

awards included former Police Authority and Shropshire County Council member, Bill Morris, who was the Volunteer of the Year.

Significant Cases and Court Results

17. The Police Authority has been updated on significant cases and court results including, manslaughter, murder, sexual abuse, drugs and urging others to start riots in Droitwich and Worcester via Facebook.

Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings

18. The Authority is required to nominate a member to answer questions on the discharge of the functions of the Police Authority at meetings of the relevant councils and the following members were appointed for 2011/2012:

Herefordshire Council	Mr S Bowen
Shropshire Council	Mr M Wood
Telford and Wrekin Council	Mr K Austin
Worcestershire County Council	Mrs S Blagg

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.

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 27 September 2011.