

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 19 JUNE 2012

Chair and Vice Chair

1. Mrs Sheila Blagg (Bromsgrove, Worcestershire) has been appointed Chairman of the Police Authority until the abolition of the Police Authority on 21 November 2012.
2. Mr Robin Durham (Shrewsbury, Shropshire) and Mr Zad Padda (Evesham, Worcestershire) have been appointed as Vice Chairs.

Assistant Chief Constable Posts

3. The Police Authority placed on record its appreciation of the service given to West Mercia by Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), Simon Edens, who has been appointed Deputy Chief Constable for Leicestershire Police
4. Mr Edens joined West Mercia Police as an Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Policing) in 2008 and in December 2011 was appointed ACC for both Warwickshire and West Mercia Police as part of the strategic alliance between the two forces. Mr Edens continues to hold the position of national lead on anti-social behaviour for the Association of Chief Police Officers.
5. Following a selection process, which included members of West Mercia Police Authority, the Chief Constables of Warwickshire and West Mercia Police and the Vice Chair of Warwickshire Police Authority, Gareth Morgan has been appointed to the position of Assistant Chief Constable (Local Policing) for the Strategic Alliance. Mr Morgan joins West Mercia from West Midland Police.
6. Warwickshire Police Authority has also appointed an Assistant Chief Constable using a similar selection process, which involved their members, both Chief Constables and the Chairman of West Mercia Police Authority. Karen Manners has been appointed to the position of Assistant Chief Constable (Protective Services) for the Strategic Alliance. Ms Manners was previously with the Hampshire Constabulary.

Deputy Chief Executive

7. As part of a staffing restructure to prepare for the transition to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Ian Payne, Deputy Chief Executive Officer will retire in July 2012 after 19 years service to the West Mercia Police Authority.
8. Mr Payne has led the Police Authority's work in relation to Independent Custody Visitors and Diversity issues. He has made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Police Authority and his professionalism and experience will be sadly missed.
9. The Police Authority paid tribute to Mr Paynes contribution and service.

Annual Report 2011/2012

10. The Police Authority has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of an efficient and effective police force in its area. It does so by appointing senior police officers including the Chief Constable, by setting policing priorities annually, by reviewing and approving the overall policing budget and by setting the element of Council Tax. It has a responsibility to keep informed of public opinion on policing issues and to monitor the delivery of services to the public. The Authority has agreed the Joint Annual Report for 2011/2012, a copy of which is available on the Internet at www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.

11. Overall, West Mercia Police has continued to maintain a high level of performance and the end of year figures show that the number of recorded crimes was 69,582, compared to 72,023 as at March 2011. The number of domestic burglaries has also continued to fall with 3,027 recorded in the end of year figures, which was 177 less than the previous year. Performance against agreed targets, or when comparing to the previous year is strong in many areas, including improved detection rates for overall crime where 31.5% of crimes were solved.

12. The Force has also maintained good levels of satisfaction from service users, with 85.1% of victims surveyed saying they were satisfied with the overall service they had received from West Mercia Police. In addition, the latest residents' survey results show that 70.2% of people agree that the police are doing a 'good' or 'excellent' job in their local area.

13. Focusing resources on the priorities is important, but the force has to adapt to any national, regional or local needs as they arise. For example, in the last year metal theft emerged as a major problem for forces up and down the country and West Mercia was no exception. Over 500 drain covers were stolen from in and around Redditch in a five month period, but following intelligence gathering from the public and a successful police operation a man was arrested and charged, in early March, with stealing 628 drain covers worth over £155,000 from roads in North Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

14. The Authority has been working with the force to effectively implement the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review whilst maintaining front line service delivery and during 2011/12 real term budget reductions of £9.8 million were achieved, which demonstrate good financial management and planning. This was recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in its July 2011 report on preparedness (in meeting the financial challenge) which stated that the 'force has displayed a clear understanding of the challenges ahead and has considered many options on how to meet them'.

15. In January 2012 HMIC issued a further report on West Mercia which looked at its management of crime and incident data. This inspection found that the force had a positive culture around focusing on the needs of the victim.

16. Overall the Police Authority is confident that West Mercia Police continues to be well placed to address all the challenges ahead and is capable of sustaining a cost effective high standard of policing.

Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire Police

17. The Police Authority has agreed the four-year plan to deliver high-quality, value for money, policing services to communities across Warwickshire and West Mercia police force areas and which has also been agreed with Warwickshire Police Authority.

18. Each force will continue to be led by a Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable and retain its own identity. A total of four Assistant Chief Constables and Directors are now responsible for the delivery of policing services across both force areas. Police Authorities will continue to govern forces until Police and Crime Commissioners are elected in November this year.

19. The Alliance plan will enable both forces to maximise the protection delivered by building resilience within local policing and protective services directorates and streamlining support services that enable policing to take place, as well as reducing the total number of management and supervisory posts.

20. West Mercia Police needs to reduce its operating costs by £20.1 million by the end of 2015/16 and Warwickshire by £10.2 million, a total of £30.3 million.

21. The four-year plan will see:

- Policing delivered across seven geographic areas, each led by a local Superintendent working with local partners. The areas are Herefordshire, North Warwickshire, North Worcestershire, Shropshire, South Warwickshire, South Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin.
- Local Policing Teams will be reorganised to concentrate on harm reduction in their communities by focusing on communications, local engagement, problem solving and offender management. Teams will remain fundamental to serving the public and will operate across all four counties. The Chief Constables will work with the Police Authorities and then elected Police and Crime Commissioners to determine how to best utilise them.
- Local Policing Teams will be supported by other officers and staff working in the community performing functions such as patrol, crime investigation and forensics.
- There will be fewer people employed in supporting functions, fewer managers and fewer police supervisors.
- A new strategy will be developed to reduce the costs of police buildings, safeguarding money to ensure as many officers and staff as possible continue to be employed to deliver protection. Buildings, while providing a level of 'visible reassurance', do not deliver any protection.
- Any potential changes to individual police buildings, stations or front-counter arrangements will be discussed with the Police Authorities and then elected Police and Crime Commissioners, local communities and partners to decide how they can best be used to support local policing.
- Other services, such as police-only front counters, will also be reviewed as the service improves its use of technology, multi-agency 'one-stop' shops and mobile police stations to engage with local people.

22. Both Police Authorities have asked their Chief Constables to 'drive forward future design and implementation work as quickly as professionally possible', in consultation with them and the elected Police and Crime Commissioners from November 2012.

Youth Crime and Substance Misuse Prevention Work

23. The Home Office announced in March 2012 that funding for youth crime and substance misuse would be split between the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and individual police authorities.

24. The YJB will continue to fund local Youth Offending Teams (YOT), however, an element of the grant will now be at the discretion of the Police Authority / Police and Crime Commissioner. The aim of the change is to enable a transition of partnership working to commission community safety services from 2013/14 onwards.

25. The amount allocated to West Mercia was £99,128 across the two local YOTs who had planned for this money to be available to them in 2012/13, unaware of the late diversion of funds.

26. The Police Authority has, therefore, agreed the pass-portioning of £99,128 to the YOTs to be shared as follows:

Worcester / Herefordshire	£56,525
Shropshire / Telford & Wrekin	£42,603

27. The Police Authority also agreed:

- That the arrangement would last for twelve months pending a full understanding of the new model and how outcomes can be improved.
- That the Youth Offending Teams report performance quarterly to the Police Authority / PCC (based on existing performance management frameworks) but to include:
 - Preventing the onset of offending/substance misuse
 - Tackling the escalation of offending/substance misuse
 - Clear progression towards the integration of offender management across West Mercia, with a new model for Youth Offending Teams and their contribution to the local youth crime prevention agenda beyond 2012/13.

Rape Investigation and Prosecution

28. The Police Authority has received a report on West Mercia Police's current position on the continuous improvement approach in respect of the recording and investigation of rape offences and the support to victims of rape offences.

28. The Police Authority was also advised of the outcome of a recent national review of rape related processes by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

30. In the light of the recommendations arising from the national review the Police Authority has agreed that these be formally adopted in West Mercia Police's Rape Action Plan and that West Mercia Police had responded appropriately and professionally to the contents of the thematic review.

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

31. The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme provides a check on the conditions under which people are detained in police custody and provides an independent check on the way police officers and detention officers carry out their duties.

32. There are over 60 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) in West Mercia and they are drawn from members of the community from all parts of the force area. During 2011/12 five new visitors were appointed and one training session was arranged. Visitors met regularly in their area panels to discuss their visits and received reports from the national Independent Custody Visiting Association. In addition they had the opportunity to attend a regional seminar held in Stafford and the Panels were represented at the national conference held in Belfast.

33. A total of 328 visits were made to the custody units at Hereford, Leominster, Kidderminster, Malinsgate (Telford), Redditch, Shrewsbury and Worcester during the year. This also included visits to Wellington which was used whilst the unit at Malinsgate was refurbished. This ensured that in line with the Police Authority's target the custody facilities in each area were visited on average once a week, which continues to be an exceptional achievement by the volunteer ICVs.

34. 1,398 people were in custody at the time of the visits out of which 88% of the detainees who were available consented to a visit. Reasons for detainees not being available included being interviewed, in consultation with their solicitor, asleep or visitors being advised not to see the detainee where there were health and safety concerns.

35. No particular issues were raised in relation to nearly two thirds of all visits and the remaining third raised issues around medical matters, bedding, drinks and telephone calls. Any issues that were raised by the visitors were rectified as soon as possible, dealt with in correspondence with the local Police Liaison Officer and/or discussed at the Panel meetings.

36. Of particular note during the year was the successful implementation of the MEDACs service, which had ensured the better provision of medical care than previously in Shropshire and North Worcestershire.

37. The responsibility for ensuring an effective Independent Custody Visiting Scheme will transfer from the Police Authority to the Police and Crime Commissioner on 22 November 2012. The ICVs have been assured that the Police Authority has put in place arrangements to ensure a smooth handover of the Scheme so that ICVs continue to receive support and are able to raise issues arising out of their visits and Panel meetings. The Chief Constable has also confirmed his commitment to the Scheme and the valuable feedback and reassurance ICVs provide.

Commendations and Awards

38. Chief Constable Commendations have recently been awarded to Sergeant Daren Hayes, Sergeant Andrew Jackson, Sergeant Stuart Wells and PC David Williams for their utmost professionalism, calm and brave actions when dealing with a life threatening situation. Each put their own safety in danger in order to save members of the public at the scene of a fatal Road Traffic Collision and subsequent double fire.

Significant Cases and Court Results

39. The Police Authority has been updated on significant cases and court results including a brutal beating that led to a death, manslaughter, sexual offences and burglary.

Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings

40. 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 the remainder 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 Annual Meeting of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 19 June 2012.