

# REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2010

## *Chief Constable*

1. Chief Constable Paul West's term of office finishes in July 2011 and members of the Police Authority have paid tribute to his work in West Mercia since his appointment in 2003. Mr West has also during that time helped shape the national policing picture, having chaired the Association of Chief Police Officers' Professional Standards Committee and held the portfolio for the Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders. Arrangements for the appointment of his successor will commence in the New Year.

## *Appointment of Members*

2. Worcestershire County Councillor Andrew Roberts has been appointed to the Police Authority following the sad death of Edward Sheldon, MBE.

3. The four year term of office of five of the independent members of the Police Authority comes to an end on 31 March 2011. The Police Authority would normally have commenced a selection process for new appointments with effect from April 2011 but, because of the Government's proposals to abolish Police Authorities in May 2012, the Home Secretary has announced that she will extend the term of office of all existing Independent Members of the Police Authorities in England and Wales, where appropriate, to May 2012.

## *Consultation on Priorities for the Policing Plan 2011/12*

4. The Police Authority and Chief Constable have commenced the process of preparing the Policing Plan for 2011/12. Further details of the draft Plan and the Police Authority's consultation arrangements are available on the website ([www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk](http://www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk)).

5. A consultation document has been produced and 2000 copies circulated to local authorities, parish and town councils, partnerships and community organisations. Public consultation evenings for partners, business and community representatives on the Policing Plan and Budget would take place during January 2011 in Hereford, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester and a Webcast, using Worcestershire County Council's facilities, had also been arranged and could be viewed on the Authority's website.

6. The draft policing priorities are shown below and as part of the process of developing them a Partnership Consultation Day was held in November 2010:

Strategic Aims	Suggested Priorities 2011/2012
Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour remain low	Protect people from crime & disorder according to their needs and vulnerabilities  Work with partners to bring offenders to account, acting in

<p>The public have confidence in us and express satisfaction with our policing service</p> <p>Our communities feel safe</p>	<p>the best interest of victims and the public</p> <p>Ensure we are accessible in our communities</p> <p>Provide a supportive and effective response to victims of sexual offences, domestic abuse and child abuse</p> <p>Protect road users by working with partners to reduce casualties</p> <p>Have the capability and resilience to respond to major crime investigations and serious incidents while delivering a resilient local policing service</p> <p>Provide an efficient and effective policing service which delivers value for money through our Making the Difference Programme.</p> <p>Actively pursue collaboration opportunities with other forces and partner organisations to achieve economies and efficiencies.</p>
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### ***Comprehensive Spending Review***

7. West Mercia's budget is funded by a combination of government grant and council tax with the former contributing approximately 65% of overall funding. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Authority will face a reduction in Government funding of around 20% over the next four years.

8. The funding gap for 2011/12 was £16m and this will be partly addressed through savings made as part of the major review of the force undertaken in 2009/10 (Planning for the Future), non pay reductions and vacancy management. The balance will be funded by use of the Authority's Sustaining Service Delivery Fund, which was established for this very purpose.

9. With 80% of the budget spent on pay it was inevitable that there will be a reduction in the overall workforce of 4,100. The Authority and Chief Constable will endeavour to minimise the reduction in police officers and staff by prudent management of resources and by streamlining processes so that the savings required can be achieved without reducing the effectiveness of the police service, particularly in the period 2011- 2013. Unidentified further savings of some £24m are expected to be required by 2014/15 and work has begun to identify the necessary reductions.

10. The Police Authority is also reviewing its own activities to reduce the business load it generates on the force, thereby allowing financial economies to be realised. As part of this process the Community Engagement Strategy is being streamlined and focused on what is the most cost effective.

### ***Collaboration***

11. West Mercia Police has well established formal arrangements for collaborative working with the three other forces within the West Midlands Region and work in

developing these is continuing. In particular options are being explored for strategic collaboration with Warwickshire Police, where it is recognised that due to the close cultural and operational similarities between the two forces, there were likely to be real operational and efficiency gains in establishing a strategic alliance with Warwickshire.

### ***Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

12. The Government has published the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill, which includes proposals to -

- *Replace police authorities with directly elected police and crime commissioners to be introduced from May 2012.*
- *Change the Licensing Act to give more powers to local authorities and police to tackle any premises that are causing problems, doubling the maximum fine for persistent underage sales and permitting local authorities to charge more for late-night licenses to contribute towards the cost of policing the late-night economy.*

13. The Police Authority has expressed concern at the proposals to introduce directly elected police and crime commissioners given the extent of the powers afforded to a single individual. In particular the Authority is anxious to see the involvement of local councilors is retained in the new structures.

14. Under the proposals local councillors will be members of a single Police and Crime Panel (PCP) for the whole of West Mercia, with provision for a couple of co-opted 'independent' members. The PCP will have a scrutiny role and some veto powers in relation to the new commissioners.

15. The Chairman of the Police Authority has written to Leaders of all Councils in West Mercia urging them to press for greater powers to be afforded to the PCP so as to preserve an important and influential role for local authorities under the new structure.

### ***Monitoring Policing Plan Aims 2010/2011***

16. The Authority monitors the performance of the force against the Policing Plan and overall performance against the targets set for 2010/2011 is on course with particularly good results in relation to lower numbers of burglaries of households and road casualties. The Authority noted that the Domestic Burglary Detection rate of 21% was below target by 3.5% and this was to be addressed by the Force Performance Group.

### ***Audit of Accounts 2009/10***

17. The Audit Commission has congratulated West Mercia Police Authority, together with ten Councils and local government bodies in the country, including Worcestershire County Council, on the quality and timeliness of its financial reporting. The Commission commented that at a time of great interest in the transparency of public bodies' finances, early publication of audited accounts was an important contribution to openness and accountability.

18. The Police Authority was the first body to publish its accounts for 2009/2010 and this was the second year in a row that it had been recognised by the Audit Commission in its Annual Report.

### ***Domestic Violence Prevention Orders***

19. West Mercia Police is one of three forces who will be given the power to use Domestic Violence Prevention Orders as part of a twelve month pilot programme which will run from the summer of 2011.

20. The Orders will stop alleged abusers from contacting the victim, or from returning to the victim's home. Where there were reasonable grounds to believe a case of domestic violence had taken place, the police could issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) that lasted for 48 hours. During those 48 hours the police must apply to a court for a Domestic Violence Protection Order. If the court ruled that the victim needed continued protection, it could issue a Domestic Violence Protection Order lasting from 14 to 28 days.

### ***Review of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)***

21. A review is in progress of West Mercia Police's three Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), which were established to provide independent advice to West Mercia Police to enable the delivery of fair and equitable policing services to its diverse communities.

22. The three groups - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT), Disability and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) – indicated that they wished to remain as separate groups and work was ongoing to broaden the groups and involve other community networks and work in a smarter way. IAGs would be involved in all critical incidents unless it would be counter productive. Consideration was also being given to enhancing engagement with Children and Young People and a report would be prepared.

### ***Review of Pay and Conditions of Service for Police Officers and Staff***

23. The first comprehensive review of police officer and staff pay and conditions of service since 1978 has begun with three objectives:

- to look at how to use pay and conditions to get more officers and staff to the frontline
- to ensure pay and conditions are fair for both the taxpayer and police officers and staff
- to bring modern management practices into the police

24. A report on short term improvements to the service will be given to the Home Secretary by February 2011 and the second, on matters of longer-term reform, will be completed by June 2011.

## **Commendations and Honours**

25. Chief Constable Commendations have recently been awarded to officers involved in a variety of cases including violent offenders and robbery, sexual offences, child abuse and family support. DC Simon Davies was also awarded a commendation for promoting awareness of policing and personal safety to thousands of young people and their families through the West Mercia Police School Engagement Events held in 2009 and 2010.

## **Significant Cases and Court Results**

26. The Police Authority has been updated on significant cases and court results in each of the five Policing Divisions, where successful convictions were secured for a variety of offences including sexual assault on young girls, rape, arson, robbery, murder and burglary.

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](http://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 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 14 December 2010.*