

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2007

Chief Constable

1. The Authority has placed on record its appreciation of Mrs Margaret Wood who served as Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Operations) from October 1998 to January 2007. The Authority also congratulated Mrs Wood on her appointment as ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) Terrorism Programme Director. The post of Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Operations) has been advertised and interviews will take place in March 2007. Chief Superintendent Howard Topping has been appointed Acting Assistant Chief Constable in the interim.

Budget 2007/2008

2. The Police Authority has set a net budget of £184.3 million for the financial year 2007/2008. Of this total £116.0 million will be received from central government grants, with the remainder from local Council Taxpayers.

3. The Council Tax for a Band D property will be £157.66, an increase of 2p per day. The increase of 4.94% is within Government guidelines.

4. In making its decision the Police Authority took into consideration its consultation with the public of West Mercia. This included feedback received from:

- Research via the West Mercia Crime Survey posted to 51,400 residents
- 18 Police Community Consultative Groups, which are public meetings held across West Mercia
- The consultation leaflet "Your police service 2007 and beyond" was posted to over 2,000 stakeholders seeking views
- A special Consultation Evening was held where the public and businesses were able to respond to outlined proposals including the budget for 2007/2008

5. West Mercia Constabulary continues to be one of the best performing forces in England and Wales, yet it receives one of the lowest government grants. The Police Authority in listening to the views of the public intends to ensure that resources are focused on tackling crime, protecting the public, promoting community safety and improving public satisfaction and confidence.

6. 2008 will see a record number of police officers in post in West Mercia and more community support officers and police staff than ever before. The overall aim will therefore be to ensure that West Mercia remains a safe place to live in, work in and visit."

Capital Programme

7. The Police Authority has agreed its three year Capital Programme and developments include:

- *Accommodation for Community Support Officers at Bridgnorth and Bromyard Police Stations*
- *The development of proposals for the strategic expansion of Police Headquarters at Hindlip Hall, Worcester, the Defford Estate and for Market Drayton to become the hub for North Shropshire, allowing the stations at Wem and Whitchurch to downsize and develop partnership options.*
- *Improvements under the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure compliance for public access to West Mercia's buildings.*
- *The Authority has also agreed to the purchase of buildings in Shrewsbury for a combined Call Management Centre for the northern area of the force and the re-location of the Shrewsbury Major Incident Room with Major Incident Unit co-located, Criminal Justice Unit and Police Authority offices.*

Three Year Strategic Plan and Annual Joint Policing Plan

8. 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 2007 – 2010. The Joint Policing Plan for 2007/08 is incorporated within the plan and gives particular emphasis to the planned outcomes and priorities for the forthcoming year.

9. A summary of what will be delivered under the 'Four Better Outcomes' during 2007/2008 is attached as an appendix.

Performance

10. The Authority regularly monitors the force's performance and has extended this to specifically include updates on Building Protective Services and Protecting Vulnerable people.

11. In terms of data available on crime in West Mercia the Authority is encouraged to note that recorded crime has fallen consistently in the following key areas over the past three years:

- Total crime has been reduced by 20%, with 21,546 fewer victims.
- Domestic burglary has been reduced by 37% with 2,187 fewer victims.
- Violent crime has been reduced by 27% with 6,258 fewer victims
- Vehicle crime has been reduced by 20% with 2,382 fewer victims.

12. All of the above has been achieved as a result of the hard work, dedication and commitment of all of the police officers, police staff and volunteers who work for the West Mercia Constabulary.

13. The Authority was also pleased to note that the Auditors had awarded the top rating in relation to the PURE (Police Use of Resources Evaluation) for Value for Money. The Audit Commission will be using West Mercia as an example of good practice in its published report.

Protection for Officers under Threat

14. The Police Authority has agreed a policy for the protection of officers and their families who experience threats or harassment arising from their police duty. The instances of significant threats are rare in West Mercia but the policy will enable the Chief Constable to incur costs of up to £10,000 where the degree of threat so warrants. Any requirements above that figure will remain subject to prior approval by the Police Authority.

Police Property Act 1897

15. During 2005/2006 approval was given to retain for police purpose the use of a Blackor Jumpstart Air Compressor, which had been seized.

Anniversaries

16. The Herefordshire Police Choir recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a commemorative service at Hereford Cathedral. The Special Constabulary has also just celebrated its 175th Anniversary.

17. The 1 October 2007 is the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of West Mercia Constabulary and Police Authority and a programme of events is being arranged for September and October 2007.

Signed on behalf of the
West Mercia Police Authority

P Deneen
Chair

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) 344314.

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:

*Herefordshire Council Mr B Hunt
Shropshire County Council Mr M Kenny
Telford and Wrekin Council Mr J Hicks
Worcestershire County Council Mr E Sheldon*

List of Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director 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 13 February 2007.

WEST MERCIA CONSTABULARY THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL JOINT POLICING PLAN

Summary of what will be delivered under the 'Four Better Outcomes' during 2007/08.

Tackling Crime

Working with partners, we aim to reduce crime levels, increase detections and increase the number of offenders brought to justice. We will increase the enforcement of penalties, aim to reduce drug use, especially among young people, and to reduce the fear of crime in our communities.

Priority goals and initiatives

- Use an intelligence led approach to tackle and reduce crime and review our prevention, enforcement and reassurance priorities.
- Improve our performance at every stage of the crime investigation process to ensure that we provide the best available evidence in every case.
- Within the structure of West Mercia's Local Criminal Justice Board, work with our criminal justice partners to deliver nationally agreed targets for bringing offenders to justice.
- Work in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service to achieve successful outcomes for all victims and witnesses.

In 2007/08 we intend to:

- Increase our successes in tackling crime and further reduce crime levels with particular emphasis on violent crime, drug-related crime and alcohol-related crime and disorder.
- Work with our partners in the Prolific and Other Priority Offender schemes to focus on and deal with persistent offenders who are responsible for a large proportion of our crime.
- Take action against those selling alcohol to children and people who are drunk through the targeted use of test purchase and licence reviews.
- Improve the frontline investigation skills of all officers and staff through the introduction of the Professionalising the Investigation Process programme (PIP).
- Maintain our position as one of the highest performing forces in relation to the proportion of offences which are detected and for which a sanction is applied through the criminal justice system.
- Seek opportunities to identify speedy outcomes for victims of crime and, where appropriate, consider the effective use of non-court sanctions.
- Ensure the quality and accuracy of information with initial emphasis on intelligence and crime.

- Undertake work to meet the requirements of the Management of Police Information (MoPI) national policies to enhance the quality, reliability and security of information.

Promoting Community Safety

We will work to understand the issues affecting communities, ensuring that we can be relied upon to protect vulnerable people and to deal with quality of life issues such as anti-social behaviour and minor criminality.

Priority goals and initiatives

- Establish fully staffed Local Policing Teams to provide dedicated and accountable resources to local communities.
- Further develop community engagement to enable individuals, communities and partners to work with us and take a greater role and responsibility in problem solving.
- Be accessible to our communities in order to build confidence and encourage public support in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and bringing offenders to justice.
- Ensure the tactics and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour are used widely and wisely, in response to community needs.
- Enhance the provision of services to protect vulnerable people including taking a positive approach towards dealing with domestic violence, child abuse, hate crime and missing persons.

In 2007/08 we intend to:

- Focus on tackling local issues to reduce people's concerns about anti-social behaviour and disorder and other identified problems.
- Increase the number of Community Support Officers (CSO) to at least 270 to improve visibility and ensure that every community has a designated CSO.
- Implement the Partners And Communities Together (PACT) approach throughout the force area and develop new methods to help identify and address local issues of concern.
- Work with our partners and communities to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse.
- Provide enhanced levels of high quality public information concerning policing including a local policing summary, leaflets, posters, business cards and imaginative use of the Internet.
- Undertake focussed communications and enforcement campaigns to increase public awareness of issues including domestic violence, alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Undertake joint problem solving training with partners to improve community engagement and resolve issues.

- Establish protocols with partners to enable the sharing of relevant information within a properly managed process.
- Help and support people suffering domestic violence by taking an active lead within Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), and by delivering nationally designed domestic violence training to front line staff and partners.
- Participate in local Safeguarding Children Boards to improve safeguarding and welfare arrangements for young people.

Improving Satisfaction and Confidence

We are determined to deliver an overall service that is fair, equitable, sensitive to individual needs and generates high levels of public satisfaction. We will ensure that, as a consequence, communities believe that their police are doing a good job and public confidence increases.

Priority goals and Initiatives

- Build on the core standards set out in the National Quality of Service Commitment¹ and continue to improve our service delivery.
- Focus on the service we provide to victims of crime, including keeping them informed of developments in their case, and monitor compliance with the Victims Code.
- In conjunction with West Mercia Police Authority, develop community engagement activities focussed on building trust and confidence.
- Maintain a programme of work to ensure the effective, efficient and secure management of police information.
- Act upon lessons learned from complaints and misconduct matters in a positive way.
- Respond effectively to the planned national changes in professional standards and discipline procedures.

In 2007/08 we intend to:

- Implement enhanced Customer Relationship Management processes to support call takers and other direct service delivery roles.
- Deliver a new Communications Centre in the North of the Force area that will provide enhanced facilities and help us to improve our service to telephone callers.
- Further implement the “Speaks Quality” training and awareness programme to improve customer focussed behaviours and support the application of our Customer Service principles (CARE).
- Develop our force Internet site to improve communications with the public.

¹ The National Quality of Service Commitment sets out customer service standards for all police forces. They describe the level of service expected whenever the public have contact with the police.

- Implement telephone based satisfaction surveys for victims of crime to enhance the quality of information received and support continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Maintain focus on the satisfaction levels of victims of crime and trends in public complaints and related issues through regular review by the force and the Police Authority.
- Undertake work to deliver the requirements of the National IMPACT programme to improve access to and sharing of police information.
- Identify key learning points from both national and local complaints and misconduct incidents and ensure that lessons are effectively fed back into operational policing.
- Prepare West Mercia Constabulary to implement the principles of the Taylor Review of police disciplinary procedures, in anticipation of new national arrangements in 2008.

Protecting the Public

We will respond quickly and effectively to all serious and major incidents. We will enhance our counter terrorism capability and improve our use of intelligence to support operations against serious and organised criminality. We will contribute towards reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

Priority goals and Initiatives

- Engage in the full range of counter terrorism policing activities and support regional and national counter-terrorist operations.
- Increase our capability and capacity to deliver protective services to the public.
- Engage with other forces to explore new opportunities for joint working.
- Support the implementation of our Roads Policing Strategy by aiming to deny criminals the use of our roads.
- Work with partner agencies and other forces to combat serious and organised crime.
- Enhance our approach to the protection of vulnerable people, including improving our arrangements for the management of sex offenders and other offenders who pose a risk to the public.
- Continue to work towards achieving or exceeding the Government's 2010 target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

In 2007/08 we intend to

- Complete the £2.9 million investment programme commenced by West Mercia Police Authority in 2006/07 to enhance our capability and capacity to deliver protective services.

- Further develop our capacity to target drug dealers to reduce the availability and supply of illegal drugs in our communities.
- Increase our capability to tackle cross border crime through increasing the size of our Serious and Organised Crime Unit and the expansion of our surveillance capacity.
- Invest in high quality facilities and equipment to provide the best possible operating environment for our specialist staff dealing with major investigations and serious and organised criminality.
- Ensure our information is properly protected by managing and using it in line with national guidelines
- Use dedicated resources to monitor and tackle the illegal activities of extremists.
 - Enhance our capability in dealing with critical incidents and meet national Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) requirements.
 - Strengthen border security through port checks at airfields within the force area and regularly examine iconic and vulnerable sites.
 - Evaluate our resilience by carrying out counter terrorism and critical incident training and exercising.
- Through increased investment, enhance our capability and capacity in managing sex offenders and potentially dangerous offenders.
- Under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), exchange appropriate information with partner agencies about dangerous offenders and manage the risk they pose.
 - Work with our partners to reduce road casualties by providing specialist roads policing and by implementing targeted enforcement and education campaigns.