

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 12 JUNE 2007

P C Ricky Gray

1. It was with very deep sadness that the death of PC Richard Gray was reported to the Authority's Annual Meeting. Silence was observed for PC Gray and other officers who had died in the line of duty.
2. PC Gray was killed whilst responding to a firearms incident at Shrewsbury on 6 May 2007, where two colleagues were being held at gunpoint.
3. PC Gray's actions to provide aid to his fellow officers by placing himself at personal risk stood as a supreme example of extreme heroism and selfless service to others. His actions were entirely in character for an officer who had gained no less than five commendations in his relatively short service with West Mercia.

Chair and Vice Chair

4. Mr Paul Deneen (Ross on Wye, Herefordshire) has been appointed Chair of the Police Authority for the ensuing year.
5. Reflecting the increasing workload of members and a desire to have a greater influence at the national level the Authority has agreed to appoint two Vice Chairs.
6. Mr Alan Thompson (Bringsty, Worcestershire) has been appointed Vice Chair (APA) and Mrs Margaret Winckler (Bridgnorth, Shropshire), Vice Chair (Local). Mr Deneen and Mr Thompson are both lay justice members and Mrs Winckler is a councillor member.

Membership

7. The Authority placed on record its appreciation of the service Mr Robert Forster (Telford), Mr Jim Hicks (Telford), Dr G Nathan (Redditch) and Mrs K Tomlinson (Telford) had given to the Authority.
8. The Authority also welcomed their successors; Mr Robin Bennett (Bridgnorth), Mr Keith Grumbley (Herefordshire) Mr Kuldip Sahota (Telford) and Colonel Tony Ward (Offenham, Evesham).
9. Mr Robert Rogers (Blakemere, Herefordshire) has also been appointed as an independent member of the Standards Committee.

Ministerial Visit

10 Tony McNulty MP, the Secretary of State for Policing, Security and Community Safety visited West Mercia in May and received a briefing on the performance of the force and current initiatives being undertaken. He was also informed of plans to develop the Hindlip Estate and presented certificates to several members of staff.

Policing West Mercia

11. A document summarising how West Mercia Police Authority and Constabulary “are working with communities and partners to make the area an even better place” is being distributed to all households during June 2007.

12. Five versions of the summary, one for each police division in West Mercia, have been produced and they contain generic information and specific information relevant to each of the divisional areas.

13. The summary includes details of local police station opening times and the Local Policing Teams etc.

Annual Report 2006/07

14. The Authority has agreed the Joint Annual Report for 200/2006, a copy of which will be available on the Internet at www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.

15. Notable achievements during the past year include:

- The introduction of 145 Local Policing Teams, together with new methods of community engagement branded as Partners and Community Together (PACT), which will ensure increased police visibility, improved communication and strengthened relationships with local communities. The Authority has received very positive feedback on these new initiatives from local communities.
- A 3.8% reduction in total crimes recorded, with 3,258 fewer victims.
- In comparison with its family of most similar forces, West Mercia is the best performing force for: total recorded crime and violent crime and for sanction detection rates for these types of crime and racially aggravated crime.

There has also been a challenging recruitment campaign, which resulted in:

- 95 new posts created, with 66% filled. This is part of our two-year plan to strengthen, develop and enhance the force’s serious crime investigation, counter terrorism and civil protection capabilities. It is anticipated that the recruitment process will be completed, as planned, by March 2008.
- 270 Community Support Officers (CSOs) recruited or in post by April 2007. During the year the Government accelerated funding to enable further

recruitment and as a result we were able to exceed our original plan to recruit an additional 118 CSOs, which would have brought the total number to 190 CSOs.

Gender Equality Scheme

16. Both the Constabulary and Police Authority have published Gender Equality Schemes and copies are available on the Internet at www.westmercia.police.uk and www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk respectively.

17. The Schemes were developed in consultation with police officers and staff, local people and representative groups and set out how the promotion of gender equality will be central to the way the organisations operate.

Local Government in Shropshire

18. The Government invited the Police Authority to express views on a consultative paper regarding the possibility of Shropshire becoming single Unitary Council.

19. In considering this issue it was recognised that the lay justice and independent members of the Authority had not been involved in the proposed changes and had little knowledge. The Police Authority, therefore, resolved to have no view one-way or the other and would remain neutral. It was further agreed that the Authority would work with whatever Local Government structure emerged as a result of the Government's Review.

Professional Standards update

20. The first six months of 2006/07 (April-September) saw an increasing volume of complaints, whereas the following five months (October-February) saw a steady decrease.

21. In comparison with Most Similar Forces, West Mercia records the highest number of complaints, although the differential is less extreme on figures for complaints recorded per 1000 staff. Many complaints are lower level incivility, which are not recorded in many other forces.

22. The Independent Police Complaints Commission's national work continues to seek to standardise recording practices and a report was expected shortly. Direction and Control complaints were now recorded on the central database.

Police officer recruitment update

23. The Authority received the Police Officer Recruitment Update. The overall strength at 1st March 2007 was 2436 (2413.5 Full Time Equivalents) in post. 1.4% (34) were from a black and minority ethnic background and 25% (603) were female.

Building Protective Services

24. The Authority was updated on the Building Protective Services programme. The original investment of £2.9m into protective services agreed by the Police

Authority in 2006-2007 allowed for the provision of 95.5 additional personnel for this area. At the end of the first year of the two-year programme the Force had filled 63 of the 95.5 new posts.

25. The greatest challenge had been the transfer of experienced, specialist staff from divisions whilst maintaining appropriate levels of experience in front-line policing.

26. Local performance measures and a benefit register were being established to measure performance, national performance measures had not yet been established.

Protective Services Demonstrator Sites

27. The Chief Constable presented a report on Protective Services Demonstrator Sites and related the limitations of the funding surrounding these demonstrator sites and indicated that the final stages of submissions were still being finalised.

28. The Authority has supported the submission of the following funding bids:

- i) An intelligence-led project that would build on West Mercia's current use of Analyst Workstation software by extending the joined up use of the system to Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.
- ii) A data warehouse to share general information.

29. A project has been commenced to develop the capacity of the Constabulary's multi-media unit in producing interactive presentations of media evidence in court. The project would aim to work with partners to develop a long-term sustainable partnership model. Partners were being approached and may include Suffolk and Warwickshire. This project was also being discussed with the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, who had expressed an interest in working with West Mercia.

West Mercia/Wales Cross Border Concordat

30. The Authority received a report on the West Mercia/Wales Cross Border Concordat to establish joint working along the West Mercia Constabulary and Welsh borders. The Authority endorsed the report and the draft agreement to be signed by the Chief Constables of West Mercia, Dyfed Powys and North Wales Police.

Special Priority Payments

31. The Police Reform Programme provides for a local scheme for Special Priority Payments targeted at front line and operational police officers in particular. The Scheme requires annual ratification by the Police Authority and Home Office.

32. In developing the Scheme for 2007 special consideration has been given to police officers who work significantly longer hours and who undertake frequent periods of stand-by.

33. West Mercia's Scheme allows for payments of between £500 and £3000 (or £5000 in exceptional cases). The cost is anticipated to be £1.6m and will be met by the Home Office although the specific grant is no longer separately identifiable as it has been consolidated into several grants.

Stop Search and Encounters

34. The Authority received an update on Stop Search and Encounter Records for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007. A total of 12,911 Stop Searches had been recorded which was a 1.7% increase on the previous year.

35. A significant increase had been made in stop searches related to ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition). The Force's percentage of stop searches leading to arrests was slightly higher than the national average (13.8% against 13% nationally).

40th anniversary

36. The 1st October 2007 is the 40th anniversary of the formation of West Mercia Police Authority and West Mercia Constabulary, where in 1967 the Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Worcester City Constabularies were merged.

37. A series of events are being arranged to mark the occasion to include serving and former Police Officers and Staff and from the Police Authority and partner organisations.

Police/Community Consultative Groups (PCCGs)

38. The Authority has appointed the following members to attend meetings of PCCGs during 2007/2008.

Bridgnorth	Mr R Bennett/Mrs M Winckler
Bromsgrove	Mrs S Blagg
Bromyard and District	Mr B Hunt
Droitwich Spa	Mr E Sheldon
Evesham and Pershore	Mr Z Padda/Col. A Ward
Hereford	Mr P Dunford/Mr K Grumbley
Herefordshire Rural	Mr P Deneen/Mr B Hunt
Kington	Mr B Hunt
Leominster	Mr K Grumbley
Malvern	Mr J Campion
North Shropshire	Mr R Bennett/Mr R Durham
Oswestry	Mr R Durham
Redditch	Mrs S Blagg
Shrewsbury	Mr M Kenny/Ms Pready-James
South Shropshire	Mr R Bennett/Mr M Kenny/ Ms Pready-James
Telford and Wrekin	Mr K Sahota
Worcester	Mr R Peachey
Wyre Forest	Mr R Bennett

Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings

39. 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 2007/2008:

Herefordshire Council	Mr B Hunt
Shropshire County Council	Mr M Kenny
Telford and Wrekin Council	Mr K Sahota
Worcestershire County Council	Mr E Sheldon

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.

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 Annual Meeting of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 12 June 2007.