

REPORT OF THE WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Meetings Held on 19 February 2008

Budget 2008/2009

1. The Police Authority has set a net budget of £190.1 million for the financial year 2008/2009. Of this total £118.9 million will be received from central government grants, with the remainder from local Council Taxpayers.
2. The Council Tax for a Band D property will be £165.45, an increase of 15p per week. The increase of 4.94% was within Government guidelines.
3. In making its decision the Police Authority took into consideration its consultation with the public of West Mercia. This included feedback received from:
 - the annual West Mercia Crime and Safety Partnership Survey, which was posted to 57,900 residents with just over 11,500 respondents; and a web based Young Peoples' Survey, which was carried out via local schools with 2,260 10 to 16 year olds participating. The results were reported at force wide, divisional and Community Safety Partnership levels and summaries are attached. The response rates for the respective areas were Herefordshire (1,164 respondents), Shropshire (3,942 respondents), Telford & Wrekin (997 respondents) and Worcestershire 5,362);
 - the Police Community Consultative Groups, from their public meetings held across West Mercia;
 - the consultation leaflet "Your Police Service 2008 and beyond" was posted to over 1,000 stakeholders seeking views;
 - Police Authority website where information regarding the proposed policing priorities and budget considerations were made available to the public with the opportunity to comment; and
 - Special Consultation evenings held in Shrewsbury and Worcester where stakeholders and businesses were able to respond to outlined proposals including the budget for 2008/2009.
4. The budget ensures that the Force's capacity and capability will remain at an historic high during West Mercia Constabulary's 40th anniversary year and that officers and staff have access to the right technology and specialist support to continue providing a first-class service to communities in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire.
5. West Mercia is one of the top performing forces in England and Wales, despite receiving one of the lowest levels of funding from central Government and to support and protect our communities, the Police Authority has provided an extra £2.9million a year since 2005 to boost the force's capability to respond to the challenges of policing in the 21st century.

6. This investment, secured at no additional cost to Council Tax payers, was beginning to pay real dividends, with record numbers of police officers, community support officers and police staff all working together to keep communities throughout the force area safe and secure. The budget would enable the Chief Constable to continue delivering visible, accessible and effective local policing while at the same time having the ability to deploy highly trained specialist resources to tackle some of the more organised and serious criminality that threatens our communities.
7. Throughout the next year the Chief Constable with the support of the Police Authority would be working to become even more responsive to the needs of local people, resolving the issues that meant most to them and working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that the West Mercia area remains one of the safest places in England and Wales in which to live, work and visit.
8. Among the investments in the force's infrastructure starting in the coming year were -
 - A new force helicopter to replace the EC135 Eurocopter currently used by West Mercia Constabulary in partnership with Staffordshire Police. The new helicopter should be airborne by 2010.
 - A new custody facility at Ross-on-Wye Police Station which would make use of redundant cells at the station and save officers having to transfer all detainees to the main custody suites in the county at Hereford and Leominster. This new facility would enable officers to return to their duties on the streets in the south of Herefordshire more quickly.
 - Upgraded and extended custody suite facilities at Telford Police Station. The improved facilities would provide an even safer environment for detainees, officers and staff working in the suite.
 - First steps towards a new police station for Bromsgrove. The force hoped to complete the purchase of a site for the new station, which would also include custody facilities. The site, which enjoyed a much better location in the town than the current station, had been identified by the force in partnership with the local authorities and other partners.
 - As part of the force commitment to sustainability, improvements to ensure energy bills are kept down and measures to reduce the force's carbon footprint and environmental impact.
 - Improvements to the custody suite at Redditch to ensure it fully meets the high standards demanded by the Home Office.
 - New joint-agency interview facilities for Worcestershire and Shropshire. These would replace existing out-dated specialist accommodation that was needed for interviewing vulnerable victims and witnesses, including child victims of sexual abuse.
 - A new police station for Market Drayton to replace the current outdated station. Custody facilities would also be included in the new station plans and would be for 'Part 4 bail reporting (i.e. where people are answering police bail).
 - A new police station to replace the existing facilities at Bewdley, Worcestershire.
 - A new police facility for Ironbridge, Shropshire.

9. All these projects were included in the force's three-year capital programme 2008-2011.

Three Year Strategic Plan and Annual Joint Policing Plan

10. 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 2008 – 2011. The Joint Policing Plan for 2008/09 is incorporated within the plan and gives particular emphasis to the planned outcomes and priorities for the forthcoming year.
11. A summary of what will be delivered under the 'Four Better Outcomes' during 2008/2009 is attached as Appendix 2.

Estates Strategy

12. A revised 15-year Estates Strategy has been approved and takes into account a range of issues including the age, condition/maintenance, sustainability/energy, flexibility and operational effectiveness of property.
13. The greatest impact for change for West Mercia will be felt from the Planning Policy where the Regional Spatial Strategy defines five key areas of growth in the West Midlands Region, four of which are in the West Mercia area. The implications are for a 28% increase in population and a 35% increase in employment land, attracting inward commuting.
14. If West Mercia is to maintain current officer/head of population ratios, this will have a significant impact on policing numbers and, by definition, the support infrastructures of buildings, vehicles and information technology.
15. The impact of this growth will require new police stations for major new settlements or existing stations will be dramatically extended, or, in some cases, relocated to be central to the area they serve. It will also impact on Neighbourhood Policing posts.
16. Other key drivers for change revolve around the sustainability agenda, with a carbon tax to be levied on buildings within two years. Buildings with low carbon footprint and low energy usage (i.e. Leominster) will not be affected but energy hungry buildings (e.g. Shrewsbury DHQ) will produce additional costs.
17. The key driver for assets remains operational effectiveness and the revised Estates Strategy has assessed where buildings can support policing in a flexible way and whether they are in the correct geographic area for current and future operational needs.
18. The revised Estates Strategy defines the need to work strategically and innovatively in securing land, buildings and funding via the Planning System and, in particular, through pro-active work now, statements written into Local Development Frameworks and Design Briefs secured which will legislate for:
 - a) the provision of land for Police (at no cost) in areas of development
 - b) the provision of police buildings where substantial settlement occurs
 - c) the provision of funding through Section 106 Agreements on any new development in the Force area. It is calculated that if successful this will produce circa £45m funding over the term of this strategy.
19. In addition West Mercia should be able to deliver capital receipts in excess of £13m and revenue efficiencies in excess of £6m over the same period.

20. The revised strategy will support future operational policing, allowing West Mercia to pro-actively plan and produce an effective policing policy for its dramatically enlarged community before this growth has an adverse impact on performance delivery.

Sustainability

21. The Authority has received an update on the current and future work programmes involved in preserving West Mercia's natural assets and resources.
22. West Mercia has for a number of years been making progress in these areas, including -
- i) In the early 1990's the vehicle fleet started to move to diesel from petrol, and currently 70% of the fleet is diesel.
 - ii) Computer screens were changed from Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) to Liquid Chrystal Display (LCD) monitors on the greater percentage of its computers, which use less energy and produce less heat, reducing cooling requirements.
 - iii) For the past decade all of West Mercia's buildings have been designed to standards 10% better than Building Regulation requirements for energy saving.
 - iv) West Mercia has now produced the first building project at Leominster using ground source thermal heat, providing 40% of the heating energy revenue free.
 - v) A recently awarded photocopier contract provides new equipment using 20% less energy and produces 30% less heat.
23. The revised Estates Strategy referred to above has sustainability as its core principle seeking to identify new sites which create sustainable communities, constructing buildings from sustainable sources, creating West Mercia's own energy, and producing funding to provide a sustainable capital programme.
24. In the current year savings in excess of 5% have been achieved in gas and electricity units used but, in order to sustain this, the Estates Department was in the process of recruiting an Energy and Environmental Officer, whose primary role would be to identify energy savings and to improve efficiencies of current and future building stock.
25. A policy for improving the Constabulary's Carbon Footprint in respect of vehicles has been prepared and endorsed by the Police Authority.

Deputy Treasurer

26. The Authority has placed on record its appreciation of the service given by John White as its Deputy Treasurer for the past ten years. Mr White, who retired at the end of March 2008, has been succeeded by Heather Jasper from the Finance Directorate at Worcestershire County Council.

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) 264690.

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:

<i>Herefordshire Council</i>	<i>Mr B Hunt</i>
<i>Shropshire County Council</i>	<i>Mr M Kenny</i>
<i>Telford and Wrekin Council</i>	<i>Mr K Sahota</i>
<i>Worcestershire County Council</i>	<i>Mr E Sheldon, MBE</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 19 February 2008.

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

Summary of what will be delivered under the 'Four Better Outcomes' during 2008/09.

Tackling Crime

West Mercia Constabulary is a comparatively low crime area and, working with partner agencies, we aim to reduce crime levels, improve the quality of our investigations and increase the number of offenders brought to justice. We will aim to reduce drug use and alcohol misuse, especially among young people and will seek to transfer the fear of crime from the victim to the criminal.

PRIORITY GOALS AND INITIATIVES 2008 – 2011

- The public will continue to experience low levels of crime in West Mercia
- We will continue to focus on improving the quality of investigations, file preparation and the level of service provided to victims of crime
- Through focusing on prolific and other priority offenders we will seek to reduce levels of re-offending
- We will use an intelligence-led approach to continuously review our approach to prevention, enforcement and public reassurance
- We will work in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service to present the best possible evidence in order to achieve successful outcomes for victims and witnesses
- Working in partnership with all the criminal justice agencies involved, we will implement a more comprehensive approach to dealing with youth crime across the Criminal Justice System, from early intervention through to reducing re-offending.

In 2008/09 we intend to:

- Continue to address crime levels, with a particular emphasis upon the most serious violence, including serious sexual offences, violence that causes injury and domestic abuse
- Continue to make progress on serious acquisitive crime (burglary, robbery, and vehicle crime), through a focus on the issues of greatest priority locally, with a particular emphasis upon burglary of people's homes and 'distraction' offences that target vulnerable victims
- Increase our effectiveness in depriving criminals access to the proceeds of their crime through ensuring a focus on asset recovery work and the use of Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) legislation
- Continue implementation of the Professionalising the Investigation Process (PIP) programme to improve the investigative skills of all officers and staff
- Work with partner agencies in the criminal justice system to reduce re-offending through the improved management of offenders
- Build upon recent successes in pursuing simple, speedy, summary and efficient criminal justice processes in non-complex cases.

The Police Authority's Force Performance Monitoring Panel will monitor these goals and intentions

Promoting Community Safety

We will work with partner agencies and engage with the public in a range of ways in order to understand and help to address the issues most affecting the sense of well-being in communities. We will deal effectively with anti-social behaviour and will place a particular emphasis upon the needs and the safety and security of vulnerable people.

Priority goals and initiatives 2008 – 2011

- Established Local Policing Teams will be visible, accessible and will address those issues of greatest concern to local communities
- We will develop the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) approach to enable our partners and the public to work closely with us in identifying and dealing with local issues
- We will ensure that the powers and tactics available to tackle anti-social behaviour are used widely and wisely, in response to community needs

In 2008/09 we intend to:

- Provide an effective response to incidents of anti-social behaviour and disorder
- Identify issues of concern (including those issues of concern to young people) at neighbourhood level and address them through Partners and Communities Together (PACT) processes and the active involvement of Local Policing Teams
- Work with our partners to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on community safety
- Play a part in the research and formulation of Local Area Agreements to ensure that community safety issues are given sufficient priority in local partnership planning
- Support those who are victims of domestic abuse with a positive response to a request for assistance, followed by the development of comprehensive care plans where appropriate, with a particular focus on reducing repeat victimisation
- Take an active lead in delivering nationally accredited domestic abuse training to front line staff and partners
- Improve the protection of vulnerable young people by participating in Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

The community satisfaction and partnership working goals and intentions will be monitored by the Authority's Inclusivity and Community Engagement Panel, all other goals and intentions will be monitored by the Police Authority's Force Performance Monitoring Panel

Improving Satisfaction and Confidence

Our aim is to deliver an overall service that is fair, equitable, sensitive to individual needs and generates high levels of public satisfaction. We recognise that public support is a critical component of effective policing and to this end we will ensure that communities are well informed about policing in their area. We intend to demonstrate that we care, can be trusted to deliver what we say we will and are committed to delivering a high quality service at all times.

Priority goals and initiatives 2008 – 2011

- We will use the results of public satisfaction surveys to identify and address the elements of our service that are most likely to lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction
- We will make relevant information available to the public, targeting it towards specific groups and communities when necessary
- Working with our criminal justice partner agencies we will focus on the service we provide to victims and witnesses and will aim to improve their satisfaction levels and their confidence in the criminal justice system
- We will promote a strong image of West Mercia Constabulary through raising awareness of our style, values, people and successes
- We will demonstrate how local policing is addressing community priorities and providing a more responsive, accountable service
- We will ensure that any complaints and civil claims received from the public are actioned and dealt with and that necessary organisational and individual learning is actioned
- We will use local policing communications to raise public awareness and confidence and provide reassurance that action is being taken to address local issues of concern.

In 2008/09 we intend to:

- Act speedily upon feedback from our public satisfaction telephone surveys in seeking continuous improvement in service quality
- Improve victim and witness experiences of the Criminal Justice System through joint working with the Crown Prosecution Service, the Combined Courts Service and Victim and Witness Support Schemes
- Implement enhanced Customer Relationship Management processes to support telephone call-takers and other direct service delivery roles
- Further extend our “Speaks Quality” training and awareness programme in support of our Customer Service (CARE) principles
- Work with our partner agencies to build public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System
- Communicate our successes and undertake public awareness campaigns to provide reassurance to local communities and other key stakeholders

- Bring offences to justice in the most efficient, effective and proportionate way
- Provide enhanced levels of high quality public information concerning policing including a local policing summary, leaflets, posters and development of the Constabulary and Police Authority websites
- Implement the planned legislative changes concerning police disciplinary procedures scheduled for introduction in 2008
- Identify key learning points from both national and local complaints and misconduct incidents and ensure lessons are effectively fed back into operational policing
- Fully comply with the requirements of the Victims Code and keep people informed on the progress of their case
- Deliver what we say we will through an effective response to calls for assistance.

These goals and intentions will be monitored by the Police Authority's Inclusivity and Community Engagement, Human Resources Management and Force Performance Monitoring Panels

Protecting the Public

We will respond quickly and effectively to all serious and major incidents. We will continuously develop our capability to tackle serious and organised crime, major crime and counter-terrorism and will protect the public from sex offenders and dangerous offenders. We will contribute towards reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

Priority goals and initiatives 2008 – 2011

- We will continue to develop our specialist capability and intelligence assets to tackle serious and organised crime to reduce harm within neighbourhoods
- We will continue to work with our partners and communities to counter radicalisation and terrorism, enhancing our capacity and capability to support regional and national responses
- We will continue to focus on the protection of vulnerable people, including the management of sex offenders and other offenders who pose a risk to the public and by taking a positive approach towards dealing with domestic abuse, child abuse, hate crime and missing persons
- We will improve levels of co-ordination and joint working with our Regional and neighbouring Forces to ensure that criminals and others who seek to harm the public are unable to exploit Force boundaries to their advantage
- We will use intelligence, targeted patrols and technology to reduce criminality on the strategic roads network
- We will 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 2008/09 we intend to:

- Protect our communities and individual members of the public from serious harm
- Tackle organised crime groups and travelling criminals through a range of intelligence and evidence gathering techniques
- Disrupt the availability and supply of illegal drugs in our communities including, for example, through the use of drug premises closure orders
- Further develop our existing approaches to collaborative working with the Forces of the West Midlands Region to engender greater resilience and wider access to specialist resources, facilities and/or equipment
- Work in partnership with other agencies and forces both regionally and nationally to protect the public against terrorist attack and monitor and intervene in the illegal activities of extremists
- Test and evaluate our resilience by carrying out counter-terrorist and critical incident training and exercising, including with partner agencies
- Continue to drive up standards of investigation for rape offences, to maximise the evidential potential whilst providing reassurance and support to victims, in order to bring more offenders to justice and prevent further offences being committed
- Use Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and existing legislation to actively manage sex offenders and other potentially dangerous offenders
- Develop a strategy to reduce repeat victimisation. This will include building upon and developing our Multi agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) across the force
- Work with our partners to reduce road casualties by providing specialist roads policing and the use of targeted enforcement and education campaigns.

These goals and intentions will be monitored by the Police Authority's Force Performance Monitoring Panel