

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 10 JUNE 2008

Chair and Vice Chair

1. Mr Paul Deneen (Ross on Wye, Herefordshire) has been appointed Chair of the Police Authority for the ensuing year.
2. Mrs Sheila Blagg (Bromsgrove, Worcestershire) has been appointed Vice Chair (Association of Police Authorities), which has specific responsibility for issues arising nationally and regionally and Mrs Margaret Winckler (Bridgnorth, Shropshire), Vice Chair (Local).

Membership

3. Mr Keith Grumbley had announced that he would be resigning as a Herefordshire Council representative on the Police Authority. Mr Alan Thompson's membership of the Police Authority would also come to an end in September 2008, following the removal of the category of lay justice members. The Authority placed on record its appreciation of the service and contribution they had made to the work of the Police Authority.
4. The removal of the lay justice category resulted in three further independent positions being available for the period 1 October 2008 to 31 March 2013. The positions were advertised in April 2008 and following an appointment process, which included an independent assessor and a Home Office representative, Mr Paul Deneen (Herefordshire), Mr Robin Durham (Shrewsbury) and Mr Arul Selvaratnam (Newport) have been appointed.

Chief Officers

5. Deputy Chief Constable Ian Arundale has been appointed Chief Constable of the Dyfed-Powys Police after eight years of service in West Mercia, the first five of which were as Assistant Chief Constable. During this time he spearheaded the force's commitment to reducing crime and increasing detections. He has also focussed on areas of best practice, ensuring that available resources were used in the most effective way, led the Operation Christmas Presence campaigns since 2005 and was a strong supporter of the force's Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans Group, LINK.
6. Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Peter Wright has announced his retirement in September 2008 after 30 years dedicated service with West Mercia Constabulary. Appointed ACC in 2006 he has led the effective roll out and delivery of the 145 Local Policing Teams. Mr Simon Edens who joins from Cambridgeshire Constabulary will replace him.

7. The Authority placed on record its appreciation of the service given by these two officers and for the contribution they have made in ensuring that West Mercia is one of the top performing police forces in the country.

Annual Report 2007/08

8. The Authority has agreed the Joint Annual Report for 2007/2008, a copy of which will be available on the Internet at www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.
9. During the course of 2007/08 a record numbers of police officers and staff, as well as community support officers and volunteers, was achieved. The 145 Local Policing Teams were in place ahead of the government deadline and will further strengthen the force's resilience and reputation.
10. Overall levels of recorded crime were low and the Police Authority had continued to mark its investment in the future with the opening of a new police station at Leominster, a major new specialist facility in South Worcestershire and a new state-of-the-art Contact Management Centre in Shrewsbury.
11. The strong performance of the force was also recognised in three very positive external reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the Home Office (in relation to the Policing Performance Assessment Framework; PPAF) and the Audit Commission in respect of the Police Use of Resources Evaluation (PURE).
12. October 2007 marked a significant milestone in the West Mercia's history when the opportunity was taken to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of West Mercia Constabulary. A highlight of the celebrations was a visit to force headquarters by HRH the Duke Of Gloucester who met and made presentations to staff and officers who had served for more than 40 years with the force.
13. One of the final events to mark the anniversary year was the creation of a garden at the Malvern Spring Gardening Show in May 2008 which received a Royal Horticultural Society Silver Gilt award. The garden was created in conjunction with Adcote School at Shrewsbury.
14. The force has continued to face challenges such as the floods of summer 2007 and other major operational demands caused by major incidents, as well as serious and organised crime. The year also saw the tragic death of PC Ricky Gray who died of a gunshot wound after colleagues were taken hostage in Shrewsbury.
15. The commitment, dedication and determination by the Constabulary to serve citizens at their time of greatest need have further strengthened the already significant bond of trust and respect that exists between local communities in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire and their police service.

16. The Police Authority congratulated the Chief Constable on a successful year and for his officers' commitment and dedication to providing first class policing services to their local communities. The Police Authority also thanked all partner agencies for all their support.

Policing Matters Groups

17. The Police Authority, in consultation with the Constabulary, community representatives and partner agencies has reviewed its community engagement arrangements. The purpose being to streamline existing arrangements and to provide opportunities for developing more joined up arrangements through improved links with local policing teams and co-terminous boundaries with community safety partnerships.
18. The new style public meetings and events, branded "Policing Matters", will provide the opportunity for local people to meet their Divisional Commander (or his representative), local Police Authority Member(s) and partner agencies, to find out about and discuss issues affecting policing in their Police Division.
19. Recognising that one size does not fit all the arrangements had been developed to provide a consistent framework, whilst allowing for local determination of what would work best. In summary the arrangements are:



Herefordshire: One Policing Matters Group, chaired by a Police Authority Member, meeting twice a year in the central, north and south areas of the division.

Shropshire: One Policing Matters Group, chaired by a Police Authority member, meeting annually in each of the local authority district areas.

Telford: Partnership events in each of the five cluster areas (details being finalised it is hoped to hold the first meeting before the end of July 2008).

North Worcestershire: One Policing Matters Group, chaired by a Police Authority Member, meeting annually in the three major towns (Redditch, Droitwich and Kidderminster).

South Worcestershire: Three Policing Matters Groups, meeting normally three times a year across their area. The Divisional Commander to attend one meeting of each group annually, other meetings to be attended by the local inspector. Chair to be elected annually.

Combined Equality Scheme

20. The Police Authority was required to publish Equality Schemes in relation to Disability, Gender and Race. The Schemes each cover three-year periods. The Race Equality Scheme was first published in 2002 and re-published in 2005 and was due for review this year. The Disability Equality Scheme was published in 2006 and Gender Equality in 2007.

21. The Police and Justice Act 2006 had introduced a new Police Authority positive duty to promote equality both within the force and the Authority and, therefore, a new Equality Scheme, combining all strands of equality and diversity was being prepared. A draft copy of the Scheme would be published for consultation, with an accompanying questionnaire in July 2008 and will be available on the Police Authority's website (www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk).

Professional standards

22. The Police Authority monitors the way in which the Constabulary deals with complaints and between 1 April 2007 and 31 January 2008, there were 688 complaint cases recorded containing 888 allegations.
23. Since April 2006, the long-term trend for both cases and allegations had showed a steady decrease. Compared with 2006/07 the year to date figures were 5% less. The average number of complaints recorded per month during 2007/08 was 69, for 2006/07 this was 71. Case recording timeliness performance had significantly improved since this time last year, with 84% of cases being recorded within the ten day target compared with last year's 70%.

University of Worcester

24. The Police Authority has agreed to co-host with the University of Worcester an annual lecture, which would have a criminal/social justice theme and would be presented by a prominent speaker. The first lecture, 'Building a 21st Century Prosecuting Service', will be held in July and will highlight the important links between West Mercia and the University of Worcester. The Speaker would be Sir Ken Macdonald QC, the Head of the Crown Prosecution Service and Director of Public Prosecutions.

Summary of Force communication campaigns

25. The **Safe & Secure** campaign, aimed at reducing the fear of crime and provide reassurance:

Safe & Secure Vulnerable Vehicle Pack – the trial in Worcester has been extended to other Local Policing Areas in Worcester and to Bromsgrove and Kidderminster. It is being used in areas with a high rate of vehicle crime. Since January approximately 250 packs have been posted in the original trial area.

Safe & Secure Home Checks – free, simple home security advice will be promoted and provided to elderly and vulnerable people. The Plan is for this to be piloted in Herefordshire.

Operation Turn Up – undertaken in February – recovered and returned to the justice system approximately 190 people who failed to appear to answer bail.

Seven Deadly Sins – Road Safety – a 12 months programme of work is being drawn up in consultation with the Safer Roads Partnership.

Knock Knock - relaunched during April through a series of partnership events. The campaign aims to reduce the number of distraction burglaries committed in the force area. An information leaflet has been produced to provide guidance for individuals on how they can best protect themselves and the more vulnerable members of their community, against distraction crimes. Details of this scheme and other safety initiatives can be found on the Constabulary's website at www.westmercia.police.uk.

Single Non Emergency Number

26. The Constabulary has been reviewing its non-emergency telephone number following widespread national concern over the increased charges by service providers for use of 0845 numbers. As part of this review officers have visited the Home Office's Single Non-Emergency Project Team for more detailed information on the potential to adopt the '101' Single Non Emergency Number, which has been successfully trialled in other areas of the country with partner organisations.
27. The costs and feasibility of potential new arrangements are being investigated and will be the subject of a further report to the Police Authority.

Internet safety

28. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) has developed a specific programme entitled "Think U Know" aimed at developing awareness amongst school children. The Constabulary was developing a parents and carers package on Internet Safety which had been very well received. Presentations will be delivered across the force area during the next few months. Performance data will be collected to demonstrate how the force was delivering a positive outcome. This would also be put on the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) agenda to involve partners.

Serious Crime – Rape

29. The Constabulary has developed a Tactical Delivery Plan for the serious crime of rape and the Police Authority has been updated on the following areas of where work was in progress:
 - Call Management Centre
 - Training
 - Initial Response
 - Ethical Crime recording and 'No Criming'
 - Investigation
 - Forensic
 - CPS
 - Victim Care
30. The Police Authority stressed the importance of multi-agency co-operation in this area, involving other partners such as education and health services.

Association of Police Authorities

31. The Association of Police Authorities was the national representative body for police authorities in England and Wales. Following a recent review of its structure greater emphasis will be given to regional working focusing on four key areas – *Citizen Focus, Corporate and Business, People and Strategic Policing*. Arrangements have been agreed with the three other police authorities in the West Midlands (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands) to ensure effective regional working that could also inform the national Association.

Special Priority Payments

32. The Police Reform Programme provides for a local scheme of 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.
33. The Police Authority has approved the Scheme for 2008 where special consideration has been given to police officers who work significantly longer hours and to those who undertake frequent periods of stand-by.
34. The main changes to the Scheme for 2008 are the inclusion of the following posts:
- Covert Unit
 - Dedicated Source Unit Controllers – Detective Inspector
 - Home Protection Team Task Force - Police Sergeant & Constables (as part of Armed Response Vehicle Officers)
 - Public Protection Unit Offender Manager - Detective Sergeant
 - Special Branch - Detective Sergeant

Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings

35. 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 2008/2009:

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

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.

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 10 June 2008.