

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2009

Significant Crown Court Results Criminal Convictions in the West Mercia Force Area

1. The Authority received a report from the Chief Constable on recent significant court cases across the area and which included successful convictions in relation to:

Herefordshire Division

- Minimum of five years in jail (reduced from 10 years for pleading guilty) for stabbing girl friend seventeen times in Hereford, March 2008. *The use of body-worn video camera equipment helped secure arrest and conviction.*
- Four years in prison for part in the burglary of twelve homes in South Herefordshire. *The investigation a good example of cross border police co-operation between four forces.*

South Worcestershire Division

- Eleven and a half year sentence for rape in car in Worcester.
- Sexual offender from Droitwich jailed for 12 years.
- Four and a half years imprisonment for seriously assaulting partner. *Conviction secured by was of a 'victimless prosecution'.*

North Worcestershire Division

- Two Redditch men jailed for drugs offences as part of Operation Gauntlet, a pro-active campaign in North Worcestershire aimed at disrupting the supply of drugs within communities.
- 2 kg of Cocaine, with a street value of £90,000 seized from house in Matchborough. Sentenced to two and half years for attempt to possession and intent to supply.

Shropshire Division

- Jailed indefinitely for attempted murder of girlfriend in Wem, June 2008.
- Three men convicted of breaking into supermarket in Bridgnorth, having been sprayed with SmartWater. *This was the first time that SmartWater evidence had been presented in a case in Shropshire.*
- Man jailed for three and a half years for commercial cannabis factory on a farm in North Shropshire.

Telford and Wrekin

- Two Telford men sentenced for four years for aggravated burglary.
- Two years for drug addict who stole property during a house burglary in Telford and found trying to sell it.

Headquarters Criminal Investigation Department

- Confiscation orders granted against six people who the courts decided had benefited from crime. Seven offenders were jailed for a total of 27 years for their part in a large scale drugs operation. *In respect of the six who face increased jail terms for failing to pay back thousands of pounds, the total benefit was £363,000 and their realisable assets were £91,000.*
- Former Council Leader in Redditch pleaded guilty to stealing £87,000 from a charity for homeless and vulnerable people.

Budget 2009/2010

2. The Police Authority has set a net budget of £197.6 million for the financial year 2009/2010. Of this total £121.8 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 £173.62, an increase of 16p per week, representing an increase of 4.94% over the comparative figure for 2008/09.
4. 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 posted to 58,267 residents and 14,805 people responded, giving a 25% response rate.
 - On-going telephone surveys of victims of crime.
 - PACT priorities and Issues identified through engagement processes involving the 145 Local Policing Teams.
 - Policing Matters public meetings and Your Community Matters events held across each of the five Police Divisions.
 - Special Consultation Evenings held in Shrewsbury and Worcester where over 1,000 partners, businesses and community representatives were consulted upon the policing priorities for 2009/10.
5. In developing the budget the Chief Constable put forward a £2m package of further reductions to help fill an emerging funding gap. A Strategic Resource Leverage process will be applied to ensure that all resources and assets are used efficiently and effectively. A further £3.5m will also be used to close the funding gap from the Authority's Sustaining Service Delivery fund.
6. The Police Authority has also agreed to invest in an essential programme of capital projects and technology to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of policing in West Mercia, examples of which are shown below:
 - Hereford Custody.
 - New Bromsgrove Police Station with Custody.
 - Custody improvements on Telford Division.
 - New station at Market Drayton with detention facilities.
 - Shared service facility at Wem with the new Shropshire Unitary Authority.
 - Installation of a lift at Kidderminster Divisional Headquarters to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
 - Building Management System to control and monitor premises including heating controls, hot water systems and alarms.

- Video Conferencing facilities, initially focused on Force Headquarters and Divisional Headquarters, to reduce time, cost and CO₂ emissions cost involved in attending meetings.
- 240 mobile data devices for frontline operational staff to allow remote access to information, which will increase the amount of visible front line patrol duties and reduce bureaucracy.

7. The budget ensures that existing levels of front line Police Staff and Officers will be maintained. It allows the Chief Constable to continue to improve the standards of local policing by making sure that police officers, staff and community support officers have the most up to date equipment/vehicles available. It also means highly trained specialist resources will be able to continue to be deployed to tackle the organised and serious crime that affects communities.

8. The Police Authority and Chief Constable remain committed to putting the citizen at the heart of everything the police service does and the recently adopted Policing Pledge reflects the Constabulary's commitment to providing a service which is even more responsive to the needs of local people and communities by resolving those issues that mean the most to them. Working with other agencies, the aim is to ensure that the West Mercia area, which includes Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire, remains one of the safest places in England and Wales to live, work and visit.

Three Year Strategic Plan and Annual Joint Policing Plan

9. 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 2009 – 2012. The Joint Policing Plan for 2009/10 is incorporated within the plan and gives particular emphasis to the planned outcomes and priorities for the forthcoming year. A copy of the plan is available on the Authority's website.

10. The successful delivery of the Plan over the three year period will result in the following outcomes:

- The public have confidence and express satisfaction with the policing service.
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour remain low.
- Communities feel safe.

11. The Strategic Aims are:

- Strengthen the confidence of all our communities and improve public satisfaction levels
- Protect vulnerable people
- Improve the service offered to victims and witnesses
- Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour
- Ensure sufficient capability and capacity to address major, serious and organised crime and civil contingencies
- Bring offenders to justice
- Reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol misuse
- Reduce road casualties
- Use our resources efficiently and effectively

12. The Police Authority will monitor the performance of the Constabulary against the Plan during the year, including at a local level through the Divisional Policing Boards.

2007/08 Audit Letter

13. The Authority has welcomed a positive Audit Letter from the Audit Commission for the year 2007/08. The report highlighted good practice in relation to the preparation of financial statements, Police Use of Resources and ensuring data quality. West Mercia was awarded the top rating for Value for Money for the third successive year.

14. The report did make a number of recommendations, which would be addressed. In particular it was noted that in future the work of partnerships would form part of the Comprehensive Area Assessments. This did present complications for an area like West Mercia where there were more than county/unitary council areas.

Signed on behalf of the
West Mercia Police Authority

Paul Deneen JP DL
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 17 February 2009.