

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 15 JUNE 2010

Chair and Vice Chair

1. Mrs Sheila Blagg (Bromsgrove, Worcestershire) has been appointed Chairman of the Police Authority for the ensuing year.
2. Mr Robin Durham (Shrewsbury, Shropshire) and Mr Zad Padda (Evesham, Worcestershire) have been appointed as Vice Chairs.

Annual Report 2009/2010

3. The Police Authority has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of an efficient and effective police force in its area. It does so by appointing senior police officers including the Chief Constable, by setting policing priorities annually, by reviewing and approving the overall policing budget and by setting the element of Council Tax. It has a responsibility to keep informed of public opinion on policing issues and to monitor the delivery of services to the public. The Authority has agreed the Joint Annual Report for 2009/2010, a copy of which is available on the Internet at www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.
4. During the last year, police officers, police staff and volunteers throughout West Mercia provided a high quality service to local communities in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and the Wrekin.
5. West Mercia Police continues to perform very strongly on the national stage and was one of the most highly rated forces in England and Wales in the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's Police Report Card. It is also very pleasing that the Force continues to have a strong record of delivering value for money and consistently features in the highest scoring group in the Audit Commission's evaluation of Police Use of Resources. However, there is no room for complacency and the Police Authority's shared aim with the Chief Constable is to provide continuously improving police services for all of our communities whilst maintaining a solid financial position within an increasingly challenging national and global economic climate.
6. The strong reputation that West Mercia Police enjoys has resulted from the dedication and commitment of all its police officers, police staff and volunteers. The challenge for the Force, and into the future, is to build upon that reputation and become an even stronger, more accountable and more responsive organisation committed to serving, protecting and making the difference in our communities.

Missing People Management

7. The Police Authority has received a presentation on Missing People Management which showed the numbers of missing people in the Force area and highlighted the level of police resources used to investigate and manage such cases. Success stories, hot spots and lessons learned were highlighted. The large number

of care homes in parts of the force area has a direct impact on police resources and the Authority is concerned at the lack of information regarding placements at care homes and further work will be done in this area.

Regional Collaboration for Air Support Units

8. West Mercia and Staffordshire Police currently share the Central Counties Air Support Unit, which is based at Halfpenny Green. The Police Authority has supported a proposal to develop a business case for merging the Air Support Unit with West Midlands Police. The approach will deliver enhanced coverage for all three forces and although initial revenue savings will be minimal, there are a number of clear operational benefits that will accrue. The merger will also underpin and support the National Air Operations Strategy.

Performance Overview

9. The Performance Report showed that in general this was improving. However, the level of confidence in the Police and Local Councils in tackling anti-social behaviour and crime has shown a small dip. This will be a matter of concern if it marks the beginning of a trend. The Authority discussed issues relating to e-mail messages and voice-mail box messages when officers were on leave, and agreed that there should be a review of procedures.

Improving Satisfaction and Confidence

10. Satisfaction levels were showing slight improvements or remaining stable compared to last year. The increase to 72% in satisfaction with follow up work by the Police was welcomed as this has been a particular area of focus over the past two years. More work is needed to make local policing officers and community support officers better known in their areas.

Anti Social Behaviour

11. West Mercia Police receive about 86,500 calls regarding Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) each year, with partner agencies taking about a further 20,000. Where possible early intervention is used in many cases, starting at the low level with letters to parents, visits from local policing teams, through to acceptable behaviour contracts and ASBOs as a last resort. Good practice was being noted and rolled out, such as Telford's Joint Anti Social Behaviour Unit, with local agencies; and the ASB car in Telford which enabled local Community Support Officers (CSO) to go to incidents, speak to victims and develop action plans. This did not impact on the CSOs' prime role of visibility but built upon their local knowledge

12. An Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy has been agreed for 2010-2011, part of which includes the approach officers should follow when attending incidents:

- Attend and assess the situation paying particular attention as to whether the victim or caller is vulnerable;
- Engage with all parties including the caller, victim, offenders and witnesses;

- Investigate as if it were a crime;
- Organisational memory of any previous attendance at the address or location;
- Update systems by recording the victim, location and any offender or suspects.

Professional Standards

13. The Police Authority continues to monitor the number and type of complaints made against the Police and has met with the Independent Police Complaints Commissioner, Mr. Len Jackson, to discuss West Mercia's performance in this area. He assured the Police Authority that he was satisfied with West Mercia's recording and complaint handling processes and considered that standardized reporting would lead to other forces recording more complaints as the revised process was embedded. For the period 1 April 2007 to 31 January 2010, 2357 complaints were recorded, an average of 69 cases per month.

14. 1% of complainants can take up about 30% of the work of the Professional Standards Department and the force would be leading on a national conference in autumn 2010 on repeat complainants.

Strategic Resource Leverage

15. Reductions in police officer and staff posts worth £2m, equivalent to 1.28% of the pay bill, have been made and have resulted in 42 fewer police posts and 24.5 fewer police staff posts. In addition, 22 new staff posts had been created to undertake the duties of some of the deleted police posts as part of both the Workforce Modernisation agenda and the efficiency plan. In total this process has resulted in 44.5 fewer full time equivalent employees whilst protecting front line delivery of policing services. Members were advised of the process used to identify posts and discussed prospects for career progression and motivation.

Role and Function of Independent Advisory Groups

16. A review on the Role and Function of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) is in progress and as part of that consideration will be given to the introduction of an IAG for children and young people.

Summary of Force Communication Campaigns

17. Recent campaigns organised by or involving West Mercia Police have included:

- Safe and Secure (Garden and Home Security)
- Cop Cards (aimed at informing children on the role of the police)
- Pedestrian and Cycle Safety
- World Cup (prevention of domestic abuse)

18. Marketing materials are being developed for:

- Distraction burglary – ‘No Callers at the Door’ telephone card - elderly and vulnerable residents can write the telephone numbers of their water, electricity and gas suppliers on the card so they can phone them to check whether callers are genuine before letting them into their home.
- Positive Action – exhibition materials to support positive action recruitment events.
- Inconsiderate parking – materials will be developed to address inconsiderate and anti-social parking issues in local areas.
- Trailer / Lorry Theft Poster – advising drivers of vans, trailers and lorries that thieves are operating in an area.

19. Details of current campaigns can be found on the West Mercia Police website www.westmercia.police.uk

Social Media

20. West Mercia Police has established a presence on the Facebook social networking site and this can be viewed by simply typing ‘West Mercia Facebook’ into Google. The Force also has a presence on You Tube and is considering the best ways of using Twitter.

21. Social media provides a significant communication opportunity for the Force and is one which will increasingly be utilised alongside other more traditional forms of communication.

Priority Setting – Consultation Arrangements

22. As part of the arrangements for the 2010/11 consultation process on the Joint Policing Plan and Budget the Police Authority has agreed to the introduction of a web video and webcast. Arrangements have been made to use audio visual facilities at Worcestershire County Council premises for the live webcast on 12 January 2011.

Commendations and Honours

23. Chief Constable Commendations have recently been awarded to two North Worcestershire officers, DC Philip Christi for his involvement in a murder inquiry and PC Matthew Hunt for his selfless act of bravery when off duty. An award was also made to CSO David Rowley from the Shropshire Division for courageously tackling a man, again when off duty, and Missing Persons Investigator, Mr Alan Piggott.

Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings

24. 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 2010/2011:

Herefordshire Council	Mr B Hunt
Shropshire County Council	Mr M Kenny
Telford and Wrekin Council	Mr K Sahota
Worcestershire County Council	Mrs S Blagg

Signed on behalf of the
West Mercia Police Authority

Sheila Blagg
Chairman

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 15 June 2010.