

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 28 JUNE 2011

Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire Police

1. The Police Authority has agreed that a strategic alliance be formed between Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police using their resources to deliver all policing services to the people and communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. This will enable policing services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively in the future, enabling both forces to meet the challenge of reducing policing budgets and provide greater operational and organisational resilience.
2. Warwickshire Police Authority has also accepted the proposals, which were based on the professional recommendations of Warwickshire Chief Constable Keith Bristow and West Mercia Chief Constable-designate David Shaw.
3. Both forces will retain Chief Constables who remain accountable to their Police Authorities for delivery of policing. Force identities will also be retained within the alliance and both forces and authorities are keen to stress that local policing priorities agreed with local communities and partners will continue to be addressed.
4. To support Chief Constables and Deputy Chief Constables in each force, two Assistant Chief Constables and a Director to, respectively, lead the delivery of local policing, protective services and those services that support the delivery of policing across both force areas (Enabling Services) was also approved. This will make a senior leadership team of seven officers and staff.
5. The professional recommendations include a change to how forces are currently planning to deliver reductions in budget, through the creation of a single change programme for both forces, and the necessary legal agreements to enable officers and staff to operate across both force areas.
6. However, both forces will retain their separate governance and accountability arrangements (through their Police Authorities), policing budgets, assets and financial accounting arrangements, including independent financial advice.
7. Most importantly, both forces recognise that policing across both areas must continue to address the greatest harms within each area as well as continuing to operate effectively within communities to address local priorities agreed with the public and local partners.
8. The Police Authorities have asked both Chief Constables to take forward the creation of a single change programme and the detailed design and implementation work required to make the alliance a reality.
9. The eight supporting key recommendations, which were unanimously accepted by both police authorities, were:

- a) *The executive leadership model to consist of two Chief Constables and two Deputy Chief Constables, commissioning services provided by three directorates in alliance – Protective Services, Local Policing and Enabling Services. The concept of this shared commissioning role and the relationship between CC roles and DCC roles requires immediate work to define.*
- b) *These three directorates should be led by two Assistant Chief Constables and a Director of Enabling Services. The portfolios of these chief officers need to be confirmed including the amount of delegated authority and independence around financial decisions as well as the nature of governance and reporting requirements.*
- c) *The chief officers should be appointed as soon as possible to provide the necessary momentum and oversight of the ongoing design while driving out further efficiencies as yet unidentified. For the same reason, the Alliance Programme Director should be appointed at the earliest stage as it should become the one change programme for both forces.*
- d) *The chief officers should work with the Police Authorities to understand and shape how their respective management and governance roles will operate to complement this model. This will give rise to the necessary initial section 23 arrangements.*
- e) *Both forces' underpinning values, strategic objectives and performance approaches should be aligned as quickly as possible.*
- f) *Operational decisions should be based upon addressing the greatest harms within each policing area. Chief Officers should urgently develop a model to address tasking and operational deployment across both force areas based on a commissioning approach. This approach will be subject to annual review by their respective governing bodies advised by their respective treasurers.*
- g) *We will ensure that diverse local communities continue to receive the policing services they need within Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. We will maximise this by developing a model of local policing within the Alliance approach while reflecting local differences.*
- h) *Each Chief Constable will have access to independent financial advice. An early review is required to provide clarity over financial arrangements. The two organisations will need to maintain their own balance sheets, retain their own assets and meet the costs that fall exclusively on their own force area. New alliance services covering both forces will be apportioned on an appropriate basis (the default will be that net revenue expenditure which suggests apportionment broadly 31% for Warwickshire and 69% for West Mercia).*

10. A new programme team to take forward the next phase of work to establish alliance services will now be formed, reporting to both forces and Authorities.

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 Meeting of the West Mercia Police Authority held on 28 June 2011.