

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2011

Deputy Chief Constable

1. The Police Authority is pleased to report that following a recruitment process the Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Simon Chesterman, has been appointed Deputy Chief Constable with effect from 19 December 2011. Mr Chesterman originally joined West Mercia from Thames Valley Police in June 2007. He has a number of national responsibilities, on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), in relation to armed policing, taser and prison intelligence.

Transition to Police and Crime Commissioners

2 A directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner will replace the Police Authority from November 2012 and in the months leading up to the transition the Police Authority will seek to ensure a smooth handover of duties and is confident West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner will inherit one of the most financially sound forces in the country.

3. The Authority will maintain close contact with strategic partners to ensure they are aware and can respond to the changes to police accountability and scrutiny and, so far as is possible, and respecting constitutional arrangements for this area of police governance, the Authority will assist the county, district and unitary councils in their preparations for Police and Crime Panels.

Consultation on Policing Plan and Priorities 2012-15

4. The Police Authority and Chief Constable have commenced the process of preparing the Policing Plan for 2012/13. Further details of the draft Plan and the Police Authority's consultation arrangements are available on the website (www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk).

5. A consultation document has been produced and copies circulated to local authorities, parish and town councils, partnerships and community organisations.

6. The Chairman, Chief Constable, Chief Executive and Treasurer will be holding a Webcast on Wednesday 11 January 2012 at 7 p.m. in front of an invited live audience.

7. The draft policing priorities are shown below and as part of the process of developing them a Partnership Consultation Day was held in November 2011:

- Provide an effective emergency response
- Protect people from crime and anti social behaviour according to their needs and vulnerabilities

- Proactively target organised crime groups and individuals who cause most harm
 - Work with partners to bring offenders to account and reduce re-offending
 - Provide a supportive and effective response to victims and prioritise the most vulnerable
 - Disrupt drugs markets and the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse
 - Protect road users by working with partners to reduce casualties
 - Plan and prepare to respond to any major and serious incidents
 - Provide an efficient and effective policing service which delivers value for money
 - Plan and prepare to deliver our contribution to the Strategic Policing Requirement (the force's contribution to regional and national issues).
8. The Police Authority will adopt a Policing Plan at its meeting on 14 February 2012.

Budget

9. The Police Authority is considering a zero increase in the council tax precept for a second year and in so doing will benefit from a special government grant for freezing the level. However, it is understood that this special grant will not be available in future grant years and a decision to freeze the Police element of the Council Tax in 2012/13 will have financial implication for future annual budgets

10. The Authority's long term record of prudent financial management has enabled a build up of strategic reserves which will help to cushion future reductions. The current plans are to reduce expenditure in 2012/13 by £4.5m.

Hate Crime

11. The Chief Constable has provided a report on Hate Crime and emphasised that the force will continue to develop its links with local communities and other agencies to deal effectively with Hate Crime and the issues around it. The force remains committed to dealing with Hate Crime in a positive manner to ensure communities had confidence in policing in their area and will continue to monitor potential and emerging problems and reporting of prejudicial hate related incidents, no matter how minor, will be encouraged.

Domestic Violence Prevention Orders

12. The Domestic Violence Protection Order 12 month pilot scheme was launched in June 2012 in the three policing areas of Greater Manchester Police, Wiltshire and West Mercia.

13. The scheme is police led with an authorising officer not below the rank of Superintendent (to ensure that the use of the scheme is proportionate, justifiable and necessary and in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998), issuing a perpetrator

of domestic abuse with a Domestic Violence Protection Notice. The Notice places a number of prohibitions on the perpetrator with the intention of preventing further violence to the victim and/or other persons living within the household. These prohibitions might include a requirement for the perpetrator to leave the family home.

14. Magistrates, on hearing an application from the Police, will then decide whether to impose a Domestic Violence Protection Order. Again, this order may contain a number of prohibitions, including the requirement for the perpetrator to leave the family home and will last for a minimum of 14 days and a maximum of 28 days.

15. Eleven notices and seven orders were issued in the period between July and September 2011 and this figure was in line with predicted figures and was being used effectively to positively protect victims of domestic abuse.

16. The Home Secretary has stated that she was very pleased with progress and the outcomes of the pilots to date. Due to the success of the pilot within South Worcestershire it has been extended to the North Worcestershire Territorial Policing Area before being considered for roll out across the force area

Professional Standards

17. The six month figures for complaints have fallen significantly. Since 1 April 2011, West Mercia had recorded 313 complaint cases, which was a 27% reduction in the number of complaint cases compared to 2010/11. Allegation figures have reduced from 928 allegations in 2010/11 to 489 in 2011/12 for the same period – a 47% reduction.

18. The work of the Professional Standards Department to re-focus recording and training initiatives to improve the understanding of complaint management had significantly impacted on the numbers of complaints. Staff have been encouraged to deal with complainants' issues at the time of reporting thereby improving service provision and this has further led to a reduction in complaint recording

Community Resolution

19. Community Resolution empowers the victim giving them a genuine say in identifying the way in which a crime could be 'resolved' in a manner which meets their needs. The resolutions used to date have been agreed between the officer and the victim and have had no constraints so long as the resolution was appropriate and proportionate to the crime, concentrating on 'doing what is right rather than gaining detections'.

20. For the purpose of analysis, the types of resolutions used by officers have been grouped into four areas to assist in identifying trends.

- Financial resolutions, including money to replace or repair goods, pay vets bills etc, and additionally this included donations made to charity.
- A simple written or verbal apology. For a victim an apology was seen as particularly powerful giving the victim some sort of closure on the incident and an opportunity for the offender to demonstrate remorse.

- Offender to agree to stay away from an individual or business.
- “Other” – this category was made up of a diverse mixture of resolutions but was the group which contained the most creative and often the most thought out by a local officer. Examples in this sample included Volunteering with the Rainbow Hill Local Policing team, car park sweeping and attendance at a fire awareness course.

21. The Police Authority was supportive of this initiative but further work needs to be undertaken to ensure consistency and accountability of their use and ensure that information is provided to other Criminal Justice partners.

101 Non-Emergency Telephone Number

22. A new national police non-emergency telephone number, 101, has been introduced and should be dialled instead of 999 to report matters such as:

- A Stolen Car
- Damaged Property
- Suspected drug use or dealing;
- Minor traffic collision.

23. For the deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, the service can be accessed via textphone on 18001 101.

24. West Mercia Police’s 0300 333 3000 will continue to operate as a general switchboard number and should be used to speak to a particular person or department, for example, the Local Policing Team

Monitoring of Policing Plan Delivery

25. Performance against the delivery of the Policing Plan has been monitored on a monthly basis and any problem areas highlighted and addressed. The Authority has had recent discussions around the areas of:

- Violent crimes with injury and Domestic burglary West Mercia was only 0.5% and 0.1% off the ‘solved’ targets respectively.
- Robbery (% solved) was noted to be behind target. However, the Authority was reassured that very small numbers were involved and that a robust management structure was in place to tackle this area to ensure the target was met. It was confirmed that there were no trends relating to robbery giving the Force cause for concern.
- The rise in serious sexual offences volume appeared to be linked to an increase in confidence in the police as there had been no increase in stranger attacks. The Authority noted that most sexual offences occurred within the domestic setting and, therefore, detections were harder to achieve, however, it was hoped that once the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) was fully operational this would assist in increasing detection rates.

Significant Cases and Court Results

26. The Police Authority has been updated on significant cases and court results including, attempted murder, murder, sexual abuse and exploitation, drugs and burglary.

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 13 December 2011.