

# **REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY HELD ON 7 JUNE 2005**

## ***Chair and Vice Chair***

1. At the Annual Meeting of the Authority held on 7 June 2005 Mr Paul Deneen (Ross on Wye) and Mr Alan Thompson (Bringsty, Worcestershire) were appointed Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the ensuing year. Both are magistrate members.

## ***Thank you to Past Chair***

2. The Authority thanked the outgoing Chair, Mr Bob Forster for his excellent leadership, dedication and commitment over his past two years of office. Mr Forster will continue as an independent member of the Police Authority.

## ***Membership of the Police Authority***

3. Following the County Council elections in May 2005 the following councillor members have been appointed to the Authority for a four year term:

Mrs S Blagg	Worcestershire County Council
Mr J-P Campion	Worcestershire County Council
Mr M Kenny	Shropshire County Council
Mr R Peachey	Worcestershire County Council
Mr E Sheldon	Worcestershire County Council
Mrs M Winckler	Shropshire County Council

4. The Authority placed on record its appreciation of the following former councillor members, all of whom had served for at least four years:

Mr J Cairns	Mr W Morris
Mr A Davies	Mr D Wicksteed
Mrs J Davy	

## ***Performance 2004/2005***

5. The performance figures for 2004/2005 indicate a reduction in total recorded crime of 11%, a 19% reduction in domestic burglary and a 15% reduction in violent crime. The Police Authority in congratulating the Chief Constable and his officers consider it vitally important that these trends continue so that West Mercia becomes an even safer place in which to live and work.

6. A summary of the key results is shown below:

- Total crime recorded 95,127 compared to 106,831 last year. Reduction of 11%.
- Sanction detection rate 26.4% (up from 21.3% a year ago)
- Domestic Burglary 19% reduction (4790 recorded) and detections up 6% to 25.5%
- Vehicle Crime 9.8% reduction in volume and detections up 3.8% to 16.1%

- Violent Crime 15.1% reduction in volume and detections up 3.4% to 67.9%
- The last time that total crime, domestic burglary and violent crime were below these levels was five years ago in 2000/01.
- The last time that sanction detection rate was above 26% was seven years ago in 1998/9.

### ***Investors in People***

7. In May 2005 West Mercia Constabulary was recognised as meeting the Investors in People standard – a nationally recognised and rigorous performance benchmark reached by only a handful of Constabularies. The Chair congratulated the Constabulary on this achievement and particularly the members of staff who were involved in the process of achieving the award.

8. The assessors particularly highlighted the pride, commitment and enthusiasm shown by police officers and staff, a factor that puts West Mercia Constabulary among the top organisations so far accredited.

9. Among the positives highlighted were:

- Process such as PDR (Performance and Development Review) is becoming embedded, with staff recognising their usefulness to development and performance management.
- Very strong and visible leadership at all levels, with a high degree of teamworking.
- A strong performance focus ethic, but which is combined with sharing of good practice and recognition of individual achievements.
- A strong focus on staff welfare, including flexibility in working practices.

### ***Capital Programme***

10. The Police Authority has agreed an upgrade to the custody facilities at Shrewsbury Divisional Headquarters at a cost of £1,560,000 in order to provide a custody suite of sixteen cells, three interview rooms, two consultation rooms and one holding cell. The Scheme is subject to planning approval.

### ***Border Arrangements***

11. Shared Border Arrangements have been introduced between the Herefordshire Division and the Powys Division of Dyfed Powys Police, which is the first scheme that crosses a national boundary. The six-month pilot commenced on 1 April and there has already been some very positive co-operation between the Divisions.

12. Cross-border initiatives also exist with Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands. These currently cover three areas: Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG), Regional Task Force and Counter Terrorism Support Unit. The four Police Authorities are considering a process for ensuring an appropriate level of Accountability and Governance for these joint-force initiatives.

### ***Recruitment and Retention of Police Officers and Staff***

13. The Authority agreed in February 2002 to increase the number of police officers by 300 and the target of securing an overall Force strength of 2400 police officers was achieved in July 2003. Since that decision a further five police officers have been added to the full establishment.

14. As at 1 June 2005 the overall strength was 2387 although 18 probationers joined on the 6 June 2005 to take the strength back up to 2405. 33 police officers (1.38%) and 26 (1.5%) police staff are from visible minority ethnic background.

15. The Constabulary has been conducting Exit Surveys of people leaving and these have been of limited success. Exit interviews have now been introduced and the Police Authority will be receiving reports on their results.

16. A number of Positive Action Initiatives for Recruitment, Retention and Progression have also taken place over the past few months designed to encourage women and people from ethnic minority groups to consider a career with West Mercia Constabulary. There have been informal drop-in events and recruitment seminars, together with workshops and guidance on applications. Contacts have been retained on a database and the Positive Action Team has been involved in specific interventions in under-represented areas. Consideration is being given to extending this initiative to police staff.

### ***Neighbourhood Policing***

17. The Government White Paper has a commitment for every community to have access to a Neighbourhood Policing Team by 2008. This is a significant initiative that could have substantial resource implications and the Police Authority is awaiting a further report from the Chief Constable on the detailed costs. The reconstituted Community Policing Boards will play an important part in monitoring the impact of these new teams at the divisional level.

### ***National Quality of Service Commitment***

18. Every Police Force has to have in place National Standards of Service by November 2006. The National Quality of Service commitment and the National Policing Plan required all Forces to have an action plan in place by April 2005 setting out how they will meet the November 2006 deadline. It is estimated that the resource implications for West Mercia in terms of Information Technology support, training, staff development, etc will be in the region of £1 million.

19. The Police Authority, in agreeing the Implementation Plan, has asked the Chief Constable to give consideration as to how progress will be monitored, together with the introduction of a mechanism for dealing with complaints about quality of service issues. This will include how the role of the Police Authority as a contact point for the public could be developed.

### ***Quality of Life Indicators***

20. The Audit Commission's report "Using Quality of Life Indicators" identifies quality of life as those things that make an area a good place to live in. The 2001 MORI survey for the Commission identified crime levels as being one of the important issues that make somewhere a good place to live.

21. Quality of Life Indicators generally sit within long term community strategies, overseen by Local Strategic Partnerships, and the Constabulary is already an active participant in those.

22. The Authority has considered the results of the Constabulary's Crime and Safety Survey as they relate to Quality of Life indicators, divided into three categories

- (i) How worried are our citizens about something that may happen to them
- (ii) How much of a problem do they consider particular incidents to be – and what is the biggest problem in their area
- (iii) What is the one problem in their area, which, if addressed, would make it a better place to live?

23. In relation to the final category the top ten issues, as identified by respondents to the survey were, and in no particular order:

- ◆ Tackle teenagers (wandering streets / threatening behaviour)
- ◆ More police presence
- ◆ Tackle speeding vehicles
- ◆ Tackle drugs
- ◆ Tackle vandalism
- ◆ More activities for young people
- ◆ Reduce litter
- ◆ Tackle drunken behaviour
- ◆ Better parking
- ◆ More street lighting

### ***Race Equality Scheme***

24. The Police Authority has published its revised Race Equality Scheme and this takes into account the recommendations arising out of the Commission for Racial Equality's Formal Investigation into the Police Service.

25. The Authority's Scheme links in closely with the Constabulary separate Scheme and key areas that are addressed are:

- the recruitment, training and management of police officers;
- monitoring of these areas by the police service and police Inspectorate; and
- how police authorities and forces are meeting the statutory general duty to promote race equality, and related specific duties to publish a scheme and carry out employment monitoring.

### ***Health and Safety***

26. The Police Authority has agreed a Health and Safety Policy and Strategy for the Constabulary and which covers the period 2005 to 2010. This followed an examination of health and safety in West Mercia and aims to drive proactive ill health and accident reduction.

27. A member of the Police Authority sits on the Constabulary's Health and Safety Group and a report will be presented annually on health and safety issues.

### ***Force Training Strategy***

28. The Police Authority has also approved the Force Training Strategy 2005-2008, which sets out the commitments to training and development as a means of helping all staff achieve the skills needed to perform their roles efficiently and effectively. The Strategy includes an Annual Costed Training Plan and a Performance Development Review.

### ***Special Priority Payments***

29. The Police Reform Programme provides for a local scheme for 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. In developing the Scheme for 2005 special consideration has been given to police officers who work significantly long hours for payment and to those officers who undertake frequent periods of stand-by.

30. West Mercia's Scheme allows for payments of between £500 and £3000 (or £5000 in exceptional cases). The cost is anticipated to be £1.5m of which £1.2m will be met by a specific Home Office grant.

### ***Questions on Police Matters at Council Meetings***

31. 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 2005/2006:

Herefordshire Council	Mr B Hunt
Shropshire County Council	Mrs M Winckler
Telford and Wrekin Council	Mr J Hicks
Worcestershire County Council	Mr E Sheldon

### ***Police/Community Consultative Groups (PCCGs)***

32. The Authority has appointed the following members to attend meetings of PCCGs during 2005/2006

Bridgnorth	Mrs M Winckler
Bromsgrove	Mrs S Blagg/Mr A Thompson
Bromyard and District	Mr B Hunt
Droitwich Spa	Mr E Sheldon
Evesham and Pershore	Mr Z Padda
Hereford	Mr P Dunford
Herefordshire Rural	Mr P Deneen
Kington	Mr B Hunt
Leominster	Mr B Hunt
Malvern	Mr J Champion
North Shropshire	Mr R Forster
Oswestry	Mr R Forster
Redditch and District	Dr G Nathan
Shrewsbury	Mr M Kenny/Ms Pready-James
South Shropshire	Mr M Kenny/Ms Pready-James
Telford and Wrekin	Mr J Hicks/Mr A Selvaratnam
Worcester	Mr R Peachey
Wyre Forest	Mr J-P Campion

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) 344314.

Further information on the West Mercia Police Authority can also be found on the Internet at [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk)

#### *List of Background Papers*

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director 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 7 June 2005.