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**Report to**  
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

13 May, 2009

**Report of**  
Cllr Tim Sawdon

**Title**  
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Police Authority

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### **1 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report sets out details of the work of West Midlands Police Authority over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 To note the contents of this report and that this appointment is made through the West Midlands Joint Committee.

### **3 Information on Work of Outside Body**

3.1 The Police Authority has a number of functions and the main ones include:

- Maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of West Midlands Police
- Overseeing police accountability to the community, and checking that the force is achieving its targets and offering value for money
- Agreeing the budget for policing in the area
- We also work with Community Safety Partnerships to help reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime. The Authority has a lead member that sits on all the 7 partnerships across the West Midlands.

The Authority is a strategic body and the Chief Constable is responsible for operational matters. Please see attached report at **Annex 1** for a more detailed outline of the work of the Authority.

### **4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

4.1 The City Council has a seat on the strategic body to which the Chief Constable is accountable for policing matters and therefore can raise issues that arise locally as well as influencing the Strategic Policing Plan for the region, and the performance targets that are set alongside the plan. The City Council, as a precepting authority also has important representation during the discussions around precept setting during budgetary discussions.

## 5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

5.1 Attendance currently stands at 84%.

5.2 Remuneration for the appointment is £11,041.

### List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

<b>Description of paper</b>	<b>Location</b>
Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	CH 59

## REPORT FOR THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

MARCH 2009

COUNCILLOR TIM SAWDON

### Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to provide to members of Coventry City Council Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee with an update on the work of West Midlands Police Authority. The report will cover national, regional and local issues.

### The role of the Authority

The Police Authority has a number of functions and the main ones include:

- Maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of West Midlands Police
- Overseeing police accountability to the community, and checking that the force is achieving its targets and offering value for money
- Agreeing the budget for policing in the area
- We also work with Community Safety Partnerships to help reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime. The Authority has a lead member that sits on all the 7 partnerships across the West Midlands.

The Authority is a strategic body and the Chief Constable has responsibility for operational matters.

### Feeling the difference and satisfaction surveys

2. Councillors will be aware that the force conducts a major survey of residents across the West Midlands. Four times a year, 250 people in each of the 21 OCUs that make up the West Midlands are surveyed. This totals 21,000 each year and is one of the largest survey of its type anywhere in the country. The survey is currently in its fourth year and has shown year on year improvements in its results. Questions are asked around how safe people feel, their views on the harmony within their communities together with seeking views on their local police. The results for Coventry show that well over 90% of people give positive results on feelings of safety and harmony. The survey also shows that over 80% of residents have a good opinion of the police. All four Feeling the Difference targets are being exceeded. This major survey is supplemented by other survey work on satisfaction. Over 80% of residents have indicated that they are satisfied with the action taken by the police and the overall service given and the force has a target of 70% of people being satisfied with the feedback they are given, which Coventry is exceeding.

### Neighbourhood policing

3. Neighbourhood policing teams have now been rolled out across the West Midlands. Information on neighbourhood policing was sent by the Authority to every home in the West

Midlands in the form of a local policing summary in May of last year. Local OCUs provide further details to their local communities on a regular basis. The Authority is now working on the local policing summary for this year, in partnership with the force and these will be delivered to every household in the West Midlands by the end of June.

Information is also available about crime in your neighbourhood via the [www.MyNeighbourhood.info](http://www.MyNeighbourhood.info) website. This site gives local people the ability to find out what is really happening in their community as well as enabling them to find out who their local neighbourhood teams are. In addition it is possible to find out when and where local neighbourhood meetings are taking place and also about Community Safety Partnerships. Work is still being done on the information that is available, and there will soon be further specific crime prevention messages and updates.

## Performance

4. Performance 2007/08 was very strong with a 16% reduction in total recorded crime. For the current performance year 2008/09 total recorded crime has once again fallen standing at a 5.2% reduction at the end of January 2009 – over 1,350 fewer victims of crime. January 2009 itself experienced an 11% reduction on January 2008. All three Operational Command Units in Coventry are experiencing reductions in total recorded crime. For the two key performance indicators Coventry is experiencing a 3.9% increase in serious acquisitive crime and a 26.3% increase in most serious violence. I should be pointed out that the definition of most serious violence changed from April 2008 and therefore 2008/09 will become a benchmark year as it cannot be compared to 2007/08. One of the key drivers in the reductions in total recorded crime is the reductions in criminal damage. This equates to almost 20% of total crime and the 10.8% reduction in criminal damage is of great benefit. Business Crime in Coventry has reduced slightly year to date. Coventry is slightly below its target for sanction detections, achieving 27.0% against a target of 28.0%, although target was exceeded in January 2009.

April-January				
Recorded Crime	2007/08	2008/09	Difference	% Difference
Most Serious Violence	308	389	81	26.3%
Serious Acquisitive Crime	5,294	5,502	208	3.9%
Total Recorded Crime	25,949	24,594	-1,355	-5.2%
Burglary Dwelling	1,817	1,835	18	1.0%
Robbery	543	603	60	11.0%
Vehicle Crime	2,934	3,064	130	4.4%
Business Crime	4,767	4,758	-9	-0.2%
Criminal damage	5,509	4,914	-595	-10.8%

## Future plans

5. Last year also saw the Authority working with local authorities through our consultation process. The Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that consultation is taking place across the region. One of the main reasons is to seek the views of people in the area about its policing, and also to obtain their co-operation with the police in preventing crime. 2006 saw a change in the way that we carry out consultation and last year we carried out a series of consultation and engagement activities working alongside our partners. We did this on a geographical basis in the seven districts. The Authority would wish to develop this further as we move the consultation phase for 2009-10.

## Youth Consultation

6. The Authority held a regional youth conference on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham as part of the planning process. The conference was the second stage of our consultation programme for young people. In

October 2007, we carried out a series of focus groups in each of the seven local authority areas working with our local authority partners. The conference was very well attended by 170 young people from across the West Midlands and each local authority area was represented. Consideration is now being given to using this pool of young people to provide a virtual young people's panel using a range of communication techniques such as FaceBook and YouTube.

### **Heads of Community Safety**

7. The Authority continues to meet quarterly with the Seven Heads of Community Safety. In addition we have representation from Government Office of the West Midlands, and the Local Criminal Justice Board. The group originally met to ensure that we had a co-ordinated approach to the planning process which would avoid conflicting targets and priorities. The group has agreed that there is added value in the meetings and we will continue to look at national, regional and strategic issues for the West Midlands and how they impact locally.

### **Business Consultation**

8. The Authority has held an annual business meeting in February of each year as part of the strategic planning process. As a result of the issues raised at those meetings, the Authority has undertaken further work to develop a strategy for an ongoing relationship with business to enable us to get more comprehensive information and a clearer picture of the issues that affect them.

The business consultation and engagement strategy has now been developed. It was launched at a business event held on 5 February 2009. The Authority has been working closely with CDRPs in respect of links into business and work has already started in respect of this. Quarterly surveys will utilise the consultation opportunities identified by the CDRPs. It is not intended that the survey will generate a statistically robust analysis of business crime issues across the region but it will give us a flavour of the issues and concerns and indicate trends as they emerge.

- Visits to each CDRP area by Authority members will give us an opportunity to talk directly to businesses and local business organisations and to see some of the initiatives that are taking place.
- An annual meeting with regional business organisation meeting will be an opportunity for regional organisations to input into the process.
- The annual conference which will be an opportunity to fulfil our statutory obligation to consult regarding budget and expenditure as well as to showcase the positive initiatives that are happening across the region and will engage businesses, business organisations, regional partners and other police authorities.

### **National initiatives**

#### **Home Office Green Paper/Policing and Crime Bill**

9. The Home Office Green Paper – From the Neighbourhood to the National; Policing our Communities Together published on 17 July 2008, invited comments by 10 October 2008. The Government published its response on 28 November 2008. In summary the response dealt with:

- the steps to implement the policing pledge
- proposals to take forward direct elections to police authorities

- Government plans to ensure that the police, together with other agencies, can respond to issues requiring a regional and national response
- new performance management arrangements, explaining how they will work, including new roles for the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the National Policing Improvement Agency
- the range of work to minimise the bureaucratic burden on police officers and staff
- new arrangements for appointing and developing Chief Officers
- the work to tackle serious and organised crime and counter terrorism and the Government's approach to strengthening the security of borders.

The Policing and Crime Bill was published in December at which time it became clear that the Government had not included provisions on direct elections to police authorities. The Bill contains a range of provisions on police reform, sexual offences and sex establishments, alcohol misuse, proceeds of crime, extradition and aviation security. The Bill is now at the Committee stage.

### **Single Confidence Measure**

10. The Home Secretary has also written to Chairs and Chief Constables outlining how the Home Office intends to move to a single target, measuring improvement in public confidence that crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally are being dealt with by the police and their partners. Both the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the APA, fully support the principle of a simplification of targets as both are committed to delivering real and sustainable improvements in confidence for their communities. Both accept that such targets should be ambitious and realistic. However both have concerns about the proposed methodology, the quantum of the targets and how partnerships support the achievement of the targets.

### **The Policing Pledge**

11. The Policing Pledge was announced by the Home Secretary during October 2008 and was adopted by ACPO towards the end of November 2008. The Pledge prescribes a set of service standards that each police force in England and Wales will achieve by 31 December 2009.

There are ten elements to the Pledge, which are complementary to the West Midlands' style of policing. It is important that residents understand the service that they can expect against a standard. It is intended that the Pledge represents a commitment between local police and local people.

### **Police Authority Inspection**

12. HMIC and the Audit Commission are jointly charged with the inspection of police authorities. The objective of the inspection process will be to assess the extent to which the police authority makes a difference to policing in its local area. It is likely that the inspectors will focus on four key areas:

- Leadership and capacity  
Does the police authority working with the force have the leadership, capability and capacity needed to promote service improvement and support the delivery of priorities?

- Performance management and scrutiny  
How effective is the police authority in ensuring the force delivers the priority services, outcomes and improvements that are important to local people?
- Partnership, collaboration and community engagement  
How effective is the police authority in ensuring the force identifies the priorities that will lead to an improvement to local people and works with others to deliver them?
- Use of resources, efficiency and value for money  
Managing finances - How effectively is the police authority managing its finances to deliver value for money?

Three pilot inspections have been run in Derbyshire, Kent and West Yorkshire. The first inspection, of Derbyshire Police Authority, was completed towards the end of November and current indications are that the full programme of inspections will start in July 2009.

### **Participatory budgets**

17. Vernon Coaker MP, the Policing Minister has written to forces and authorities seeking expressions of interest in running participatory budgeting pilots. This is to meet the Government's commitment, outlined in the Green Paper, to launch Community Safety Participatory budgets later in the year. Participatory budgeting is a process that allows members of the community to directly influence the use and/or distribution of resources in their community, using a process of active participation and engagement. Although it is a process more commonly associated with local councils, it was proposed through the Flanagan Review of Policing, and Policing Green Paper to pilot these approaches in the context of community safety.

Police forces and authorities, and the Neighbourhood and Crime and Justice areas were invited to submit bids for funding to contribute to the costs of running local participatory budgeting events before the end of March 2009.

### **Local Activity**

18. Cllr Sawdon has established very good working relationships locally with regular Operational Command Unit (OCU) visits to 2 of the OCUs (M1 and M2) twice annually. In addition, consultative forums are held in order to consult with the community, on each OCU twice a year. The Authority is holding a joint OCU meeting to be held on the 30 March 2-4pm, in the Council House and will then look at how we take things forward. This ensures that we have good links into the community on an on-going basis and can use the information to influence the annual planning process of the Authority. The Police Authority as a responsible authority is also represented on the Coventry Community Safety Partnership by Cllr Sawdon.