



**JOINT ANNUAL REPORT OF
WEST MERCIA POLICE
AND
WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY
2008/09**

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Joint Introduction from the Chair of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable

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West Mercia Police

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During the last year, police officers and police staff throughout West Mercia have, once again, risen to the challenge of providing a high quality service to our local communities in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Telford and the Wrekin. We are delighted that this Annual Report provides us with an opportunity to highlight just some of the Force's achievements in 2008/09.

Building upon previous successes and recent trends, the past year saw overall crime reach a ten year low in the West Mercia area, falling by more than 3% relative to the previous reporting period. The Force was recognised in positive reports from the Home Office (in relation to the Policing Performance Assessment Framework, PPAF) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) while the Police Authority exceeded the rating it received last year for its Corporate Governance Review and was rated as 'Performing Strongly' by the Audit Commission.

West Mercia Police and West Mercia Police Authority are committed to promoting community safety, improving public confidence and satisfaction in policing services and protecting the public. We place great importance upon listening to the needs and concerns of our communities, seeking a clear understanding of what is important to them and how they would like to be policed.

Our 145 Local Policing Teams encourage people in the community to have a voice – local PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings and other events have gone from strength to strength, with key local issues of concern – speeding traffic, illegal parking and anti-social behaviour – being identified and targeted by ourselves and other relevant agencies.

The Police Authority has also set up a new structure of 'Policing Matters Groups' throughout West Mercia. These provide the opportunity for people to meet the Divisional Police Commander, Police Authority members and representatives of key partner agencies and to hear about what is being done in the area. They also enable people to give feedback and to say what they think about the way in which their community is policed.

The West Mercia Policing Pledge was introduced on 1st January 2009, giving the public a clear understanding of the standards of service that we aim to deliver. In addition, recent months have seen the introduction of CrimeMapper, an online system which enables residents to monitor crime trends and patterns in their particular locality.

The Force is better equipped than ever to tackle serious and organised crime and to investigate the most serious offences. This year has seen some outstanding results with a number of criminal enterprises dismantled, significant criminals convicted and their assets seized. We also continue to work jointly with neighbouring forces and a range of other partner agencies in tackling cross-border criminality and responding to major incidents and emergencies.

We also continue to build upon our commitment to 'Quality People' through investing in training and developing our staff. This past year witnessed the first NPIA (National Policing Improvement Agency) accredited course for detectives and also the first cohort of officers gaining foundation degrees in Professional Policing at the conclusion of their two year period of Student Officer training.

The strong reputation that West Mercia Police enjoys has resulted from the dedication and commitment of generations of police officers, police staff and volunteers. The challenge for us now and into the future is to build upon that legacy and become an even stronger, more accountable and more responsive organisation committed to serving, protecting and making the difference in our communities.

Police Authority comment on performance

Each year the Police Authority agrees the priorities and targets to guide the Force in its activities and authorises the necessary investment of resources, having regard to the impact on the Council Tax payers. The priorities and targets are published in our [Joint Policing Plan](#), available on our website.

West Mercia Police has continued to maintain a high level of performance results and for the fifth year running has achieved an overall reduction in crime. Focusing on the priority areas identified in the joint policing plan has been key to achieving these results; these include an improvement in detection rates for serious sexual offences and completing local policing priorities on time.

Both the Force and the Police Authority have actively engaged in local partnerships, recognising the importance placed on shared targets and shared delivery across the West Mercia area. In addition, we have continued to actively participate in increased collaboration and joint working with neighbouring forces and authorities.

West Mercia Police has been engaged in a number of high profile major operations through the year and has successfully managed staffing levels and prioritising effort at these times. Its approach to tackling major crime has also been endorsed through independent assessment. The Force faces an ongoing challenge of recognising and adapting to changing or emerging threats. This year in particular the Authority has been made aware of the ever growing area of internet crime and the challenges this presents for the High Tech Crime Unit.

With the introduction of a new target based on public confidence and the roll out of the Policing Pledge, the Authority has worked very closely with senior staff within the Force in developing those measures that will be used to track progress against these initiatives as well as agreeing other measures to allow effective ongoing monitoring of the policing plan targets.

Once again we are confident that West Mercia Police will meet all the challenges ahead and will continue to be seen as high performing, cost efficient and effective, delivering the high standard of policing services that the people of West Mercia have come to expect.

What we have achieved

The 'Four Better Outcomes' described our aims, policing objectives and what we intended to be delivered through effectively policing the communities of West Mercia. The Outcomes focused on the four key areas of:

- Tackling Crime
- Promoting Community Safety
- Improving Satisfaction and Confidence
- Protecting the Public

Tackling crime

West Mercia Police aims to make life difficult for those people who commit crime and seek to prey upon the more vulnerable members of our communities. Of course, the police service does not operate in isolation - we work closely with our local authority partners, other criminal justice agencies and local communities and together we have all contributed towards making West Mercia a safer place to live, work and visit.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Change 2008/09 vs 2007/08
Total Recorded Crime	82,095	80,054	77,443	Down by 3.3%
Domestic Burglary	3,260	3,654	3,851	Up by 5.4%
Violent Crime	17,510	17,271	**	
Vehicle Crime	8,865	8,492	7,981	Down by 6%
Sanction Detection Rate* (total recorded crime)	32.5%	29.2%	29.8%	0.6 point increase

* where investigations lead to action being taken against an offender

** as a result of recent clarifications to the Home Office counting rules, this category is not directly comparable between 2008/09 and 2007/08

There were 3.3% fewer crimes recorded in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08. This brings crime down to its lowest level in 5 years. Aligned to this reduction was a 2% increase in the overall sanction detection rate to 29.8%.

Burglary rose slightly, by 197 offences, compared to the previous year. We are placing significant effort into this area to prevent further increases in the number of burglaries in 2009/10.

Vehicle Crime (theft of and from vehicles) decreased by 511 offences during 2008/09 compared to 2007/08.

During 2008/09 there were a number of high-profile cases within West Mercia including:

- the investigation into the deaths of Heather Wardle and her adult son James Hughes who had severe physical and learning disabilities. At Worcestershire Coroners Court in December 2008 the Deputy Coroner returned an open verdict on James and recorded a verdict that Heather Wardle killed herself.
- the investigation into the fatal fire at Osbaston House in Shropshire in August 2008. The coroner's verdict of unlawful killing for Kirstie and Jill Foster and suicide for Christopher Foster was returned in April 2009. A film about the investigation into the fire was shown on the Channel 4 TV programme 'Dispatches' in April 2009.
- the murder of 29 year old Craig Hodson-Walker at Fairfield Post Office near Bromsgrove in January 2009.

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) enables law enforcement agencies to recover monies from those people who benefit from the proceeds of their criminal conduct. Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009 West Mercia successfully obtained 91 Confiscation Orders to the value of £1,287,539 and 29 Cash Forfeiture Orders to the value of £169,228. This includes orders obtained for West Mercia by the Regional Asset Recovery Team (RART) based in Solihull.

Police, prosecutors and courts receive part of these funds to re-invest in asset recovery schemes. Up to 31 December 2008 the West Mercia Police share was £113,822.

SmartWater proved to be a successful tool in both the prevention and detection of crime during the year. SmartWater is a colourless liquid that is almost invisible to the naked eye and is virtually impossible to remove. The liquid glows under ultraviolet light, making it easy for the police to detect.

It comes in two forms, as a unique, high-tech property marking system or as spray that activates and covers thieves in an irremovable liquid. Each sample contains a unique chemical code conclusively proving ownership. This means anyone found in possession of stolen items that are marked with SmartWater can be linked directly to a crime scene.

In December 2008 SmartWater evidence was, for the first time in Shropshire, presented during a trial to help convict offenders. Following a break-in at a Bridgnorth supermarket in November 2007, two of the three offenders were sprayed with SmartWater. They were arrested following a police pursuit and the SmartWater was found on their clothing after they were taken into custody. As a result, all three were charged with burglary and pleaded guilty when they appeared in court.

Other examples of the way in which SmartWater has been used this year include:

- free SmartWater packs distributed to residents and schools as part of crime prevention initiatives
- cash in transit vehicles in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin have been fitted with SmartWater technology to help catch criminals
- Worcestershire HorseWatch supplied members with SmartWater at a discounted rate to mark saddles, bridles and other equipment.

‘Ruff’ Justice

PC McCallister and his dog, Tyler, picked up a vehicle with three people on board leaving the scene of a burglary in Bridgnorth. A lengthy pursuit ensued covering about 17 miles. During the pursuit two armed vehicles were rammed by the offending vehicle, with one vehicle having a long handled axe thrown at the windscreen. The offending vehicle eventually crashed through a hedge and three occupants attempted to flee the scene. Two offenders were detained by officers but the third got away. Tyler was able to pick up a track, and lead PC McCallister across a ploughed field into a storage/allotment area, where the offender was located amongst some pallets. He was duly arrested.

‘Tackling Crime’ Performance Indicators 2008/09

	Target or Method of Monitoring	Result/Comment
Domestic burglary - volumes	Less than 3,500 per annum (this equates to less than 7.2 burglaries per 1,000 households)	3,851 Volume greater than target and last year's result of 3,654
Domestic burglary – sanction detection rate	21% or above	18.8% Below target and 2007/08 result of 20.2%
Serious violence against the person and sexual offences - volumes	To be monitored by Police Authority	1,750 Volume greater than last year (largely due to recent clarifications in the Home Office counting rules)
Serious violence against the person and sexual offences – sanction detection rates	35% or above	41.3% Above target and 2007/08 result of 35.8%
All other offences	Less than 67,850 per annum (this equates to less than 57.4 offences per 1,000 population)	63,130 Less than target and 2007/08 result of 66,053
All other offences – sanction detection rate	32.5% or above	32.4% Slightly missed target but above 2007/08 result of 31.8%

Promoting Community Safety

During 2008/09 we worked with partner agencies, volunteers and engaged with the public in a range of ways to understand and address the issues most affecting the sense of well-being in communities.

In particular we focused on the safety and security of vulnerable people and improving public reassurance, conducting a number of campaigns including:

- Knock, Knock - which raised awareness about the seriousness of distraction burglary and doorstep crime
- Safe and Secure - home security advice during for the summer holiday period
- Vehicle safety advice – simple steps to keep vehicles safe and secure which included the distribution of 10,000 “*STOP – All valuables have been removed*” postcards
- Lighten Up – free energy-efficient light bulbs, donated by energy company, npower, were distributed by Local Policing Teams to remind people to leave a light on in the evening when they are not at home
- Halloween Safety campaign - specially designed ‘*Sorry No Trick or Treat*’ posters, distributed by Local Policing Teams and made available at police station front counters, for people to display in their front door or window, if they did not wish to participate in the celebrations or open the door to trick or treaters.

Operation Christmas Presence was launched in December 2008, aiming to make the festive season safer for everyone by clamping down on crimes such as drink driving, drink spiking and drink-fuelled violence. During the campaign, which ran from 1st December to 1st January, a total of 2,401 people across the Force area were administered a roadside screening breath test. Out of those, 171 people (7%) gave a positive breath test or refused/failed to provide one.

Our 145 Local Policing Teams have a key role in promoting community safety, listening to the needs and concerns of people living and working in their area and ensuring that communities have a genuine say in identifying issues that are to be addressed as priorities.

Formal consultation takes place through PACT (Partners and Communities Together) events such as meetings, surgeries and surveys, although concerns can be brought to the attention of Local Policing Teams at any time.

The Ditch Youth Project highlighted below is just one example of how Local Policing Teams are making a real difference in the community.

Further information your Local Policing Team, their contact details, priorities and PACT meetings together with local crime information can be found within the [Local Policing](#) section of the West Mercia Police website.

The Ditch Youth Project

A youth group set up at Oakenshaw Community Centre, Redditch, by the Local Policing Officer, PC Richard Waterhouse, has made a big impact in reducing anti-social behaviour in the area.

The Ditch youth project was launched after two years of preparation work by PC Waterhouse who saw it as a way of addressing anti-social behaviour in an area where there were no statutory youth facilities.

PC Waterhouse helped secure £13,000 of funding for the project in its first year and the group now meets every Wednesday night.

There are around 50 members aged between 13 and 16 who have facilities including a sound system, pool table, table tennis, a Nintendo Wii, arts and crafts and floodlighting for soccer sessions. The Ditch has a full-time youth worker and 8 to 10 volunteers including Community Support Officer Chris Tipton.

CSO Tipton said: "Anti-social behaviour in the area that had previously attracted problems doesn't happen any more on a Wednesday night and anti-social behaviour in general has dropped in Crabbs Cross.

Volunteers continued to provide a valuable service to West Mercia during the year. Ranging from the Special Constabulary to Watch schemes (such as Neighbourhood Watch, Business Watch and School Watch) to victim and witness care services (Victim Support and Witness Care Units), all made a valuable and valued contribution to our efforts in ensuring that West Mercia remains a safe area in which to live and work.

Shropshire Volunteers

There are approximately 75 community volunteers ranging in age from 16 to 76 working in various locations and departments throughout Shropshire Division. They are well accepted and appreciated by full time members of staff.

The CCTV centres at Bridgnorth and Oswestry are staffed solely by volunteers and volunteers also assist at the Shrewsbury CCTV centre.

There are volunteer front counter staff at Shifnal, Pontesbury, Ellesmere, Much Wenlock and Cleobury Mortimer.

Two volunteers have set up and are currently running a Rural watch scheme on the Division.

Volunteers at Broadway front counter

Broadway Police station is the operational base for the Local Policing team covering the town of Broadway, and the surrounding parishes. In addition to the full-time members of West Mercia Police, the station is staffed by a team of eight unpaid volunteers drawn from the local community. Their commitment allows for the provision of a Front Counter Service, for several hours each day, five days a week. Volunteers have been providing this service for almost twelve years. Each will have undergone an induction and vetting process, which includes appropriate training. As a result, Broadway police station is able to offer a front counter service comparable to any within West Mercia.

The volunteers provide a valuable and reassuring link between the local policing team and the community.

‘Promoting Community Safety’ Performance Indicators 2008/09

	Target or Method of Monitoring	Result/Comment
Anti-social behaviour management	To be monitored by Police Authority	85,380 incidents – decrease of 3.8% on 2007/08
Assessment of PACT engagement activity including schools/youth activity	To be monitored by Police Authority	Schools liaison action plan delivered
Percentage of local policing actions completed in target time	80% or above within target time	94.6% Above target and 2007/08 result of 87.8%

Improving Satisfaction and Confidence

West Mercia Police and West Mercia Police Authority place great importance on listening to the needs and concerns of local people and ensuring that they have a voice in how their neighbourhood is policed. This helps us form strong relationships which result in citizens being willing and able to play an active role in the fight against crime. The primary aim of our [joint Community Engagement Strategy](#) is to improve West Mercia's communities' levels of confidence in their local police and to provide reassurance.

Working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations is key to us achieving our aims and West Mercia Police Authority has worked closely during the year as members of the 11 local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (also known as Community Safety Partnerships) and the four Local Strategic Partnerships (responsible for Local Area Agreements) within our region, together our criminal justice partners.

West Mercia conducts user satisfaction surveys throughout the year. We regularly provide information to divisions on the levels of satisfaction in their area and areas for improvement. In addition the West Mercia Performance Group regularly reviews the survey results and the Police Authority receives a quarterly update. Throughout West Mercia, the focus remains on customer satisfaction.

For the year 2008/09 we set a target for overall satisfaction with service received of 84%. This target was reached with 85% of respondents reporting that they were satisfied with our service. However, we use the survey information to inform us about areas where there are still improvements that can be made. In particular we want to do more to improve the follow up service we provide to victims of crime, and this is an area we focused on in 2008/09 with the development of a victim care database which assists officers in ensuring that victims receive regular updates on their crimes. This has helped us to improve satisfaction with follow up over the last year, with the percentage of victims saying they are completely or very satisfied with follow up increasing by 8%.

West Mercia has also devised a new Victim Care Booklet which will be made available to all victims of crime. The leaflet includes useful information about each stage of the process and what to expect from the police. It also provides advice about where to get additional support. In addition, a leaflet will be given to all people involved in road traffic collisions to provide them with information they need and help answer any questions they may have about how collisions are dealt with.

Below are just a few of the many positive comments we received about our service in 2008/09.

“Everything that was needed to be done was done, they have been in contact on a regular basis, they were very good.”

“They came in, sat down and had a chat with us. Said that it's all being dealt with and reassured us, they knew what they were doing and in general made me feel more relaxed. We haven't had to worry - they were all fantastic.”

“I think overall they responded promptly, they were very professional and reassuring. They appeared to take a genuine interest in it and made sure I was happy and knew what would happen next. I did not have to chase for information. They explained what would happen and kept me updated. Everyone I dealt with was very professional, helpful and courteous.”

“It was very stressful but the police were very good. They did everything they possible could to help us. They even talked to my children and it made a great difference.”

The annual Crime and Safety Partnership Survey which was posted to 58,267 West Mercia residents in 2008 attracted a 25% response rate. The top 3 issues identified by residents as a priority to be addressed were speeding traffic, groups loitering and underage drinking.

A Young People's Crime and Safety Survey was conducted in Worcestershire and Telford in October 2008. In total, over 3,500 young people aged 10-16 completed the survey. The five issues which young people most frequently reported were problems in the area where they live or go to school were

- Groups of people hanging around in public places
- Under-age drinking
- Vandalism/graffiti
- Drunk people causing problems in public places
- Being pestered / shouted at by strangers in public places.

The most frequently raised PACT (Partners and Communities Together) priorities for 2008/09 were:

1. Speeding traffic
2. Cars parked illegally/inconveniently
3. Anti-social behaviour – inappropriate gathering/loitering/nuisance (youth related).

Flower Power

Community Support Officers (CSOs) Leeanne Marwick & Anna Synnock came up with the idea of involving local youths in a litter pick and planting scheme on the green at Bryngwyn Court, Hereford where elderly residents resented and feared the youths who congregated there, calling police frequently.

Plants and equipment were donated by local agencies and businesses. Helped by the CSOs, some of the youths removed the litter and made a large bed in the green which they filled full of flowers. Some residents came out to thank them and one provided refreshments. Relations have greatly improved - youths still meet there but are quiet and polite and clear up any litter when there. As a result, the residents' fears of crime have reduced.

Policing Matters Groups were established during 2008 to provide residents with the opportunity to meet their Divisional Police Commander, Police Authority members and partner agencies to give their opinion on more strategic policing issues in their area. The [Police Authority website](#) provides details of when and where Policing Matters Groups are held.

Criminal Justice System

The period April 2008 to March 2009 saw a further increase in the amount of partnership work within the local criminal justice agencies:

The Criminal Justice 'Simple Speedy Summary' Project (CJSSS), involving Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, Probation and local defence practitioners continued to develop during the year. The project has been a notable success, recording a substantial increase in the number of pleas of guilty at the first hearings of cases in all West Mercia Magistrates' Courts and a reduction in the time that defendants and witnesses have to wait for a trial date where proceedings are contested. All local agencies are now planning to build upon this success by introducing the 'Streamlining Project' where a substantial reduction in Police paperwork is planned in court cases but without a reduction in performance.

'CJSSS' was also successfully introduced to all Youth Courts in West Mercia during the year. Again all local criminal justice agencies were involved in a project that set out a consistent strategy for all our Youth Courts and was then introduced progressively at local court level during the summer and autumn of 2008.

A number of further inter-agency criminal justice projects were identified during 2008/09 for implementation in 2009/10. These include a new protocol that will provide for joint working and agreed systems and targets in relation to Prolific Persistent Offenders. Changes are also to be made with the object of ensuring that those defendants who breach the community penalty orders to which they are subject are speedily brought back before the courts.

In November 2008 a new non-emergency telephone number – 0300 333 3000 – was introduced. This new number, which was introduced following public consultation, is designed to be easier to remember and cheaper to call. During 2008/09 West Mercia received over 1 million non-emergency telephone calls.

December 2008 saw the launch of a new way for people to find out about crime in their local area. [CrimeMapper](#), which can be accessed from the front page of our website, provides visitors with up-to-date information on crimes within the categories burglary, theft and robbery, vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour and violent crime. Details can be found by simply entering a postcode, location name or browsing a map to find comprehensive information by Force, division and ward areas.

West Mercia's '[Policing Pledge](#)' was published in January 2009 and gives the public a clear indication of the standard of service which we will aim to deliver. The Pledge, which is being rolled out by police forces across the country, was launched nationally in Redditch by former Home Secretary Jacqui Smith and is a key part of our commitment to keeping communities safe from harm.

'Improving Satisfaction and Confidence' Performance Indicators 2008/09

	Target or Method of Monitoring	Result/Comment
User satisfaction – percentage satisfied with whole experience (measured by West Mercia User Satisfaction Surveys)	84% or higher satisfaction	84.9% Above target. Improvement on 2007/08 result of 83.4%
User satisfaction – percentage satisfied with follow up (measured by West Mercia User Satisfaction Surveys)	70% or higher satisfaction	65.8% Below stretch target but an improvement on 2007/08 result of 64.4%
Confidence in local police (measured by the British Crime Survey)	53% or higher confidence	50.2% Note – this is not the Home Secretary's new confidence measure
Perception of anti-social behaviour (measured by the British Crime Survey)	To be monitored by Police Authority	13.8%
Perception of local drug use/drug dealing (measured by the British Crime Survey)	To be monitored by Police Authority	25.1%

Protecting the Public

During 2008/09 we continued to develop our capability to tackle serious and organised crime, major crime and counter-terrorism and to protect the public from sex offenders and other dangerous offenders.

In February 2008 West Mercia's Public Protection Unit held an internet safety awareness event at Hindlip Hall, Worcester. The presentation entitled "Think you know? Do you?" was developed for parents to raise awareness of the risks to children online. The Public Protection Unit, in conjunction with the four Safeguarding Children Boards in the West Mercia region, hosted a number of e-safety events and gave presentations to schools, agencies, parents and the public throughout the West Mercia area during 2008/09.

In December 2008 West Mercia hosted a 'Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence' conference which attracted a wide range of keynote speakers, including actress Lynda Bellingham. Honour Based Violence is a specific type of domestic abuse that crosses all cultures and communities, and the conference was linked to our ongoing [Home Truths](#) initiative, which aims to raise awareness of the seriousness and scale of domestic abuse and promote the national helpline number for people who are being victimised (0808 2000 247).

West Mercia has been commended by both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the National Policing Improvement Agency for its use of the internal Local Policing intranet site to ensure that local policing teams are at the very heart of managing risk. This work focuses upon supporting victims of domestic abuse and managing sex and other dangerous offenders within the community. Protecting the public is at the very heart of policing within West Mercia and we have championed our work nationally at the annual ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) public protection conference and various other national events.

We continued to tackle drug dealing and had a number of successful operations during 2008/09 including Operation Walnut, one of the most significant and complex investigations West Mercia has undertaken, which involved police working across regional and international borders. Five men, all part of an organised crime group, were jailed for their part in a large scale importation of heroin and cocaine into the UK. During the course of Operation Walnut, which lasted for three years, 28 kilos of heroin with a street value of more than £2 million was seized. A total of 28 men were arrested and those charged have since been sentenced to a total of more than 50 years in prison.

During the past year the West Mercia Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system has captured details of over 40 million vehicles, of which nearly one million had previously come to police attention or were of **interest to the police**. Because our ANPR cameras operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we also monitor them in real time in order to identify **people who are of interest to the police**, not only locally, but **also** regionally and nationally. This can provide

valuable advance warning when individuals from elsewhere in the country choose to target our communities, in which circumstances we are sometimes able to disrupt or prevent their activities, or if that is not possible, to use the information obtained by ANPR as a valuable investigative tool. The number of ANPR cameras that we deploy is in the process of being increased significantly, particularly on those roads and locations which it is known are used by travelling criminals, in order to further extend our capability. ANPR is a valuable source of intelligence, which backed up by photographic evidence, is proving invaluable in detecting crime and protecting our communities.

In terms of collaboration regarding premises, our specialist crime facilities in Worcestershire are being used by Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade for training and the Police Authority has recently given approval for a central storage project that will enable records to be held centrally not only for West Mercia but for other police forces in the region.

Operation Kingpin

The work of Detective Inspector Mark Colquhoun could lead to changes in legislation governing mobile home parks after his investigation attracted national interest.

In September 2008, seven men were convicted of carrying out a sustained campaign of terror against elderly and vulnerable residents of The Glen mobile home park in Blackwell, Bromsgrove. Three homes had been burned to the ground in two arson attacks as part of a campaign to intimidate residents into leaving.

DI Colquhoun led Operation Kingpin and his work on the case has been featured in a Radio 4 'You and Yours' programme and in National Park Homes Magazine. He has been contacted for advice by other forces along with caravan/park home residents from other parts of the country experiencing similar intimidation.

DI Colquhoun has delivered a presentation about Operation Kingpin to civil servants at the Department of Communities and Local Government and has been invited to participate in a working party concerned with reform of legislation relating to park homes.

‘Protecting the Public’ Performance Indicators 2008/09

	Target or Method of Monitoring	Result/Comment
Protecting the Public		
Support national counter terrorism activity by engaging in full range of national and regional terrorism policing activities	To be monitored by Police Authority	Assessed as “Good” in last available assessment within an scale of Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
Improve our 2007 performance and support the National Asset Recovery Strategy by maximising every opportunity to confiscate assets including cash derived from criminality	To be monitored by Police Authority	Assessed as “Fair” within an assessment scale of Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
Enhance our approach to the protection of vulnerable people by taking a positive approach towards dealing with domestic abuse, child abuse, hate crime and missing persons	To be monitored by Police Authority	No quantitative data available, however all available evidence from external audit and inspection reports indicates that positive progress is being made
Under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), exchange appropriate information with partner agencies about dangerous offenders and manage the risk they pose	To be monitored by Police Authority	No quantitative data available, however all available evidence from external audit and inspection reports indicates that positive progress is being made
Repeat victimisation – domestic violence offences	To be monitored by Police Authority	23.2% Below 2007/08 figure of 21.2%
Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions	800 or fewer (Government year 2010 target)	517 (599 in 2007/08)

Other		
Police officer sickness – working days lost	9 days or less	8.5 (provisional) Below target Below 2007/08 figure of 9.3
Police staff sickness – working days lost	9 days or less	9.8 (provisional) Above target Above 2007/08 figure of 9.0

Inspection and audit

Police Performance – 2007/08 (published November 2008)

This annual assessment forms part of the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) developed by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), with support from the Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

It reports data against each of the Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for Policing, and covers information on priorities set locally, inspections carried out by HMIC in 2007-08 and the results of the Audit Commission's Police Use of Resources Evaluation (PURE). [Click here](#) to view the full report.

Annual Audit Letter 2007/08 (published January 2009)

This Letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Authority, based on audit work performed in relation to the accounting period ending 31 March 2008.

Audit of the accounts

An unqualified opinion on the Authority's accounts was issued on 17 July 2008.

Value for money conclusion

The Authority have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

Police Use of Resources scores

The Authority continued to demonstrate that it manages its services effectively and provides good value for money.

THEME	Assessment
Financial reporting	3
Financial management	3
Financial standing	4
Internal control	3
Value for money	4
Overall assessment of the Audit Commission	4

1 = inadequate performance

2 = adequate performance

3 = performing well

4 = performing strongly

West Mercia received an overall score of 4 – well above minimum requirements – with a score of 4 for Value for Money for the third year running. [Click here](#) to view the full audit letter.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Inspections

	<u>Inspection Grade</u>	<u>Date published</u>
Delivery of Citizen Focus	Meets the standard }	September 2008
Neighbourhood Policing	Meets the standard }	
Major Crime	Meets the standard	July 2008

The inspection of 'Major Crime' made one recommendation:

"Urgent steps should be taken to ensure that victims of rape and serious sexual assault have acceptable and timely access to trained officers at the time of initial reporting, and effective co-ordination and supervision of SOLOs (sexual offences liaison officers) should be implemented."

To address this recommendation we developed a model of Specially Trained Officers (STOs) who are now available 24 hours a day to deal with reports of rape. Each of our five Divisions has identified and trained a minimum of 8 STOs whose work is to be supported, evaluated and monitored by designated divisional coordinators as well as the Force Rape Steering Group.

Corporate Governance Review of Police Authority

(published November 2008)

West Mercia Police Authority undertook a voluntary inspection of its Corporate Governance arrangements, which was conducted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers in 2006 and was repeated in 2008. The Authority received a rating of four Excellents and two Goods (previously two Excellents and four Goods):

Good Governance Principles 2007/2008	Assessment	Good Governance Principles 2005/2006	Assessment
Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.	Excellent	Focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for the public.	Excellent
Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.	Excellent	Performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles	Excellent
Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.	Excellent	Promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour	Good

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing the risk.	Good	Taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk	Good
Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective	Good	Developing the capacity and capability of the Authority to be effective.	Good
Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability	Excellent	Engaging stakeholders and making accountability real	Good

[Click here](#) to view the full report

Independent Custody Visits

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme provides an independent check on people held in police custody and the conditions in which they are kept. The visitors are drawn from the local community and during 2008/09 monitored the custody units at Kidderminster, Leominster, Redditch, Shrewsbury, Telford (Malinsgate) and Worcester Police Stations by visiting them at least once a week and reporting their findings back to the Police Authority.

The visitors are given immediate access to custody units and are able to see any detainee unless there are special circumstances, for example because they are in interview, asleep or the escorting officer advises for safety reasons, particularly where a detainee has been especially violent.

315 visits were made during the year and in total 1,251 people were in custody at the time of the visits. 850 detainees were available to be visited of which 697 (82%) detainees consented to a visit. This was an increase on the previous year where 542 agreed to a visit (78%).

No major problems emerged from the visits and the main comments related to medical issues, food, provision of legal advice, language issues, drinks and keeping relatives informed. Where issues were raised these were either rectified as soon as possible by the custody officers, dealt with in correspondence with the Divisional Police Liaison Officer or discussed at the Independent Custody Visiting Panel meetings.

During the year all visits made by the Herefordshire Panel were to the Leominster Custody Unit, pending the opening of the refurbished Hereford Custody Unit which was due in July 2009.

Membership to this voluntary scheme is open to people over the age of 18 who live or work in the area and application forms are available from the Police Authority (PO Box 487, Shrewsbury, SY2 6WB - www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk). Training is provided and new entrants to the scheme receive the support of experienced visitors when initially undertaking the role.

All visitors are given the opportunity of refresher training and two induction courses were arranged during the year for new visitors. In addition cultural awareness and diversity training was provided to scheme members and seminars were held in Birmingham and Warwickshire. The Annual Conference of the National Association of Custody Visiting was held in November 2008 at Stratford upon Avon and members from each of the four Area Panels (Herefordshire, Kidderminster/Redditch, Shropshire and Worcester) were present.

Finance

The Police Authority's financial position is that it is holding reserves of £23.5m to meet future obligations and potential risks. One of these reserves is the Sustaining Service Delivery reserve and in 2008/09 it was planned to use £2m of this reserve in order to match planned spending with planned income. This plan was achieved and the Sustaining Service Delivery reserve now stands at £11.7m and is available in future years to maintain the medium term financial strategy.

Summary of Accounts 2008/09

This document summarises the Authority's full 2008/09 Statement of Accounts and gives a view of the financial position at 31 March 2009. In order to present this information in a more concise and user-friendly way, some modifications to the full Statement of Accounts have been made.

The full statement of accounts are available on the Police Authority's website, www.westmerciapoliceauthority.gov.uk.

Review of the Year

In 2008/09 the resources available amounted to £192.7m which included £2.0m to be drawn from reserves.

The Statement of Accounts is audited each year by the Audit Commission. In addition to auditing the Statement of Accounts, the Audit Commission evaluates the effectiveness of the use of resources. This exercise - Police Use of Resources Evaluation (PURE) - awards a score for each of five criteria together with an overall judgement. In the previous financial year West Mercia received the highest possible score for value for money and financial standing together with the highest score for the overall judgement of use of resources. The results for the 2008/09 PURE assessment will be announced in the autumn of 2009.

In resource terms, the plan for the year was mainly to consolidate the increase in resources which had been engaged in the two previous years. There was a net increase in recruitment as new posts were filled.

The Authority must maintain adequate reserves and these are kept under regular review by the Treasurer. Reserves have been preserved to meet future liabilities, obligations and potential risks. At 31 March 2009 reserves amounting to £23.3m are being held to meet these requirements.

At the end of the year it was possible to maintain the revenue reserves in line with the budget strategy. Also during the year capital expenditure was £12.6m and this has been funded primarily by government grant and working capital pending longer term borrowing.

Spending on activities during the year

The total cost of policing in West Mercia during the year was

2007/08		2008/09
£m		£m
118.7	Police Officers salaries etc	122.1
50.5	Police Staff salaries etc	53.7
2.0	Police Pension scheme	2.3
36.9	Other running costs	41.5
26.3	Depreciation and accounting adjustments	14.1
234.4		233.7
(24.1)	Income	(24.3)
210.3	Net cost of services	209.4
(2.0)	Interest received and paid	(1.6)
(26.3)	Accounting Adjustments (depreciation)	(14.1)
182.0	Operating cost for year	193.7
The budget for the year was funded by:		
(116.0)	Income from Government Grant	(118.9)
(68.3)	Income from Council Tax	(71.8)
(184.3)	Total Funding	(190.7)
The difference between the total funding and the operating cost for the year was used for:		
0.9	Funding capital expenditure from revenue sources	0.2
1.4	Contribution to (from) earmarked reserves	(3.2)
2.3	Resources deployed at the end of the year	(3.0)

Accounting adjustments relate to requirements in the full Statement of Accounts to include depreciation and an actuarial assessment of future pension cost. This summary relates to expenditure incurred during the year only.

Summary Balance Sheet at 31 March 2009

This is a summary of the value of what the Police Authority owns, together with debts owed to and by the Authority.

31 March 2008 £m		31 March 2009 £m
87.4	Value of buildings, vehicles and computers	89.8
33.6	Cash in the bank and invested	23.9
10.7	Money owed to West Mercia	9.7
(17.4)	Money owed by West Mercia	(18.9)
(10.8)	Long term borrowing by West Mercia	(10.9)
103.5	Total Assets less liabilities	93.6
	Represented by	
77.0	Accounting Reserves	70.3
26.5	Funds for specific purposes	23.3
103.5		93.6

Capital Investment during the year

The assets of the Police Authority are enhanced by capital spending in each year. In 2008/09 the details were:

2007/08 £m		2008/09 £m
8.2	Land and Buildings	7.1
2.1	Vehicles and equipment	2.4
4.3	Computers and Communications	3.1
14.6		12.6

These were paid for by using:

2.6	Government grant	2.7
0.9	Funds from revenue sources and reserves	0.2
1.0	Sales of other assets	0.2
10.1	Borrowing or Use of working capital	9.5
14.6		12.6

Cash Flow

The cashflow summarises how receipts and payments during the year relate to the final balance of cash and investments:

2007/08 £m		2008/09 £m
34.9	Cash and investments at start of year	33.6
224.9	Cash received	231.4
(226.2)	Cash paid	(241.1)
33.6	Cash and investments at end of year	23.9

Efficiency Plan

West Mercia has a long established value for money tradition exemplified by an excellent audit report and results from the Audit Commission on Police Use of Resources.

West Mercia has consistently achieved the annual efficiency target set by the Home Office and since 1999 a cumulative total in excess of £42m has been redirected into service improvement and absorbing the additional demands which have been placed upon the service.

West Mercia recorded £10 million of efficiency gains in 2008/09 which is in excess of the planned target. The Efficiency Plan included:

- the local implementation of national initiatives such as the commencing of CJSSS (Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary) and further civilianisation under the workforce modernisation programme.
- wholly local initiatives such as a review of BCU (Basic Command Unit) Intelligence support, a Crime Management Review in Herefordshire and the continuation of savings arising from the devolvement of Prosecution Quality Teams.

During 2008/09 a Strategic Resource Leverage process was introduced, containing two specific elements:

- Cash releasing initiatives
Divisions and Departments are required to identify cash savings of 1.25% of their total budget without affecting frontline policing.
- Cash re-investment initiatives
Proposals to improve performance or to be more efficient by an initial additional allocation of resources are considered under an invest to save programme.

The capital investment programme is essentially an 'invest to save' process spread throughout West Mercia and significant developments have been approved for the following:

- Hereford Custody
- Approval for new Bromsgrove police station with custody
- Approval for custody improvements at Telford police station
- Approval for new police station at Market Drayton with detention facilities
- Approval for new custody provision at Wellington
- Delivery of new road and Gatehouse for Hindlip Headquarters

The year in brief

2008

April

- The first group of Trainee Detectives from the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA)-accredited scenario-based Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP) gained full Detective Constable status at a ceremony held at Hindlip Hall. Detectives who have completed this programme are now fully accredited specialist investigators.
- West Mercia achieved Carbon Trust Standard certification. The Carbon Trust Standard is awarded to organisations that are taking real action on climate change and have reduced their own carbon emissions.

May

- A show garden created by West Mercia and Adcote School, Shrewsbury to mark the 40th anniversary of the formation of West Mercia Constabulary won a Royal Horticultural Society Silver Gilt award at the Malvern Spring Gardening Show.
- Victim Care database launched. The database enables officers and staff to more effectively manage their Victim Code updates, ensuring the Force continues to meet the mandatory Victim's Code requirements by providing victims with updates about their case.

June

- Simon Edens, formerly of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, joined West Mercia as Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Operations).
- 'Internet Safety Fortnight' promoted Internet safety awareness, delivering key internet safety messages and material on how parents can keep their children safe online.
- Superintendent Jane Horwood received the 2008 Mentoring Award from the International Association of Women Police. Jane was nominated for this distinguished award as a result of receiving the 2008 British Association of Women in Policing Award for Mentoring, which marked the significant contribution that she has made to the careers of so many staff, especially women, in West Mercia and throughout the wider police service.

July

- PC Mat Crisp and PC Ricky Gray (posthumously), were honoured in the Sun Newspaper/Police Federation Bravery Awards with a top national bravery award in recognition of their courage in risking their own lives to save the lives

of their colleagues and other members of the public in an incident in Shrewsbury in May 2007.

Ricky Gray tragically lost his life in the incident. He was an outstanding officer who made the ultimate sacrifice in his desire to protect others and is the first officer to receive the national "bravest of the brave" award posthumously.

- The Hereford Police Choir appears in the BBC 1 show *Last Choir Standing*.
- Our Legal Services Department gained Lexcel accreditation following assessment by the Law Society. This is only the fourth in-house police legal team in England and Wales to gain the Lexcel quality mark. Achieving the quality mark indicates that West Mercia has a highly professional and very effective legal team providing first-rate legal advice, backed up with strong processes and systems.

August

- PC Diane Goodman became West Mercia's first female police motorcyclist.
- Foundation degrees in Professional Policing were awarded to 34 West Mercia police officers for the first time at a graduation ceremony held at Force headquarters, Hindlip Hall, Worcester. These were the first officers at West Mercia to receive the degree, which was introduced as part of the new Initial Police Learning and Development Programme back in 2006.

September

- David Shaw, formerly of West Midlands Police, joined West Mercia as Deputy Chief Constable.
- "Quality People" awards ceremony held at Hindlip Hall, Worcester to recognise and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Police Officers, Police Staff and Special Constables from across the Force.

October

- Samantha Spencer, aged 14, from Droitwich named West Mercia's Good Citizen of the Year 2008. The annual Good Citizen Awards recognise young people aged 18 and under who have made an outstanding contribution to their community. Samantha received her award for her extensive charity work and fundraising, despite being in ill health herself.
- Inspector Al Short and a team of volunteers organised a 'Help for Heroes' event at Hindlip Hall, Worcester to raise funds for the charity of the same name, set up to support service personnel injured in current conflicts. Over 8,000 visitors enjoyed a number of military and police related attractions, raising over £30,000 in ticket sales and raffles.

November

- Launch of the new West Mercia Police non-emergency telephone number – 0300 333 3000.
- BBC Home Affairs Correspondent Danny Shaw spent three days with West Mercia to explore issues around policing in today's society. Following his visit, a series of short radio features were broadcast on Radio Four's Today programme, together with a live interview with Chief Constable Paul West.

December

- Operation Christmas Presence launched, aiming to make the festive season safer for everyone by clamping down on crimes such as drink driving, drink spiking and drink-fuelled violence.
- West Mercia hosted a 'Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence' conference which attracted a wide range of keynote speakers, including actress Lynda Bellingham.
- Launch of CrimeMapper, a new way for the public to find out about crime in their area, contact details for local policing teams, crime prevention advice and information on what we are doing to reduce crime further.
- Pamela Becke, one of Britain's longest serving Police Specials, awarded an MBE in the Queens New Year Honours for voluntary services to the community. Pam, from Bridgnorth, Shropshire, served 41 years as a Special with West Mercia and retired in August 2008. She continues to assist the police through her work as a CCTV coordinator and helping to recruit new Specials.

2009

January

- Four men arrested and charged with the murder of Craig Hodson-Walker, the attempted murder of Ken Hodson-Walker and attempted robbery at Fairfield General Stores and post office in Bromsgrove.
- Launch of the new Victim Care Booklet for all victims of crime, which is designed to provide simple, user-friendly information to all victims of crime at the earliest possible stage of their contact with West Mercia Police.
- West Mercia's 'Policing Pledge' published which gives the public a clear indication of the standard of service which we will aim to deliver.
- Shropshire officer PC Ricky Gray, who was killed on duty in May 2007, and his colleague Constable Mat Crisp awarded Queen's Commendations for Bravery. Chief Constable Paul West said: "It is very fitting that the commitment and dedication to public service demonstrated by these two officers has been honoured and recognised in this very special way."

- The 2008 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) ranked West Mercia 73rd out of the 317 organisations who participated, placing the Force in Stonewall's 'Top 100 Employers' list. This achievement reflects the amount of work which is taking place across West Mercia to ensure lesbian, gay and bisexual people feel safe and valued, in relation to both our workforce and our communities.

February

- An Internet safety presentation entitled “Think you know? - Do you?” was launched at Hindlip to a multi-agency audience of 130. The presentation has been developed by the Force on behalf of the four Children’s Safeguarding Boards across West Mercia.
- Shropshire Division launched 'Cop Cards' – a new way of informing children about the work that police do in the area and providing them with an opportunity to get to know their local officers and Community Support Officers (CSO).
- New road safety campaign, “It’s your call!”, launched by the Safer Roads Partnership, highlighting the consequences of using a mobile phone while driving.
- Seven men were given substantial jail sentences having been convicted of carrying out a sustained campaign of terror against elderly and vulnerable residents of The Glen mobile home park in Blackwell, Bromsgrove. Three homes had been burned to the ground in two arson attacks as part of a campaign to intimidate residents into leaving.

March

- Inspector Melanie Crowther, Force Operations Department and Helen Danks, Diversity Advisor, received the British Association of Women in Policing Benenden Healthcare Award. The Award is presented to those who help to promote a healthy workforce and has been awarded to Mel and Helen for their work in establishing and supporting the West Mercia’s Maternity Support Network.
- Local Policing Teams undertook a week of activity to demonstrate to residents how they are implementing the West Mercia 'Policing Pledge' in their neighbourhoods. The week was organised to coincide with a Home Office campaign called “Justice Seen Justice Done”, which aimed to raise awareness of the Policing Pledge and Local Policing.
- Muriel Southall and Michael Whitcombe were convicted, and subsequently jailed for life, for the murder of Mrs Southall’s husband, Reginald, whose body was recovered from the River Severn near his home in Stourport in December 2007.

Glossary

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
BCU	Basic Command Unit
CJSSS	Criminal Justice: Simple Speedy Summary
CSO	Community Support Officer
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
ICIDP	Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme
MAPPA	Multi-agency public protection arrangements
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
PACT	Partners and Communities Together
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
PPAF	Policing Performance Assessment Framework
PURE	Police Use of Resources Evaluation
SOLO	Sexual offences liaison officers
SPI	Statutory Performance Indicator
STO	Specially Trained Officers
WEI	Workplace Equality Index