



**JOINT ANNUAL REPORT OF
WEST MERCIA POLICE
AND
WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

2009/10

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

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During the last year, police officers, police staff and volunteers 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. This Annual Report provides an opportunity to highlight just some of the Force's achievements in 2009/10.

The year started with a refined Force strategy - Serving – Protecting – Making the Difference – underpinned by a number of specific aims and outcomes to achieve over the coming years. One year on, we are able to show how we actioned each of these strategic aims and to identify some of the real and tangible benefits that have resulted.

West Mercia Police continues to perform very strongly on the national stage and was one of the most highly rated forces in England and Wales in the recently published HMIC Police Report Card. It is also very pleasing that the Force continues to have a strong record of delivering value for money and consistently features in the highest scoring group in the Audit Commission's evaluation of Police Use of Resources. However, there is no room for complacency and our shared aim is to provide continuously improving police services for all of our communities whilst maintaining our solid financial position within an increasingly challenging national and global economic climate.

The strong reputation that West Mercia Police enjoys has resulted from the dedication and commitment of all its police officers, police staff and volunteers. The challenge for the Force, and into the future, is to build upon that reputation 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 following public consultation the Police Authority agrees the priorities to guide the Force in its activities for the forthcoming year and also agrees a series of key measures which are used to monitor progress in delivering the agreed outcomes. With the introduction of a government 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 to ensure measures are also in place to track progress against these initiatives. The outcomes, priorities and measures are set out in the joint policing plan

By focusing on the priority areas identified in the joint policing plan West Mercia Police has continued to maintain a high level of performance results and recorded crime has fallen consistently over recent years. End of year figures show that there was a 7.6% reduction in recorded offences comparing 2009/10 to 2008/09. Other results include a fall in serious violence against the person incidents with an improvement in the detection rate for the same type of crime. The Force has also maintained good progress against the government's confidence target and achieved a 50% confidence level by the end of 2009/10.

Recognising the need to improve the service offered to the victims of serious sexual offences the Force has introduced approximately 60 specially trained officers across the force to deal with these types of crimes. In addition the Authority has recently endorsed the development of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for West Mercia and the Force is now working in partnership with other agencies to introduce this facility.

The challenging financial climate has made us concentrate even more on collaboration and partnership working to achieve greater value for money. Both the Force and the Authority have actively participated in increased collaboration and joint working with neighbouring forces and authorities. This commitment to collaborate has recently been strengthened by entering into a five year regional collaboration strategy within the West Midlands region. The Force and Authority have also actively engaged in local partnerships across West Mercia, recognising the importance placed on shared targets and enhanced delivery.

The Force has performed well in external assessments. It has been inspected on its implementation of the Policing Pledge and was one of only eight forces to be assessed as 'Good'. In 2010 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary published performance information from its rounded assessment of police forces, known as the 'report card'. In the three areas graded within the report card West Mercia Police was graded 'good' in two areas and 'fair' in the third.

Despite an overall excellent performance record in 2009/10 the Force were criticised for failings in two particular cases where fuller and more timely investigations may have made a difference. These cases have been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Police Authority. Some remedial steps have already been taken. The Authority remains committed to ensure the Public receive the very best service which can be provided at all times but it is recognised that as financial pressures come to bear a heavy burden falls to our officers and police staff to make the right judgement every time, a

responsibility which inevitably and with benefit of hindsight will always be open to challenge.

Overall the Police Authority is confident that West Mercia Police is well placed to address all the challenges ahead and will continue to be seen as a high performing, cost effective force which is capable of sustaining a high standard of policing services for West Mercia.

What we have achieved

April 2009 saw the launch of the redefined West Mercia policing mission: Serving – Protecting – Making the Difference.

In support of the mission the Authority and the Force described the outcomes that we expected to see in the years ahead:

- The public have confidence in us and express satisfaction with our policing service
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour remain low
- Our communities feel safe

We set out our broad strategic aims for the next three years:

- Strengthen the confidence of all our communities and improve public satisfaction levels
- Protect vulnerable people
- Improve the service offered to victims and witnesses
- Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour
- Ensure sufficient capability and capacity to address major, serious and organised crime, and civil contingencies
- Bring offenders to justice
- Reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol misuse
- Reduce road casualties
- Use our resources efficiently and effectively

And within those aims we identified our priorities for 2009/10. The following pages provide information on and examples of what we have achieved during the year.

Strengthen the confidence of all our communities and improve public satisfaction levels

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Identify and respond to issues of local concern
- Increase our accessibility to the public through improved communications and the availability of local information concerning crime, including court results
- Endeavour to deliver our services to the standards and principles contained within the West Mercia Policing Pledge

What we have done

For 2009/10 the Home Office set just one target for police forces – “the percentage of respondents who agree or tend to agree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area”, as measured by the British Crime Survey. West Mercia’s target was 50% and as at December 2009 (latest data available) we achieved 47.6%. Our future, challenging targets are 54.3% for 2010/11 and 59% for 2011/12.

We use a process called PACT which stands for Partners and Communities Together to ensure communities have a genuine say in what local issues are addressed as priorities and how their community is policed. Every Local Policing Team has the flexibility to tailor the delivery of PACT to meet the needs of their community, but typical elements include: meetings, surgeries (where local people can have a one-to-one conversation), and postcards (available to pick up in places like local libraries, pubs, doctors’ surgeries and post offices).

During 2009/10 there were 964 PACT partner meetings and 5,203 PACT surgeries held across the force area. Common examples of the issues raised include:

- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Speeding
- Dog Fouling
- Youth gathering
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Street drinking

The Crime and Safety Partnership Survey is sent out to approx 60,000 households during the year in four phases. The survey asks residents about their opinions of the police and other local agencies and seeks people’s views about local issues of concern.

The survey findings for April 2009 – September 2009 showed that the following issues were perceived to be the most important problems in respondents’ neighbourhoods:

1. Speeding traffic
2. Groups of people loitering or hanging around in public places
3. Underage drinking
4. Rubbish or litter lying around
5. People being drunk or rowdy in public places

We also used the survey to monitor public perceptions of feelings of safety and fear of crime.

30.8% of people felt that their neighbourhood has been completely or very safe over the last three months. 93.8% felt that crime and anti-social behaviour have no, or a slight, impact on the quality of their day to day life and 42.6% have been fearful of house burglary, being mugged / robbed, assaulted in a public place, or of anti-social behaviour in the last three months.

West Mercia Police Authority holds 'Policing Matters' meetings that provide local people with the opportunity to meet the Divisional Police Commander, Police Authority Members and Partner Agencies for their area. The meetings enable the community to find out what is being done in the area and gives the public an opportunity to provide their views.

The information from all these consultation methods was used to shape the priorities for the 2010-2013 Policing Plan.

In November 2009 the force launched its new website – www.westmercia.police.uk - which has been redesigned in order to improve our communications to the public. In December, for the first time, the force ran a publicity campaign on Facebook to support Operation Christmas Presence, since when we have continued to post interesting stories on Facebook on a weekly basis.

CrimeMapper continues to be a key part of our policing pledge and the force's commitment to improving services. The [CrimeMapper website](#) provides visitors with maps of crime – split into separate local areas and wards – in categories such as burglary, theft, robbery, vehicle crime, violence and anti-social behaviour, alongside information on what actions police are taking to reduce crime and explanations of crime trends.

During 2009 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) visited all 43 police forces in England and Wales to review how well forces were delivering the standards they promised the public within their Policing Pledges. West Mercia Police was awarded an overall grade of "good", one of only 8 forces to achieve this grade.

The Pledge is divided into ten domains, each of which has been assessed using a number of internal measures against the baseline of 2008/09. Eight of the domains have shown improvements over the year, one has seen a slight drop in performance and one was not assessed in 2009/10.

Domain	
Provide information on Local Policing Team	Minor improvement
Provide opportunities to meet Local Policing Team	Improved
Provide monthly updates on progress with agreed priorities	Some deterioration
Ensure Local Policing Team spends at least 80% of time visibly working in your area	Improved

Respond to every message directed to your Local Policing Team within 24 hours	Improved
Answer and deploy to emergencies	Minor improvement
Answer and deploy to non emergencies	Improved
Treat you fairly	Improved
Agree how you would like your case taken forward	Improved
Acknowledge dissatisfaction with service	Not assessed *

* West Mercia, along with many other forces, does not currently have a cost effective, robust way of monitoring this domain. However, work is in progress to determine a suitable method of monitoring it.

Community Safety Initiative Fund

Each year the Police Authority allocates a sum of money to each of West Mercia's five Divisions for community safety and engagement projects. The money is used to support local engagement activities, reassurance and safety campaigns and partnerships and has proved very effective in assisting local policing teams to kick-start initiatives. The funds have supported a wide range of projects which benefit local communities, and contribute to community safety, including:

- * setting up a boxing club for disengaged young people
- * supporting partnership Fun Days
- * youth documentary film production
- * summer play schemes
- * street sport initiatives
- * installation of CCTV and dummy cameras
- * assistance to volunteer groups
- * drink drive campaigns
- * children's personal safety programme

In 2009/10 each Division received £54,337 from the Fund. The Chairman of the Policing Board and the Divisional Commander jointly allocate these funds, overseen by the members of the Divisional Policing Board.

Protect vulnerable people

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Focus on the management of sex offenders and other offenders who pose a risk to the public and take a positive approach towards dealing with domestic abuse, child abuse, hate crime and missing persons
- Use Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) in partnership with others to increase our effectiveness in protecting vulnerable people

What we have done

During 2009/10 there were 817 recorded serious sexual offences, up 10.7% compared to 2008/09 and detections increased from 29% last year to 30.5% in 2009/10. There were 883 offences of serious violence against the person, a decrease of 14.4% from 1,031 offences in 2008/09. Detections increased during 2009/10 to 56.2% compared to 49.4% in 2008/09.

During the year the force was inspected by the Home Office Rape Support Team. The inspection looked at all aspects of how West Mercia and the Crown Prosecution Service deal with Rape Investigation and concluded that "West Mercia Police have made huge improvements in their rape investigative processes in the last twelve months and have made rape investigations a priority for the Force".

In September 2009 West Mercia led the way nationally in being the first force to use a Risk of Sexual Harm Order (ROSHO).

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) exist to deal with the risks that are presented by some offenders who are thought likely to cause serious harm. West Mercia Police, West Mercia Probation Trust and the Prison Service make up the 'Responsible Authority for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements' in the West Mercia area. In October 2009, public protection officers and staff featured in a BBC1 Panorama documentary about what MAPPA is and how it works.

In March 2010 West Mercia Police took part in the Learning Disability Hate Crime Conference, aimed both at people with learning difficulties and those working with or caring for them. The conference, organised by members of the Worcestershire branch of the West Midlands Regional Learning Disability Board, which includes West Mercia Police, incorporated discussion about the effects of hate crime, a series of related workshops and a performance by a drama group.

West Mercia also launched the True Vision Disability Reporting pack which encourages victims of disability hate crime to report it and provides details on the support available. This pack is available in an 'easy read' format (with larger print, simpler text and more illustrations) aimed to assist those with learning difficulties or mental health issues.

In February 2010 West Mercia's Safeguarding Children Boards took part in Internet Safety Awareness Week where people in schools, libraries and colleges across West Mercia could learn more about how to surf the internet safely. The theme of the event was 'Think Before You Post' and focused on the power of personal information and how it can be misused.

The awareness presentation entitled 'Think you Know? Do you?' has been developed for parents and has been shared with schools and agencies to raise awareness around how to keep children and young people safe online.

Improve the service offered to victims and witnesses

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Fully comply with the requirements of the national Victims Code and keep people informed on the progress of their case
- Redesign our key processes around the needs of service users

What we have done

During 2009/10 we worked closely with our criminal justice partners to provide victims and witnesses of crime with the best possible service at all times. We carry out surveys of victims of crime on a regular basis. Listening to people's views helps us identify what lessons we can learn and how we can continually aim to do things better.

For the year 2009/10 we set a target for overall satisfaction with service received of 86%. This target was almost reached with 85.6% of respondents reporting that they were satisfied with our service. Satisfaction rates for violent crime have improved, are stable for burglary and road traffic collisions, but have fallen for vehicle crime.

Community resolution reinforces our commitment within the West Mercia Policing Pledge to: "Agree with you if you have been a victim of crime how you would like the case taken forward". In 2009/10 there were a total of 2,170 minor crimes where a community resolution took place.

'Penance Pick' by Lido Night-Time Invaders

Teenagers who jumped into Droitwich Lido after midnight and caused criminal damage have made amends for their anti-social behaviour by picking up litter in the surrounding park.

During their morning-long 'penance' the young people collected nearly 40 bags of rubbish from across the Lido park.

Their punishment was agreed through the Community Resolution process, which is designed to enable victims to have quick resolutions and closure to their crime. It ensured the offenders received speedy and proportionate justice and reduced bureaucracy for the force.

In July 2009 a joint national Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) inspection took place around compliance with the 'No Witness No Justice' project aimed at improving victim and witness care. The subsequent report, published in March 2010, contained 41 recommendations aimed at all Police Forces and the Crown Prosecution Service. A joint agency action plan to address the recommendations is now in place.

An example of an action we are working towards is the development of a comprehensive contact directory. Contact directories are a list of those persons/organisations who have already been vetted by the police e.g. locksmiths, to whom we can refer victims.

Working with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) we have set up Victim and Witness Forums and have established Practitioner Forums in order that staff within each of the agencies can meet and share their thoughts, ideas and any concerns about inter-agency linking. In addition, also with the LCJB, we are undertaking focus groups around the Force area and have now completed three - Kidderminster, Telford and Shrewsbury - to get feedback about all agencies involved in the criminal justice process.

In June 2009 we changed our processes for dealing with the victims of road traffic collisions in order to improve their satisfaction with the service they received. We now contact *all* the parties involved to advise them of what they can expect from the process. We provide a named point of contact and thereafter provide updates as necessary.

Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

Focus on: a) house burglary b) robbery c) serious violence d) anti-social behaviour

What we have done

West Mercia Police aims to make life difficult for those people who commit crime and whose anti-social behaviour affects quality of life. 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.

In 2009/10 there were 3,291 house burglaries recorded across the force area, a decrease of 14.5% over the previous year. Against a burglary detection target for 2009/10 of 21%, we achieved 19.5%. While this was disappointing, it still represented an improved detection rate in comparison with 2008/09 (18.9%). Domestic burglary remains a top priority for the police. Throughout the year we ran campaigns and initiatives to help reduce the opportunities for crime to occur such as our Safe & Secure campaign which sought to highlight the simple ways that people could protect themselves and their homes against burglary.

During 2009/10 there were 468 robberies in West Mercia which is a reduction of 91 crimes compared to 2008/09. Of these, 60 were business robberies and 408 were personal robberies, compared to 104 and 455 respectively in 2008/09 – a reduction in both categories of robbery. Our initial target sanction detection rate for robberies in 2009/10 was 27%. However, a six month review of performance identified that we were performing well above target and in November 2009 the Police Authority decided to increase the target to 35% to reflect this and ensure this excellent performance was maintained throughout the year. We ended the year on target at 35%.

In 2009/10 there were 883 offences of serious violence against the person, a decrease of 14.4% from 1,031 offences in 2008/09. Detections increased during 2009/10 to 56.2% compared to 49.4% in 2008/09.

During the year 2009/10 there were 84,327 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour, a decrease of almost 5% compared to 2007/08. The term anti-social behaviour covers a broad range of conduct ranging from groups of youths loitering, to neighbours who don't clean up after their dogs, to the misuse of fireworks. All of these issues can affect quality of life and their perceptions of the local area. In order to reduce anti-social behaviour, West Mercia aims to intervene early. We make use of the many tools at our disposal, including warning letters and interviews, contracts and agreements, fixed penalty notices and penalty notices for disorder, parenting orders, dispersal powers, anti-social behaviour orders and finally, where necessary, arrest and jail sentences.

Factors affecting the quality of life within a local area are often complex and require the help of many different people and organisations to resolve. Local Policing Teams work as part of a broader neighbourhood teams, including local councillors, neighbourhood managers and housing managers, youth workers and local businesses as well as community and voluntary organisations

In November 2009, West Mercia took part in the Home Office's Not In My Neighbourhood Week. The week of action which took place between 2 - 6 November, gave West Mercia and our partners involved in community safety the opportunity to showcase the work that we do to keep neighbourhoods safe.

New Youth Scheme Tackles Wyre Forest Anti Social Behaviour

A groundbreaking youth community work scheme was launched by police in Wyre Forest with the aim of preventing youngsters from re-offending after they have been caught committing anti-social behaviour

The scheme works by giving youngsters the opportunity to pay back the community for any damage they have caused through work and at the same time teaches them about the wider impact of their actions in order to instil them with a greater sense of social responsibility.

Four Wyre Forest youths aged between 14 and 16 who were caught pulling up plants from a town centre display are the first to take part in the scheme. None were charged or cautioned in relation to that but Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) letters were sent to their parents advising them of what they had done and asking them to monitor their children's behaviour. The youths were then invited to visit Brinton Park to learn from Wyre Forest District Council landscape staff about how plants are grown in the greenhouses there and the work that goes into organising displays around the district. They were also set to work litter picking and clearing leaves from parts of the park such as the tennis courts and skateboard area.

'Shop Watch' success

At Hereford Crown Court in January 2010 a career church burglar, Christopher Coulthard, was sentenced to 9 years for the burglaries of a number of churches including three in Worcestershire.

Coulthard was arrested at the Angel Hotel, Pershore on 29 September 2009 following the speedy reactions of two community support officers who were at the town police station when information was received that Coulthard was in the area. Using the 'Shop Watch' radio system they discovered that he had checked into the hotel, where they detained him until police officers arrived and arrested him.

Ensure sufficient capability and capacity to address major, serious and organised crime, and civil contingencies

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Maintain appropriate levels of operational resilience
- Identify new opportunities for collaboration and joint working with neighbouring forces
- Develop our counter-terrorism (CONTEST) strategy
- Provide an effective response to civil emergencies

What we have done

In order to provide appropriate levels of operational resilience, and following on from a review of Armed Policing, the force has introduced the Force Operational Support Team (FOST). With effect from April 2010, the FOST, based at Shrewsbury, Hereford and Rubery, provide specialist resources including armed response to assist local officers in responding to certain types of emergency calls across West Mercia.

West Mercia Police has established formal arrangements for collaborative working with the three other police forces within the West Midlands Region (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands). The Regional Collaboration Statement of Purpose sets out the principles that provide an agreed framework within which to pursue collaborative opportunities.

Examples of regional collaboration include:

- The Regional Intelligence Unit gathers and collates intelligence on serious and organised criminals affecting the West Midlands Region.
- Operation Viper is our operational response to serious and organised crime affecting the West Midlands region which has been cited by the Home Office as good practice. Operation Viper involves all four forces within the region, together with our partners in the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the UK Border Agency.
- The Central Motorway Police Group is a three force policing service responsible for patrolling the motorways of the West Midlands, West Mercia and Staffordshire force areas.
- The police helicopter, based at Wolverhampton airport, is shared with Staffordshire Police.
- The Regional Protective Services Group comprising Assistant Chief Constables from the West Mercia, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands forces and senior representatives from HM Revenue and Customs and SOCA.
- Business continuity arrangements are in place with other forces within our region in respect of Fingerprints, High Tech Crime Unit, Photographic and Scenes of Crime.
- West Mercia is leading the West Midlands regional collaboration for the provision of forensic services in custody.
- The Force maintains a Procurement Strategy which prioritises purchases from a national or regional collaborative contract except where there is no suitable alternative to a local arrangement.

- An agreement exists whereby Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service uses our specialist facilities in Worcestershire for training.

The Force continues to implement a combined CONTEST strategy to tackle potential security threats and terrorism. Each of the four strands (Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare) is actively managed at Chief Superintendent level. The management groups for each strand meet on a regular basis to review progress against the relevant strategic delivery plan.

West Mercia has developed contingency plans with local and national partners, including HM Government, to protect sites of national importance in the event of a civil emergency. We have also built upon our current capacity and capability to respond to any terrorist related incident and participate in a number of exercises which test local and regional collaboration.

Bring offenders to justice

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Work with local Criminal Justice agencies to reduce re-offending
- Improve our investigative processes through the implementation of our RESULT! programme

What we have done

We continue to protect the public of West Mercia by targeting criminals who cause most harm and to reduce the rate of reoffending by high risk offenders. We will work with our partners from the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to ensure that people wanted on warrant are brought before the courts as quickly as possible.

During the year we worked with partners to improve the speed in which offenders who had breached a community penalty order were brought back before the courts and dealt with. In 2009/10 we reduced the time it took to get an offender back before the courts and dealt with by 51%, or from 68 days to 33 days on average.

The LCJB has also made process improvements in dealing with offenders wanted on Fail to Attend warrants. From April 2009 to March 2010, we reduced the number of people wanted on warrant by 25.9%, or from 371 to 275. We made improvements in how quickly we found offenders and arrested them.

Integrated Offender Management is a key priority that West Mercia Police and partners work closely together on. In Shropshire we are building on the success of joint working by bringing together partners in probation, health, the local authority, courts, prison and volunteer services to provide a single targeted approach to all strands of offender management. Practical support such as good tenancy training, prompt access to a GP or drugs worker, training opportunities, intensive parenting support and restorative justice to address attitudes and thinking behaviour are all interventions that can help rehabilitate offenders. Close liaison with front line police officers helps to ensure that those who cause greatest risk of harm to our communities are given opportunities to reform or pay the consequences through the courts.

The RESULT! Programme has now been completed. We continue to improve standards of investigation through the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP), and the Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP) as well as through Senior Detective development.

Reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol misuse

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Tackle alcohol related violence
- In partnership with other agencies address issues of underage drinking
- Disrupt the availability and supply of illegal drugs in our communities

What we have done

It is difficult to measure alcohol related violence so instead, as a proxy measure, we count the number of less serious injury assaults. During the year 2009/10 there were 6,210 less serious injury assaults which is a reduction of 6.8% from the previous year.

During the Christmas period West Mercia once again implemented Operation Christmas Presence to encourage holiday revellers to take personal responsibility for their actions and be aware of the effect that their behaviour may have on others.

Extra police patrols were used to crack down on crimes such as drink-fuelled violence, anti-social behaviour and drink spiking, by targeting people who commit offences and by working with pubs and clubs to keep people safe.

Throughout 2009/10 West Mercia Police has worked in partnership with Trading Standards, sharing intelligence to target 'test purchasing' in off license premises.

During 2009/10 there were 195 offences of supplying class A drugs that resulted in a sanction detection, that is a detection resulting in a criminal justice action being taken against the offender responsible.

Police Show Crime Doesn't Pay

In March 2010, an Audi R8 worth around £80,000 was displayed at the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch in March 2009 to show the public that crime really does not pay and to reassure them that the police use every power available to seize and confiscate assets that are the proceeds of crime.

The car was seized in January 2009 during a major drugs operation spanning both West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police force areas. Around 15 kilos of import-quality cocaine with a street value in excess of £3 million was also seized.

Reduce road casualties

Our priority for 2009/10 was to:

- Together with partner agencies use targeted enforcement and education campaigns to reduce instances of speeding and anti-social driving

What we have done

During 2009/10 there were 469 fatal and serious road traffic casualties, a reduction of 9.3% compared to 2008/09, well below the Government year 2010 target of 800 or fewer casualties.

West Mercia Police is a member of the Safer Roads Partnership. The aim of the partnership is to reduce the number of casualties and make the roads safer for all users in West Mercia through speed enforcement and by seeking to change attitudes and behaviour.

Speeding is often identified as a priority for local residents through the PACT process and, as a result, Local Policing teams conduct speed enforcement activity in areas of local concern.

Motorists who drive too fast in the West Mercia area can now opt to take part in a speed awareness course instead of receiving penalty points on their licence. Research has shown that drivers who are retrained are less likely to re-offend than those who are prosecuted. Drivers only have the choice to opt for a speed awareness course on one occasion.

In April 2009 the Safer Roads Partnership in West Mercia also launched a new rider training programme aimed at reducing the number of collisions involving motorcycle and moped users. The 'Take Control' programme offered a range of free or subsidised training courses for any motorcyclists regardless of age or experience. It also included engaging with the biker community to encourage safer use of the roads.

'Special' Weekend on West Mercia's Roads

As part of the National Specials Weekend in February 2010, members of West Mercia's Special Constabulary took part in a range of activities to make their communities safer, with a particular emphasis on roads policing and speed enforcement. Initiatives included:

- * Together with the charity RoadPeace, Specials placed flowers at four recent fatal crash sites on the A49 in Herefordshire to act as a reminder to others to consider their own driving manner and drive more carefully.
- * Specials worked with regular traffic officers to operate ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) checks on major and local roads to gain experience on traffic and crime issues and help counter criminals making use of the road network.
- * Specials from North Worcestershire and Warwickshire Police teamed up to conduct a joint operation to tackle cross-border criminals along the county border.

Use our resources efficiently and effectively

Our priorities for 2009/10 were to:

- Ensure, through a comprehensive business review process, that we are appropriately resourced and configured
- Ensure that appropriately skilled and trained staff are deployed in key roles
- Maximise the potential for IT and other technological solutions to support front line services
- Identify opportunities for reducing our environmental impact

What we have done

In late 2009, West Mercia Police initiated a review to establish how the force should be configured, resourced and structured to deliver its mission of – Serving – Protecting – Making the Difference.

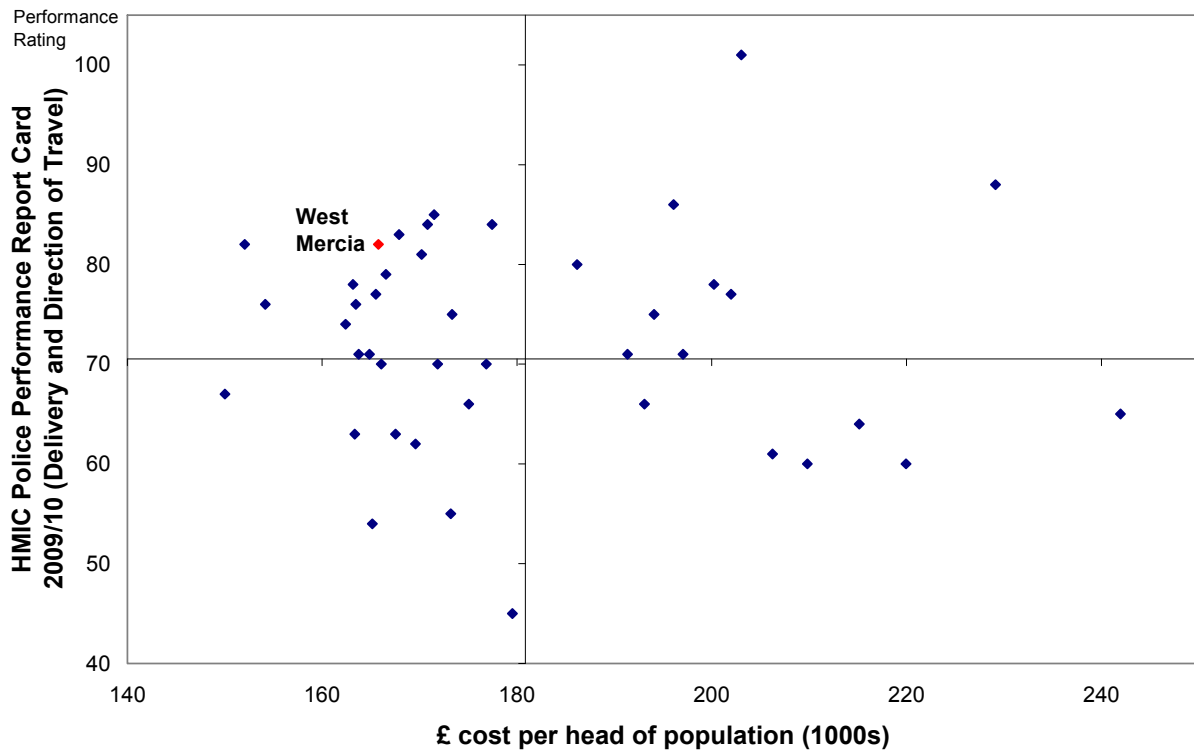
In light of the recent Government White Paper on the future of policing and the prospect of a difficult financial climate in the future, the review team are currently in the process of developing proposals outlining how a newly reshaped force could be structured and operate to best effect in the future.

In relation to the best use of IT and technological solutions, in June 2009 the force rolled out the use of body-worn video to police officers and community support officers (CSOs), a groundbreaking development for the force. A total of 120 cameras and equipment sets were purchased. The cameras are used to gather evidence at fast-moving and complex situations, in particular domestic violence and public order incidents.

In relation to reducing our environmental impact during the year, we achieved our target of a 5% reduction in energy units used. We have also been pursuing Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Method Good/Excellent rating on three new capital projects and have completed registration and compliance with the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme. Additionally there is a Green Travel Plan in place for Police Headquarters at Hindlip, Worcester, and the appointment of a full-time Energy Manager in 2010/11 will give further emphasis to this important area of work.

The Cost Performance Matrix detailed below has been produced by assigning numeric scores to the grades awarded to forces within the various domains and sub-domains of the Police Record Card and incorporating a weighting for directions of travel. Whilst this methodology could not be said to be entirely scientific, it represents a simple and effective way of displaying relative performance and costs:

Performance and Cost Matrix (all forces excluding London)



The matrix essentially confirms the value for money tradition of West Mercia Police, which has a recent history of providing upper quartile performance on lower quartile resources.

Measures of our success

The measures we used to track progress in delivering our outcomes:

	Target or method of monitoring 2009/10	2009/10 Result/ Commentary	2008/09 Result/ Commentary
Public Confidence. The percentage of respondents who agree or tend to agree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area (measured by the British Crime Survey)	50%	50%	49%
Overall victim satisfaction with service provided by the police (measured by West Mercia User Satisfaction Surveys)	86%	85.6%	84.9%
Number of serious violent crimes: a) serious violence against the person b) serious sexual offences	a) maintain or improve 2008/09 performance b) to be monitored by Police Authority	a) 883 b) 817	a) 1,038 b) 757
Total sanction detection rate* for serious violent crime a) serious violence against the person b) serious sexual offences	a) 48% b) 30%	a) 56.2% b) 30.5%	a) 49.2% b) 28.1%
Number of: a) robberies b) house burglaries	a) to be monitored by Police Authority b) maintain or improve 2008/09 performance	a) 468 b) 3,291	a) 559 b) 3,854
Total sanction detection rate* for: a) robbery b) house burglary	a) 27% (altered to 35% in Nov 2009 by Police Authority) b) 21%	a) 35% b) 19.5% **	a) 27.2% b) 18.9%
Alcohol related crime as measured by the number of less serious injury assaults	To be monitored by Police Authority	6,210	6,670
Total number of crimes recorded	Maintain or improve 2008/09 performance	71,250	77,204
The number of fatal and serious road traffic casualties	800 or fewer (Govt year 2010 target)	469	517
Feelings of safety – as measured by the Crime and Safety Partnership Survey a) percentage of people who feel their neighbourhood has been completely or very safe over the	<i>Measure under development to establish the baseline</i>	a) 30.8%	a) 28%

last three months b) percentage of people who feel that crime and anti-social behaviour have no, or a slight, impact on the quality of their day to day life c) percentage of people who have been fearful of house burglary, being mugged / robbed, assaulted in a public place, or of anti-social behaviour in the last three months		b) 93.8% c) 42.6%	b) 93% c) 45%
Delivery of the Policing Pledge	To be monitored by Police Authority	Of the 10 domains in the Pledge, 8 have shown improvements on the baseline, one has seen a slight drop in performance and one was not assessed in 2009/10 ***	N/A

*detections resulting in a criminal justice action being taken against the offender responsible

** see page 13 for explanation

*** West Mercia, along with many other forces, does not currently have a cost effective, robust way of monitoring this domain. However, work is in progress to determine a suitable method of monitoring it.

Inspection and audit

Police Performance – 2008/09

Analysis of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) is an annual assessment developed by the Home Office with support from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the Association of Police Authorities, the Association of Chief Police Officers and other stakeholders that reports data against a series of performance indicators. For 2008/09, the Home Office set a single performance target for the APACS indicator relating to public confidence.

Annual Audit Letter 2008/09

The Annual Audit Letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Police Authority, in relation to the accounting period ending 31 March 2009.

Audit of the accounts

A most favourable, ie an unqualified opinion on the Police Authority's accounts was issued in July 2009. This means there was no area which the accountant wished to draw to the Police Authority's attention.

Value for money conclusion

The Police Authority has adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

Police Use of Resources scores

West Mercia was rated as one of the top 8 police forces in England and Wales in the independent Police Use of Resources Evaluation (PURE).

THEME	Assessment
Managing finances	3
Governing the business	3
Managing resources	3

Level 1 Performs poorly – does not meet minimum requirements

Level 2 Performs adequately – meets only minimum requirements

Level 3 Performs well – exceeds minimum requirements

Level 4 Performs excellently – significantly exceeds minimum requirements

[Click here](#) to view the full audit letter

In their annual report "Auditing the accounts 2008/09", the Audit Commission congratulated West Mercia Police Authority on being the only police authority in the country where they were able to issue their opinion by 31 August 2009. The Commission stated "This demonstrates what can be achieved when an authority gives appropriate priority to financial reporting."

Inspection of police custody suites in West Mercia – December 2009

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary conducted a joint inspection of custody facilities in West Mercia looking at force-wide strategies, treatment and conditions, individual rights and healthcare.

The inspection identified much good practice but also highlighted some significant areas of concern. The report, which was published in February 2010, included a number of recommendations. These have been responded to constructively by the Force and built into an Action Plan that is currently being progressed.

The full report can be viewed at http://www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-prisons/docs/West_Mercia_2009_rps.pdf

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Inspections

1. Delivering the Policing Pledge (published October 2009)

During 2009 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) visited all 43 police forces in England and Wales to review how well forces were delivering the standards they promised the public within their Policing Pledges.

In October 2009 West Mercia Police was awarded an overall grade of "good", one of only 8 forces to achieve this grade.

Of the ten pledge standards, the Force was assessed as 'good' for seven and 'fair' for the remaining three. As well as reporting on the force's delivery of each Pledge standard, HMIC also assessed and graded the efforts being made to improve performance.

Surveys and management meetings were being used to improve performance; public satisfaction and confidence data were taken into account.	FAIR
The force had identified deficiencies in its delivery of the Pledge and was taking action in those areas.	GOOD
Implementation was led by the force's senior team, the Police Authority was involved, staff were being trained and the Pledge was communicated to staff and the public.	GOOD

2. Police Report Card (published March 2010)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessed the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales rating them as 'poor', 'fair', 'good' or 'excellent' in 18 areas of service delivery.

West Mercia Police was rated as 'good' for 'Local Crime and Policing' and 'Confidence and Satisfaction' and 'fair' for 'Protection from Serious Harm'.

Within these domains, the force was graded as 'excellent' for preventing knife crime and received a 'good/excellent' grading for comparative satisfaction of our BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community.

West Mercia received no 'poor' grades and HMIC also commented that, by national standards, West Mercia Police is a low-cost force.

All of the 18 categories showed a direction of travel, relative to previous assessments, that was either stable or improving.

We are pleased that HMIC has recognised West Mercia Police as one of the better performing forces in the country; however we are constantly seeking to improve our service and intend to put in place measures to address those aspects of performance graded as 'fair'.

The full report can be viewed at: [West Mercia Police Report Card](#)

Independent Custody Visits

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme provides a check on the conditions under which people are detained in police custody and provides an independent check on the way police officers and detention officers carry out their duties.

There are over 65 Independent Custody Visitors in West Mercia and they are drawn from members of the community from all parts of the force area. During 2009/10 five new visitors were appointed and two training sessions arranged. Visitors met regularly in their area panels to discuss their visits and received reports from the national Independent Custody Visiting Association. In addition they had the opportunity to attend a regional and national conference during 2009.

A total of 298 visits were made to the custody units at Hereford, Leominster, Kidderminster, Malinsgate (Telford), Redditch, Shrewsbury and Worcester during the year. This ensured that in line with the Police Authority's target the custody facilities in each area were visited on average once a week.

1,094 people were in custody at the time of the visits out of which 83% of the detainees who were available for a visit consented to meeting with the Independent Custody Visitors. Reasons for detainees not being seen included being interviewed, in consultation with their solicitor, asleep or visitors being advised not to see the detainee where there were health and safety concerns.

Whilst there were no major areas of concern, where issues were raised these were dealt with satisfactorily and reported to the Police Authority as appropriate. Issues raised during year included availability of suitable temporary clothing and footwear, medicine management and buildings maintenance.

During the year the refurbished Hereford Custody Suite was opened and was well received by the local Independent Custody Visiting Panel. During the period that the unit was closed full use was made of the facility at Leominster, with the local Panel ensuring all visits were carried out despite the additional travelling involved.

Her Majesty's Inspectorates' of Constabulary and Prisons undertook an inspection of the Custody facilities in West Mercia during December 2009 and Independent Custody Visitors were interviewed as part of that process. The Inspectorates' report was published in March 2010, following which West Mercia Police has produced an Action Plan to implement the report's findings and which will, during the coming year, be discussed with the Independent Custody Visitors. The report highlighted the importance of the Scheme's independent oversight mechanism and commented that the Police Authority was actively interested in custody issues and was ably supported by the four area Independent Custody Visiting Panels.

The Police Authority and Chief Constable's appreciation of the excellent work of the independent custody visitors was emphasised at the Annual Meeting and helped ensure that West Mercia provided a good standard of custody care.

Finance

Summary of Accounts 2009/10

This document summarises the Authority's full 2009/10 Statement of Accounts and gives a view of the financial position at 31 March 2010. 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 2009/10 the resources available from grants and council tax was £197.6m.

The Statement of Accounts is audited each year by the Audit Commission.

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 2010 reserves amounting to £24.6m are being held to meet these requirements.

Also during the year capital expenditure was £11.0m 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

2008/09		2009/10
£m		£m
122.1	Police officers salaries etc	122.6
53.7	Police staff salaries etc	55.9
2.3	Police pension scheme	2.4
41.0	Other running costs	39.1
<u>15.5</u>	Depreciation and accounting adjustments	<u>12.5</u>
234.6		232.5
<u>(24.3)</u>	Income	<u>(24.4)</u>
210.3	Net cost of services	208.1
(1.1)	Interest received and paid	0.4
<u>(15.5)</u>	Depreciation and accounting adjustments	<u>(12.5)</u>
<u>193.7</u>	Operating cost for year	<u>196.0</u>

The budget for the year was funded by:

(118.9)	Income from government grant	(121.8)
<u>(71.8)</u>	Income from council tax	<u>(75.8)</u>
<u>(190.7)</u>	Total funding	<u>(197.6)</u>

The difference between the total funding and the operating cost for the year was used for:

0.2	Funding capital expenditure from revenue sources	0.3
<u>(3.2)</u>	Contribution to (from) earmarked reserves	<u>1.3</u>
<u>(3.0)</u>	Resources deployed at the end of the year	<u>1.6</u>

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 2010

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

31 March 2009 £m		31 March 2010 £m
89.8	Value of buildings, vehicles and computers	86.3
23.9	Cash in the bank and invested	11.7
11.7	Money owed to West Mercia	11.3
(20.6)	Money owed by West Mercia	(13.5)
(10.9)	Long term borrowing by West Mercia	(10.1)
93.9	Total Assets less liabilities	85.7
	Represented by	
70.6	Accounting reserves	61.1
23.3	Funds for specific purposes	24.6
93.9		85.7

Capital Investment during the year

The assets of the Police Authority are enhanced by capital spending in each year. In 2009/10 the details were:

2008/09 £m		2009/10 £m
7.1	Land and buildings	4.5
2.4	Vehicles and equipment	4.6
3.1	Computers and communications	1.9
12.6		11.0
	These were paid for by using:	
2.7	Government grant	3.1
0.2	Funds from revenue sources and reserves	0.3
0.2	Sales of other assets	0.2
9.5	Borrowing or use of working capital	7.4
12.6		11.0

Cash Flow

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

2008/09		2009/10
£m		£m
33.6	Cash and investments at start of year	23.9
231.4	Cash received	239.0
(241.1)	Cash paid	(251.2)
<u>23.9</u>	Cash and investments at end of year	<u>11.7</u>

Efficiency Plan

West Mercia has a strong record of delivering value for money. It has consistently featured in the highest scoring group of police forces in the Audit Commission's evaluation of Police Use of Resources (PURE).

By the end of the financial year 2009/10 West Mercia had achieved £57.1 million in efficiency savings since 1999. This is the equivalent of effectively funding 120 police officers per year, which gives an indication of the scale of the achievement.

West Mercia recorded in excess of £4 million of efficiency gains in 2009/10 and is therefore on track to deliver the planned target for the Comprehensive Spending Review period 2008–2011.

2009/10 saw the continuation of the Strategic Resource Leverage process introduced in 2008/09. The process includes two elements:

- Cash releasing initiatives with Divisions and Departments identifying cash savings of 1.25% without affecting frontline policing.
- Cash re-investment initiatives; where proposals to improve performance or to be more efficient are undertaken by re-deploying resources.

Other wholly local initiatives have taken place, an example being the resolution of local crime in a more effective manner maximising efficiency in investigations.

In continuing the 'invest to save' basis for committing expenditure, major schemes now approved include,

- Central Storage Facility.
- Operational Data Store bringing data together from the multiplicity of systems necessary to improve decision making and reduce data entry.
- Command and Control System improving call management and subsequent deployment.

As a package the three initiatives assist in addressing the reducing bureaucracy agenda and the improved deployment of police officers.

The year in brief

2009

April

- The Safer Roads Partnership in West Mercia launched a new rider training programme aimed at reducing the number of collisions involving motorcycle and moped users. The 'Take Control' programme offered a range of training courses, either free or heavily subsidised, for any motorcyclists regardless of age or experience.
- Launch of Operation Protect, West Mercia's burglary action week, in order to reduce burglaries even further, reassure local communities about the low level of crime in their areas and ensure offenders are brought to justice.
- Kidderminster Police Station's new-look front counter opened to the public following a complete refurbishment of the existing front counter area, disabled access ramp and front doorway, to comply with Disability Discrimination Act legislation. Improvements include electronic push button doors to provide easier wheelchair access, a disabled toilet, and high level and low level desking.

May

- West Mercia Police Authority approves change of the Force's name from West Mercia Constabulary to West Mercia Police.
- Body Worn Video (BWV) equipment, sometimes referred to as 'headcams', made available for all frontline uniformed officers and Community Support Officers within West Mercia. National trials have identified significant benefits for officers using BWV, including reductions in the time spent on paperwork due to increased early guilty pleas.
- Introduction of a speed awareness course, run by Telford Training Consultants (TTC), for some speeding motorists as an alternative to having points on their licence. Drivers are asked to pay £60 for the half day course and research has shown that drivers who are retrained are less likely to re-offend than those who are prosecuted.

June

- West Mercia Police engaged in a drink and drug driving enforcement campaign from 1st - 30 June, in conjunction with the ACPO national drink drug drive campaign and the Safer Roads Partnership campaign.

- West Mercia Police introduce Community Resolution, a scheme whereby the victim of a minor crime is empowered to have a genuine say in identifying the way in which a crime could be 'resolved' in a manner which meets their needs. It also empowers the victim to permit offenders who have behaved foolishly, rather than maliciously, to make amends for their mistake, rather than the police service having to pursue a criminal justice outcome.
- Get Involved Week, highlighted ways that residents could work alongside police in a number of voluntary roles. West Mercia promoted volunteering opportunities including becoming a special constable, joining the cadet scheme for 16 to 18 year-olds and getting involved in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

July

- Official opening of the newly-refurbished Hereford Police Station, complete with a state-of-the-art custody suite with sixteen cells and spacious front counter/reception area for visitors and callers.
- Telford Cadet Scheme held a passing out parade for fourteen local teenagers who had completed two years as police cadets. The scheme, which is the only one of its kind in the West Midlands, has helped many youngsters over the years to build a variety of careers, including joining the Police.
- St Lawrence Primary School, Church Stretton, the Shropshire primary school that won West Mercia Police's Tag Rugby tournament in May, became national champions in the National Tag Rugby Finals, held at Rugby School. Part of their prize is the opportunity to play at Twickenham. West Mercia Police's Tag Rugby initiative, developed in partnership with the Rugby Football Union and Child Victims of Crime (CVOC), a children's charity supported by police forces, provides an opportunity to engage with local children and deliver personal safety messages.
- West Mercia 'Respect Week', a force-wide campaign to highlight the positive measures police are taking to tackle anti-social behaviour, took place. A number of initiatives took place throughout the force area to raise awareness of the impact anti-social behaviour can have on others and to encourage communities to respect and tolerate each other.

August

- Deputy Chief Constable David Shaw accepted the Disability Two Ticks Award from JobCentre Plus. The disability symbol is a recognition given by JobCentre Plus to employers based in Great Britain who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled people. By using the symbol we are making it clear to individuals with disabilities that we welcome applications from them and that we are positive about their abilities. It will also show existing employees that we value their contribution and will treat them fairly if they become disabled and build upon the positive work undertaken by the Disability Network in supporting colleagues and raising awareness.

- Stephen George Jackley was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment after appearing at Worcester Crown Court. The 23-year-old former Worcester University student pleaded guilty to 18 offences that took place in Worcester, Ledbury and Devon between September 2007 and March 2008. The offences included five armed robberies, three attempted armed robberies, seven firearms offences in relation to the robberies, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, one attempted burglary of a bank and one burglary.
- Telford & Wrekin's Community Messaging System - 'Ringmaster' - signed up its 1000th member. The main aim of the system is to provide up-to-date information and crime prevention advice to members. Anyone who feels they would benefit from receiving information about crime is welcome to sign up.

September

- West Mercia Police hosted a Help for Heroes event at Hindlip Hall, Worcester. The event was attended by more than 12,000 people and raised around £35,000 for the charity which helps to rehabilitate injured soldiers. Some of the money raised will go specifically to 'rehabilitation houses' where soldiers recover from their injuries and learn to live with any disabilities they may have received.
- The annual Quality People Awards ceremony was held at Hindlip Hall, Worcester to recognise and reward the achievements of West Mercia staff.
- Herefordshire Police introduced Bluetooth technology as a method of transmitting messages on crime and safety themes to communities around the county. There is no cost to send the message and none to receive it.
- West Mercia Police joins a national trial that aims to improve emergency 999 access for people who are deaf, who have a hearing loss or impaired speech. The new initiative, in partnership with the RNID, allows users to send a text to 999, which will then get converted into a call to the emergency call centres. This means that caller ID and location information are available to the emergency service in the same way as for other calls.
- A series of community engagement events were held at Police Headquarters, when nearly 2,000 school children from across the force area came to Hindlip Hall to meet police officers and learn more about what the force does. The visit included a visit to the Dog Section, access to a variety of police vehicles and a presentation on Internet safety.

October

- West Mercia Police identified as one of the 'Top 50 Places Where Women Want to Work' in The Times list for 2009. The annual list recognises UK organisations with more than 1,000 employees and/or global brands, who most effectively recruit top female talent, retain and develop female employees and can show they have a number of successful and inspirational female role models.
- West Mercia Police graded as 'Good' in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessment of its delivery of the policing pledge, one of only 8 police forces to achieve this grading.
- Ryan Allen, aged 18, and Rory McGhie, 19, from Redditch were jointly named Good Citizen of the Year 2009 for raising thousands of pounds for charity and being outstanding members of their local community. The annual Good Citizen Award recognises young people who have made an outstanding contribution to their community.
- West Mercia public protection work highlighted in a BBC 'Panorama' documentary, explaining the work of MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements). The programme follows the publication of the 2008/09 MAPPA report which details the work of a number of organisations, including the police, prison and probation service. The agencies share crucial information to ensure sexual and violent offenders are effectively monitored and any risks to the public minimised.

November

- The new West Mercia Police website was launched.
- As part of the Home Office's Not In My Neighbourhood Week, local policing teams across the force area launched a series of activities to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the region, focusing on how local communities are affected by anti-social behaviour and what action is being taken.
- West Mercia Police hosted police officers from Spain, Italy and the Netherlands who wanted to find out how we engage with the public and address community issues. The European officers went out on patrol with local police and community support officers, visiting anti-social behaviour 'hotspots', schools, shops and also accompanying officers during face to face engagement and on licensing checks.

December

- Three men were given life sentences, with a recommendation that they should serve a minimum of 34 years each before they can be considered for release, for the murder of Craig Hodson-Walker, aged 29, who was shot and killed in a raid at Fairfield General Stores and Post Office in Worcestershire in January 2009. Also

they were each given concurrent 34 year terms for the attempted murder of Craig's father Ken, who was also shot, 21 years for possessing a firearm with intent to endanger life, and 21 years for attempted robbery at the post office stores. A fourth member of the gang, the getaway driver, was found not guilty of murder, attempted murder and possessing a firearm but admitted the attempted robbery, for which he received an eight year jail sentence.

- PC Dave Harte of Shrewsbury Rural South Local Policing Team was named Rural Watch Champion for 2009 by Watch co-ordinators for his dedication and hard work. A trophy is presented annually to the officer who makes the greatest contribution to Rural Watch in their area.

2010

January

- Paul Deneen, current member and former Chair of the West Mercia Police Authority, awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours for services to the community in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- West Mercia Police and Staffordshire Police jointly took delivery of a new police helicopter.
- West Mercia Police retained its ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) of the top 100 employers of gay people. Stonewall - a charitable organisation that campaigns and lobbies for equality for gay men, lesbians and bisexual people - has produced its annual Workplace Equality Index of the best employers since 2005.
- West Mercia Police participated in the Redditch Partnership event "We are Redditch" held in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. The West Mercia display stand highlighted how police work in partnership with other agencies in Redditch to tackle alcohol related crime. The event also provided an opportunity to give the public crime prevention advice and to hand out Local Policing postcards, letting people know who their local police officers are and how they can be contacted.

February

- 'Think b4 u post' was the theme of this year's Safer Internet Week which focused on the power of personal information and how it can be misused. A number of events were held around the force area focusing on how to reduce the risks online for children and young people. These events follow on from last year's successful presentations 'Thinkuknow? Do you?' which focussed on developing parents' awareness around use of the internet.

- As part of the National Specials Weekend, members of West Mercia's Special Constabulary took part in a host of activities to make their communities safer, with a particular emphasis on road policing and speed enforcement.
- Launch of a 'Police Surgery' at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford. The surgery, which will be open from 2- 4pm on the second Thursday of each month, has been set up to give local people attending the hospital the chance to speak to local police officers and Community Support Officers to share any issues or concerns they have.

March

- West Mercia Police became one of a number of forces in England and Wales that agreed to take part in an extension of the Child Sexual Offender Review Disclosure Pilot. The scheme was developed in consultation with Sara Payne (the Victims' Champion), the police and children's charities. Under the pilot, first launched in September 2008, concerned individuals were given a formal mechanism to make enquiries about people who had unsupervised access to children.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Police Report Card was published. West Mercia Police was rated as 'good' for 'Local Crime and Policing' and 'Confidence and Satisfaction' and 'fair' for 'Protection from Serious Harm'. Within these categories, the force was graded as 'excellent' for preventing knife crime and received a 'good/excellent' grading for comparative satisfaction of our BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community. West Mercia received no 'poor' grades and HMIC also commented that, by national standards, West Mercia Police is a low-cost force.

Glossary

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
APACS	Analysis of Policing and Community Safety
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BWV	Body worn video
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSO	Community Support Officer
CVOC	Child Victims of Crime
FOST	Force Operational Support Team
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
ICIDP	Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
PACT	Partners and Communities Together
PIP	Professionalising Investigation Programme
PURE	Police Use of Resources Evaluation
ROSHO	Risk of Sexual Harm Order
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SOCA	Serious and Organised Crime Agency