

Frequently Asked Questions

1. BACKGROUND, MERGER AND FINANCE

Why is it called 150plus?

In 2007, a major internal review began with the aim of providing affordable, acceptable and sustainable policing services. This change programme was known as “150 forward” in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the formation of Warwickshire Police.

150 forward resulted Warwickshire Police being the first police service to radically restructure and remove layers of management (Basic Command Units).

Since April 2007, we have delivered sustained improvements against those crimes that cause the most harm to people living, working or travelling through the county. (See performance figures for details).

The requirement to operate with a further reduced budget led to a new internal review programme named “150plus” beginning in January 2010.

How much money does the force have to save?

In common with all public services, the force’s budget is reducing dramatically.

We know that we must reduce our budget by **£13.4 million** over the next **three financial years** from April 2010 – March 2013, including by £5.7 million in 2011/11.

The Government have also undertaken a **Comprehensive Spending Review** and, in December, we expect to be told the level of **additional reduction** that will need to be achieved from our budget.

We anticipate that the future level of funding for police services will be around 80% of its current level. The challenge is to ensure that we deliver the maximum amount of protection possible from all our resources and continue to deliver affordable, acceptable and sustainable services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

What changes has the force already made?

- The Police Authority has already supported the force’s decision to reduce its senior management team from nine senior officers and staff to seven.

- The force will restructure, reducing from four directorates to two – Operations and Resources. All services will be delivered from within these two directorates.
- The force is making changes from the top down and ensuring that all structures are as lean as possible, while maintaining the resilience required to protect people from harm.
- The force is implementing targeted reductions to non-workforce revenue and and capital expenditure budgets.
- These changes have been supported by staff associations and unions within the force.

Will the force merge with West Midlands Police or any other force? Will Coventry re-join Warwickshire?

The Police Authority does not currently have any plans to merge with any other police service.

The suggestion that a new force be formed to police Warwickshire and Coventry was made, by the Authority, in September 2010 in a response paper on Policing in the 21st Century.

However, this long-term view does not mean that the Authority has changed its current view with regard to mergers.

The force and Authority are looking at all opportunities to collaborate on the provision of services, both with other forces and other public services, but mergers are not being actively explored at this time.

We will seek to collaborate when to do so will deliver better protection for the same or less resources or deliver the same protection for less cost.

How can you maintain services despite such large cuts?

The full impact and the level of cuts is not known at this time. However, we will continue to protect the public from harm to the best of our ability by maximising the use of all resources.

We have reviewed demand for services, identified the best way to structure ourselves to deliver them, based on risk, and we are confident that our new policing model provides the best match of resources to demand at this time.

Will the force design have to change again if additional savings are required?

No. The new model is effective and efficient and lean. It can operate with fewer resources or additional resources. Further workforce savings required

as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review can be accommodated in this model. We would need to be even more rigorous in our prioritisation of services to reduce harm and in our focus on force and local priorities.

2. SERVICE CHANGES INCLUDING STATIONS

You have closed some front enquiry counters. Will you close more?

In partnership with other local public services, we are closely examining the requirements of the public in contacting the force and we have already merged some front enquiry counter services with those of local councils, for example in Warwick and Alcester, and we are receiving good feedback on these changes.

We have invested a considerable amount of time analysing demand for all our front enquiry offices and whether there is a requirement for individual stations to open for as many hours as they currently do.

Hours at some stations have or will be reduced and local communities and their representatives are being engaged where this is planned to take place.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other officers and staff will continue to be based in local stations, even when front counter enquiry services have been relocated to alternative locations, to ensure communities are protected from harm.

Stations being considered for relocation of front desk enquiry services or reduced opening hours are Atherstone, Bedworth, Coleshill, Kenilworth, Rugby, Shipston, Southam and Stratford.

Reduced opening hours are being considered for both the northern and southern justice centres, which currently operate 24/7.

Where do people go if they need to report a crime if the front office is closed?

Each site has a 24-hour help point to access the force control room and policing services to ensure we can still offer protection. In an emergency, members of the public should still call 999 or, to report non-urgent matters and for advice and assistance on policing issues, call 01926 415000.

Will police stations close?

A full review of our properties, including police stations, is currently taking place to ensure that they contribute as much as possible to delivering protection. We have to ensure that we have the right buildings in the right places to support the future delivery of policing services.

We do expect to share buildings more with partners in the future, to move away from a force headquarters at Leek Wootton, which is expensive to operate and maintain, and to have less buildings, including stations, overall.

The less we spend on property means more available for other resources, including officers and staff. This does not mean that officers and staff will not be visible or operating across all areas of the county as they do at present. Our response times to emergency or priority calls will not change.

Similar reviews are underway in relation to our vehicles, IT and other critical areas of expenditure.

The force is moving to 'deployment centres'. What are these and where will they be based?

The new policing model identifies the need for a main central deployment centre for response officers, probably supported initially by two smaller satellite locations in the north and south of the county.

Until review work is complete, it is not possible to be definitive about locations. We have a number of premises, for example at Rugby, Greys Mallory, Bedworth and Coleshill, that may be suitable.

How is change being managed?

Change is being managed by the force and Police Authority working closely together to ensure that the maximum protection is delivered from all resources in the future. We are consulting our workforce through Staff Associations and Unions, partners and other stakeholders.

What else is being done to reduce waste?

Officers and staff are doing all they can to reduce waste within the workplace, such as turning off lights and computers when not in use. While this focus on small savings is important and will continue, the size of budget reduction we face requires much more fundamental change.

What changes will happen to policing?

Our focus on protecting communities from harm remains unchanged. We will continue to work to reduce death, injury, loss and distress within the county.

Core policing services – problem solving, response, investigation and arresting and charging those responsible for crime - will continue.

Visible policing will remain but behind the scenes there will be significant changes to how we organise our processes and services and our workforce.

There will be:

- A streamlined management structure overseeing reorganised, leaner and more efficient services logically grouped together.

- A central control and knowledge management function that plans and co-ordinates work across:
 - Harm Reduction and Partnerships
 - Incident Response
 - Investigation
 - Defendant Management
- Single layered central management of policing services, rather than geographic policing managed five times across borough and district council areas.
- Neighbourhood policing teams will continue to operate within current geographic boundaries but will be released from response and investigative duties to focus on problem solving. Some officers will be moved to response and investigative duties. Safer Neighbourhood teams will continue to be based locally and operate under local leadership.
- A rationalisation of “enabling” services into more efficient process groupings covering, people services, physical assets (property, IT, vehicle fleet), corporate services and assurance. There will also be budget reductions in respect of revenue expenditure and capital expenditure on assets.

The new blueprint for delivering effective and efficient services contains more than 50 recommendations for change, most of which will not be visible to or impact directly upon local communities.

What differences in policing will our communities’ experience?

Visible policing should not be noticeably different from a public perspective. Existing locally based Safer Neighbourhood policing teams will continue to exist under local leadership and operate within current geographic locations.

The focus on prevention from harm will be maintained with local responsibility for prevention increased. Other colleagues will be responsible for patrolling and responding to incidents and conducting investigations.

How will community protection work be affected, won’t the force just become reactive?

Local Safer Neighbourhood teams will be responsible for community protection and crime prevention and other elements of their role, such as response and investigation, will reduce to ensure they have the time to work with local partners and communities to address local police priorities. We will also have dedicated teams of officers responsible for managing offenders in local communities, working alongside partner organisations to manage risk.

3. WORKFORCE

How many officers and staff will go?

While some Authorities and forces have speculated publicly about what cuts may mean, in terms of workforce size, we will not do so. **We will wait until the outcome of all force reviews are complete** and have been agreed with the Authority. For example, we are currently reviewing future requirements for properties because the less we spend on buildings, the more is available for other purposes, such as paying wages.

We have been clear with our workforce that **we will have to reduce in size** and that the workforce that remains must operate more efficiently and effectively and cost less. We will communicate additional information to our workforce, partners and communities when it is available.

Will there be redundancies and if so, how many jobs will be lost?

The budget reduction challenge cannot be met without implementing a reduction in the number of posts and salary costs within the organisation. As approximately 80% of force costs relate to our workforce it follows that the workforce will have to reduce in size significantly over the next three to four years. This will involve some people leaving who don't wish to do so.

A new Workforce Management Strategy has been produced to provide a framework for optimising the mix and skills of our workforce to meet service demand while managing down the overall size.

We are considering all opportunities to assist, such as a recruitment freeze, natural turnover, secondments, career breaks, management of temporary and fixed term contracts and voluntary redundancy, early and ill-health retirement for officers. However, some degree of compulsory redundancy is inevitable.

Is the force offering officers or staff voluntary redundancy?

Police Officers can retire from the force prior to the completion of pensionable service, however by not completing the final 3 years of pensionable service, the benefits for the individual are significantly reduced. A review by the force's Finance team suggests that, at this time, enhanced settlements would not provide best value for the force in terms of protecting our communities.

The force has decided not to offer Voluntary Redundancy to police staff, at this time, as it is important that we do not lose people who have skills and abilities we need to retain within the force. Change is being managed within each area of service delivery.

Will you 'force' officers to retire even if they don't want to do so?

This is called Regulation A19 and is an option available to us to reshape our workforce. Officers affected will have completed their pensionable service with the force, usually 30 years. No decision will be taken on its use before the full outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review is known (mid-December).

A19 is regarded as an important element of any strategy to significantly reduce workforce numbers, given the limited range and impact of other options to reduce officer numbers.

If it is used, an advance notice period of 6 months has been agreed in order to give those affected time to plan their futures. This provides more notice than the statutory minimum requirement.

The force is moving to a new shift pattern, why?

An eight-hour pattern will be implemented in May 2011 as it delivers the most protection for the public. Public protection is our priority and the reason we all come to work.

The pattern will support the delivery of our new policing model. It will integrate a single shift pattern across all areas of our service – communications centre, neighbourhoods, patrol, custody, intelligence and investigation, thereby improving consistency in the delivery and the quality of services to the public.

An eight-hour shift pattern costs less than current arrangements and brings 'single team' benefits to the delivery of services. It will reduce rest-day working and overtime – two major financial costs to our organisation and requirements that also impact heavily the personal lives of officers and staff.

More senior leaders will also work shifts, improving levels of leadership and supervision within the force. Also, three quarters, rather than half, of our workforce will be on duty on any given day.

Because it costs less, an eight-hour pattern will allow us to retain more of our workforce than any other pattern by providing more money to pay wages.

More members of the workforce mean more officers and staff working together, thereby increasing officer protection and resilience as well as protection to the public.

Some police officers say that they are being moved to new duties, new locations. Is this true?

Many officers and staff will have to work from new locations and in new roles or teams from May 2011, or earlier. Some officers will be posted to new roles or locations and police staff are being consulted on any changes that impact

on them. It is vital the force has the right people in the right place at the right time in order to deliver the most effective and efficient services.

All those involved in managing change affecting individuals are working as quickly as possible in order to give as much notice of new postings or duties before May 2011.

How will officer and staff morale be maintained when there are fewer people covering the same volume of work?

We believe that we have a mature professional workforce which understands the current position and who can communicate openly with colleagues and leaders about their concerns and ideas for improvement. Much of our work allows us the flexibility to make decisions, and we are paid to make choices and organise ourselves so that our work is undertaken effectively and efficiently. Leaders within the organisation have additional responsibility for supporting their staff and prioritising work within their teams.

What is happening to government funding for PCSOs and how might changes to this impact the design?

The force budget for PCSOs is funded in part by the Home Office and part by Local Government in respect of specific posts. We won't know the full impact of the Government Comprehensive Spending Review or Local Government spending reviews for several months.

Any withdrawal of funding is likely to be directly reflected in the overall number of PCSO posts, but the situation will be carefully considered and a decision made only after thorough investigation and appropriate consultation. Our new policing model has been designed to be scalable according to the budget we are allocated.

When will the next recruitment of police officers and staff occur?

There will not be a general intake of new officers this financial year 2010/11 and in all probability not for some considerable time after that.

We will only recruit externally where specific skills / experience are required that cannot be met by someone already within the existing workforce.

The force has a Workforce Management Strategy in place to ensure that retain the right mix of officers and staff with powers, skills and experience to deliver protection and this is reviewed regularly.

Will officers be placed into staff posts if an officer post is “at risk”?

Our current policy remains that officers are placed in officer posts and staff in staff posts. Further detailed workforce modelling analysis is yet to be completed, and there are many options open to the force to manage the transition of the workforce. Our starting principle continues to be that which it has been for the last three years, not to deploy officers into staff posts.

If the force is faced with a situation where there are a significant number of “over establishment” police officers then in the interests of efficiency it may be necessary to temporarily post officers into vacant staff posts. This is distinctly different from what is commonly referred to as “de-civilianisation”, a process whereby staff posts are converted to officer posts. We are not proposing to de-civilianise staff posts as this would increase the long term cost base of the force.

How will the changes affect restricted officers and staff?

The force remains fully committed to retaining where possible, experienced and skilled people who require reasonable adjustments in their workplace to perform both operational and supporting roles.

Where officers meet the criteria under Regulation A20 and are supported for ill-health retirement by the Selected Medical Practitioner, the force will proceed with this process. The same process applies to staff that meet the Pension Fund criteria for ill health-retirement.

Will police staff have to reapply for their own post?

The force has an organisational change policy that details how change within functions will be managed. Selection and interview processes will be required in some cases.

What will be the impact on career progression and promotion opportunities?

The need to reduce salary costs means that there will be a reduction in the overall number of posts. However, change does create opportunities, and those who are keen to broaden / progress their careers should use this as a time to take stock of where they are now and where they want to be in the future, and develop their skills accordingly.

The new structure will not be static and new opportunities will become available in the future, assisted by the natural turnover of people within the force.

What about future pay rises?

Officers and staff received pay rises in September 2010 in line with nationally negotiated agreements. In June 2010 the government indicated that there would be a two-year pay freeze in the public sector, which strongly suggests that there will be no pay increases for police officers and staff in September 2011 and September 2012.

Will the force try to change employee terms and conditions in order to reduce costs?

A review of national terms and conditions is currently in progress and will report in early 2011. Warwickshire Police will consider the outcome and recommendations of that review, and the contribution to savings that implementing the options would provide.

The force will seek national / local agreement with Unison in respect of any changes that might impact upon terms & conditions.

What will happen to staff on fixed term contracts when those contracts expire?

Given the need to achieve savings, all temporary and fixed term posts will be subject to scrutiny on renewal. Renewal of contracts will be considered on a case-by-case by the Workforce Management Group, taking into account organisational need and the availability of suitable resource with the required experience, skills and knowledge. Where it is decided not to renew a contract, the force will give the affected individual as much notice as possible.

How amenable is the force to job sharing, part-time working, career break, and unpaid leave etc as a way of reducing salary costs?

The force recognises that due to personal circumstances there may be times when an individual seeks to change their working arrangements on either a permanent, or temporary basis. As a responsible employer that encourages work life balance we have made provision for such arrangements. Anyone who is interested in such an arrangement is encouraged to take the initiative and discuss this with their manager. Subject to the overriding requirement of meeting operational need and ensuring a robust organisation structure that can meet demand, the force recognises the savings opportunity and the added resilience that such arrangements can afford and will try to be as accommodating as possible. However, it may not be possible to meet all requests.

4. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Police Authority met on November 17 to discuss and agree the recommendations from Warwickshire Police. Further work to ensure that service delivery changes can be introduced in May 2011 will now take place.

Reviews of essential services and facilities that support the delivery of protection will be completed and further financial modelling will take place when the outcome of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review is available in mid to late December.

The force will continue to keep officers and staff, partners and local communities informed of changes impacting upon them and to deliver the maximum protection possible within all resources available.