

Police

authority

inspection

report

Warwickshire Police Authority
June 2010



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Contents

Executive summary	4
Setting strategic direction and priorities	6
Performance scrutiny	10
Engaging with communities	12
VFM and productivity	14
Next steps	18
Appendix 1 – Context	19
Appendix 2 – Methodology	21

Executive summary

- 1 Warwickshire Police Authority (the Authority) is performing adequately and is contributing to improved policing in the county. In 2006 Warwickshire Police (the Force) was judged to be performing poorly. Since then the standard of policing has improved. The county is now a relatively safe place to live and the police report card published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in March 2010 judged the Force to be 'fair' in each of the three assessed themes: local crime and policing; protection from serious harm; and confidence and satisfaction.
- 2 Relationships between the Authority and the Force are constructive, and based on mutual respect. Their shared vision is 'Protecting our communities together', protecting the public from the harm that results in death, injury, loss and distress. The Authority has given the Chief Constable a clear direction on the medium term future of the Force; collaboration is encouraged and financial sustainability is the immediate objective. Work is in progress to produce a model for policing the county on a reduced budget as part of the medium term financial strategy.
- 3 The Authority's approach to carrying out its work – 'embedded governance' – is unusual but appropriate for the local context. Members of the Authority regularly engage with managers, discuss progress and performance issues in a constructive way and gain a good understanding of the day to day running of the Force. However, embedded governance is not without risk. The arrangements work for Warwickshire. They may not be appropriate in the future or for use in other locations. The Authority should ensure that its independence from the Force is made clear at every opportunity and that it can readily demonstrate where its governance, rather than its collaboration, has led to beneficial change.
- 4 The Authority does not have a consistent, embedded and structured approach to diversity, equality and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community. All members of the Authority need a broader understanding of local issues and needs in order to ensure that progress on diversity and equality is maintained.
- 5 Better business planning and human resource management could assist the Authority to make best use of its members and staff. Arrangements for aligning Force and Authority risk registers are underdeveloped.
- 6 Performance scrutiny is adequate but there are clear opportunities for further development. Authority members receive regular performance reports from the Force and supplement this data with qualitative information captured under their embedded governance arrangements. In this way, the Authority is able to monitor trends and progress on agreed priorities. However, the Authority does not thoroughly monitor how well all the features of the Policing Pledge are delivered. It does not compare the Force's performance with similar areas in order to set appropriately ambitious and challenging targets.

Executive summary

- 7 Community engagement is adequate and improving. Local consultation by individual members is supplemented by structured forums and processes including surveys conducted jointly with Warwickshire County Council. Police and community together (PACT) meetings have been replaced with multi-agency community forums which attract wider audiences who attend regularly. 'You said, we did' arrangements offer feedback on the actions taken to address community concerns. The Authority now needs to work to develop a comprehensive understanding of the diverse and vulnerable communities of the county and ensure their needs are being met.
- 8 Securing value for money and financial sustainability represents the biggest challenge in the immediate future. The '150 Forward'¹ programme, begun in 2007, led to the reorganisation of the Force and improved service delivery. The '150plus' programme aims to build on those outcomes, reduce the annual budget by around 10 per cent and remove the need to use financial reserves to meet overall costs. Financial planning and management are strong. Challenge from the resources assurance group (RAG) has converted a forecasted overspend into an under spend and produced a viable medium term financial plan. Priorities and resources are generally aligned but the Authority needs to ensure it accurately and comprehensively understands these arrangements if it is to play its full part in the '150plus' programme.
- 9 The Authority's agreed capital programme requires £60 million of investment over five years, an ambitious challenge at a time of significant financial constraint. The Authority is appropriately reviewing the programme and has already identified £4 million reductions.

Table 1 Summary of inspection scores

Key questions	Score
How does the police authority ensure that both it and the force have the leadership, capacity and capability needed to deliver good quality service outcomes on behalf of the public?	2
How effective is the police authority in scrutinising and ensuring the force delivers the priority services that matter to local people?	2
How well does the police authority achieve results through community engagement and partnerships to deliver its ambitions and strategic priorities?	2
How effective is the police authority in ensuring a clear and sustained focus on value for money to secure a good deal for the public?	2
Overall score	2

¹ Warwickshire Police began in 1857. In 2007, 150 years later, a new programme team – '150 Forward' – was asked to produce an effective, efficient and affordable police service for the future.

Setting strategic direction and priorities

How does the Police Authority ensure that both it and the force have the leadership, capacity and capability needed to deliver good quality service outcomes on behalf of the public?

- 10** The Authority is performing adequately in this area. Its challenge and support since 2006 have led to significantly reorganised and improved policing arrangements in the county. It has provided clear direction about the medium term vision for the Force. Relationships with the Chief Constable are professional, constructive and mature. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure that professional and ethical standards are maintained in both the Authority and Force.
- 11** The Authority's approach to carrying out its work – 'embedded governance' – is unusual but appropriate for the local context. The arrangements work for Warwickshire but are not without risk. They may not be appropriate in other circumstances.
- 12** The Authority does not make sufficient use of challenging and specific targets to drive improvement. Without challenging or ambitious targets it is difficult to determine what success or good performance will look like. Underdeveloped business planning and human resource management is limiting the Authority's capacity. The approach to equality and diversity includes aspects of good practice but is inconsistent.

Strengths

- 13** The Authority's challenge and support in recent years has improved policing in the county. In 2006, the Warwickshire Force attracted 'poor' ratings on a number of measures. Mergers were being strongly encouraged and Warwickshire, the smallest force in the country, was committed to becoming part of a West Midlands regional policing arrangement. However, the plans faltered and the Authority and Force were faced with re-establishing policing independence. The '150 Forward' project was launched and led to a major restructuring of the Force designed to address concerns about the overall performance and long-term viability.
- 14** Through the '150 Forward' programme and other development strategies, the Authority has effectively challenged the Force on its journey of improvement. Since 2006/07, serious violent crime has reduced by 31 per cent, overall crime in the County has fallen by 25 per cent, burglary by 19 per cent, theft of vehicles by 38 per cent and theft from vehicles by 37 per cent. While there is still some way to go, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) recently (March 2010) assessed the Force to be 'fair' for each of the three themes in the police report card: local crime and policing; protection from serious harm; and confidence and satisfaction.

Setting strategic direction and priorities

- 15** In 2010 the Authority set a clear strategic direction for the Force in the medium term. Despite the progress achieved, it remains the view of the Chief Constable that merging with another force(s) would be appropriate for the county. The Authority disagrees and has given clear direction. It believes that creating a financially sustainable and effective Force should be the immediate goal. Collaboration with neighbouring forces and other local agencies is encouraged (provided it serves the best interests of the county) and merging will remain an option for consideration in the future. The mutual respect and quality of the relationship between the Authority and Force has enabled the Chief Constable to fully embrace the strategic direction provided by the Authority.
- 16** The Authority's approach to carrying out its work – 'embedded governance' – is unusual but appropriate for the local context. Under its governance framework the Authority has three main work streams: local policing; resources; and protective services, standards, and planning. All Authority members are allocated to, and carry out their duties, within these work streams. Three members are governance stream leads and are supported by other members who lead on aspects of each stream. Each of these work streams is closely aligned to the main work areas of the Force. An extension of the approach now includes some Authority members being associated with the geographical districts of the Force. Members of the Authority regularly engage with managers to discuss progress and performance issues in a constructive way. However, embedded governance is not without risk. Its success relies, in part, on the particular individuals involved, the relationships they achieve, and a shared and mutually accepted understanding of the discrete roles of manager (the Force) and scrutineer (the Authority). The arrangements work for Warwickshire. They provide the Authority with a sound understanding of the day to day operations of the Force without losing the ability to challenge and hold the Chief Constable to account. They may not be appropriate in the future or for use in other locations.
- 17** Relationships between the Authority and Force are mature, open, and constructive, and are based on mutual respect. A weekly meeting, the steering group, between the senior representatives of the Authority and commanders of the Force, provides a forum for the free exchange of views on performance, finance, and emerging issues at a strategic level.
- 18** The Authority challenges the Force in an appropriate way. Members have access to Force managers and plans but members clearly recognise that operational matters are the remit of the Chief Constable. Community concerns and constructive challenge by the Authority clearly influence strategic and tactical planning. Examples where plans have benefited from Authority intervention include a wide range of topics, for example the arrangements for policing the 'Bull-dog Bash' annual Hells Angels event safely and effectively, piloting child sex offender disclosure arrangements appropriately and reducing antisocial parking around local schools.

19 Satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure professional and ethical standards are maintained in both the Force and the Authority. Regular reviews and meetings of the standards and professional standards committees have identified no significant issues of concern in the conduct of the Force, the Authority or its members. Complaints against the Force are monitored quarterly and involve a dip sampled review of specific cases. 'Inappropriate attitude' or 'incivility' is one of the greatest sources of complaint, followed by neglect or failures of duty. The professional standards committee has raised the need for improved recruitment, selection and training on the former, and programmes are being reviewed accordingly.

Areas for improvement

- 20** Specific and challenging targets are not being consistently used to drive improvement and public accountability. Specific targets help those involved in service delivery to understand what is expected of them and the public to see whether improvement plans are appropriately ambitious. For example:
- the policing plan sets out priorities but does not make clear the improvement sought in all cases making it hard for the public to see what 'success' would look like; and
 - incidences of 'incivility' by members of the Force figure prominently in the nature of the complaints received from members of the public; however the Chief Constable (and his command team) do not have any personal targets to reduce this.
- 21** Despite year on year improvements the Force still compares poorly with similar areas on some measures and greater improvement is needed. Comparative information is not given sufficient consideration when targets are being set. When Warwickshire is compared to similar forces, in some crime categories (for example vehicle crime and burglary) it is still at the lower end of performance. When setting targets, the Authority needs to consider whether the challenge they provide is sufficiently ambitious to deliver both year on year improvement and close the gap between Warwickshire and the better performers
- 22** Interim arrangements for the chief executive position represent a risk to the Authority's aim of implementing significant change. The chief executive of a police authority has an important role to play in supporting the long term vision and development of the authority and running the processes for senior officer appointments to the Force. The existing interim arrangements for the position in Warwickshire could undermine effectiveness.
- 23** Business planning and human resource management is underdeveloped. At present, the Authority does not produce its own business plan which would guide both members and staff to focus on the priorities. The Authority does not have a human resources strategy setting out, for example, a skills, competency and development framework for members as they progress through the life of their four-year appointments. Such arrangements can help the Authority get maximum benefit from the capacity and resources it has.

Setting strategic direction and priorities

- 24** The Authority does not have a consistent, embedded and structured approach to diversity, equality and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community. It has successfully challenged Force arrangements and improved outcomes as a result in several areas. These include progress in increasing the representation of women and staff from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in the workforce. Examples of good initiatives include an event supporting the gypsy and traveller community. Members display an appreciation of the needs of older and younger people but show limited understanding of the broader aspects of diversity, for example issues concerning people with disabilities, BME and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. The membership of the Authority's overseen independent custody visitor scheme had not been reviewed to ensure representation from a broad spectrum of communities. All members of the Authority need a broader understanding of local issues and needs in order to ensure that progress on diversity and equality is maintained.
- 25** The governance arrangements can lead to a perception that the relationship between the Force and the Authority is too close. This risks undermining the identity of the Authority as a discrete entity that has its own purpose. The 'embedded governance' approach has distinct advantages: it ensures all members of the Authority have an active role to play and it gives members access to information which more distant arrangements do not allow. However, this openness, and the language that characterises the approach, carries the risk that the Authority might be seen as part of the management of the Force rather than the organisation that holds the Force to account. The creation and recent redesign of an independent website is a very positive step towards minimising this risk. But the Authority should ensure that its independence from the Force is made clear at every opportunity and that it can readily demonstrate where its governance, rather than its collaboration, has led to beneficial change.

Performance scrutiny

How effective is the Police Authority in scrutinising and ensuring the force delivers the priority services that matter to local people?

- 26** The Authority is performing adequately in this area. The Authority holds the Chief Constable to account. Priorities are being delivered and public confidence is improving in line with expectations to meet national targets in 2012. Scrutiny of protective services¹¹ is satisfactory. Scrutiny of the Policing Pledge, the implementation of recommendations and exception reporting arrangements need to be strengthened.

Strengths

- 27** The Chief Constable is appropriately held to account. The governance arrangements work well. The roles and accountabilities of the Authority and its streams, committees and panels are set out in a governance framework which is reviewed each year. Lead Authority members are competent and maintain close links with the Force managers who oversee their areas of responsibility. As a result they can monitor and influence performance.
- 28** Embedded governance ensures that all members have regular opportunities to scrutinise performance appropriately. The weekly steering group meeting discusses performance with the Chief Constable and the Deputy Chief Constable. A 'dashboard' of performance figures is reported to the weekly steering group as well as to each of the nine meetings of the full Police Authority throughout the year. The Authority also receives weekly, monthly and quarterly reports on performance and other management information, as well as the annual report. In addition, governance stream reports inform members about scrutiny that has been done by individual members, committees or panels. Regular presentations and seminars by members of the Force to meetings of the Authority and at planning workshops provide further opportunities for scrutiny. Examples include roads policing, human resources, the Policing Pledge, the work of the firearms team and the Force's scoring matrix of organised crime. Each presentation is followed by question and answer sessions which routinely include challenge of force performance and practice.
- 29** The Authority and Force have worked well together to improve performance. Priorities are aligned and focus resources on protecting communities from harm. Strategies include targeting high harm causers, policing priority areas, and domestic abuse. Offences involving violence with injury are well below those recorded in similar forces.

¹¹ Protective services include counter-terrorism, serious organised and cross-border crime, civil contingencies and emergency planning, critical incident management, major crime, public order, strategic roads policing and protecting vulnerable people

Performance scrutiny

- 30** The Authority is committed to neighbourhood policing and improving public confidence in the Force. The lead member and public confidence board monitor progress. The latest British Crime Survey data for December 2009 shows that confidence improved from 41.7 per cent in September 2008 to 48.6 per cent. The Force has improved its position which now matches the average for similar forces, and is on track to reach its national target of 58.3 per cent by March 2012.
- 31** The Authority's scrutiny of protective services is satisfactory. Performance is monitored through the protective services, standards and planning stream. Two members of the Authority have suitable security clearance. Modest targets for 2009/10 were easily met but not adjusted during the year. Different and more complex arrangements have now been introduced. The Authority will need to be satisfied that the new targets are suitably challenging and ambitious.

Areas for improvement

- 32** The Authority's approach to performance scrutiny is adequate but carries a number of risks. Under its governance arrangements, performance scrutiny is distributed across its three streams rather than collectively and strategically considered in one forum. It uses a 'dashboard' to focus its attention on priorities but neither receives nor generates its own information on other issues. The existing arrangements have produced significant improvements but pose a risk that links between issues arising in the separate streams, or underperformance in an important but non-priority area of activity could go unnoticed.
- 33** The Authority's scrutiny of performance on the Policing Pledge' is underdeveloped. The national Policing Pledge is a set of promises from the police to their communities about the services they will provide. The pledge sets out ten commitments to quality services which require every police force to listen to local people and to act on any problems they raise. Existing reporting arrangements offer the Authority regular updates on public confidence, but other commitments captured under the 'pledge' have attracted less attention. This means that underperformance against 'the pledge' could go unnoticed.
- 34** Progress on implementing recommendations for improvement is not sufficiently scrutinised. External inspection reports frequently contain recommendations for change that are based on known good practice elsewhere. The Force operates a 'tracker' mechanism to monitor progress against these recommendations. The Authority should make better use of this information.

Engaging with communities

How well does the Police Authority achieve results through community engagement and partnerships to deliver its ambitions and strategic priorities?

- 35** The Authority is performing adequately in this area. It is beginning to put in place a structured and systematic approach to securing and understanding the views of local people.
- 36** In the past, neither Force nor Authority engaged well with the public. During 2006-2009 both focused on improvement and restructuring. Now there is recognition that continuous and effective engagement is important and necessary.

Strengths

- 37** Each member of the Authority has a direct and effective link to the community. All 17 members are assigned to the 33 community forums, the multi agency meetings which replaced the Police and Communities Together (PACT) arrangement in the county. Members use these meetings to scrutinise the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing, gather information and to consult the community. The top three concerns at each of the community forums are addressed and actions reported back to local communities by police and other partners at the next meeting, using a 'you said we did' format. Typical concerns include speeding, antisocial behaviour and underage drinking, vehicle crime, and road safety. In the spring of 2010, members used the community forums to gather opinions on the level of the police preceptⁱⁱⁱ for 2010/11. The minutes of community forum meetings are monitored by the Authority and matters of interest are reported to the community engagement and consultation panel.
- 38** Members have a good understanding of the reported issues in their local communities and have effectively used this information to improve policing. Five members have district lead roles mirroring the local policing arrangements. They capture and pursue reported local issues and have regular contact with the corresponding district/borough commanders. This collective knowledge is then considered at the community engagement and consultation panel. As a result of member challenge (following feedback from the public) inadequacies in the call handling system were corrected. A new process 'right service, first time' was implemented with revised standards for responding to calls.
- 39** Community engagement continues to improve. Early 2009 was spent identifying existing channels of consultation and engagement, scoping other opportunities and building links with partners and stakeholders. The community engagement and consultation panel is now focusing on better ways of using the County Council's generic citizens' 'wave' consultation, and on targeting specific communities of interest.

ⁱⁱⁱ The money the Authority collects through council tax each year to meet its spending on policing.

Engaging with communities

- 40** The Authority is responding positively to identified weaknesses. Consultation, presentations and networking highlighted the need to get a better understanding of the concerns of young people and how businesses were being affected by antisocial behaviour. The Authority commissioned the National Youth Agency to carry out survey work on confidence in police. This showed high confidence in the Safer Schools Partnership and in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). However the analysis also showed that young people do not identify PCSOs as police staff. Following this they invited young people from Warwickshire's Youth Parliament to a Police Authority meeting – as a result the Force now works more closely with young people. In partnership with West Midlands Police, the Force is now working on a regionally sponsored project about business crime mapping to show hotspots. The work with the business community also provided a good way of carrying out meaningful consultation about setting the precept.
- 41** The Authority works effectively in partnership with other public bodies. It offers the County Council an annual presentation on performance and progress against local measures and twice each year meets with the Cabinet to discuss issues of concern. Authority members sit on the local strategic partnership and on district based community safety partnerships. The Authority was the lead partner in the development of two joint justice centres (facilities designed to improve efficiency and service delivery by co-locating criminal justice services) and has led on the provision of a domestic abuse refuge in a priority policing area.

Areas for improvement

- 42** The Authority does not make best use of wider information sources when working to develop its understanding of the needs of all Warwickshire communities. This is particularly important when trying to identify issues affecting those communities that typically do not take part in the usual forms of consultation and engagement. The appointment of new policy officers represents an increase in capacity, some of which should be directed to this type of activity.
- 43** The Authority does not have a systematic way of analysing the feedback collected from district leads. Information is gathered in numerous ways including informally through personal contact and website feedback and formally through surgeries and forums. Minutes of the community forum meetings are analysed. The Authority receives regular reports from the district partnership lead members but does not collectively analyse all of the information captured to identify commonly occurring themes. This limits the opportunity to increase focus on strategic, emerging and priority issues.
- 44** Inconsistencies in the operation of community forums need to be addressed. The Authority's use of the multi agency community forums is good. The forums cover a wider area than PACT meetings, involve other partnerships and services and enable an effective multi-agency approach to local issues. But the names of forums vary, their arrangements and working practices differ and the purpose and form is not always clear. This can cause confusion. The Authority's presence and influence risks being reduced if local people do not understand its role and the value it can add to policing in the County.

VFM and productivity

How effective is the Police Authority in ensuring a clear and sustained focus on VFM in order to secure a good deal for the public?

- 45** Warwickshire Police Authority is performing adequately in this area. Its focus on financial management and planning has been strengthened. In future years the costs of policing the county have to be reduced by £12 million, around 10 per cent of the current budget. The medium term financial plan (MTFP) needs to sustain and improve services, deliver savings, and reduce the reliance on reserves. The Authority has challenged the Force to carry out a further review to identify areas where savings can be made without adversely affecting services. A new project, called '150plus' has been launched with a target of driving out significant savings. The '150plus' initiative includes identifying opportunities for collaborative working. Delivering the necessary savings, and continuing to make sure that policing arrangements effectively address local needs and national priorities, is the most significant issue facing the Authority.
- 46** The Authority's agreed capital programme requires £60 million of investment over five years, an ambitious challenge at a time of significant financial constraint. The Authority is appropriately reviewing the programme and has already identified £4 million reductions.

Strengths

- 47** Recent financial management and planning is effective and well organised. The Authority and Force have a joint resources assurance group (RAG). This is made up of senior representatives from the Force command, the Force resources directorate, the Authority resources lead, other Authority members, the interim Chief Executive and the Treasurer. The Authority personnel involved are clearly very experienced and competent in their field. The RAG usually meets quarterly. It monitors ongoing expenditure against the 'in-year' budget and prepares plans for the next year's budget to present to the Authority.
- 48** Challenge from the Authority has successfully corrected potential overspending. In September 2009, the RAG identified that Force spending was likely to lead to an overspend against the budget. The Authority members challenged the Force to bring its costs back into line with the agreed budget and actively monitored saving activities. Action plans were reviewed at RAG meetings and feedback given to managers. These measures converted a forecast £669,000 overspend into what, at the time of the inspection and subject to audit, was expected to be a £2 million underspend at the end of the financial year.

VFM and productivity

- 49** Members are fully engaged in flexible and responsive budget setting arrangements. At RAG meetings members can see the financial impact of suggested changes and risk management proposals as new information emerges. Members of the Authority are updated on the developing budget proposals at regular and well attended seminars throughout the year. This allows members to have a greater understanding of the overall and detailed implications of the budget when it is considered at the relevant Police Authority annual meeting.
- 50** The MTFP sets demanding savings targets. It reflects the need for financial constraint and sets out to eliminate the reliance on financial reserves. In 2008/09 the Authority set a high precept and as a result was limited in the amount of money it can raise through local council tax for the next three years. Historically, the Authority and Force have had to use reserves to supplement the funds raised through local taxation and government grants to provide policing in the county. However, the reliance on reserves has continued, in part due to the impact of the recent economic downturn. The Authority has recognised that this is not a sustainable financial position and, together with the Force, has now developed a MTFP that is intended to reduce the costs of policing the county, maintain that level of spending into the future and eliminate the need to use reserves for anything other than unplanned and unforeseen activity in the future. For 2010/11 the budget gap is £10.4 million, use of reserves is £4.7 million and the savings target is £5.7 million.
- 51** Threats and risks are continuously taken into account in planning for the savings required. Models are being actively developed to align the reduced resources to priorities. The Force completes an annual strategic assessment (ASA) of threats and risks which, in consultation with a small number of Authority members, it uses to plan its policing arrangements and resourcing for the following year. For 2010/11, all budget holders across the Force have been tasked with planning for around 10 per cent savings on their anticipated costs. The staff supporting the '150plus' programme are developing a model for policing the county on the reduced budget, and ensuring that priorities and the findings from the ASA are appropriately accommodated. Police Authority representatives are involved at all stages in this process.
- 52** The Authority has a good understanding of the overall and detailed costs associated with policing the county and is actively supporting programmes designed to increase value for money. The 'right service first time' project has led to more efficient use of resources through improved demand management. Reports to the RAG clearly identify the costs associated with the individual aspects of front line policing and support functions. Using this information and that obtained from various 'value for money profiles', a programme of reviews has been initiated. The reviews focus on those areas of activity where costs or activities are out of line when compared to the arrangements in other policing areas and include overtime and sickness absence. Authority members are participating in many of these reviews. Potential savings and productivity improvements are now beginning to emerge, for example approximately £250,000 saved on human resource services.

53 The Authority and Force have a robust and constructive approach to collaboration. It is a key feature of the '150plus' programme and is to be pursued where the outcomes deliver services that meet the needs of the county at a beneficial cost. There are several examples of both small scale and significant collaboration in place now. These include helicopter air support (East Midlands), serious and organised crime investigations, and shared services covering both health and safety and medical advice. The Authority is also actively exploring other opportunities with local government partners and already makes use of legal, audit and treasury services from the County Council. The Authority has also demonstrated its willingness to withdraw from collaborative arrangements that are judged not to be right for the county. In 2007 it supported a Force proposal to withdraw from the central motorway policing group (CMPG) when a business review demonstrated that the costs associated with participation could offer greater productivity and support to local priorities if invested in Force-based arrangements. A collaboration strategy has recently been agreed with the West Midlands, West Mercia and Staffordshire forces and proposals are now being developed and discussed with both the Authority and the Force. Examples include specialist support options for pre-planned firearms operations.

Areas for improvement

- 54** The Authority's understanding of the way in which resources are aligned to priorities is not always accurate and complete. Members participating in the '150plus' programme will need an accurate and fully informed understanding of the alignment of resources to priorities if the Authority is to play its full part in this process. Examples are as follows.
- With the Authority's agreement the Force has identified three policing priority areas and produced some significant benefits. Members' understanding of the resource adjustments made following this decision varied considerably.
 - The Force ASA contains some confidential information and access is restricted to those having appropriate security clearance. It should be influencing future plans, priorities and, as a consequence, resource allocation. At present, the Authority's lead for resourcing cannot access the ASA because he does not have the appropriate clearance. This limits his ability to contribute to debates about resource adjustments and hinders progress towards integrating financial and performance management.
 - Changes in the workforce in recent years have shifted the balance between police officers and police staff. While police officers are still in the majority the difference is now quite small and is smaller than in many other forces. The Authority needs to be satisfied that these arrangements are appropriate for future plans.

VFM and productivity

55 Risk management arrangements are not aligned and are incomplete.

- The Force and Authority operate independent risk management groups and registers. Arrangements for aligning the risk registers are ineffective. Authority and Force representatives participate in both forums with the intention of ensuring alignment of the two processes where appropriate. Given the different responsibilities of the Authority and Force a degree of difference in the two registers is appropriate. However, the registers vary significantly.
- Minor criminal activity, antisocial behaviour, and repeat exposure to both can have serious and tragic consequences for those involved. This represents a risk which does not figure in either the Force or Authority registers at present and is particularly relevant given the underlying emphasis on 'harm causers' rather than victims.
- Savings from the '150plus' programme will be identified, extracted and accumulated to meet the total target as the programme progresses. Interim targets have not been set. This approach requires rapid decision making and carries the risk of falling short of the target. The highly effective RAG forum could have a role in managing this risk but will need to meet frequently and be able to make decisions on behalf of the Authority to be effective.

56 The Authority's understanding of whether its own costs represent value for money is underdeveloped. The Authority costs around £1 million to operate each year. It has recently increased its staffing levels to ensure it has the support and policy officer capacity it needs to carry out its functions effectively. The Authority is challenging the Force to reduce its costs and is participating in the '150plus' programme with a view to making its own contribution to the required savings. The Authority holds information on staffing arrangements in a number of authorities across the country but it has not compared its own costs or practices with other authorities in a structured way. Comparative information can help to identify how the Authority might increase its efficiency and the value it offers.

Next steps

- 57** We expect Warwickshire Police Authority to address the areas for improvement identified in this report and secure targeted and continuous improvement. In doing so, the Police Authority should have regard to the wider improvement planning, support and intervention set out in the Home Office's performance framework and landscape for policing.
- 58** We published an interim national report in March 2010 drawing on the findings from the first ten inspections. It identified thematic issues relevant to all police authorities, helping to secure improvement and sharing of good practice. The Police Authority should refer to and use this report in shaping its improvement planning.

Appendix 1 – Context

The Region

- 1 Warwickshire is a largely rural and landlocked county within the West Midlands region, with Worcestershire and the West Midlands metropolitan authorities to the west and Leicestershire and Northamptonshire of the East Midlands region to the east. It covers an area of 764 square miles. It surrounds, but does not include, the city of Coventry and the borough of Solihull, both of which are in the West Midlands Police Force area. The north of the county is the more urban and previously relied on traditional industries such as coal mining, textiles, cement production and heavy engineering. Much of this traditional industry has now declined and is being replaced by a growth in the logistics and service sectors taking advantage of the county's central location and good communications networks. The southern part of the county is predominately agricultural with historic towns such as Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon benefiting from the tourist industry.
- 2 The county has a population of just under 527,000 people with no dominant centre of population. The major towns are Nuneaton, Stratford, Leamington, Warwick and Rugby. Warwickshire's older population is greater than regional and national averages, and as this group increases, the younger population is in decline. The area is dominated by a White British population, higher than regional and national averages. However, the minority ethnic population has increased by 43 per cent since 2001. The Indian population is the largest of the ethnic minorities in Warwickshire, although the Black and Chinese populations have increased two-fold since 2001. Levels of deprivation in Warwickshire vary between districts, the highest being in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and the lowest in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 3 Unemployment is relatively low and earning levels are high when compared to West Midlands and England averages. House prices are highest in the south of the county, with affordability below the national average. Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick are the least affordable areas. Housing needs exceed availability.
- 4 A recent survey shows that in Warwickshire 83 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is comparable with similar areas and the national average of 81 per cent.

The Police Authority

- 5** Warwickshire Police Authority is one of 43 police authorities in England and Wales. It is responsible for securing an efficient and effective police force for Warwickshire and holding the Chief Constable to account. The joint vision of the Authority and the Force is 'protecting our communities together' from harm resulting in death, injury, loss and distress. Several strategies are in place to achieve the protection, including targeting high harm causers, policing priority areas, and domestic abuse. The policing priorities for 2009/10 to deliver this vision are:
- to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured;
 - to reduce the number of homes burgled and vehicle crimes committed; and
 - to improve trust and confidence.
- 6** The Authority has 17 members, including 9 county councillors from Warwickshire County Council and 8 independent members. The Chair is an independent member. The Authority has seven staff led by the temporary Chief Executive. A consultant currently provides policy and governance advice to the temporary Chief Executive and the roles of treasurer and monitoring officer are provided through a service level agreement with Warwickshire County Council.
- 7** In 2009/10 budgeted spend was £107.54 million before income and use of reserves. The total day-to-day spending budget (net of fees, charges, specific grants and transfers) was £88.08 million, £2.67 million more than 2008/09.

The Force

- 8** Warwickshire Police is the smallest force in the country other than the City of London force. Currently, it has 981 police officers, and 851 police staff including 142 police community support officers. There are also 204 special constables available to the force.
- 9** The police force area is coterminous with that of the administrative county. Local policing is delivered through five districts/boroughs each led by a chief inspector. These teams are predominantly responsible for responding to emergencies and delivering local, community-based policing. Thirty-three safer neighbourhood teams, each led by a sergeant and based in geographically defined locations, are responsible for working with local communities and partners to identify, prioritise and resolve local issues and concerns.
- 10** Overall crime rates across the county are relatively low. The risk of being burgled or violently assaulted is lower than the average in similar force areas. Satisfaction with the police service is in line with the most similar force group average. The proportion of people who perceive there to be high levels of antisocial behaviour is stable, as is public confidence in the ability of the police and local councils to deal effectively with antisocial behaviour.

Appendix 2 – Methodology

- 1 This report summarises the joint Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary findings from the inspection of Warwickshire Police Authority which took place in March 2010.
- 2 In July 2009, the Audit Commission and HMIC published the Police Authority Inspection framework.
- 3 The inspection framework comprises four assessment areas:
 - Setting strategic direction and priorities – How does the Police Authority ensure that both it and the force have the leadership, capacity and capability needed to deliver good quality service outcomes on behalf of the public?
 - Scrutinising performance outcomes – How effective is the Police Authority in scrutinising and ensuring that the force delivers the priority services that matter to local people?
 - Achieving results through community engagement and partnership – How well does the Police Authority achieve results through community engagement and partnerships to deliver its ambitions and strategic priorities?
 - Ensuring value for money (VFM) and productivity – How effective is the Police Authority in ensuring a clear and sustained focus on VFM in order to secure a good deal for the public?
- 4 The Inspection team drew on a range of evidence to form judgements against each of the four assessment themes. This included key documentation that the police authority uses to run its business, interviews, focus groups, observations and reality testing with key police authority partners and stakeholders.
- 5 Each assessment theme was scored separately on a scale of 1 to 4 and is combined into an overall score. The scores of 1 to 4 for each theme represent the following descriptors of performance.

Score	Descriptor of performance	Public reporting
1	Police authority does not meet minimum requirements for this theme	Performs poorly
2	Police authority meets most of the minimum requirements for this theme with some exceptions and areas of concern	Performs adequately
3	Police authority exceeds minimum requirements for this theme	Performs well
4	Police authority significantly exceeds minimum requirements for this theme	Performs excellently

- 6 An accredited peer member inspector and a senior officer from a police authority supported the joint inspectorates during this inspection
- 7 We have integrated quality assurance throughout the planning, fieldwork and reporting stages of the inspection. In particular, a quality assurance panel of the joint inspectorates ensured the consistency and robustness of the inspection teams' judgements before the publication of reports. A suitably qualified peer joined the quality assurance panel as an observer.
- 8 HMIC and the Audit Commission are grateful for the support and co-operation of the Police Authority, its staff and officers during the inspection.

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This document is available on our website.

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission

1st Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4HQ

Telephone: **0844 798 3131**

Fax: 0844 798 2945

Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

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For further information about HMIC, visit our website at:

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Audit Commission

1st Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4HQ

Telephone: **0844 798 1212**
Fax: 0844 798 2945
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946

www.audit-commission.gov.uk



HMIC

Ground Floor
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London
SW1P 2BQ

Telephone: **020 7035 2001**
Fax: 020 7035 2176

www.hmic.gov.uk