



Appendix 2

Steve Mackay

Email: Smackay@worcestershire.gov.uk

Date: 15th October 2018

Our ref: PCC/CC/RT

Dear Steve,

Following our recent letter you will be aware of the decision to formally end the current strategic Alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police. As we have previously stated, our aspiration is that this decision enables us to reform the relationship with Warwickshire, rather than abandon it altogether. This point has been overlooked by much of the recent media coverage, despite numerous clarifications.

We have seen a lot of rhetoric about “divorce”, or West Mercia “going it alone”. This has been unfortunate and frustrating, because we have both been very clear on the matter. Whilst the current alliance arrangement will come to an end next year, our clearly stated preference is to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with our colleagues in Warwickshire going forward. An offer has already been made to that end. At the time of writing we are yet to receive a reply.

There is no reason that the existing benefits of the alliance cannot be retained. What is clear however, is that we must act now to address the limitations of the alliance that are affecting the delivery of efficient and effective policing in West Mercia. Any new relationship would simply need to be based on a different governance arrangement that would deliver more autonomy and accountability to both the constituent forces, as well as better services for our communities. We believe the current governance arrangement which limits the effectiveness of the alliance must change, but all the benefits realised for both forces do not need to be unpicked.

Talks about the future of the alliance have been ongoing for some time with our partners in Warwickshire. We have made numerous representations about reforming the current alliance arrangement over the course of more than a year. Those

representations have not resulted in any significant progress. As such, we arrived at the conclusion that this decision was necessary, and took steps to ensure our counterparts in Warwickshire were fully briefed more than a week in advance of our termination letter.

We fully recognise and respect that they do not support ending the current arrangement. Equally however, we also hope they will recognise that this decision is about reforming the way we collaborate, not terminating it altogether. As such, we have asked them to work with us in the weeks and months ahead to find a new way forward in the interests of our respective communities and police forces.

We are committed to ensuring that this period of negotiation and change will not negatively impact our local police service in West Mercia. We share the view that we must ensure our police are visible, accessible and delivering the best possible service. Work will also continue apace to recruit the 100 additional police officers for West Mercia announced recently.

Precisely how we will emerge from the current alliance is not yet known, but our message to residents in West Mercia is that this is about working towards a better deal and a better service for our communities. It is also about giving greater clarity to our hard working police officers and staff.

Change is naturally unsettling in any scenario, but that does not make it wrong. It would clearly have been easier and more convenient to simply maintain the existing alliance, and accept its associated flaws. However, that would also mean accepting a scenario that does not deliver the best possible value or results for the communities of West Mercia.

We are not willing to simply take the easy option if it isn't in the interest of our communities, and we do not believe our communities would expect us to either.

We will of course keep you updated as this matter progresses. Do please contact us if you would like to discuss the issue further or have any questions.

We have attached a bullet pointed briefing sheet for your convenience.

Yours sincerely



John Campion
**Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia**



Anthony Bangham
**Chief Constable
West Mercia Police**

West Mercia Police Stakeholder Briefing Sheet

- **What is the Alliance?** The Alliance was formed in 2012, and shares resources below the Chief Officer teams, particularly around specialist police and back office support functions. Both forces retain separate Chief Constables and Governance.
- **Why have West Mercia given notice to end the Alliance?** The Chief Constable and PCC are required to deliver efficient and effective policing to the communities of West Mercia. They both feel that the current Alliance structure prevents optimum effectiveness and efficiency, due to the lack of clear leadership it creates. There are considerable inefficiencies and gaps in effectiveness that the Alliance has not been able to address because of its governance structure. We are now acting to reset that relationship to address existing issues and deliver better value and services for local communities.
- **Why are we not just reforming the current Alliance?** Discussions have been ongoing with Warwickshire since May 2017 with an attempt to resolve the issues. To date no meaningful progress has been made. Having been unable to reform the alliance arrangement from within, West Mercia feels that they now have no choice but to end the current Alliance agreement, with a commitment to negotiate a mutually beneficial new relationship with Warwickshire.
- **When was this decision communicated to Warwickshire?** This decision was communicated to both Warwickshire's PCC and Chief Constable more than a week prior to the formal termination letter, which was delivered on 8th October 2018. As outlined above, this action followed more than a year of dialogue on the subject.
- **Why are the forces not merging?** West Mercia is already a multi county force and would support exploring the possibility of a full merger with Warwickshire. Warwickshire do not support this position. This has been the position adopted by successive PCCs in both force areas.
- **Does this mean no future collaboration with Warwickshire?** Whilst the existing Alliance will be coming to an end, there is already a clear offer by West Mercia to negotiate a mutually beneficial future relationship with clear and accountable governance and leadership. We do not believe it is necessary to undo the benefits the alliance has achieved, we are simply seeking to fix the issues that limit its effectiveness.
- **What is the cost of this decision?** West Mercia Police spend over £200m as part of the £300m alliance. West Mercia is committed to working with Warwickshire over the coming period to negotiate a future mutually beneficial relationship that will mitigate any potential costs. It is right that West Mercia resources are focused on delivering a service to its community.
- **What does it mean to the communities in West Mercia?** Day to day policing will not be affected. The ending of the existing Alliance and the negotiation of a future relationship will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing for the communities of West Mercia. The PCC's

recent commitment to add another 100 establishment officers in West Mercia remains.

- ***What happens now?*** There is a 12 month notice period before the existing Alliance comes to an end. West Mercia have offered to negotiate a new relationship with Warwickshire and await their response.