

Police and Crime Panel

8th February 2017

Sale of Registration Mark AB1

1. Background

- 1.1 The registration number AB1 was first issued to Worcestershire in 1903 and was used on the car of Worcestershire County Police's Chief Constable until 1931.
- 1.2 Following that the mark was void for a number of years until being reissued to Worcestershire County Police and used on the car of the Chief Constable in 1957. Since that time, including following the amalgamation of the County force into the newly formed West Mercia Police in 1967, the mark was displayed on the Chief Constable's vehicle until 2011.
- 1.3 In 2011, AB1 was withdrawn from use for two main reasons. Firstly: due to the security concerns associated with having such an easily identifiable mark on the Chief Constable's vehicle. Secondly for ensuring public expectations were met regarding the prudent use of public resources. The mark has subsequently remained unused for six years.
- 1.4 Registration marks are not owned in and of themselves. It is the right to use them that is owned. Such rights are given by the Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency, and the sole evidence of such rights is the registration documentation.

2. Timeline and sale process

- 2.1 22nd May 2017 With no prospect of the registration number being used again by the police and in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's commitment to use the resources and assets in his proposals to support policing in West Mercia, the Commissioner notified the Head of Transport of his intention to sell the asset. Research was completed to establish historical facts and validate ownership, including validation of the registration documentation (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 22nd May 2017 to 15th June 2017 Negotiations were held with Brightwells as an established and experienced agent as to their commission and marketing plan, which also included some ideas as to potential value. That agreement is commercially confidential and cannot be published. The registration mark was valued to ensure any sale was in line with market expectations and to ensure value for money for local taxpayers.
- 2.3 15th June 2017 Brightwells Auctioneers were instructed to market AB1.
- 2.4 15th June 2017 to 17th July 2017 Over the following month, Brightwells advertised AB1 as being for sale in a number of ways. They organised coverage at the Bicester Heritage Museum's Flywheel Festival and at an event at Shelsley Walsh Historic Hill Climb. They promoted it in their Classic and Vintage media and approached clients directly. The registration number was also advertised in the Daily Telegraph and in the Midland Automobile Club News booklet. This was in

accordance with their recommended approach. A number of offers to purchase AB1 were received and rejected during this period. Those offers are commercially confidential and cannot be published. Some of those offers rejected were in excess of the indication of potential value, and they were all considerably less than the final offer accepted.

- 2.5 17th July 2017 Mr West made an offer direct of £160,000 to the Police and Crime Commissioner. His offer was significantly higher than any other received.
- 2.6 18th July 2017 The Police and Crime Commissioner commissioned legal advice that was received on the 18th July 2017, establishing the ability to withdraw the item from sale through Brightwells and sell directly to an individual, enabling the Police and Crime Commissioner to conduct the sale privately. This had not been the original intention, but it represented an opportunity for the Police and Crime Commissioner to accept the best offer and pay no commission on the sale.
- 2.7 18th July 2017 The registration was withdrawn from sale with Brightwells following legal advice and the sale was agreed in principle with Mr West.
- 2.8 18th July 2017 The Police and Crime Commissioner then instructed that all the necessary standard legal checks, including provenance of the funds to pay for the purchase under anti-money laundering legislation, were completed for transactions of this size and nature. An overage clause was also inserted into the eventual contract of sale to ensure that a share of any profits from the future sale of AB1 are returned to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the public purse.
- 2.9 8th August 2017 Contracts were signed and sale completed. The sale was announced to the media and wider public on 10th August 2017, as soon as reasonably possible after the contracts were signed.
- 2.10 No higher offers than the one accepted were received for AB1. Following the sale being agreed a small number of parties have approached local media outlets claiming they would have been willing to pay more, but they did not make offers. The Police and Crime Commissioner confirms that the robust and transparent process has ensured AB1 was sold to the person who made the highest bid.

3. Contractual arrangements

- 3.1 The contract included standard overage clauses protecting the Police and Crime Commissioner's and public's interests. If AB1 is sold or transferred to any other party within 10 years 50% of the price difference will be paid to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4. Transparency

- 4.1 Most of the details listed above relating to the timeline and process of the sale have been publicly disclosed. Some of the above is commercially sensitive and has not been published. Those disclosed have featured in:
- [The formal decision notice on the PCC website](#) (published 10th August – Appendix 2)
 - [The Commissioner's Freedom of Information disclosure log](#) (from mid August on – relevant requests included at Appendix 3).
 - Numerous press statements (Appendix 4)
 - Correspondence with the public.
- 4.2 The only details withheld from FOI disclosures have been instances where it would have been illegal to divulge commercially sensitive information. These requests have been reviewed and overseen by the Police and Crime Commissioners Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.
- 5. Use of Sale Receipt**
- 5.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner has committed that he will use resources at his disposal to support frontline policing including the proceeds of AB1.

Andy Champness
Chief Executive

Appendix 1



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

Retention Document

Please read the guidance notes over the page
Use CAPITAL LETTERS when you fill in this form.

Serial number

7778

Grantee

WEST MERCIA POLICE TRANSPORT
WEST MERCIA POLICE TRANSPORT
HINDLIP HALL
HINDLIP
WORCESTER
WR3 8SP

Vehicle registration number: **AB 1** Validation character: **4**

This vehicle registration number must be assigned to a vehicle before: **06 09 2025**

Nominee

WEST MERCIA POLICE TRANSPORT
WEST MERCIA POLICE TRANSPORT

Document reference number: **WEST MERCIA POLICE TRANSPORT AB1**

Date of issue of document: **26 08 2015**

Body type of the vehicle the registration number has come of: **4 DOOR SALOON**

THE ASSIGNMENT FEE HAS ALREADY BEEN PAID

1 Assigning this vehicle registration number

The Grantee MUST fill in this section. Please send the assignment application directly to DVLA, Swansea. Read note B over the page.

I, the Grantee, apply to assign the vehicle registration number of:

An unregistered vehicle or a registered vehicle Please an 'X' in the box that applies.

This vehicle registration number must be assigned to a vehicle before the date shown below:

06 09 2025

Please fill in the vehicle registration number and validation character of the registered vehicle below. These details are shown in Section 4 of the Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C).

Vehicle Registration Number: Validation character:

I understand that I have used my right to assign this vehicle registration number, and that any future application to transfer or retain this vehicle registration number will be subject to the Department for Transport's rules as they exist at that time.

Grantee (not Nominee) MUST sign in the box below:

Date:

If you are signing for a partnership, limited company, or other legal entity, give your position in the firm:

If you want to add (if you do not have one) or change the nominee details at the same time as assigning, you also need to fill in Section 2.

Please put an 'X' in the box to show what you are applying to:

2 Nominee details (read note C over the page)

Fill in this section if you want to add (if you do not have one), or change the Nominee details on this Document.

I, the Grantee, apply to add or change the Nominee details on this Retention Document.

First names:

Burname:

or Company Name:

3 Grantee's change of address details (read note D over the page)

Post town:

Post code:

Daytime phone number:

4 Refund of the assignment fee (read note E over the page)

I, the Grantee, apply for a refund of the assignment fee (500). The vehicle registration number has not been assigned, and the assignment period has not expired. I understand that I can no longer assign this vehicle registration number.

5 Certificate renewal after expiry

Please put an 'X' in the box for renewal after 10 years.

6 Signature

Grantee (not Nominee) MUST sign in the box below for Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Date:

If you are signing for a partnership, limited company, or other legal entity, give your position in the firm:

DVLA use only

Date received:

Date processed:

ROS taxing information

AC: Period: CC/CO₂: Value:

Official use only

Date of assignment: 6 DVLA code: 7 Section code: 8 Output marker: 9

12/14

Appendix 2

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA



RECORD OF DECISION

TITLE: West Mercia – Sale of registration mark AB1

Ref: PCC/D/2017/08

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is recommended that the registration rights to AB1 owned by West Mercia PCC be sold to maximise value for money.

PROPOSAL

Worcestershire was allocated the identification letters AB1 in May 1903, and as a result AB1 was the very first mark to be issued to a motor vehicle in the county. The mark was used on the vehicle of the Chief Constable of Worcestershire County Police until 1931. Following that, the mark remained void for some time, until being reissued on the vehicle used by the Chief Constable of Worcestershire County Police in 1957. Since that time and following the amalgamation of the Worcestershire County force into West Mercia Police in 1967, the mark has been displayed on each of the Chief Constables vehicles. Since 2011 the registration mark has been held on retention and not allocated to any specific vehicle within West Mercia Police. Registration is the only proof of rights to assign the mark to a vehicle. It is registered in the name of West Mercia Police Transport [Department], and therefore the Police and Crime Commissioner can sell the rights of that registration.

Whilst fully acknowledging the significant local history behind the registration mark, the asset has remained unused for a significant period of time. No Chief Constable or other public servant will use a private number plate, both for security reasons and because of public expectations of prudent use of public resources. On this basis, it is appropriate to market the registration rights to AB1 to achieve a capital receipt for the Police and Crime Commissioner that can be used to deliver services that benefit the local community more fully.

The registration mark has been valued independently to ensure that any sale is in line with market expectations and to ensure that value for money for local taxpayers is achieved.

The mark was sent to auction earlier this summer through Brightwells, an established and experienced company, and there were a number of offers. The best offer to purchase the registration was received directly to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, completely independent of the auction process. The amount

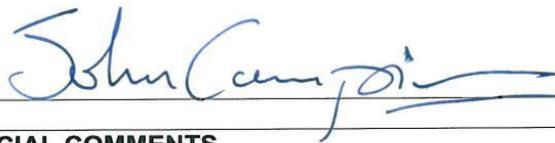
offered is in excess of the provisional estimates given by Brightwells.

The recommendation is therefore that the offer of £160,000 to purchase the registration mark by a private individual be accepted by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

**APPROVAL OF
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed



FINANCIAL COMMENTS

The private sale of the registration rights will generate a capital receipt of **£160,000** including VAT. This value was significantly higher than any offer received through the auction process, and above the independent valuation of the registration mark. This has ensured that value for money for local taxpayers has been achieved.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

By virtue of schedule 11, paragraph 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Commissioner may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of commissioner. That includes: entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not) and acquiring and disposing of property (including land).

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the West Mercia Commissioner's website. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request are not included in Part 1 but instead in a separate Part 2 report. There is no Part 2 report.

OFFICER APPROVAL

Chief Executive Officer

Signature  Date 8th August 2017

Appendix 3

WEST MERCIA PCC: DISCLOSURE LOG RESPONSES TO REQUESTS

Reference: 2017 – 146

Date of response 15th August 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST.

FOI Query.

I am writing to you requesting that you do the right thing and reconsider your decision to dispose of AB 1.

As a matter of transparency I, like others who have previously written to you in respect of this issue, would like to receive your response to the following which you should treat as a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. Who was consulted with before the decision was made?
2. What is the legal advice that provides you with the reassurance that West Mercia own the right to sell? Agreement of agency who gifted it e.g. DVLA?
3. What research has been done on the historical facts which you say you have great respect for?
4. Has the Registered # been placed at an auctioneers and if so who and where. Has it been valued by independent accessors?
5. What value do you feel the plate has and how do you ensure it remains with the people of Worcestershire?
6. If you go through with the sale of this asset, how exactly will the funds be used. The use of "to support front line policing" is nebulous and the community deserves a more detailed explanation.

Response.

1. Discussions were held between the PCC and Chief Officers.
2. The information regarding legal advice and agreement of agency is set out in Decision Notice No. 8 which is available to view on the PCC Website (see link below).
3. Research has been done on historical facts which are summarised in Decision Notice No.8 which is available to view on the PCC Website (see link below).
4. The registration was placed with Brightwells Auctioneers as the Force uses them to sell other force assets. Brightwells Ltd organised coverage regarding the sale at the Bicester Heritage Museum's Flywheel Festival and at an event at Shelsley Walsh Historic Hillclimb. They promoted it in their Classic and Vintage media and approached clients directly. The VRN was also advertised in the Daily Telegraph and in the Midland Automobile Club (MAC) News booklet. The OPCC proposed a staggered commission for the sale instead of a flat fee to encourage getting the most for the VRN.
5. The registration mark has been valued independently to ensure that any sale is in line with market expectations and to ensure that value of money for local taxpayers is achieved. A press release

has been issued which contains the information concerning the buyer who resides in Worcestershire, which is available to view on the PCC Website. (See link below).

6. Precisely how the money will be used will be determined now the amount realised is known. The Commissioner will use the money to deliver services that benefit the local community.

All of the above information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8 and the Press Release which are available to view on the PCC Website. Please see links below:

Decision Notice No. 8

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/record-of-decisions-made-during-2017/>

Media Release

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/ab1-sold-but-stays-in-west-mercia/>

FOI Officer

Police and Crime Commissioners Office West Mercia

Reference: 2017 – 147

Date of response 15th August 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST.

FOI Query

Area requested for Sale of vehicle registration AB1. No details shown on the publication scheme/website.

Questions requiring answering:

1. When was the consideration first raised for the possibility of selling AB1 and by whom. Meetings, minutes, actions.
2. What legal enquiries to validate ownership to sell were made?
3. What research was undertaken to establish the ownership and history of the plate and by whom and to see the document produced to enable this to be used to consider the decision to sell. Any documentation, reports, research, correspondence with DVLA.
4. Request to see the plate registration certificate showing ownership and conditions.
5. Who, when, where the decision to sell was made and the conditions of its sale. Was this date before, on or after the knowledge of public concern was raised?
6. Where it would be offered for sale, confirmation that best return for sale was undertaken, documents showing valuation and potential return.
7. Why was it withdrawn from Brightwell auction rooms and allegedly sold privately.
8. Details of places approached for sale, costs, evaluation.
9. Confirmation whether or not this plate has been sold or not.
10. If sold the exact amount realised.
11. If sold was the purchaser known to or by any member of West Mercia or the PCC office or related agencies.
12. If sold was it sold with conditions it remains in Worcestershire and exhibited on a vehicle used primarily within Worcestershire.
13. If it has been sold full details of who by, when (exact date, time, place, persons present, signatories) where, agreements by relevant committee, force group, financial appraisal agreements, ensure that the best value and realisation for force asset was possible. All this will be dependent upon the agreement by the relevant force committee that they had satisfied themselves that they had the lawful title to sell.

14. Full details of the Chief officer group and particularly the office of the PCC responses to those contacting and making requests for responses following concerns that the sale is believed to be illegal and if not a serious misjudgement by the PCC.
15. If the decision was to sell, full details of all consultation engaged in to ensure that the Chief Officers and PCC office have undertaken their responsibilities to develop and improve community relations, maximise financial returns for the force and delivery quality services to the communities the PCC s elected as a servant to represent.
16. If sold details of the money realised and breakdown of its intended use.
17. Confirmation of any press releases provided to any type of media including social media. What was the communications strategy?
18. Confirmation and copies of the risk assessment and community impact assessment carried out and used as part of the decision log.

Response.

1. Consideration was formally raised between the PCC and the former Chief Constable in 2016 and then the Head of Transport was notified by the PCC on 22nd May 2017 of his intention to sell the VRN.
2. This information regarding legal enquiries to validate ownership are contained within Decision Notice No. 8 which is available to view on the PCC Website (see link below).
3. Research has been done on historical facts which are set out in Decision Notice No.8 which is available to view on the PCC Website (see link below). Discussions are subject to legal professional privileges under Section 42(1) and (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
4. Attached is a copy of the Retention Document for AB1¹, some of the sensitive information has been redacted to prevent the document from being copied and misused by someone else, bearing in mind it is now publicly available.
5. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).
6. The registration was placed with Brightwells Auctioneers as the Force uses them to sell other force assets. Brightwells Ltd organised coverage regarding the sale at the Bicester Heritage Museum's Flywheel Festival and at an event at Shelsley Walsh Historic Hillclimb. They promoted it in their Classic and Vintage media and approached clients directly. The VRN was also advertised in the Daily Telegraph and in the Midland Automobile Club (MAC) News booklet. The OPCC proposed a staggered commission for the sale instead of a flat fee to encourage getting the most for the VRN. The documents showing valuation and potential return are not disclosable as they would prejudice the commercial interest of Brightwells under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
7. The VRN was withdrawn from sale by the Commissioner, and the Head of Transport Services was notified of this on 18th July 2017. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8.
8. Please see response provided to Question No. 6.
9. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).
10. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).

¹ See Appendix 1

11. The response to this question is contained within the press release, which is available on the web site. (See link below).
12. The response to this question is contained within the press release, which is available on the web site. (See link below).
13. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).
14. The information requested is of a personal nature and therefore not available under Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it contravenes Data Protection except for those contained under the FOI requests detailed on the PCC Website.
15. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).
16. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below). Precisely how the money used will be determined now amount realised is known.
17. All press releases relating to the sale are held on the PCC Website (see link below). A statement was posted on the West Mercia Police Facebook account on 18th July.
“The Police and Crime Commissioner has decided to market the registration number ‘AB1’. The number plate has been on retention for a number of years and has not been used by West Mercia Police. Any sale proceeds will be used to support policing in West Mercia”.
18. This information is contained within Decision Notice No. 8. (See link below).

Decision Notice No. 8

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/record-of-decisions-made-during-2017/>

Media Release

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/ab1-sold-but-stays-in-west-mercia/>

FOI Officer

Police and Crime Commissioners Office West Mercia

Reference: 2017 – 149

Date of response 15th August 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST.

FOI Query.

I entered a competitive tender process in respect of the sale, by the West Mercia Police Authority, of registration plate AB1 conducted by Messrs. Brightwells, following an advertisement placed in the national press.

I was advised during the process that the plate had been sold. As I was willing to pay a substantial amount for the plate (I was advised offers based on £250,000) I was shocked that the auction/tender process was not carried through.

Could you please let me know:

1. If the plate has been sold
2. The price that was paid for the plate
3. The name of the person or organisation that purchased the plate

This information is required in my capacity as an interested party and as a council tax payer in the Malvern Hills District Council area which contributes to the costs of the West Mercia Police Authority. This email should be regarded as a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act and your response will be used to determine what further action I should take in this matter.

Response.

1. The AB1 number plate has now been sold. The details of which are held on Decision Notice No. 8 which can be found on the PCC Website. (See link below).
2. The price paid for the number plate is held on Decision Notice No. 8 which can be found on the PCC Website. (See link below).
3. The name of the person who has purchased the Number Plate can be found on the Media Release which can be found on the PCC Website. (See link below).

Decision Notice No. 8

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/record-of-decisions-made-during-2017/>

Media Release

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/ab1-sold-but-stays-in-west-mercia/>

FOI Officer

Police and Crime Commissioners Office West Mercia

Reference: 2017 – 151

Date of response 18th August 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

FOI Query.

Dear West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner,

I note the recent sale of the AB1 number plate. Please supply me with all documentation relating to this sale;

In particular i would like to see;

-details of all valuations sought or received -the manner in which the sale was advertised -details of the procurement/sale process that was followed -how full value for a publicly owned asset was achieved -how a former Chief Constable came to purchase the number plate -why the number was sold for way below its actual and estimated market value -the legal and professional advice the Commissioner relied upon to make the decision to sell the registration number -details of the governance/oversight process that applied to this transaction -details of how 'due diligence' was applied to this transaction -the overall rationale for selling the number plate to a private individual at a significant discount when he was prepared to pay significantly more - i.e. its actual market value.

Response.

All available information is published on the West Mercia Website at the following address <https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk>

The Decision Notice, media release and other FOIs relating to the sale of AB1 can be found on the links below.

The number plate was not sold for below its estimated market value. It was sold at the full offering price, not at any discount.

All other documentation is exempt from disclosure under Section 43, Sub Section (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as this would prejudice the Commercial interest

Decision Notice No. 8

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/record-of-decisions-made-during-2017/>

Media Release

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/ab1-sold-but-stays-in-west-mercia/>

FOI Officer

Police and Crime Commissioners Office West Mercia

Reference: 2017 – 157

Date of response 24th November 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

FOI Query.

Dear West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner,

This is a duplicate of my previous request which 'got lost'

In relation to the sale of Vehicle Registration Mark AB1 could you please supply me with the following:-

Copies of Minutes of any Meeting where the sale of AB1 was proposed or discussed (redacted if appropriate) including the very first proposal to sell it. I have yet to locate in the Disclosure Log any document containing the original proposal to sell it and ensuing discussion. Decision Notice 8 only records the decision to accept the offer of £160,000, specifically NOT the Decision to sell the VRM.

Copies of any documents including, but not limited to, any correspondence concerning the monetary value of the VRM, any letters or emails between OPCC/PCC/HEO and the successful purchaser.

Copies of any other documents or emails, not specifically requested previously, that contain reference to the sale of AB1 and have not been previously included in a Disclosure Log.

Response.

There are no copies of minutes or any other documents regarding the first proposal to sell AB1. Decision Notice 8 implicitly incorporates the recommendation to sell with the recommendation to accept the offer.

The documents and correspondence concerning the monetary value of the VRN and copies of emails between the OPCC/PCC/HEO and the successful purchase are exempt from disclosure under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act - Commercial Interests.

The copies of any other documents not specifically requested previously that contain reference to the sale of AB1 and not previously included in the Disclosure Log are all exempt from disclosure under either Section 43(2) - Commercial Interests, Section 42(1) - Legal Professional privilege, Section 33(2) – Audit Functions or Section 22(1) – Information held with a view to its publication at a future date, which has all since been published.

FOI Officer

Police and Crime Commissioners Office West Mercia

Appendix 4

WEST MERCIA PCC: PRESS RELEASES

21/07/2017

Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said: “My priority is to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are protected and that West Mercia is a safe place. The public expect that I effectively use the assets at my disposal to do this.

The prospect of a Chief Constable or any public servant using a private number plate belongs in a time gone by, both for security reasons and public expectation, therefore a considered decision has been made to market ‘AB 1’ and any sale proceeds will be reinvested towards frontline policing in West Mercia.

I acknowledge that there is history associated with this registration number, however it is right that we utilise the assets we have to support policing in our area – particularly when they have not been used for around six years.”

10/08/2017

AB1 Number Plate Sold, but Stays in West Mercia

The AB1 car registration has been sold for a significant six-figure sum, but will remain a part of the local landscape after being bought by a former West Mercia Chief Constable.

Paul West QPM was the last Chief to use the plate on his car. As its new owner, he has now pledged to keep the registration within Worcestershire.

AB1 was the first number plate to ever be issued in Worcestershire and was used by local Chief Constables up until 2011. It was withdrawn from use due to safety concerns, and with no prospect of it ever being used again Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion decided to sell it.

John Campion said: “The local history of AB1 was always secure come what may, but sadly it was clear we were never going to see it in use again.”

“This sale achieves a significant amount of money towards policing our communities and keeping people safe. It also means AB1 retains a good link with West Mercia’s policing family and remains a part of the local landscape”.

Paul West QPM said: “I am well aware of the acute financial pressures being faced by the police service at present, so whilst it’s not a decision that I would have wanted to make, I completely understand why the PCC chose to sell an asset like this, especially when it had been out of use for so long. However, my family and I didn’t want AB1 simply to be lost to somebody with no connection to policing or to Worcestershire and never to be seen again.”

“I do intend to use the number plate on a car and am committed to keeping AB1 in Worcestershire during my lifetime. I’d also like to make sure that its story remains accessible to local communities. I am planning to work with several former colleagues who had an even longer association with AB1 than I, to create some historic displays about the number plate’s unique history, which we intend to offer to local museums and libraries in Worcestershire.”

18/08/2107 (two statements)

"In 2017 I think the public would rightly expect me to use the assets at my disposal, such as AB1, to help support their police service, rather than just providing a status symbol for senior officers, which they cannot use anyway for security reasons."

"I am confident that proper process was followed regarding the sale. The registration was advertised openly and the highest offer was accepted".

A spokesperson for the Police and Crime Commissioner said " We would reiterate that the plate was sold to the highest bidder. We can confirm that no correspondence and no formal offer was received by Mr Cherry prior to the sale, which was agreed on 21st July. As is common with transactions of this size and nature, a series of financial checks were required before the deal was completed and announced. "

21/08/2017

A spokesperson for the West Mercia PCC said: "AB 1 was widely advertised for sale, via an external agency, in national and motoring press as well as at motoring events. Anybody was able to submit a bid for the registration and a number of offers were received. To reiterate, AB 1 was sold to the highest bidder."

22/08/2017

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said:

"Cllr Oborski's claims are politically motivated nonsense. The registration was nationally advertised for sale over a number of weeks, inviting bids from any interested party. We received a number of offers and accepted the highest, which was significantly more than any other bid received. All the details of the transaction have been published."

31/08/2017

In 2017 I think the public would rightly expect me to use the assets at my disposal, such as AB1, to help support their police service, rather than just providing a status symbol for senior officers.

The proper process was followed to achieve best value for the taxpayer. The registration was advertised widely for sale, via an external agency, in national and motoring press as well as at motoring events. Anybody was able to submit a bid for the registration and a number of offers were received, both via the agent and directly.

The highest offer, which was significantly more than any other bid received, was accepted and agreed on 21st July. It was removed sale at this point.

As is common with transactions of this size and nature, a series of financial checks were required before the deal was completed and announced in early August. All the details of the transaction have been published and are available to view on my website.

This sale achieves a significant amount of money towards policing our communities and keeping people safe.

11/09/2017

A spokesperson for the West Mercia PCC said:

“We have not seen the complaint in question. How it is dealt with is wholly a matter for the Police and Crime Panel, but the PCC will happily provide any assistance they require.”

“We have been clear and consistent on the sale of AB1. The registration was advertised and marketed for more than a month. Anybody was welcome to submit a bid during that period, and it was sold to the highest bidder.”

“Full details of the sale have been disclosed on the PCC’s website and can be viewed at any time, including numerous extensive and appropriate responses to Freedom of Information requests. Some elements of these requests asked for information which cannot be legally released”.

14/09/2017

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said:

“The full details of the sale are published for anyone to view at any time. That has been the case for weeks now and will continue to be the case.”