

**Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Chair's Report of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel meeting, 22nd  
October 2013.**

Panel Members present included Councillors Pattie Hill, Roger Hill, and Yvonne Smith as substitute for Councillor Fry. Also in attendance were Councillors Hartnett, Blake, and Witherspoon.

We welcomed the Divisional Superintendent for West Mercia (North Worcestershire), Supt Kevin Purcell, to the meeting to give a brief overview of policing arrangements for Redditch in the future. He was accompanied by Sue Hanley, primarily in her capacity as Chair of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP).

Supt Purcell advised us that West Mercia Police were in the process of recruiting Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) who would work within local secondary schools to offer support to pupils and teachers and the local community. Ideally, candidates will have previous experience of working with young people and particular skills suited to working in a Schools partnership environment.

More Special Constables are also being recruited to compliment the work of Police Officers and PCSOs. They will now be trained up to the required level over a shorter time period than in previous years so that they can quickly join the Safer Neighbourhood teams and support important work in the local community.

We were advised that the West Mercia Police are also looking to strengthen their engagement with young people by recruiting police cadets as part of a force wide volunteer scheme. This would give the cadets an opportunity to raise their understanding of policing and to help them to become good citizens. One of the force's intentions is to break down barriers to entry for under represented communities (e.g. financial concerns) and to generally have a more diverse range of volunteers within the scheme.

We were told that, altogether, these initiatives will help to further increase the visibility of the policing in the local community. The force has already received very positive feedback around there being more police on patrol.

Members were reassured that there will always be a policing base in Redditch no smaller than the existing station. However, we were told that this station was very costly to maintain, hence the police are considering whether there is a suitable alternative facility that could be used in future.

Supt Purcell also informed us that he and colleagues are currently working with Worcestershire County Council and other partners around how to best deal with people in custody that have mental health issues. We were told that this is a national issue and not something that could be resolved satisfactorily by working purely at the local level on an ad hoc basis.

After Supt Purcell left the meeting, we were provided with a community safety update which referred to the activities that are taking place to make Redditch and neighbouring areas even safer, shared community safety priorities and those that had been identified in Redditch, and also performance summaries for tackling crime for North Worcestershire and also specifically in Redditch. We were very pleased to see that total recorded crime had significantly decreased in recent years.

Finally, Officers ran through the most recent approved minutes of the North Worcestershire Community Partnership from June 2013. As ever, this took place in confidential session.

We thanked the Officers for their attendance at the meeting. Members were aware that this was the only scheduled meeting for 2013/14. They were invited to inform Officers if there were any pressing issues that they felt warranted another meeting to scrutinise until the end of the year.

**Cllr Andrew Brazier**  
**Chair, Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel**  
**October 2013**