



John Champion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia



Annual Report

2016-2017

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Foreword

In the past year, I have hit the ground running to deliver for our communities. I promised to deliver a West Mercia that is safe, secure, reformed and provides victims of crime with the services and support they need. These have been the guiding principles in my first year in office.

Putting victims and survivors first and ensuring they get the help they need to cope and recover is integral to everything I do. I have delivered the new Victim's Charter that was part of my election pledges. I have sustained key funding to a number of victim support services, and will continue to support campaigns, such as those around hate crime, cybercrime and child sexual exploitation.

There has been demonstrable progress for West Mercia Police, which is now providing a better service to our communities than it was 12 months ago. There have been improvements in key PEEL reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). I've provided funding to address a number of specific community concerns, covering everything from speeding to street drinking. I've also helped and supported people all across our communities, including some of the most vulnerable sections of society, through my grants scheme. I want to sustain and build on this progress now to make our communities even more secure.

In terms of reform, I've built on our good foundations and pushed for some major steps which are now being made to modernise West Mercia Police and give our officers the tools they need to do their jobs. These include the roll out of mobile technology, the introduction of body worn video and the ongoing work to create a brand new Operations Communications Centre to be shared

with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

I have worked to reassure our communities by understanding, being responsive to, and providing a strong voice for their key priorities. Whether this has been through formal consultations, hundreds of face-to-face engagements, my team of Community Ambassadors or on new digital platforms. Being open, transparent and accessible have been guiding principles through all of my work so far and I have worked to ensure that our communities can have faith in me as their Commissioner, and also in the police service they receive.

I am pleased to be able to share details of all of this in my first annual report. Clearly there is a lot more work to do in the coming years but I am confident that we have the right foundations in place. Building a safer West Mercia will take knowledge, skills, resources, partnership and co-operation. I believe my first annual report shows we are moving in the right direction and I will work to sustain and build on the progress we are making in every element of my work.



John Campion
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

The year in numbers

Putting victims and survivors first

£2M investment in support services 

50,000 victims of crime referred to Victim Support 

81% of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Mercia Police


1,000 new referrals for sexual violence


Reforming West Mercia

£4.2M investment in mobile technology 

£1M investment in body worn video 

3,152 Operations Communications Centre construction starts

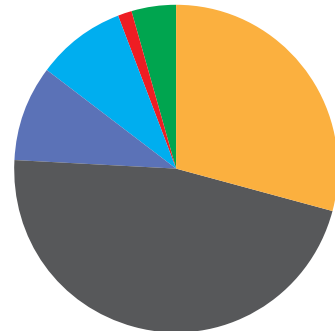
85% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds 

62% of 101 calls answered within 30 seconds 

Building a more secure West Mercia


80,959 offences were recorded

£4.8M secured confiscation orders



10,304 violence with injury offences
16,505 violence without injury offences
3,152 rape and other sexual offences
3,085 residential burglaries
47 people killed on West Mercia's roads
1,479 hate crimes reported

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

77% of people are confident in police in their local area 

407 special constables 

158 police volunteers 

550 public engagements 

259 independent custody visits 

450 media articles or interviews 

Putting victims and survivors first

This was a key election promise for me, and I am delivering on the promises I made. Ensuring improved and consistent support services for the victims, survivors and witnesses who suffer most from crime remains as important for me now as it ever has been.

For 2017/18, I have more than doubled the funding allocated to West Mercia from the Ministry of Justice to provide victim services. This means over £2m this year is committed to ensuring that victims receive the support they need to enable them to cope and recover from crime. This additional resource will supplement additional victim provision as part of my commitment to securing the very best service for a victim of crime.

My Victims Charter was published within my first 100 days in office, as I pledged to do before my election. It is my firm commitment to victims of what standards they can expect, as well as setting out the standards I expect service providers to work to in providing the best possible support to victims. It is now being implemented and used to ensure the investments I make on behalf of our communities are both victim and outcome focused. I have built a close working relationship with the Ministry of Justice around some ground breaking projects and initiatives. My Victims Board is enabling my office to keep abreast of developments and hold partners to account for their part in enabling the victim pathway.

My focus in commissioning services has been clearly fixed on victim driven outcomes. There have been a number of times where the importance of this has been driven home for me in the last 12 months. Either via face-to-face visits, telephone



calls or in writing to my office, I have seen and heard some compelling first hand experiences from victims who have used these services. They have provided some life changing (and in many cases life saving) interventions.

“Kim was brilliant, she listened and I couldn’t have gotten through it without her.”

A Victim Support service user

Commitment to victim services

My commitment to victim services is achieving significant outcomes. This year alone Victim Support have managed 50,000 referrals in the West Mercia area; that’s 50,000 victims of crime seeking emotional and practical support. This referral rate has doubled in the last two years and I have been very pleased to see this progress. There have also been 1,000 new referrals for Other data shows that, far from indicating an increase in actual crime, this increase in referrals shows more victims are confident to come forward and get support – whether or not they have reported a crime to the police.



10,000 of these referrals required immediate support and assessment which was provided (often within 24-48 hours of a referral), and 8,000 victims required more in-depth and longer term care. My commissioning team continually work with providers and listen to the views of victims to make sure they are getting the right level of support at the right time and in the right manner. To date, Victim Support has a 99% satisfaction rate which is more than encouraging.

The service continues to evolve with support from my Commissioning team who have received national recognition for their work, piloting and developing new innovative approaches to enhance the experience for the victim. An example of this is integrating Restorative Justice (RJ) into the victim care pathway; enabling any victim to access and be part of an appropriate RJ process to enable their recovery. As a result there have been over 300 RJ interventions across West Mercia.

Over the coming year I will be carrying out a needs assessment for victims, which will involve listening to victims, understanding what support service they want to see, and me taking time to understand the challenges they face along their journey. I am passionate about hearing their views and incorporating them in any future support model.

Specialist support

Specialist teams and agencies have been commissioned to help meet my vision of providing the highest standards of support for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, regardless of age or gender.

I am committed to working with other commissioners to strengthen the provision across our four local authority areas. Over £500,000 is committed to the provision of Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors and helpline support, and I have committed to this spend throughout my term. This is a specific area where the number of victims seeking help has increased.

I have also continued to increase investment in sexual violence support. This now stands in excess of £700,000 and ensures the availability of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors for all ages. This investment has been ring fenced for my term in office and these services also link into Paediatric Sexual Assault Referral Centres and Adult provision across the region, which have recently been jointly commissioned with NHS England.



Some of the team from West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre

Building a more secure West Mercia

Force leadership

One of the first priorities to address following my election was appointing a new Chief Constable following the retirement of David Shaw. Twelve months on, the force has a new leadership team to deliver for our communities. Anthony Bangham's appointment as Chief Constable was the result of a rigorous, open transparent process involving numerous community partners. His appointment has been followed by the appointment of Amanda Blakeman as Deputy Chief Constable, along with Martin Evans and Richard Moore also joining as Assistant Chief Constables recently. I am confident in their individual and collective abilities to lead a strong, compassionate police service.



With Chief Constable Anthony Bangham

Responding to changing police demands

There has been a major change in the way resources are allocated. New 'harm hubs' are based in local policing teams, moving away from specialist functions within protective services. This change in approach seeks to address the changing nature of crime in our communities and represents both an increase in capacity in investigating crimes against the vulnerable and moving that capacity closer to our communities where it is needed.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) continues to be a key priority both at a force, regional and national level. It is my intention to further strengthen the resources dedicated to the prevention and investigation of child sexual exploitation and high tech crime. I have also granted £80,000 to Barnardo's to fund CSE caseworkers who work as part of multi-agency teams to support children who are encountering or at risk of CSE. Last year they provided support to 65 vulnerable children. A further five children refused the service.

West Mercia Police has a 2020 vision of protecting people from harm and striving to be great at protecting the most vulnerable. To support this vision the force has developed a Vulnerability Strategy which is being publicly launched in July. This represents a significant investment for the force and supports my commitment to reduce harm and protect our most vulnerable people. Key to its success will be ensuring officers and staff can effectively identify and support people with vulnerabilities and manage associated risks. Messaging and training is ongoing to instil professional curiosity into people's mind sets and

to 'see past the obvious'. A major vulnerability training programme will be rolled out across West Mercia from September. Part of my vision though is to ensure long term planning for the force, beyond 2020, and this is something I am driving forward.

It is challenging to note there has been an 11% increase in total recorded crime within West Mercia over the last year. I have reassurance from the Chief Constable that the drivers for this increase are understood – primarily due to improved recording processes and greater confidence in victims to come forward - and that sufficient resources are in place to meet the demands.

Effectively managing the reduction of (re-)offending

My Crime Reduction Board has been established to bring together senior officers of the criminal justice system and Chairs of Community Safety partnerships in order to reduce crime and reoffending through effective partnership working. This includes oversight and scrutiny of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme, which contains 300 offenders. A new IOM manager to facilitate improved partnership working and management of the programme has also been appointed.

My Commissioning team secured grants totalling almost £300,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant for the Remember Veterans initiative to help keep local military veterans away from criminality. To date over a hundred veterans have been signposted to support services across the West Mercia and Warwickshire areas.

Collaboration and partnership working

It is a commitment in my Safer West Mercia Plan to support collaboration to improve services, increase capability and achieve efficiencies. In April a new collaborative arrangement between West Mercia Police and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) began. Seven staff from HWFRS's West District Administration and Community Risk Team have joined West Mercia Police's Harm Hub, to work in an integrated way from Hereford Police Station on Bath Street. The two teams will work together to protect the most vulnerable people in the community. This is just one example of a close partnership which I am pleased to support and hope will develop further.



Meeting Dave Ashmore at a visit to West Mercia Police's Task Force

Our partnership work with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) continues to evolve and we are currently working with partners to prioritise funding for them for the rest of my term. This will use demand and impact analysis to determine what support is needed down to postcode level. In 2017/18 I have provided CSPs with core funding of around £611,000 to support a range of initiatives, such as CCTV and Integrated Offender Management, through to local initiatives on domestic abuse and reducing anti-social behaviour.

My office are also working with CSP analysts to improve the relationships between partner organisations, and improve efficiency and access to information.

More widely I have worked in partnership with other Commissioners, Street Games and other partners to form an alliance to secure external funding for a research project into what makes an effective sports based intervention to deter young people from criminal behaviour.

I have worked collaboratively with regional colleagues to ensure that the Strategic Policing Requirement is met and regional work has significantly developed over the last 12 months. Two regional policy officers (RPOs) have been appointed, shared between the four Police and Crime Commissioners in the West Midlands region. The RPOs cover the Regional Organised Crime Unit, National Police Air Service, regional roads policing and the Central Motorway Policing Unit and oversight of the Counter Terrorism Unit alongside oversight of key national programmes which impact on our region. Scrutiny and accountability has been strengthened through these officers, along with a redesigned regional governance meeting.

Reforming West Mercia

Modernising West Mercia Police

I promised that I would reform and modernise West Mercia Police, giving its officers and staff the tools to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. I have kept these promises and I have pushed for major steps to be made to modernise West Mercia Police. These steps include:

A roll out of mobile technology

I am committed to improving police visibility in our communities and ensuring our officers can provide a more effective, efficient service. To that end, a trial in Evesham saw officers issued with smartphones and laptops, enabling them to work on the move and preventing them from having to return to the police station frequently to do paperwork. It resulted in, on average, an extra hour per officer, per shift, being spent out and about in the community. Following the success of the trial I have approved £4.2 million investment to roll the technology out to the rest of the force.

The introduction of body worn video

I have approved a £1 million project to introduce body worn video technology for our officers. This equipment has been shown to reduce complaints against police, help prevent crimes occurring and provide clear evidence of incidents when required. Initially 46 officers in Malvern have been equipped with the technology, followed by 240 officers in Telford with plans to roll out to all frontline West Mercia Officers and Staff by the end of 2017. The increased transparency which the video provides helps to reassure officers as well as the public, ensuring our communities can have confidence in their police.



With PC Andy Worrall, one of the first officers to receive body worn video technology in Telford

Ongoing work on a brand new Operations, Communications Centre (OCC)

In October, work began on a £23.5m construction project for a new OCC sited at Police Headquarters, shared with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. Changes in technology, telecoms, estates and culture will mean officers and staff can work more efficiently and effectively. For the public, it will mean improved responses to emergencies. The construction is currently ahead of schedule and on budget.



Turf cutting ceremony for the new joint police and fire Operations Communications Centre at Hindlip

Other projects

There are many more projects under my 'reform' agenda, either under way or planned, which will lead to improved effectiveness and efficiency in the force. One of the key projects going live in September 2017 is Athena, a 'one-stop-shop' IT business process solution to manage intelligence, investigation, case preparation and custody management, which will cover over 70% of operational process and practice and result in better victim and witness care. I shall be holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure that this and all the other projects are delivered on time and result in tangible efficiencies which lead to service improvements for our communities.

The implementation of mobile and agile working will enable more effective and efficient ways of working, delivering greater visibility for front line police, but I am also committed to ensuring the force has fit for purpose buildings and contact points which best meet the needs of local communities and organisations. This is why I will be commissioning a "One Place" review with Place Partnership Ltd to promote shared use of facilities with key partners such as fire and rescue services and local authorities. I have also identified monies in my medium term financial plan specifically to improve police contact points and to provide multi agency facilities in the Shrewsbury and Hereford areas.

Investing in our people

West Mercia Police is a professional, hardworking force which I want to build on to create a modern, innovative force. Investing in people to ensure they are reaching their full potential and feel valued is as important as any changes to ways of working or estates. I am committed to ensuring that the force delivers on these promises. I am encouraged to see improvements taking place including:

- A talent management programme to provide a co-ordinated approach to individual and organisational development which is undertaken to develop and retain people with the aptitude and competencies to meet current and future needs.
- A rationalisation of recruitment processes, resulting in reduced overall costs, higher calibre candidates and quicker appointments.
- A redesigned recruitment programme for Specials
- An alliance wide apprentice scheme, providing opportunities for young people to take part in a 12 month apprenticeship that includes studying for qualifications based on their role.

Health and wellbeing remains a priority for the force and I fully support this agenda. As part of this programme a health and wellbeing survey has been undertaken for a second year, resulting in a 55% response rate across the workforce. The results of the survey have provided a focal point for my Holding to Account meetings with the Chief Constable.

I believe that more should be done nationally to tackle violence against police. In West Mercia on duty police personnel were the victims of 678 offences in 2016/17, a 26% increase on the previous year. Earlier this year I launched my **#BehindTheBadge** campaign aimed at reducing these incidents and preventing them from happening. Our police are professional, dedicated and work hard every day to protect us and keep us safe. As communities, we need to recognise that and do everything we can to protect them as well.



John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

**This is not part
of the uniform**

You wouldn't expect to be
attacked at work...neither
do police officers and staff

Get **#BehindTheBadge**
www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/behindthebadge

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

My work has focused on delivering communities that are safe and feel safe, and ensuring that our communities can have faith in my work as Commissioner as well as the police force that serves them.

Within my office, I have developed, published and implemented a new Communications and Engagement strategy. This sets out the key pledges I have made to our communities around ensuring I am visible, accessible and responsive to their needs. Progress on delivering this strategy is published on my website to ensure full transparency in my work and performance in this area.



Joining officers executing warrants as part of Operation Protect

I have also taken steps to improve transparency and ensure our communities have faith in me as their PCC. Key appointments I have made have been recruited in open, transparent ways which have stood up to public scrutiny. For example, the process to appoint our new Chief Constable involved representation from the Police and Crime Panel, groups of young people and representatives from key stakeholders and partners – such as local authorities. I am currently exploring new options to measure public confidence and victim satisfaction through the rest of my term of office.

As well as publishing all mandatory information, I have also implemented a policy of publishing additional minutes and notes from a range of other meetings to improve transparency in this area. These include my formal Holding to Account meetings with the Chief Constable and the Alliance Governance Group. I also publish a full disclosure log of freedom of information requests and have made efforts to make all of this information easier to find for our communities.

Many of these publications are issued via my website, which has itself been fully redesigned and relaunched since my election to ensure a fit-for-purpose and more efficient service. The new site was designed to be much more engaging, easier to navigate and hold much more community information. This has all been achieved whilst actually delivering a cost saving to the public, compared with retaining the former website.

Publications on my website have been one part of my work to communicate with and provide reassurance to our communities. In addition to website articles and content I have published a monthly newsletter, continued to develop my presence on multiple social media platforms (with a focus on producing multi-media content), published more than 150 articles, blogs and comments to the media, resulting in more than 450 appearances in local and national media. I have established and maintained good relationships with our local media outlets during my first year in office.

I promised I would empower our communities to take the lead in resolving local issues, with support from the police when appropriate. To that end, I have supported a number of initiatives linked to active citizenship.

I have doubled the number of community speedwatch kits available throughout the West Mercia area. These are a valuable resource, particularly in rural areas where speeding, or the perception of speeding, remains a key priority. New applications to use these kits are coming in and communities are being supported by the Road Safety Partnership and the police in helping to use them effectively.

I have also supported numerous volunteering projects, either through my community grants programme or within the force. My PCC grants this year are enabling additional volunteering opportunities in numerous community groups across the force area. Within the force, the number of Special Constables has increased to 407 with another intake due shortly. West Mercia's Special Constabulary plays a vital role in supporting our

regular police and the force is working to further bolster recruits. Along with Specials, there are also currently 158 volunteers fulfilling other important roles supporting the force.

Ethical policing

It is important that when the public speak to either me as their Commissioner or their police force, we are responsive. We must put things right when they need to be put right and communities need to have confidence in the quality and legitimacy of service they receive in this area. It is not my role to deal with complaints about the police; this statutory function is undertaken within force by the Professional Standards Department (PSD). I will however always work to ensure complaints are processed and dealt with in a timely and appropriate way and I have challenged the force in a number of cases. Supported by my office, two members of the Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee carry out a monthly dip sample of PSD complaints to monitor standards and processes.




West Mercia's Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee

In September Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) confirmed that West Mercia had been reinstated on the national Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme (BUSS) following its suspension at the beginning of 2016. An improved 'Ride Along' scheme enables members of the public to see first-hand how their local police work, with the possibility to witness a stop and search in action. This scheme supports my commitment to deliver increased confidence in local policing and I will ensure the force continues to deliver its commitment towards this and the newly enhanced BUSS scheme.

19,241 detainees in Custody during 2016/17

53 Independent Custody Visitors 

259 visits undertaken by Independent Custody Visitors. 

78% of detainees consented to meeting with the Independent Custody Visitors

I am responsible for maintaining and operating an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme whereby trained volunteers visit police stations to check on the welfare and treatment of detainees. It offers protection to both detainees and the police, and reassurance to the wider community. To provide greater resilience to the scheme I have appointed a part time coordinator who administers the valuable work undertaken by our visitors. The results of this work over the last year are detailed in the box above.

Business rural and cyber crime

I promised that I would work with our communities to tackle rural, business and cybercrime. Over the last year I have prioritised meeting with business leaders and representatives first hand to listen to their concerns. This has resulted in 38 specific face-to-face business engagements. An outcome of these discussions is that I am exploring the opportunity to provide a dedicated business crime advisor, possibly based in the OCC, whose role would be to advise victims of business crime on how to get up and running again as quickly as possible following a crime. My Deputy is also working with the force to streamline the service provision of Business, Rural and Cyber Crime prevention to the community.

I am investing funds to provide co-ordinators to serve all areas of West Mercia, which should enhance the level of service provided to our rural and business communities. I have also jointly supported a regional cybercrime survey with my counterparts in the West Midlands region, which will provide a valuable insight into individual concerns and understanding of cybercrime and security. The final results from the survey will be published early in the summer.

Community engagement

I have actively sought engagement with our communities and partners since my election. I have been responsive to that engagement and used it to inform my work and decisions; whether that has been about local community issues or setting out longer term strategic plans. I have worked to make sure my engagements have happened in a variety of ways, places and with different people to ensure our communities are understood and represented.

Between myself and my team, we have conducted almost 550 face-to-face community engagements over the last year. These have been carried out by myself, my Deputy Tracey Onslow and the team of Community Ambassadors I have established.



North Worcestershire Ambassador Margaret Sherrey visiting a youth project in Kidderminster



With Deputy PCC Tracey Onslow

My Ambassador scheme provides additional eyes and ears for me in our communities across the large West Mercia policing area. Each policing area has an Ambassador, who contributes 40 hours a month to my work and represents me at local community events and meetings and is accessible to both the community and partners.

The Ambassadors have made the roles their own and this has been reflected in the 300 engagements they have been involved in over the last 12 months, supporting and enhancing my work as Commissioner. As examples, they have included:

- ▶▶ Liaising with community groups in Monkland, Herefordshire to help tackle an accident blackspot on a main road
- ▶▶ Visiting the Night Stop, Redditch to meet young people



Shropshire Ambassador Graham Oliver with young Police Cadets in Shifnal

- Being part of the Team Shrewsbury initiative, an integrated approach to community management which has helped the town achieve Purple Flag status
- Going out with Street Pastors in Evesham, Worcestershire
- Meeting with a victim of hate crime in Telford to discuss their experience

- Helping launch an extension to the Police cadets scheme in Albrighton, Shropshire
- Attending parish council meetings in South Worcestershire
- Meeting a charity based in Malinsgate, Telford, to see its work supporting military veterans suffering from mental health issues
- Attending regular meetings with the Face Values group in Hereford to hear views from the LGBT community

Their feedback from all these engagements comes back to me in my office, and where further action is appropriate I make sure that happens. The Ambassadors have achieved some notable outcomes as a result of their engagement, including improved road safety, encouraging more active citizenship in local communities, helping individual victims of crime and joining up local priorities – such as CCTV, community management or around business crime.



With West Mercia Search and Rescue, which has received a grant this year



Telford & Wrekin Ambassador Sherrel Fikeis with Police Cadets at a Sikh festival

Four formal public consultations have been carried out in the last year, seeking input to inform my Safer West Mercia Plan and feedback on the draft version, establishing priorities for my Victim's Charter and gauging opinion on my budget and precept proposals. In each case I used the results of these consultations to inform my eventual course of action. Whether this was ensuring I prioritised police visibility and responses in my Safer West Mercia Plan, or following through with my budget proposals, I have worked to ensure community voices are heard and represented in my work.

My office has handled and processed almost 1,500 separate items of correspondence in the last year, all of which have received full and proper replies from either myself, a member of my team or where appropriate a member of the police force. This area is also monitored regularly



Herefordshire Ambassador Dan Guerche with a group from Close House in Hereford

to ensure a timely service to partners and members of the community who contact me. In many instances correspondence provided clarity or answers to queries raised by our communities, regarding circumstances they had personally been involved in.

I have worked to ensure this principle of good service, open dialogue and responsive engagement has been carried through my other communications platforms. As already discussed, I have built a new website to improve community content and make it easier to find out about my role and work. I have also worked to build my presence through social media and monthly digital newsletters, with a focus on providing better and more engaging content. I have endeavoured to make sure the increased volume of people contacting me via these channels also receive a full, timely response which resolves their query wherever possible or at least signposts to an appropriate outlet.



South Worcestershire Ambassador Phil Grove working with residents and partners to address speeding concerns in Hanley Swan

Performance and accountability

Monitoring and driving improvements to force performance

I have implemented new processes and structures to ensure I can effectively scrutinise force performance on behalf of our communities and push for improvements whenever necessary. These processes include improvements in transparency to ensure our communities can be confident in my work and that of their police. I have agreed a weekly performance dashboard with the Chief Constable which is circulated internally to key stakeholders and enables me to closely monitor weekly performance in key areas including 999 and 101 call data. I use a more detailed monthly performance report to inform my Holding to Account meetings with the Chief Constable, and quarterly performance reports are made publicly available on my website. I have actively challenged the force on areas where performance is not meeting required standards and will continue to do so to ensure our communities get the services they need.

HMIC provides me with an invaluable independent view of West Mercia Police. Within the last six months HMIC has issued reports on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy and Leadership as part of its PEEL inspection programme. Its findings show that the force has made good progress in the way in which it serves our communities. These improvements are reflected in HMIC's overall judgement which was 'good' for all inspections. This progress needs to be sustained and seen as the base which we now build from, rather than what we settle for. There is undoubtedly still progress to be made and improvements to be achieved in order to deliver communities that are

safe and feel safe. I will be pushing to ensure the force delivers on this in the months and years ahead.

Accountability

It is an important part of my role to hold West Mercia Police's Chief Constable to account for ensuring the service the force is delivering is efficient, effective and meets the public's needs.

Since taking office in May last year I have held regular Holding to Account meetings with the Chief Constable and other Chief Officers on specific performance and strategic issues. I also held two additional sessions on child sexual exploitation and more recently on call handling. The latter was as a direct result of public complaints to me on falling standards of service reflected in poor performance figures. Following my meeting with the Chief Constable a number of immediate improvements were implemented. I was pleased to see this response and the improvement in service that resulted following my intervention. The minutes of these meetings, as well as Alliance Governance Group, are also now published for all to see, as a means of improving transparency and ensuring communities can have faith in me as their Commissioner as well as their police force. I am confident that the robust process I have implemented provides an effective way for me to scrutinise the force.

As well as the holding to account meetings I meet regularly with the Chief Constable and other officers and staff to discuss all aspects of the force. I and my team attend a wide range of organisational meetings to provide ongoing

oversight of the force. Additionally the Joint Audit Committee and the Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee have continued to support me in my oversight role through their independent scrutiny of activities, processes and policies.

It is important to me that the outcome of key discussions and decisions made are accessible so that our communities can have trust in me as their Commissioner and the police force I hold to account on their behalf.

I have developed a delivery plan for my Safer West Mercia plan outlining how the commitments I have made in the plan will be achieved. This is reviewed on a monthly basis by my office and reported to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, who are responsible for scrutinising my activities and responsibilities.

Our resources

Financial position and future financial prospects

The 2016/17 total net revenue budget for West Mercia was agreed in February 2016 at £207.6m funded through a combination of central government grants, council tax and a small amount from the budget reserve to manage reductions. At the end of the year, this budget was underspent by £2.1m. This means that the actual amount required from our reserve was less than originally budgeted.

The main variations in 2016/17 are shown below:

Area of spend – under/(over) spending	£m
Policing	1.973
Office of the PCC	0.226
Grants to other organisations	(0.075)
Total net underspend in 2016/17	2.124

West Mercia's reserve balances which stand at £53.6m at the end of the year, are healthy and are an important part of the strategy to deliver my objectives, helping to continue to minimise the effect of future budget reductions, by phasing their use over the life of the current Medium Term Financial Plan. These healthy reserves were a factor in ensuring I met my election pledge to freeze council tax for 2017/18, whilst also delivering an overall uplift of £4.5m in this year's policing budget.

This plan was agreed with the Police and Crime Panel in February, which outlined the significant use of reserves, reducing balances to £23m by 20/21. The use of reserves and reserve balances are

reviewed rigorously each year to ensure that they remain adequate against the risks we face.

To ensure the force remains both effective and efficient, it is undergoing significant transformation, much of which is reliant on capital investment. During 2016/17 £21m of capital expenditure has been incurred across the Alliance. 2016/17 saw the start of the construction of the new unified Operational Command and Control (OCC) systems across the Alliance – at Hindlip Hall and at Neville House in Warwickshire, at a cost of £9.7m.

Significant investment in our IT systems has also occurred as part of my commitment to reforming West Mercia Police and providing the tools our officers need. This work will streamline and update systems to ensure they are capable of meeting the needs for 21st century policing, including a new system for improved incident management, more effective contact with the public, better radio communications and more effective and efficient resource deployment.

A further £3.3m has also been spent on direct policing systems including:

- ▶▶ automatic number plate recognition systems,
- ▶▶ body worn video
- ▶▶ a new case management system, to improve intelligence, investigation, case preparation and custody management

The roll-out of some of these projects will continue into 2017/18 and beyond, supported by continuing capital investment.

I am continuing to drive value for money across all areas of policing, but recognise that there are a number of financial challenges in the medium term, with West Mercia facing a savings target of £21.9m between the period 2017/18 to 2020/21. I am committed to ensuring that long term, the force lives within its means, which it does not currently and has not for some years. The recent HMIC assessment rated West Mercia as providing good value for money with prudent financial plans, which allowed for future investment to deliver organisational change. I am confident that the work the force is doing to reform, and our Alliance with Warwickshire, will help to create a safer West Mercia.

Commissioning and grants

In order to gain the most value for money, key outcomes need to be targeted to reduce crime levels further and enhance support to vulnerable communities to reduce their risk of becoming victims in the future. This is why I have introduced a new grants process seeking to embrace a culture of diverse projects and initiatives, whilst at the same time focusing in on key priorities.

I launched my new community grant scheme in February with an initial focus on services for children and young people. These grant schemes, with a combined pot of £600,000 are aimed at keeping young people safe and away from crime. The first grant round aims to divert young at-risk

people aged between 13 and 16 away from crime, by involving them in preventative activities. Examples of funding awarded include:

- A grant of £360,000 over 3 years to develop a referral and mentoring pathway for young people aged 13-16, extending the current network which is aimed at 17-24 year olds. The network is made up of a number of third sector organisations and their aim is to provide a tailored package of support and diversionary activity to prevent criminal activity via a managed referral process. Within two months of the pilot going live we were able to report two people had gained employment and reported a change in behaviour.
- £52,085 directly towards organisations for youth outreach work across West Mercia. These projects target young people who may not actively engage with services and are hard to reach

I have also commissioned work regarding what schools are doing in terms of healthy relationships, cybercrime, sexting, CSE and grooming. We're working with local Children's Safeguarding Boards and other partners to collate this information which will be used to inform future commissioning intentions

The second pot of money is aimed at stopping young people from dying on the roads by making them safer drivers and I have committed to fund £90,000 over 3 years for a young drivers safety awareness programme (Pathfinder). The programme is already in operation, but this funding extends the provision across West Mercia.

Details of all the grants awarded are published on my website.



The Pathfinder young driver project



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