

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
Wednesday, 15 June 2022, 1.00 pm, West Mercia Police HQ,
Hindlip Hall, Worcester WR3 8SP

Membership:

Cllr Aled Luckman (Chairman)	Substantive Member - Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Barry Durkin (Vice Chairman)	Co-opted Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Nigel Lumby	Substantive Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Jeff Anderson	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Roger Evans	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Vivienne Parry	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Sebastian Bowen	Substantive Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Jim Lavery	Substantive Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Paul Watling	Co-opted Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Helen Jones	Substantive Member - Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Tom Wells	Substantive Member - Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Nyear Nazir	Substantive Member - Redditch Borough Council
Cllr Rob Adams	Substantive Member - Wychavon District Council
Cllr Graham Ballinger	Substantive Member - Wyre Forest District Council
Cllr James Stanley	Substantive Member - Worcester City Council
Mrs C Clive	Co-opted Independent Lay Member
Ms Beth McDowall	Co-opted Independent Lay Member

Agenda Supplement

Item No	Subject	Page No
6	Draft Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia 2021-22	1 - 66
7	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report: PEEL 2021/22 - An Inspection of West Mercia Police	67 - 76
8	Joint HMICFRS & Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Inspection Report: An unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in West Mercia Police	77 - 82
9	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	83 - 94

Agenda produced and published by Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP

To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Samantha Morris, Scrutiny Officer on Worcester (01905) 844963 email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Date of Issue: Tuesday, 7 June 2022

Item No	Subject	Page No

NOTES

- **Webcasting**

Members of the Panel are reminded that meetings of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 JUNE 2022

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA

Recommendation

Members of the Panel are asked to review the annual report and to make any recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for consideration.

Background

1. Under Section 12 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Commissioner (the PCC) is required to report to the Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) on the exercise of his functions in each financial year. Specifically, the Annual Report should report on:
 - (a) the exercise of the PCC's functions in each financial year, and
 - (b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.
2. The draft Annual Report for 2021/22 is attached at Appendix 1 for the Panel's consideration. The report provides a high-level overview of the PCC's work over the last financial year.
3. In accordance with the Act, members of the Panel are required to review the report and to make any recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner for consideration. The Police and Crime Commissioner must then respond to any report or recommendations that the Panel make prior to publishing the final version on the report.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

In presenting this draft annual report to the Panel for consideration, the PCC and the Panel are fulfilling their respective statutory obligations as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Failure to do so would mean a breach of statutory duty.

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Report 2021 – 2022.

Contact Points for the Report

For the Police and Crime Panel: Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Tel: 01905 844871

Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner Deputy Chief Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Annual report

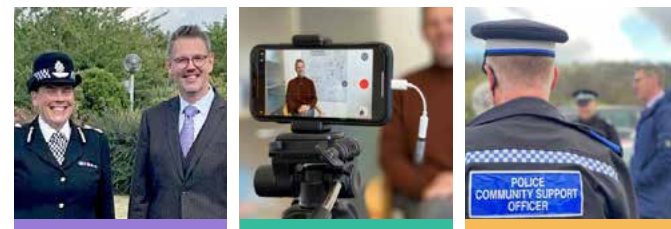
2021-22



Contents

Page 4

03	Foreword
05	2021/22 the year in numbers
07	Putting victims and survivors first
17	Building a more secure West Mercia
33	Reforming West Mercia
43	Reassuring West Mercia's Communities
50	Performance and accountability
56	Our resources



Foreword

As I reflect on the last year, it's easy to forget just how much Covid continued to impact it. Only in February 2022 did we see an end to legal restrictions around the pandemic. However, as we have adapted to a life with the virus, I have been pleased to return to some of my normal duties as PCC.

Page 5



This includes getting out and meeting with the public, in person, so I can hear people's views and concerns. This part of my role is key. I cannot make the decisions I do without consulting with communities, and ensuring their voice is reflected in my considerations. Ultimately, resulting in a police force that communities can trust and have confidence in.

Over the last 12 months I have continued to hear loud and clear that visibility and accessibility of police officers is key, I understand that road safety remains a concern and the threat of violence against women and girls has become ever more prevalent following the murder of Sarah Everard.

As the headlines highlighted this tragic death, and sadly further more, voices were heard loudly and, and as a society, we gained greater awareness of just how unsafe women and girls can feel. I made a commitment that this narrative should stay in our conscience and I would play my part in ensuring the women and girls of West Mercia feel safer

where they live and work. Whilst it's just a small part of a much bigger piece of work, I have been proud to work with partners to secure funding for self-defence classes, improve street lighting and underpasses, and distribute 10,000 personal safety alarms.

This was not the only area where partnership working took place to reduce crime. I have been proud to work with Telford & Wrekin Council on the Safer Stronger Communities project, which is just one area where improvements are being made to areas that have long suffered with crime.

Alongside this project, I have secured an additional £3m victim services and crime prevention initiatives. The area of prevention has long been a focus of mine, as we look to a world where crime can be tackled at the root cause to prevent harm being caused.

However, recognising the realities and how there is still very much a need for traditional policing,

I was grateful for the support of communities earlier this year when I set the policing budget. After hearing from communities via a consultation I ran, I allocated funding for 125 additional police officers, £1 million for crime prevention and intervention measures, and placed a greater focus on investigating crimes in order to ensure better outcomes for victims.

As we look to the coming year, and those after, I am committed to seeing improvements around the confidence in West Mercia Police, and the service the public receives. I want to see that the introduction of the Local Policing Community Charter delivers on its promise to make officers more visible and accessible to communities. For me, it is a non-negotiable part of policing and is what people expect.

I will continue to give communities a platform, listen to views and concerns and ensure they are acted upon.

The year in numbers 2021/22



Putting victims and survivors first

57,097

victims contacted by
Victim Advice Line and
offered support

83%

conviction rate for
domestic abuse cases
at court

1,678

new referrals to Women's
Aid IDVA service

88%

of witnesses
attended court

70%

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



Building a more secure West Mercia

87,059

offences were recorded

2,248

hate crimes reported

27,013

violence without injury
offences

351

offenders managed by IOM

4,041

rape and other
sexual offences

19,660*

victims and witnesses
supported by West Mercia's
Victim Care Unit

46

people killed on
West Mercia's roads

*Monthly average of number of victims and witnesses receiving support during 21/22



Reforming West Mercia

£245.5m
budget

167,674
99 9calls received

92%
of 999 calls answered
within 10 seconds

89%
of residents are confident
they could access the
police in an emergency*

52%
of 101 calls answered
within 30 seconds

22,432
reports made online to
the public contact centre



Reassuring West Mercia's communities

81%
of residents have
confidence in
West Mercia Police*

56%
satisfied with levels of
local policing*

73%
feel crime and ASB
are not much of a problem
at all in their local area*

37%
of stop and searches
resulted in a police
action being taken

201
independent
custody visits

7%
decrease in recorded
police complaints

Putting victims and survivors first

I'm committed to ensuring that people are at the heart of the Safer West Mercia Plan, and this includes putting victims and survivors right at the centre of the criminal justice system. I want every victim to get support that is tailored and appropriate, and helps them to cope and recover with whatever harm has come to them.

Page 9 The pandemic, and associated lockdowns, have impacted all of us. However, it has been particularly difficult for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse who struggle to access support. Throughout this time, my commissioning team have worked hard to secure national funding opportunities to maximise the funding I am able to provide for victim services.

Early in 21/22, the Ministry of Justice confirmed that we were successful in securing additional funding as part of a national uplift for domestic abuse and sexual violence services. In June 2021, I submitted a bid to the Critical Support Fund and was notified in July that the bid had been partially successful,

securing an additional £358,191 of funding for services which support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Some of the services that have benefited from additional funding include: sexual violence counselling services across West Mercia; services working with parents who are experiencing abuse from their children; and services working with high risk victims of domestic abuse. Further details of the awarded funding is outlined in this part of my report.

The Victim Advice Line (VAL) is designed to get victims faster access to the right help by, by ensuring they only have to tell their story once and they receive the level and type of support that is tailored to their individual needs. During 21/22, the VAL has contacted 57,097 victims and offered support to 6,055 who requested it. 97% of victims who left the VAL service in the same period, did so with a positive outcome.



The gentleman I spoke to took time to understand my situation. We discussed options for additional support. He chased up the investigation of the crime that had not yet started. Understanding how the investigation was progressing, is very important to me.

VAL service user feedback

Ensuring victims receive the service they need at every step of their contact with the police and wider criminal justice partners is vital if they are to cope and recover. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Victims' Code) is the statutory code that sets out the minimum level of service that victims should receive from the criminal justice system. A revised Victims' Code was published in April 2021 and the VAL is supporting the force's Victims' Code compliance by ensuring that victims are informed and have the information they are entitled to.

The VAL now also administrates the Victim Right to Review (VRR) scheme on behalf of the force. VRR gives victims the right to ask for a review of a police decision not to charge a suspect. I have raised the matter of ensuring officers inform victims about VRR as part of my formal holding to account process. Between Jan –Mar 2022 the VAL received 14 applications for VRR, and I will continue to push to ensure all victims are made fully aware of the services available to them.

Additional funding secured from NHS England & Improvement (NHS/I) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) enabled a specialist Sexual Abuse and Violence Navigator (SVN) post to be created in the VAL. The SVN is a fully trained Independent Sexual Violence Advisor & Counsellor that provides a single point of contact for victims and offers a personalised support pathway. This allows victims to focus on their recovery rather than trying to navigate a complex support system.



The role of the SVN has been integral in reducing the number of sexual violence victims not getting the support they are entitled to. There is still a gap in officers' knowledge of services, needs and rights of victims of sexual offences. However, without the SVN role, many victims would not have had information that allows them to make informed choices about accessing support.

Page 11

The SVN has actively triaged 2,874 cases from recorded crimes in the 12 months of November 2020 to November 2021. Of these cases, 488 had needs assessments that identified that they required services that had not been offered to them previously.

The funding provided for the post was a one-off and ended after 12 months in November. However, recognising the value of the post I have applied to the MoJ for funding, which would see the reintroduction of the post for a further three years.

XX listened to me. I was struggling with many issues and continually called me to talk and offer help and advice until counselling was offered. It has been a main stay in my life and helped me enormously through my troubled times. SVN Service user feedback

Victim Support (VS) are commissioned by me to provide a victim support service across West Mercia to help victims cope and recover. VS work closely with the VAL who refer victims into the service. Over 1,600 victims have been referred into its service in 21/22. After identifying a gap in the provision of short term support for the victims of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT), the existing contract with VS has been extended to include support for West Mercia Police on operations, as well as short-term support to identified adult victims of MSHT. The new service went live at the beginning of 22/23 and will ensure some of the most vulnerable people in our society receive the support they so desperately need.



You have been a great support. I've spoken to you about things I never have spoken about before, it's really helped. Thank you!

Service user feedback

In addition to the direct service delivery of its local team, victims of crime in West Mercia are also given access to a range of national VS services including:

- **24hr support via Supportline** – Victim Support's telephone support service that is open every day of the year including bank holidays. Any support provided to West Mercia residents is picked up by VS in West Mercia.
- **24hr support via Live Chat** – Victim Support's online chat service, available every day of the year including bank holidays. Any support provided to West Mercia residents will be added to the case management system and picked up by the local team.
- Information and self-help resources via My Support Space – an online resource filled with

interactive guides related to specific crimes types, support needs and areas of the CJS.

Victim Support also deliver a restorative justice (RJ) service by bringing those that have been harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected to play a part in repairing harm and finding a positive way forward.

Very satisfied, good communication, kept informed all way through process. Also, particularly beneficial to XX as he has learning difficulties. All the children involved were vulnerable and RJ handled it excellently. It was the first time S had admitted he was in the wrong and realised it was a choice made by him. It was also his idea to say he was sorry.

Parent of harmer taking part in RJ

Very satisfied and the process was well explained by the restorative justice team. I would recommend it to colleagues.

Harmed RJ feedback

Specialist support service

The start of 2021 saw the implementation of a new service model for the provision of Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Services (ISVA) across West Mercia. This supports my commitment to ensure all victims have access to the same level of service irrespective of where they live. The new contract was awarded to West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC), who were also commissioned to deliver the new child sexual exploitation (CSE) contract. Under the new contract arrangements for ISVA, AXIS, the previous service provider in the north of the force area, form part of the service provision provided by WMRSASC.

Contact was made with me within a few days of my police report. XX clearly has a great deal of experience working with survivors of sexual abuse and she's an invaluable means of support. I couldn't have asked for a more inclusive and empathic individual. If she is representative of your service, it's most impressive. Thanks for providing this service. [Service user feedback](#)

The core service maintains the current key front line ISVA, Male ISVA, Family ISVA and Children & Young People's (CHISVA) services across West. Additional funding secured from the MoJ has enabled WMRSASC to introduce an additional nine ISVA roles, covering a range of specialisms, including: support for children and young people (CYP); supporting CYP who have a disability; support for minority ethnic communities; and support for those who identify as LGBTQ+. Separately, I have also provided AXIS with over £200,000 of the additional MoJ funding to provide the same specialist roles in the Shropshire and Telford areas, as well as support for families going through civil and family courts.

The LGBTQ+ ISVA has provided an outstanding service in supporting me. [Service user feedback](#)

We can't find the words to thank you as you have made such a difference to XX's life! The girl you see before you is so much happier and more confident. We really appreciate you. [Feedback from parent of a CHISVA service user](#)

A growing therapeutic counselling waiting list for victims of sexual violence, exacerbated by Covid19 restrictions, saw me provide immediate crisis support funding to WMRSASC to reduce and reopen this list. Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council are also providing support funding. In addition, I also provided further funding to both WMRSASC and AXIS for a range of therapeutic counselling support services for survivors of sexual violence and abuse, to meet additional demand across the whole of West Mercia.

The PCC worked with regional and local commissioners, including NHS/I and local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), in West Mercia to procure a mental health needs assessment for survivors of sexual abuse. The needs assessment highlighted clear gaps in service provision, along with a lack of sustainable funding. As a result, the PCC is leading a local commissioners group to implement recommendations from the needs assessment.

I have recently secured £600,000 from NHS/I to fund a new Sexual Assault & Referral Centre in Telford. I will be providing match funding for this project which will deliver a large estates project, resulting in significant improvements to the services available to survivors of sexual violence in West Mercia.

In addition, I have continued to provide financial support to the Regional Paediatric Sexual Assault Service (SAS) which provides expert care for children and young people who have disclosed sexual assault, or who may have been subject to sexual abuse. My contribution of just under £130,000 forms part of a regional £2m contract. Clients are seen by an experienced paediatrician with specialist training in forensic examination and are supported by a crisis worker. Last year, 182 victims from West Mercia were referred into the service, demonstrating the need for this critically important service.

The total number of victims and survivors who were supported through the above ISVA services in 21/22 was 3,305.

In order to strengthen the existing partnership approach to addressing sexual abuse, and improve governance and oversight, I have secured an additional £50,000 of funding from NHS/I to appoint a sexual violence portfolio lead officer for an initial period of 12 months. The post holder, located in my office, works with West Mercia Police

Page 15

and partners to deliver the objectives set out in the national NHS/I Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy. They are also exploring the potential development of a multi-agency strategic group, and development of a local strategy, with the overall aim of improving outcomes for victims of sexual assault and abuse.

In support of my commitment to undertake victim needs assessments to inform the provision of future service, I have worked with regional and local commissioners including NHS/I, local authorities and CCGs in West Mercia to procure a Mental Health Needs Assessment for survivors of sexual abuse. The needs assessment highlighted

clear gaps in service provision for this cohort of victims, along with a lack of sustainable funding. As a result, my commissioning team is leading a local commissioners group to implement recommendations from the needs assessment, which I hope over time will lead to improved services.

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for me. Inflicting any kind of harm, be it emotional, physical or psychological, is simply not acceptable. It is a priority of mine, West Mercia Police, and the services I have invested in, to do all we can to tackle it in all its forms.

I have commissioned West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) to provide an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service across West Mercia. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk and to develop tailored options and safety plans. In 21/22 Women's Aid provided support to 940



victims and survivors within this service, and 90% of people leaving the service saw a reduction or end of physical abuse. Recognising that men, as well as women, can be victims of domestic abuse, further funding has been provided to WMWA for a part-time helpline support worker, specifically to support male victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Page 16

This period of time has been very distressing and confusing, however XX's regular contact and supportive perspective has helped me to keep going through the immediate difficult days and weeks after the assault. I am very grateful that help was in place so quickly and has been consistently offered. [Service User Feedback](#)

This year I also provided Women's Aid with additional funding for a pilot of specialist advisors to work with: children and young people experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationships (YPIDVA); minority ethnic communities and; families going through the family and civil

courts. For 21/22, the YPIDVA service supported a total of 37 victims and survivors, with 100% engaging with the service. I am pleased to report that joint commissioning with Worcestershire County Council has now secured the YPIDVA service to the end of March 2025.

WMWA also provide a hospital based IDVA (HIDVA) service in the four acute hospitals in our area. In 21/22, the HIDVA service provided support to 193 victims and survivors, with 79% leaving the service with a reduction or cessation of physical abuse. It is important to note that these roles provide support to any victim or survivor of domestic abuse, rather than just high risk which the core IDVA provision provides.

Funding is also given to WMWA to run a children and young people's (CYP) project. The funding is for Children and Young People's Workers to engage with 5–19 year olds identified as at risk of suffering significant negative outcomes as a result of domestic abuse within their family/home



environment. This service supported 197 children and young people, with 86% understanding positive and healthy relationships, and 75% having improved confidence upon service exit. Additional funding was provided in 21/22 to increase capacity of the service.

XX is an 8 year old boy who has witnessed domestic abuse between his mother and father. Since experiencing this, XX has found it very difficult to express his emotions and feelings. He has also been finding it difficult to discuss his worries. He stated that he did not want to share them with his family as he didn't want to worry them. During a direct work session, XX was given a worry monster so that he could express how he was feeling. Since being given the worry monster, Joe has spoken about how it has helped him get rid of some of his worries. Joe also mentioned that he has given his worry monster to his family members so that they can also get rid of their worries too. [WMWA CYP project case study](#)

Page 17

The funding I was successful in securing from the MoJ's critical support fund also enabled me to provide financial support to PEGS, an organisation who work with parents who are experiencing violence and abuse from their children. Funding provided a range of courses to be delivered to parents across West Mercia. Of parents attending the course, 100% have said that they understand and have increased awareness of child to parent abuse with 100% of parents saying they have increased in confidence.

I learnt so much from this course it also opened my eyes up to so many things and it's nice to know we're not alone. [PEGS service user feedback](#)

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service have also benefitted from funding for the provision of support services for adults and CYP experiencing domestic abuse in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. This has enabled the service to employ two full-time specialist IDVAs who provide support

Building a more secure West Mercia

My commitment to reducing crime and reoffending remains a key part of the Safer West Mercia Plan, as it was when I started my commissionership in 2016. For the communities of West Mercia, being safe is non-negotiable and I will continue to ensure My commitment to reducing crime and reoffending remains a key part of the Safer West Mercia Plan, as it was when I started my commissionership in 2016. For the communities of West Mercia, being safe is non-negotiable and I will continue to ensure the police have the resources, plans and focus they need to relentlessly fight crime and keep all of our communities safe from harm.

Policing demand

I listened when the public said they wanted more police, and for them to be visible and accessible in their communities. In the last year alone, an additional 91 officers have been recruited and my budget provision for 22/23 will see an additional 125 recruited as part of the national police uplift

programme. For the additional resources I have delivered to be truly effective, it is important that the force fully understands and manages the demand it faces.

The start of 2021/22 continued to be dominated by the impact of the global Covid19 pandemic, with restrictions only beginning to ease in early summer. The force has followed the Government's roadmap out of lockdown, and played a key role in planning and responding to the changes that have been introduced.

The force recognised that, as a result of the country re-emerging from lockdown restrictions, general demand would surge with a potential increase in disorder and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. In response, in March 2021 the force implemented Operation Navigator across each local policing area (LPA) and operational policing unit (OPU). Each was tasked with providing a bespoke easing of lockdown plan, which took into account the demographics of their LPA and key dates in respect



of the recovery roadmap and the Euro 2021 football tournament. Each area was also required to consider a number of key priorities including the re-opening of the night-time economy, violence against women and girls and high visibility patrols in public spaces. The impact of Operation Navigator, and the increase in demand across key crime types, including sexual offences and public order offences, were a focus of a holding to account meeting that I held in June.

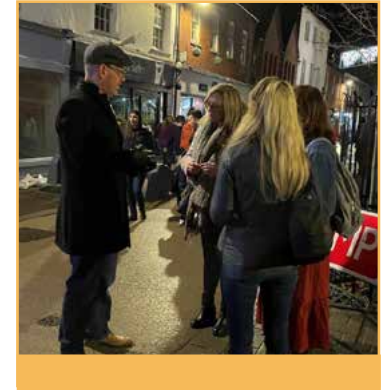
The increased demand is reflected in the number of emergency 999 calls, which saw a 20% increase in 21/22 compared to 20/21¹. Despite the increase in volume, it is pleasing to see in recent months that 999 call handling performance has been consistently above target (90% within 10 seconds).

Emergency calls will always be the priority, but it's also important that people can access the police in non-emergency situations. I welcome the introduction of the Digital Desk, enabling the public to contact the police using social media

platforms. This shows how the force is adapting and giving the people alternative options to engage in a way which is convenient for them. In the first month of going live, the digital desk dealt with 7,190 engagements and sent 272 outbound messages providing advice and guidance to the public. The use of online reporting of crimes has also continued to grow, with 22,439 requests for service made using this platform in 21/22. This was a 42% increase on 20/21 levels.

Although the impact of the pandemic resulted in significant reductions in crime during 2020/21, for the majority of crime types, patterns and volumes of offending increased in 2021/22 as restrictions were eased.

Total recorded crime in 2021/22 was comparable to volumes recorded in 2019/20, there has been a sustained reduction across a considerable number of crime types. Traditional acquisitive offences have seen the steepest decline in recording compared to 2019/20. Theft from person offences declined



¹Given the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on crime recording, it has become standard practice to use 2019/20 crime volumes as the baseline for comparison to understand longer term trends.

by 41%, shoplifting offences declined by 20% and vehicle offences declined by 17%.

Notable reductions in recording have also been seen for high harm acquisitive offences which impact on communities including a 35% reduction in business & community burglaries, a 25% reduction in residential burglaries and a 15% reduction in robbery offences.

Page 21

Though volumes of violence with injury offences have remained stable, there has been an increase in homicide offences across West Mercia, with 19 offences recorded in 2021/22 (compared to 12 in 2019/20). These major and complex crimes have a significant impact on the organisation in terms of demand and resources.

Other crimes seeing increases in 2021/22 include violence without injury, sexual offences and public order offences. However, this increase is in line with both the regional and national picture. The volume of domestic abuse offences has also returned to

the levels seen previously and demonstrates a clear need for the additional resources secured to help victims and survivors of domestic abuse to cope and recover.

Whilst the role of the police will always be to respond to emergencies, the clear focus should be to prevent offending and victimisation in the first place. The more this can be achieved, the safer our communities will be, and the more demand on our police can be reduced. This is why my 22/23 budget commitments see a sharpened focus from the force and I on preventing crime from occurring in the first place.

Tackling crime and reducing harm

Analysis that has been undertaken by the force, to better understand the increased number of homicides occurring across West Mercia, suggests one of the key local drivers to be serious & organised crime (SOC). The force has developed a clear understanding of the threats and has a SOC

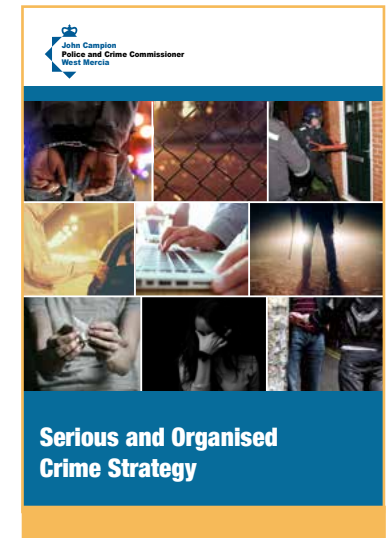
strategy and delivery plan in place to strengthen its response. I have made SOC one of the key priorities in my Safer West Mercia Plan and I will work tirelessly with both the police and partners to tackle criminality at its root as we work to protect our communities from the harm caused.

Within West Mercia around two thirds of organised crime groups (OCGs) have a primary crime type of drugs supply, including county lines . Tackling county lines² is a key focus for the force's approach to SOC and in 21/22 the force was successful in seizing drugs with an estimated street value of over £600,000, £156,000 of cash, 168 weapons and 314 people were arrested in connection with drug offences.

County lines drug dealers often exploit children and young people, recruiting them to run drugs and cash between urban and county locations and to deal drugs on their behalf. Once recruited in to county lines it can be difficult for those being exploited to leave, with threats and violence used.

This is why I have provided funding to the force for two exploitation and vulnerability (E&V) trainers, whose roles is to educate people across West Mercia on how to spot the signs of exploitation. In the last year alone they have held 292 sessions, across 218 organisations, to 6,531 participants.

As well as targeting those individuals responsible for supplying the local drugs market, providing early interventions to drug users can not only make a positive impact on the individuals concerned, but also to local communities and to potential future victims of crime. Along with my regional counterparts, monies seized regionally from proceeds of crime have funded the charity Cranstoun, to deliver the DIVERT™ project which offers early intervention for those found in possession of small amounts of drugs. In 21/22, 298 referrals were made into the project from West Mercia. The sessions are delivered virtually, encouraging more engagement across some of the vast rural communities in West Mercia.



²County lines is a term used to describe a model of drug supply whereby criminal gangs target the sale of drugs, often in smaller towns, exploiting vulnerable adults and young people through coercion, intimidation and violence.

The Government has recently published a 10 year drug strategy focusing on: rehabilitation for 300,000 drug users who are responsible for half of all thefts, robberies and burglaries; and tough measures for tackling county lines gangs. The national approach, coupled with the ongoing work locally, will make a real change to supporting the vulnerable, reducing crime and ultimately making our communities safer

Page 23

While knife crime can be associated with SOC activity it is a complex national issue that doesn't have a single, specific cause. The force approach to tackling knife crime goes above and beyond the enforcement element towards preventing crime from happening. As part of the national operation, Op Sceptre, which ran in November, officers spoke to over 15,000 students and young people at 88 different schools and venues. They also carried out high visibility patrols, had pop-up stands in towns and carried out leaflet drops. Nearly 300 knives and bladed weapons were also surrendered.

Naturally our police have a central role to play in protecting us from knife crime and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that in West Mercia that work is happening effectively. However, a more holistic approach across our society is needed if we are going to be most effective. I am committed to continuing to work with partners to further reduce knife crime in our communities. In support of this, I have used my Commissioner's Community Fund to fund local projects such as workshops in Hereford which are delivered by No Wrong Door. These workshops explore issues around knife crime, and the impact on young people, families and the communities they live in. Over 150 young people attended the sessions, which were held in Hereford Cathedral. I have also provided the Children's Society with £20,000 to fund a Steer Clear link worker. This role works closely with the police to provide a mentoring and diversionary service designed to prevent and reduce youth knife crime in Telford & Wrekin.

SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO SAY 'NO' TO KNIFE CRIME

Anyone can get in touch

Our team work with young people aged between 10-18 who we believe could be exposed to knife crime and the harm associated with it.

We will strive to educate and support each referred young person whilst tackling knife-related crime in order to protect our communities from harm.

This voluntary programme is completely free. By getting in touch, you could help keep a young person safe from harm and assist in preventing the criminalisation associated to it.

STEER CLEAR

Please contact our team if you suspect a young person is involved in knife-related crime:
steerclearherefordshire@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Intervening at an early stage, and engaging with young people in a meaningful way, can have a significant long term impact on changing an individual's path and ultimately stopping crime. This is why I have commissioned the CLIMB service, which is run by the Children's Society. The service supports children and young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation in West Mercia. In 21/22, 520 children and young people were referred into the service, 350 of which were appropriate. 94% of children and young people leaving the service achieved a primary outcome from it.

She said he has come home 'buzzing' from the many activities he has taken part in. She is pleased that he has come to the conclusion himself what a negative impact the gang youths were having on him and she felt confident he would make better choices in his friendship groups. Feedback from a service user's parent

West Mercia Police's approach to early intervention and prevention has been highlighted as innovative

by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in its PEEL 2021/22 inspection report. In May 2021, five Early Help and 11 Intervention & Prevention Officers were introduced. Data is used to identify repeat victims at the highest risk of being harmed, and repeat offenders at the highest risk of causing harm. Data is also used to help identify those who would benefit most from early intervention approaches, with a particular focus on children who are at most risk of suffering long term adverse childhood experiences. In the first six months of deployment the officers had engaged with 142 families. While the true success of the Early Help work with children will not be known fully, until the children involved reach adulthood, the approach the force has adopted should go some way towards reducing future criminality and long term police demand.

We all have a responsibility to protect children and young people from harm. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a key priority from the national level right through to the local. In the last year I have provided £305,000 to West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Support Service (WMRSASC) for the provision of the Branch and Early Intervention and Prevention services (EIPW). These offer support to those at risk of, or experiencing child sexual exploitation, across Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.

It helped me with my emotional well-being and expressing my worries in a healthy way. (Feedback from child victim)

As lockdown restrictions eased, and children returned to school, the service was once again able to offer face to face meetings, while also continuing to offer a blended approach including video/WhatsApp, phone, text, and email support sessions. This enabled 369 victims of child sexual abuse/child sexual exploitation to receive specialist support. A further 1,958 children and young people

(CYP) were engaged with in targeted sessions delivered as part of the EIPW service. Of the CYP and 396 professionals attending the sessions, 100% reported leaving with a positive outcome.

It's reassured me to know that whilst the Branch worker supports my daughter – I'm not excluded! I don't need to know what XX shares with the worker but having an understanding on what topics are covered really helps me to know that she is getting the help she needs. Parent of child attending the Branch Project

The impact of crimes committed online can be just as horrific as those committed offline, but sometimes are more complex and harder to detect. Investment in the force's specialist Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) has seen this team grow to three Detective Sergeants and 17 investigators, increasing its capacity and capability to tackle high-risk online child sex offenders across the force and further afield. The team has recently partnered with Stop It Now!, the only UK-wide charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse,



both online and offline, from happening in the first place.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been rightly highlighted nationally in a number of harrowing recent examples. It is clear that as a whole society there is more work needed to address some of our cultural issues and attitudes.

Page 26

In October 2021, I received confirmation that two joint partnerships bids I'd endorsed had been successful in securing funding from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund 3. This fund is specifically designed to improve the safety of public places for all, with a particular focus on reducing VAWG crimes. Just over £1m was secured for two areas in South Worcestershire and Herefordshire where a range of interventions, including CCTV, education and security gates are being put in to make our public spaces safer.

In response to the reopening of the night time economy, and the potential uplift in VAWG related offences this could bring, I have provided funding to local policing areas for drink spike awareness training and prevention devices as well as 10,000 personal safety alarm to act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.

More recently, in March 2022, my office organised a month of action which saw various activities and visits to a range of diverse groups take place. Alongside these visits, a series of VAWG dedicated podcasts were hosted to hear from experts including West Mercia Women's Aid, and the domestic abuse lead for West Mercia Police. I know that societal change will not happen overnight, but I am committed to doing all I can to effect change to achieve a safer West Mercia. I also recognise that the onus needs to be placed on those committing the crime, as opposed to the victims.

I am aware that acquisitive crime, such as burglary, robbery and theft, causes huge harm to communities, which has been recognised by the Government in its National Priorities for Policing.

I am committed to seeing that our communities don't have to face the fear of crime, or have their lives blighted by the actions of others – they should feel safe where they live. In support of this commitment I have worked with partners to secure an additional £863,185 of funding from the second round of the Home Office Safer Streets Fund.

Page 27

This has seen local crime prevention initiatives benefitting communities in Redditch and Telford.

Local projects, developed in consultation with local communities, have included upgraded street lighting, alley gates and improved CCTV. These measures enable people to feel safe, and not fear where they live or that they will become a victim of crime.

In March 2021, Telford & Wrekin Council and I came together to build on the great work already being done through the first round of the Safer Streets project. Identifying that there were more areas of Telford that had long suffered with crime, the Safer Stronger Communities project was

created for two years to address the root causes of crime and issues that inadvertently enable crime within targeted areas, ultimately improving life for communities within Telford & Wrekin. Combining £1 million from Telford & Wrekin, and £500,000 from myself, over the last year we have been able to start work on addressing inequalities, tackling the fear of crime and reducing crime rates, whilst building community confidence.

Whilst we still have a year left, we have already made a number of improvements. This includes: installing CCTV in areas of concern; holding community engagement events to open and maintain dialogue with communities; introducing youth clubs where anti-social behaviour is prevalent; improving street lighting; and creating intervention programmes to direct people away from crime.

There is still more work to be done with the remaining year of this intense and focused activity, however this is about creating a lasting

legacy where communities can feel empowered, relationships are maintained and we see these areas improve in levels of community safety through reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour.

West Mercia Police's Local Policing Community Charter is one example of how the force is also committed to protecting people from acquisitive crime, through a consistent problem-solving approach, supported by the Problem Solving Hubs based in each of the five local policing areas. As part of my commitment to ensure the force has the resources to address acquisitive crime, I have continued to provide additional funding to the force for its 'We Don't Buy Crime' (WDBC) initiative and rural and business resources.

The WDBC scheme aims to reduce and disrupt the market for stolen goods, as well as protecting homes and possessions using Smartwater marking. Since its inception, over 59,000 properties have been protected and over 240 retailers have signed up to the second hand good's scheme. Victims of

domestic burglary are always offered a Smartwater pack and, after raising concerns at a holding to account meeting in March about performance, I have asked my commissioning team to explore options to expand the distribution of Smartwater to neighbouring properties of burglary victims. This will help to strengthen community confidence and reduce the fear of crime.

Rural crime can have a significant impact on quality of life for our rural communities, who may feel particularly vulnerable because of their isolated location. My commitment to address rural crime has enabled the force to appoint five dedicated Rural and Business Officers (RABOs) to work with local communities to provide support, advice and reassurance. Examples of the good work these officers do include:

- **Herefordshire** – taking a proactive role in tackling quad bike thefts resulting in an 85% reduction across Herefordshire compared to 2020/2021



- **South Worcestershire** – production of the South Worcester 'Rural Beat' electronic newsletter distributed to 132 Parish Councils and to district and county councillors
- **Shropshire** – working with local policing teams at livestock auctions, approaching Defender owners due to the increase in thefts, and issuing free Smartwater vehicle packs and passing on crime prevention advice.

Page 29

One of the challenges faced in measuring the effectiveness of rural crime initiatives is that there is no national definition or specific crime type for rural crime. One of the measures I have agreed with the force, in support of my Safer West Mercia Plan, is the volume of rural crimes. I am pleased to see that the need to better understand and more accurately measure rural crime has been recognised by the force. I look forward to seeing this work develop.

Whilst environmental crimes, such as fly-tipping, are often most prevalent in our rural areas, it is an issue which has been raised time and time again by communities across all of West Mercia. Not only is fly-tipping unsightly and a nuisance, it causes a substantial cost to landowners and is hazardous to our environment and wildlife. To underline my commitment to developing a partnership response to properly tackle this issue, I launched a fly-tipping grant round in September 2021, earmarking up to £100,000 over two years for initiatives to tackle fly-tipping on private land. One initiative this fund has supported is a Tyre Tag scheme, led by West Mercia Police in partnership with Smartwater and nine local authorities. The scheme provides garages with a Smartwater kit to mark tyres scheduled for disposal. This enables authorities to easily trace any that are fly-tipped back to the garage responsible for disposing them, but it also prevents garages from being targeted by organised criminals to illegally dispose of tyres. To date, 98 garages across West Mercia have joined the scheme.



Too many people are killed or seriously injured on our roads. During 21/22, 46 people lost their lives on West Mercia's roads, which is an increase of 13 compared to 20/21 when the roads networks were significantly quieter as a result of national lockdowns.

The sheer volume of correspondence I receive from the public regarding road safety is too great to deny there is a problem. I too agree that more needs to be done to change the culture of driving and put care and responsibility back into the users of roads across West Mercia.

The lasting impact of a serious collision can be devastating for both the victim and their family, which is why I have invested approximately £75,000 in RoadPeace to run a pilot scheme that provides a support and information service for victims of serious injury collisions. The scheme, with works within the VAL showed early signs of success with 98 referrals and 95% of users engaging with the service within a short time of launching. The project

has now been extended for a further year until March 2023.

Speeding, as well as inappropriate speed, can have a devastating impact on the safety of road users, increasing the risk of a collision and the severity of the consequences. Last year saw a new average speed system go live on the A449 in Worcestershire, made possible by a significant investment from my 20/21 Road Safety Funding round.

The project is a partnership between West Mercia Police, Worcestershire County Council and leading speed technology firm Jenoptik. The average speed system aims to influence and change driver behaviour by ensuring the speed limit is adhered to throughout the whole section of the route, 24 hours of the day. The cameras are fully operational throughout the day and night and do not flash speeding motorists, as is the case with older technology. Within the first few weeks of going live, 551 drivers were found to have exceeded the 50mph limit.

I have continued to invest in the MORSE project, which was granted £320,742 last year. Road users committing motoring, or criminal offences, are referred to YSS for mentoring support to get to the root cause of the offending behaviour. They are then offered holistic support to prevent further offending. MORSE offers a combination of 1-1 intensive support and short specialised interventions. Last year, 196 referrals were made into the project.

Page 31

'I would not be where I am now had I not met XX or been referred to MORSE by the officers who arrested me... I have had support from other services in the past but XX and MORSE are just amazing people, I will never be able to thank them enough, I would recommend this service to anyone and everyone'. Service user

On a smaller scale, but no less significant, I have allocated £20,000 to each local policing area for my Road Safety Commissioner's Community Fund (CCF). This can be accessed by local communities to

fund projects designed to improve safety on roads. Some examples of how the money has been spent are provided in the commissioning and grants section of this report.

Reducing reoffending

To continue to break the cycle of crime and reoffending of individuals, as well as lessen the impact this behaviour has on our wider community, it is important that partners work together to provide the right interventions at the right time.

Successful joint working, including an agreement for match funding with Shropshire Council, Herefordshire Children's Services and Worcestershire Children's Services, secured over £455,000 of additional Home Office funding in September for the provision of Domestic Abuse perpetrator programmes across West Mercia. As a result of this funding, there is now a DA perpetrator programme in every county of West Mercia. This offers vital assistance to the community and



challenges perpetrators to change their behaviour to prevent further offending.

Perpetrator schemes are now available across West Mercia and my contributions are set out below:

- £176,184.60 to co-commission the DRIVE service across Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The DRIVE project, which was first implemented in Worcestershire in 2018, focuses on priority high-risk or serial perpetrators both male and female aged 16 and over. By addressing perpetrator's behaviour, DRIVE targets the root cause of domestic abuse and improves outcomes for victims and children. For 21/22, 52 perpetrators were referred in Herefordshire, and 104 for Worcestershire. DRIVE continues to see significant reductions in all forms of abuse, with 80% reductions in high levels of physical abuse at end of Q4



- £336,250 to the Richmond Fellowship to deliver the 'My Time' programme across Telford and Shropshire. This is group based domestic abuse perpetrator intervention, which involves working with perpetrators. This service is delivered in partnership with the Shropshire Domestic Abuse service, who will be supporting victims associated with the perpetrators, and Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils.

The Telford expansion includes specialist BAME/ LGBTQ+ workers designed to work with these groups alongside existing provision

- £328,639 to Cranstoun and West Mercia Women's Aid to deliver the Male and Masculinities project. Male and Masculinities is a group perpetrator programme delivered by Cranstoun across Worcestershire and Herefordshire. This programme is delivered in partnership with West Mercia Women's Aid who will deliver the victim support provision that supports a linked (ex-) partners to those men accessing the service
- £50,000 to West Mercia Police to complete a comprehensive needs assessment for domestic abuse perpetrators. This needs assessment will be used as an evidence base to inform future commissioning activity.

As well as providing continued leadership and governance through my Crime Reduction Board,

I have also committed funds to ensure vulnerable offenders in the community receive the support they need. The support provided often enables offenders to address key issues affecting them, such as substance misuse, and to take part in education and learning support to develop new skills and qualifications.

I have continued to support Willowdene Farm with a grant of £103,000 for the LINC project (Local Initiative Nurturing Change). The project enables vulnerable women who are offending, or at risk of offending or leaving the custodial estate, to transform their thinking and behaviour to build purposeful, stable and offending-free lifestyles. During 21/22, there were 56 new referrals into the service, 54 of whom engaged, and 43 left the service with a positive outcome. An example of the support offered, and outcomes achieved, include a woman who was referred onto a residential programme for three months. She had a range of complex issues including excessive drinking, mental

health, domestic abuse and a chaotic lifestyle leading to her child being subject to a social care placement. As a result of her time on the LINC programme, she received access and support from specialist service providers and was also successful in attaining a number of qualifications, including in finance, IT and workplace skills such as customer service.

Page 34

During 21/22, financial support has also gone to the West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) for two intervention projects. One project delivers a range of interventions to support youth cautions and conditional cautions. It saw 183 young people referred into the service between April and September 2021. The second project provides specialist substance misuse assessments and interventions to young people in the criminal justice system, or who are at risk of entering the youth justice system, with the intention of reducing the harm caused by substance misuse. The project also assists young people with recovery

and reduces the likelihood of offending and re-offending. The following case study shows how life changing being able to access intervention can be:

XX is a 17yr young person who was heavily involved in Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and subsequently placed into care. XX was arrested for possession with the intention to supply Class A and B drugs. XX was recommended for a community order by the police. Throughout his order, XX completed numerous programmes on substance misuse, reduced from daily cannabis use, engaged in his care placement, and ceased almost all of his substance misuse, which considering his background was exceptional. XX secured an apprenticeship fitting carpets and doesn't intend to go back to his home town other than occasional visits to family.

WMYJS report

West Mercia Police will move to a new approach in the use of out of court disposals in 2023, which will result in a significant increase in the number of offences being discharged in this way. This



Reforming West Mercia

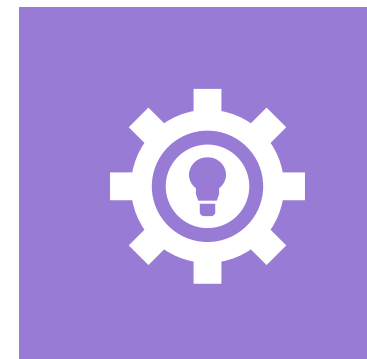
Reforming West Mercia Police remains a key part of what I want to deliver as PCC.

The residual arrangements, put in place following the ending of the police alliance with Warwickshire Police, saw the hosted Transactional and Forensics Services conclude as planned in September 2021.

At that point, IT services moved to a hosted arrangement, with the majority of services due to conclude 31st January 2022 and provision for others to end March 2022, leaving 30 applications in place until March 2023. Whilst the hosted IT arrangements are at no additional cost to West Mercia, it has limited the force's ability to deliver plans to improve digital services for its police officers and the communities they serve. The process of reform and transformation must now continue at a pace in West Mercia, so the force can not only respond effectively to changing demands, but can also play a much greater role in shaping and reducing demand in the first place.

In July 2021, following a rigorous selection process, I was delighted that Pippa Mills was confirmed by the Police and Crime Panel as the new Chief Constable for West Mercia Police. This represents a significant milestone for the force as her appointment sees the first female Chief Constable in the force's history. The new Chief Constable took over in September 2021, following the retirement of her predecessor Anthony Bangham.

This change in leadership also brings a natural evolution in the direction of the police force. Earlier this year the Chief Constable launched her 'plan on a page' to the wider workforce. This provides a summary of the force's strategic way forward for the next three years, bringing together its vision, values and organisational priorities. These will enable the force to move forward, meet challenges, and focus on delivering a policing service that reassures the public and enhances public confidence. In support of this, 'inclusion' has been added into the values of the force to capture the



importance of an inclusive working environment, as well as recognising the progress that has already been made to strengthen the relationships with everyone the force serves and work with. The Chief Constable and her command team are now hosting a series of roadshows across the force to meet with staff and embed the plan on a page.

Page 36 To support the increased focus in my Safer West Mercia Plan, in my budget for 22/23 I am allocating £1 million into preventing crime. In doing so I will ensure West Mercia Police prioritises more resources towards prevention. I will also directly commission more services to provide effective community based prevention programmes, aimed at tackling the root causes of crime. Whilst the role of the police will always be to respond to emergencies, the clear focus should be to prevent offending and victimisation in the first place. The more this can be achieved, the safer our communities will be, and the more demand on our police can be reduced.

Investing in our estate

Our police force needs to be in fit-for-purpose buildings that support the new technology we are introducing. It is also important that, whilst doing this, we are identifying savings and ways of working better and more closely with partners. My work around estates has focused on delivering against those needs.

From 1st April 2021 an in-house estates service, that supports both West Mercia Police and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), went live following a smooth transition from Place Partnership. This insourced model enables West Mercia Police and HWFRS to realise their mid and long term visions as well as deliver their estates and financial strategies. The new service is already proving to be both a better value for money and enhanced property management service model.



In the very near future a public consultation will be launched on a new Estates Strategy for West Mercia, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to comment on the future direction of West Mercia's estate.

While the establishment of an in-house estates function has been a significant piece of work, it has not detracted from the day-to-day management of the policing estate.

Most recently, an innovative project with Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council and HWFRS will see a three-way land swap and purchase allowing for the new police and fire station to be built. This partnership solution enables improvements for vital emergency services, maintains the visible police presence local people want, supports the local economy, and achieves best value for local taxpayers. It is an innovative, forward-thinking approach and I am pleased to be delivering these improvements for the communities in Redditch.

In addition, we have seen highly successful partnership working with partners such as town councils and HWFRS, whereby we have delivered co-locations, sharing buildings in Shifnal, Pontesbury and Tenbury Wells respectively, to achieve best value for the estates, whilst maintaining a front line policing presence within those communities.

The recently published HMICFRS West Mercia Custody report highlights a number of issues relating to the fabric of the custody estate and the poor facilities in some of the blocks. Whilst these shortcomings have rightly been raised, it is reassuring that these were already identified by estates as part of their quarterly inspections and form part of the remedial programme.

Investing in technology

There are many projects under my 'reform' agenda, and the force has a number of significant transformational projects that are a key part of

these reforms. My budget investment for 21/22 saw a significant investment in digital forensics to ensure that the police have up-to-date technology to investigate crime and provide faster outcomes. As part of this transformation work, digital media investigation (DMI) hubs went 'live' in each local policing area (LPA) from September 2021. These were supported by 11 digital forensic experts, with technicians on hand to support policing colleagues, whilst focusing on computer and mobile forensics. The first year of the digital forensics transformation project has been able to demonstrate the benefits realisation and service improvements the investment has made. This has included a 20% reduction in the digital backlog and a dramatic reduction in the turnaround time for the examination of forensic evidence in the digital kiosks from 46 days down to just six. These service improvements bring real benefits to victims of crime who are now having their digital devices, such as mobile phones, returned to them much sooner.

Enabling greater access and convenience around self-serve solutions, for both staff and communities, is one of the commitments in my Safer West Mercia Plan. One step in achieving this was the launch of the new Neighbourhood Alerts system in July 2021 to replace the Community Messaging system. This will be covered in more detail within the 'Reassuring West Mercia section'.

Investing in our people

Communities have told me time and time again that they want more police officers that are both visible and accessible. I have committed to delivering that, as well as ensuring that West Mercia Police has the resilience to cope with changing demands. My 21/22 budget enabled the force to successfully deliver the year two national Police Uplift Programme (PUP) target. The uplift has resulted in an extra 91 officers allocated to key areas of policing across West Mercia including patrol, SNT and local investigations. A further 125 officers will be recruited in 22/23.



The new national entry routes (PEQF) into policing launched in 2019. Over the last two years, West Mercia Police has designed and successfully delivered these new programmes as part of an innovative, regional collaboration with Staffordshire University, and the other three forces in the West Midlands region. In recognition of the work of this collaboration, the West Midlands regional PEQF partnership recently won the NPCC Partnership of the Year. In addition, the apprenticeships delivered by Staffordshire University were inspected by Ofsted in January 2022. The university was rated as 'good' in terms of overall effectiveness, and across all categories. I am keen to ensure there is continuous improvement going into the next phase of the contract.

The new routes into policing have attracted a more diverse pool of candidates and the new intakes have been more representative of West Mercia's communities in terms of gender and ethnicity. In 21/22, of the 253 new starters, 36%

were female and 3.6% came from an ethnic minority background. This is in the context of a national aspiration of 35% for females (set by the British Association for Women in Policing) and a local aspiration of 3.8% for ethnic minorities. I am committed to ensuring the public have a diverse police force, reflective of the communities they serve. I am glad that West Mercia Police is ambitious about this and, whilst there is still some way to go, this is a fantastic step forward.



A number of initiatives have been utilised by the force to support increased diversity through the new entry routes. This work has been delivered by the Positive Action Team and includes the development of the 'Step In' programme which includes pre-assessment centre workshops, one-to-one coaching, mock interviews and targeted social media recruitment campaigns. Following the success of the team this year, the force has committed to increasing the positive action resources, to ensure sustained focus on improving diversity, equality and inclusion within policing.

I have continued my own commitment to investing in people; recruiting a graduate policy and commissioning intern to work in my office for 12 months. As part of their placement they have gained an invaluable insight both into the work of my office and a wide range of force functions, as well as developing valuable workplace skills. I have also published my equality objectives which set out how I will work towards ensuring my own

office seeks every opportunity to advance diversity equality and inclusion across West Mercia.

I am committed to ensuring the workforce has the rights skills and training to support victims as well as provide a quality policing service to the diverse communities of West Mercia. This year, the force has developed a number of new initiatives to develop, retain and upskill talent within the workforce. The force developed and launched the LEAD programme (leadership development across all levels of the organisation) in 2021. The Professional Action Learning Sets (PALS) programme was launched in the force in 2021, having been successful in several other police forces across the country in providing an opportunity to recognise and develop talent amongst ethnic minority officers and staff. There are further plans to progress with a leadership development programme aimed at females.

Whilst I am pleased to see the steps taken by the force in improving the training and development



of all its staff, the PEEL 2021/22 inspection report has highlighted the limited progress the force has made in investing in how the force manages individual performance and identifies talent. I shall continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure improvements are made in this area.

The force is committed to ensuring the workforce has access to advice and services to support their health and wellbeing, and it is important to me as PCC that the force provides adequate, tailored support for all officers and staff, particularly those exposed to work-related traumatic events. Key initiatives in 21/22 include:

- Securing £150,000 funding from Police Care UK to deliver Mental Health First Aid Training to officers and staff across West Mercia Police over three years. Mental Health First Aid Trainers were upskilled to deliver the courses in-house, however the Covid19 pandemic has impacted on delivery and the project has been extended to four years. To date, close to 106 officers and staff have been trained

- Adopting the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) model of peer support. West Mercia Police currently has 37 Peer Supporters with additional officers and staff in the training process
- Engaging with a number of external charities (inc. the 'Climbing out' charity) to provide the workforce with a range of options that support their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

While the welfare of officers and staff is clearly important, the welfare of police dogs is also a priority. Police dogs carry out a vital role in supporting frontline policing and are often the first to run towards a potential threat, therefore at risk of being harmed. To help protect the animals from injury, West Mercia Police has now issued all of its police dogs with protective vests to help protect them from bladed weapons and the impact from blunt objects.

Joint working between my office, West Mercia Police Dogs Section and the Dogs Trust, has seen the launch of a new Animal Welfare Independent

Visitor's Scheme (AWS) in September. The scheme aims to ensure the welfare of those animals working within the force is protected. As part of the AWS, independent visitors are trained to check on the welfare of the animals. The scheme is being managed by the Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Coordinator and five existing ICVs have stepped forward to support the AWS.



Collaboration

At the regional level, I work collaboratively with regional colleagues to ensure the four forces meet their obligations under the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). In support of this there are formal collaborations in place across regional organised crime, counter terrorism, police air support, public order training and PEQF.

Governance of the collaborative activity is via a Regional Governance Group (RGG). The RGG enables oversight and collective decision making in respect of the formal collaborations. It also provides a forum for oversight of national programmes that may have local and regional implications.

This activity is facilitated by two Regional Policy Officers, jointly funded by the four PCCs. They provide policy support and scrutiny of the regional collaborations and also lead the coordination of regional criminal justice governance arrangements.

Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) form a critical part of the national policing network to protect the public from SOC. The ROCU continues to grow and develop and in 22/23 there will be a further 42 officers joining the ROCU funded through the Police Uplift Programme. As a consequence of the growth, the ROCU has initiated an operating model review. I will be closely engaged in how this develops, ensuring we have a flagship ROCU which is delivering for local communities.

Although West Mercia is a relatively safe place to live, we can still be affected by trends and events that occur nationally and internationally. It is my role to ensure that West Mercia Police and the work of the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) are effectively tackling these threats locally and that those vulnerable to radicalisation are being safeguarded appropriately.

In 21/22, the national threat level from terrorism moved from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE following the tragic attacks on the Liverpool Women's Hospital and the murder of Sir David Amess. It has since moved back to SUBSTANTIAL. During this time, through the RGG and my local Counter Terrorism briefing, I sought reassurance that the system was working effectively to counter the threat and ensure the safety of West Mercia's communities.

In October 2021, the four PCCs held a second "deep dive" session with the WMCTU focusing on the progress made to improve the management of terrorist offenders in light of the learning that came out of the Fishmonger's Hall attack inquiry. We were pleased to see the changes that have taken place in the last 12 months since our first deep dive on this topic, but will continue to monitor this.

I also engaged in the delivery of a national project which saw the Special Branch functions of local police forces move into counter terrorism policing. I have been active in seeking assurance that this arrangement has a positive impact on the service to West Mercia's communities and will continue to do so.

Page 44

In March 2022, regional PCCs and their Chief Constables participated in an exercise to help us understand our respective roles should there be a major incident, such as terrorist attack. As a PCC, it's my role to not only to provide civic and community leadership during a major incident, but also to ensure the provision of support services to victims and witnesses. We will continue to build on our approach in 22/23 to ensure we are sufficiently prepared and joined up with our partner agencies.



Reassuring West Mercia's communities

I am clear that our communities not only are safe, but feel safe too. People also need to be able to engage with both myself and their police to be confident that we are visible, accessible, understanding of local priorities and able to tackle them effectively.

Our communities expect and deserve the very best from their police service. They want officers that are visible and accessible, protecting them and preventing harm and they want to be confident West Mercia Police has the resources to tackle crime effectively. As part of my budget development for 21/22, I worked with the Chief Constable to agree a new Local Policing Community Charter. This Charter sets out clear commitments from West Mercia Police as to how it will improve delivery against key community priorities, ensure all the additional resources secured in the budget are fully utilised, and is felt and evidenced in all our communities across West Mercia.

The Charter was launched in March 2021 and covers six key areas for improved service delivery: visibility & accessibility; responding to communities; prevention; vulnerability; relationships; and partnerships. As part of the Charter commitments, local policing teams have approached all of West Mercia's Town and Parish Councils seeking to establish a contact contract with each, so that local policing priorities are identified, agreed and addressed. Across West Mercia, as a whole, the top three community concerns identified relate to safer roads (35%), crime (26%) and ASB (15%).

Whilst it is pleasing to see the force is responding to local concerns, there is still much more to do to create further opportunities so the public can raise concerns, provide feedback, be involved and help shape policing.



70% of residents feel West Mercia police understands issues in their community - West Mercia Crime and Perceptions Survey 21/22

I was therefore pleased that Neighbourhood Matters launched last year, as it enables residents, businesses and community groups across West Mercia to find out more about what is happening in their local community. It also gives them the opportunity to contact police officers and local policing teams directly so they can raise any concerns and provide feedback.

Page 46

The messages people receive are targeted and based on their location and preferences selected by each individual. The public can sign up for local updates from their neighbourhood policing team, or join a number of specialised community interest groups such as Business Watch, wildlife crime and crime prevention. Since its launch over 17,000 people have signed up for alerts.

As PCC, I am clear that our communities demand and deserve effective and timely communication around crime and community issues in their area. I am therefore pleased to see that this service has finally launched. I have heard loud and clear from

the public that they want their police force to be more visible and accessible – Neighbourhood Matters is just one way of achieving that.



I have heard loud and clear from communities that many still don't feel their police service is visible or accessible. Whilst West Mercia Police has made progress, it's important we build on this. I am therefore committed to doing all I can to improve the overall confidence and perceptions the public

have. My budget for 22/23 will see a further 125 officers taken on in West Mercia, taking the force to a total of 2,456. This is the highest establishment the force has seen since 2009 and is close to the highest level on record, enabled by what is by far the highest budget our area has seen for policing and crime.

Page 47 **Independent custody visitor scheme**

My Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme sees trained volunteers make unannounced visits to all West Mercia's custody suites to check on the welfare and treatment of detainees. I greatly value the work of the volunteers and I am always grateful for their contribution.

The easing of national lockdown restrictions meant that the ICVs were able to return to physical visits at the beginning of June 2021. This was following a challenging six month period when they reverted to virtual checks using digital technology and mobile phones.

During 21/22 the 41 ICVs carried out 201 visits, double the number in the previous year, which was also impacted by Covid19 restrictions. In total, 40% of detainees consented to meeting with the ICVs.

The ICV Scheme Coordinator has worked with the Head of Custody to introduce more robust oversight of custody data at the ICV Panel meetings. The local custody inspector for each panel now provides a custody data report for their local panel to enable the ICVs to scrutinise and challenge the data and identify any concerns. Issues raised are assessed by the Head of Custody at a force wide coordination meeting attended by the ICV coordinator.

The recently published HMICFRS report on West Mercia's custody facilities has identified a number of recommendations and areas for improvement and I shall be working with the ICVs to ensure that the scheme can play its part in improving the custody provision in our force area.

89% of residents said they trust West Mercia Police (WMP), 85% believe WMP treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are and 85% believe that WMP act with integrity - Quarter 4 West Mercia Public Perception Survey 21/22

Ethical policing

During 21/22 the force has seen a sustained increase in the number of misconduct cases against officers and staff, rising from 71 in 20/21 to 108 in 21/22. While the increase does in part reflect growing confidence in the wider workforce to report poor behaviour, I have questioned the force on its approach to addressing this issue through my holding to account process, most recently in February. I will continue to monitor the success of the initiatives in place to reverse this trend. In my 22/23 budget, I have prioritised additional resource into force vetting and professional standards. This will provide reassurance that the right checks are being carried out on all officers, staff and others working with or for the police, in order to root out any individuals not suitable for such a trusted role in our community.

It is important that when the public speak to us we react, and we put it right when it needs to be put right. Whilst complaints are few, our communities

deserve to know that their concerns will be dealt with quickly. As well as close liaison with the force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) I have held quarterly briefings with the head of PSD to ensure complaints are dealt with fairly and complainants receive the service they need.

To further improve transparency around complaints, and to help provide the public with the confidence they need to trust the police to always do the best they can, I now publish annual data relating to police complaints on my website.

Since taking on responsibility for carrying out complaint appeals, which were previously referred to the force, the number of reviews has grown from 89 in 20/21 to 99 in 21/22. An independent and qualified external body has been appointed to assess the reviews on my behalf, although the final decision on the outcome remains with me.

The additional oversight the complaint review process brings, enables me to identify strategic themes to address through my role in holding the Chief Constable to account on behalf of our local communities. This has included awareness of the Victim Right of Review (VRR) which was raised with service leads and through my formal holding to account programme. As part of the work to improve Victim Code compliance, officers now provide victims with an information leaflet setting out what support they have and their rights including the VRR.

Public engagement

I am pleased that the public continue to engage with my office and I. This year saw 1,603 pieces of correspondence logged. As a result of the growing contact, I brought in a dedicated Casework Officer to manage this area of work and ensure that correspondents receive an appropriate response.

In the last year I have issued more than 130 public comments or articles in order to ensure local communities are aware of my views, decisions, or strategies.

In the last year I have seen an increase to the amount of interaction on my social media platforms. I have also started using Instagram, recognising its success and that it has the potential to reach a different community group I would like to engage with more. Over the year, on Facebook I saw an increase of 301 followers and 605 page likes, on Instagram I have seen an increase of 238 since using the platform and on Twitter there has been a continual increase – 479 followers.

As a result of the pandemic, I continued producing podcasts in order to highlight interesting subjects and services to the public. Since starting my 'Safer West Mercia' podcast, I have produced 42 episodes with a total of 3,926 downloads.



My website is continually audited to ensure transparency and to engage our communities. I continue to increase transparency in my role through the publication of all appropriate decision notices, financial information, office information, strategy documents and FOI disclosures.

In the last year, just over 22,973 different users have visited my website, a slight decrease on the previous year. However, there were 31,224 individual sessions and 62,397 page views.

In order to capture the engagements via social media, the website and others platforms, I produce a quarterly metrics document that details the activity from the four months. My team also carries out a monthly metrics meeting to understand how engagement with the public can be improved.

I have been pleased to run campaigns that focus on important subjects, such as the VAWG campaign that was previously mentioned in this report. I have also continued to work with partners on issues

around water safety, domestic abuse and knife crime, ultimately strengthening the messages that are given to the public around keeping safe.

The force communications team has been working closely with my office, and a number of joint campaigns have been identified such as SOC and VAWG. These will be implemented in the coming months.

In September, as part of a roadshow, the Chief Constable and I visited communities in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire. We visited small businesses, local projects, community groups and residents to understand concerns, and whether they feel engaged with. We will be looking to carry out more of these in the coming months.



Public consultation

Over the last year, I have carried out consultations around the budget. As part of my commitment to ensure I am capturing views from the public, I provided a platform for people to share their concerns around crime and the visibility and accessibility of West Mercia Police. This involved getting out and about talking to people on the streets, which I was pleased to do again following the pandemic.

I am currently running another survey on the budget for next year slightly earlier than I have done previously. I'm doing this in order to ensure I am incorporating people's views into my decisions from the very beginning of the process.

As part of my Communications and Engagement strategy, I have committed to run more frequent surveys to capture the views of the public on a range of subjects.

I will also be carrying out a series of summer events again, with the hope that in person public engagements can remain.



Performance and accountability

Monitoring force performance

Oversight

In the last year I have continued to monitor force performance. Weekly, monthly and quarterly performance reports are produced which help to inform my regular meetings with the Chief Constable and other senior leads. I have had a regular programme of local policing area visits, which enable me to discuss performance and community issues with the local commands teams and to engage with officers and staff on an informal basis. I also hold regular meetings with a number of other service leads, including the Superintendent lead for Serious and Organised crime and the Head of the Professional Standards Department.

I, or my team, attend a range of internal organisational meetings to provide effective oversight of wider force activity. Where appropriate, a senior member of my office attends

any Critical Incident Management Meetings (CIMMs) concerning issues which could impact in the trust and confidence the public has of the force. Anyone attending a governance meeting provides a briefing note of key issues discussed and identifies any areas where I or the wider team need to take action or seek further assurance.

The West Mercia Governance Board is the overarching joint governance meeting between my office and the force and ensures the organisations and their resources are well directed and controlled. Each meeting now includes a deep dive agenda item on a key issue aligned to the Safer West Mercia Plan and force priorities. In keeping with my commitment to be open and transparent I ensure that notes of this meeting are published on my website.

As part of the development of the new Safer West Mercia Plan, my office has worked with the force to identify a number of key metrics to more clearly demonstrate performance against the plan. The



70 metrics identified incorporate the National Priorities for Policing which were announced by the Government in March 2021. In addition I have ensured that metrics, to track progress against the commitments in my budget, have been aligned to the plan metrics. The plan metrics are published on my website along with a statement on how the force is performing in support of the national policing priorities. To make the data published more engaging and accessible to the public, my office is working on a solution to provide easy to read 'bite sized' information updates on performance and outcomes.

Holding to account

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. My holding to account programme provides a clear and robust way for me to do this. In response to

my increased focus on performance, I have revised the holding to account programme. It includes a number of dedicated performance meetings to enable a 'deep dive' approach to be taken on performance issues. This focus has included the impact of a power outage on the force and its Operational Control Centre (OCC) and on the force's response to the increase in homicides.



In addition to the performance meetings, in the last year I have held the Chief Constable to account on: the force's response to an illegal rave in Herefordshire; protecting vulnerable people; the impact of budget investment; and the work of the Force Operations Unit. In each case, actions have been followed up and performance reviewed in future meetings with the outcomes published on my website.

I have also held one Facebook live meeting in January on the policing budget. It's my role to give communities a voice at the highest level and by hosting the meetings online I am seeking to ensure everyone can be involved in a more open and transparent way. I hope to hold more of these in the coming months.

To supplement the formal meetings, I also have a virtual holding to account process. Performance and service issues that do not require a focused thematic meeting, but are areas for which I wish to retain closer oversight, are scrutinised on an

ad hoc basis. The virtual process is run via email and requires the Chief Constable to provide a written response to the concerns I have raised. If I consider further scrutiny is required, the issue can be brought into the formal holding to account meetings. Issues addressed this year have included: stalking; crime recording; investigation of anti-social behaviour; and the use of the National Police Air Service and drones.

One issue, which I initially instigated a virtual request for but resulted in me calling an extraordinary formal meeting, was on the force's response to calls for service and rising levels of unresourced incidents. At the meeting the Chief Constable set out a clear plan to ensure 80% of non-emergency 101 calls was answered within 30 seconds by the end of the year. Since then, I have received regular updates on progress and have continued to push for improvements. However, disappointingly the response to 101 calls remains well below the target set by the force. This clearly

highlights the need for more to be done. Holding the force to account on concerns like the handling of 101 calls is important for our communities. If someone calls the police, they expect to be able to talk to someone within a reasonable time. They also expect police presence if there has been an incident, or something that warrants attendance. I will continue to support and challenge the force to ensure that their plans are delivered and the public get the level of service they rightfully expect from their police force.

Protecting the most vulnerable is integral to my mission as PCC and I want to make sure that those who need support receive it. At September's Protecting Vulnerable People meeting I was able to raise a number of issues relating to the Victims Right to Review (VRR) identified through my complaints review function. VRR has now been included in an information leaflet given to all victims of crime to help them understand the service they will receive and the support available to them.

The Protecting Vulnerable People meeting also highlighted to me the importance of ensuring that the force's approach to addressing the harm caused by crimes, such as serious violence and my future commissioned services, are better aligned to maximise their effectiveness and to address any gaps in service. As a consequence, closer working practises have been set up, with my Deputy PCC attending quarterly grant review meetings to ensure the right services are commissioned for communities in West Mercia.

My continued investment in officer numbers has enabled the force to redesign how it investigates crime. The new model has seen an additional 88 investigative post across the organisation to support the provision of consistent high quality investigations. While the uplift has been achieved, initial feedback from HMICFRS following its most recent PEEL inspection of the force indicated that more needs to be done to improve how the force



investigates crimes. I used my holding to account meeting in March to better understand how the force was responding to findings, and to seek assurance that improvements would be made. The force has commissioned a detailed whole service review to look at every aspect of investigation. The outcomes from the review, and service improvements required, will be implemented in the coming months. I will continue to hold the force to account to ensure it fully addresses the shortcomings identified by HMICFRS.

Independent scrutiny

During 21/22, HMICFRS carried out the field work elements of its PEEL inspection regime in West Mercia. The resulting inspection report, PEEL 2021/22, was recently published in April 2022. The report provides graded judgement on eight areas of policing. The force was graded good for preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and highlighted for its innovative approach to early

intervention and prevention. Three areas were graded as requiring improvement: 'Investigating crime', 'Responding to the public', and 'Good use of resources'. This report has highlighted a number of areas where the standard is below what our communities and I expect. The force must take action to improve and I am reassured to see that this is already happening.

HMICRS also carried out an unannounced visit to inspect West Mercia's custody provision in 2021, with the inspection findings published in the same week as the PEEL report. The report has raised serious areas of concern around legal rights, safety, and welfare in West Mercia Police custody. While the findings of this report are not good enough, these are issues that the force and I are already aware of and I am reassured by the action that is already being taken address them.

On behalf of our communities, I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that the improvements identified in both reports are made as swiftly as possible.

To support me in my oversight role, the Joint Independent Audit and Standards Committee provides independent scrutiny of activities, processes and policies of both the force and my office.

Page 57

As part of my commitment to the communities of West Mercia to ensure the best outcome for the victims, my deputy PCC chairs an independent Out of Court Disposal Panel which reviews criminal cases, dealt with by way of community resolution or caution, to ensure consistency in the outcomes. While the panel, made up of subject matter experts, including senior magistrates, cannot change the outcome of particular cases, it can make recommendations which lead to organisational change in how the force operates moving forward.

When cases do not meet relevant standards, the force is asked to go back and review the case and report on lessons learned. The work of the panel has led to a series of improvements in how the force deals with out of court disposals, including knife crime, domestic abuse and hate crime.

It is important that the outcome of key decisions and discussions are made accessible so that our communities can have trust in me as their PCC, and the police force I hold to account on their behalf. I have achieved this through my Facebook live events, publishing report notes and minutes from a wide number of governance and scrutiny meetings including: the holding to account meetings; the West Mercia Governance Meetings; my Crime Reduction Board; and Victims' Board. In addition I provide regular performance and activity reports to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, who are responsible for scrutinising my activities and responsibilities.



Our resources

The 2021/22 total revised net revenue budget for West Mercia was £245.5m, which is funded through a combination of central government grants and council tax income. There was also a contribution from reserves to fund transformation and improvement projects. At the end of the year, the revenue budget was underspent by £7.717m.

Page 58

The position on 'Office of the PCC' and 'Force' spend in 2021/22 are shown below:

Area of spend - under/(over) spending	£m
Policing	6.299
Office of the PCC	1.488
Total net underspend in 2021/22	7.717

During 2021/22 there has been a return to business-as-usual practices as Covid19 restrictions have been slowly rolled back over the course of the financial year. West Mercia set a budget for the financial year to include the impact of changes to working practices as a result of Covid19. However, there have been other external factors which have had financial implications on West Mercia, including from Brexit, global supply chain issues and rising demand for energy, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. In 2021/22 the principal impact has been on the ability to receive all goods ordered, particularly in respect of fleet purchases. We are working closely with supply chains to ensure we can access goods as quickly as possible. Cost inflation pressures did start to impact towards the end of the financial year, but are a greater risk to the 2022/23 financial budgets.

In 2021/22 the force successfully recruited an additional 93 officers, funded from the Home Office as part of the government core settlement. The officers have been going through a significant amount of training as part of their induction, before being deployed to operational activities, of which the majority of roles are in Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Page 59

During 2021/22 I continued to work closely with many partners across West Mercia, providing financial support and assistance to a number of local projects and initiatives to protect people from harm. Through the work of my office, an additional £3m of funding has been accessed from the Ministry of Justice and Home Office. I have focused on ensuring that this additional allocation has been spent on those who need it most, particularly on those suffering domestic abuse and sexual violence. As time has been focused on allocating this additional funding, it has meant that there was an underspend from the allocated budget, which I

have authorised to be carried forward to extend the provision of these vital services into 2022/23.

The majority of the force underspend is in relation to the purchase of goods and services from external bodies, particular in respect of business support functions. Considerable investment has been placed in information and communications technology (ICT) to improve the aging infrastructure. However, there has been £3.5m of savings against the budget of £18m as costs associated with supporting and replacing the network infrastructure. Hardware support and maintenance, as well as software purchases in the year, have not been realised.

In September 2021 I agreed to move to a hosted services agreement with Warwickshire in respect of the ICT provision. This remaining legacy of the alliance was to end in March 2023, but Warwickshire has now served notice to end the agreement in June 2022. Uncertainty around what service levels would be required has led to an

underspend of £593k, as not all predicted costs were incurred. With the end of the agreement in June 2022, I will have fulfilled my promise to end the alliance and ensure that all the focus is on improving the delivery of services for the public of West Mercia.

There were also savings of £1.075m from the change and transformation programme, as challenges in the employment market has meant that there were vacant posts within the team, which ultimately impacted on ability to deliver the challenging programme. I remain committed to ensuring that the force has the resources it needs to deliver an effective service. I will hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of quality digital support services.

During the year, the force was able to deliver £3.237m of the savings plans identified in the budget, whilst ensuring that services were value for money. Several savings plans could not be delivered. This included fleet savings and delivery

of Phase 2 of SAAB which were impacted by external factors. The savings plan, related to front counter reduction, was not realised when I instructed the force to review the project in light of the negative public consultation responses to the proposals. I have made my commitment clear to the force that West Mercia Police should be visible and accessible to the public. Alternative in year savings have been delivered.

Use of reserves

At the start of the financial year West Mercia had a balance of £14.252m of reserves. During the year, £1.651m of reserves were utilised to fund one off projects. The largest contribution was to road safety initiatives. To install the average speed cameras on the A449, £0.381m was used. Another £0.425m was allocated to fund other road safety initiatives and for a road safety post in VAL to support those who have been effected by road traffic incidents in our region (RoadPeace). This is



in addition to the work that the force's road safety team undertakes during the year. The remaining expenditure was on supporting one off projects to expand the support from our providers, or on initiatives such as providing electric bicycles across the region and to tackle fly-tipping.

As reported above, there is a balance of £7.717m from the outturn position on the 2021/22 budget. Of this balance I have authorised the use of £3.5m to reduce the borrowing requirement. This is an opportunity to make sure that the organisation is managing its finances both now and into the future. It will reduce the debt held, and the cost of servicing that debt, by £510k in 22/23 and as an ongoing revenue saving over the next 10 years. This revenue saving can be invested back in policing services. The remaining resources from the outturn of £4.127m are being used to complete projects that started in 2021/22 but weren't fully delivered. The remaining resources will also ensure that there is sufficient contingency available to

manage the external risks facing West Mercia. The balance on reserves, to be carried forward into 2022/23, is £7.5m of general fund reserves (less than 3% of the revenue budget) and earmarked reserve of £10.085m of which £2.5m is allocated to cover the cost of one-off major investigations. I have made these decisions to ensure that the Chief Constable and I can meet statutory responsibilities, manage critical risks and contribute towards key strategic initiatives.

Capital position

To ensure the force remains both effective and efficient, it is undergoing significant transformation, much of which is reliant on capital investment. During 2021/22 there was a total of £10.860m of capital expenditure, this includes:

- £2.7m which has been spent on our estates. This has included the start of some significant new projects including a joint fire and police station in Redditch, and the development of the firearms



training unit which will ensure that West Mercia has the facilities to train officers to keep the public safe

- There was expenditure of £7.0m in ICT projects to transform them to continue the investment required to make them fit-for-purpose for the future
- The remaining £1.164 has been invested in vehicles, road safety and other equipment which the force needs in order to be able to provide the appropriate response to the public.

There is an ongoing ambitious plan to invest in the infrastructure and estate of West Mercia, as I must ensure that the force continues to remain fit for purpose. The 2022/23 budget includes £30.5m of planned expenditure with a total of £99.4m identified as being required over the next five years.

Looking forward

The setting of the 2022/23 budget provided the opportunity to challenge the force to operate within the finances available, and to meet the needs of its residents more effectively – ultimately putting them first. I have set a budget of £260.485m, which included £8.355m of savings that the force has been asked to deliver, to ensure that policing in West Mercia is delivering value for money.

I am pleased that the Government has recognised the challenges policing faces and provided increased funding in the 2022/23 budget to employ additional officers. An additional 125 officers are being recruited during the year taking the total number of police officer posts to 2,456, the highest establishment since 2009. I am committed to providing the investment in the training of the new recruits to ensure that they can provide the professional police service expected by the public. I have obtained commitment from the force that the majority of these officers will then be placed

in roles which will have a positive outcome for visibility and accessibility of front line policing.

Commissioning and grants

I have a central role in the commissioning of services related to victims, community safety and crime reduction. My Commissioning and Grants Strategy, which is reviewed and published on an annual basis, provides further information on the approach taken. It also sets out how the commissioning of services, or awarding of grants have followed consistent, transparent processes so that all parties, including our communities can have confidence in how decisions involving public money are being taken.

I am committed to investing in local, outcome-focused interventions and projects that demonstrate value for money. Working collaboratively with other parties is one way of maximising funding opportunities and making best use of public funds. In support of this I

have expanded existing joint commissioning arrangements with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for the DRIVE project, with Herefordshire Council also now providing funding. This has secured the longevity of the project for a further three years. Further examples of joint commissioning or joint partnership funding include:

- Joint commissioning with WCC for IDVA and local DA support services contracts
- Working with regional NHS/I and PCCs to re-commission the CYP SARC for a further six years
- Jointly funding a grant for the Steer Clear worker in Telford
- Working in partnership with all four top tier local authorities to jointly commission the Men & Masculinities and MyTime – DA perpetrator interventions across West Mercia



In 2021/22 I invested approximately £10.4m across all the 135 commissioned services and projects I support, targeted towards supporting victims to cope and recover, as well as reducing offending and reoffending throughout West Mercia.

The allocation of funds for 21/22 includes:

Page 64

£4.8m
allocated to victim services

£0.5m
was spent on road safety

£0.26m
was spent on CCTV

£0.88m
was spent on specific services run by the police including VAL and the Rural and Business Officers

The remaining investment was directed towards CSP activity, CLIMB project, drug and substance misuse projects and other prevention and intervention activities.

Commissioners Community Fund (CCF)

Through my CCF fund I have provided £150,000 to West Mercia's Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) with the autonomy to support local initiatives relevant to their policing area. Examples of CCF funding include:

Herefordshire – £1,000 towards the `Making Changes` football project, aimed at vulnerable children aged 9-12yrs who are either struggling in school or at home with behavioural issues and low confidence and/or esteem.

Shropshire – £2,500 towards Crucial Crew to provide up to 50 schools in the Shrewsbury and Oswestry areas with up to 1,500 safety workbooks containing 18 safety scenarios for their year six pupils.

North Worcestershire – £550 towards 'Discover Me' – an eight-weekly group session for young women who may be at risk of sexual exploitation or genital mutilation to help women discover their self-value and self-worth.

South Worcestershire – £2,000 for tag rugby.

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams utilise tag rugby initiatives in schools across Worcestershire with the aim of developing relationships between the police and children.

Telford and Wrekin – £5,000 for the Telford Meeting Point House Youth Project. The project enables young people from all over the Telford area to meet in a safe and neutral environment and take part in sport, dance and mindfulness, with the aim of diffusing the growing issues of street gang culture.

In addition to the SNT CCF fund, I also provided a further £100,000 to enable local communities to apply for funding to prevent the harm caused by road traffic collisions in their local area. Examples

of local initiatives receiving support from the CCF roads fund include:

Herefordshire – £1,209 for Be Bright Be Seen (cyclist safety) to purchase high visibility equipment to give out to cyclists in areas of Hereford.

Shropshire – £1,440 to Llanyblodwel Parish Council for a vehicle activated sign on the A495 to assist traffic calming.

North Worcestershire – £1,014 for the Young PCSO scheme. Pupils are taught about road safety and basic parking laws to help the school and local residents deal with bad parking around the school entrances.

South Worcestershire – £2,090 to provide a solar powered vehicle activated speed warning sign in Salwarpe Road.

Telford and Wrekin – £5,300 for the purchase of speed indicator devices in Ercall Magna.

Contact your Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion:

01905 331656
opcc@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

-  @WestMerciaPCC
-  West Mercia PCC
-  WestMerciaPCC

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
OPCC, West Mercia Police
Hindlip Hall, Worcester
WR3 8SP





WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA

HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT - PEEL 2021/22 POLICE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND LEGITIMACY: AN INSPECTION OF WEST MERCIA POLICE

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

Background

2. In April 2022 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its inspection findings into the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) of West Mercia Police as part of its PEEL inspection programme of all police forces within England and Wales. A copy of the West Mercia inspection report is attached at Appendix 1.
3. HMICFRS last published a West Mercia PEEL report in September 2019. That report contained three causes of concern, fourteen recommendations and a further fourteen areas for improvement (AFIs). Two AFIs remain open associated with counter corruption and serious and organised crime (SOC). All other causes of concern, recommendations and AFIs from PEEL 2018/19 have been closed as either complete or superseded by similar findings in PEEL 2021/22.
4. Changes to the PEEL methodology have seen a move towards a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach. HMICFRS have also changed the approach to graded judgments. Forces are now assessed against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22, and HMICFRS more clearly link judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. The previous four-tier system of judgments has also been expanded to five tiers with the addition of "Adequate" between "Good" and "Requires Improvement".
5. Other changes of note are:
 - The report includes a victim service assessment, which although ungraded, does influence the assessments made in the graded areas.
 - The inspection findings relating to serious and organised crime (SOC) are no longer reported at force level, but will instead feed into a regional SOC report, which has yet to be published.

- Inspection findings relating to vetting and counter corruption are not included at force level and are to be reported separately once further national inspection work is complete.

6. The changes to the methodology outlined above mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in PEEL 2021/22 with those from the last, 2018/19 report.

Report findings

7. HMICFRS assessed the force on nine different areas of policing, of which 8 are graded in the report. The grading for each assessment area is set out below:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Treatment of the public	Investigating crime	
		Protecting vulnerable people	Responding to the public	
		Managing offenders	Good use of resources	
		Developing a positive workplace		

8. Across the nine areas assessed the report identified one cause of concern with two associated recommendations. There are also sixteen additional AFIs. These are detailed more fully later in this report.

9. New to PEEL 2021/22, HMICFRS also now identify any 'innovative practice' identified during the inspection. The report identifies one such area in regard to the force's approach to early intervention and prevention. This contributed to the judgement of good within the inspection area of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Quick time actions

10. The final part of the assessment process was an onsite fact finding visit by the inspectorate, which culminated in a hot debrief to senior officers. The hot debrief presentation was shared with the force enabling comprehensive review of the debrief content to be made. In total 73 actions were identified from the comments made which were turned into areas for focus. The aim of this was to anticipate the possible recommendations/AFIs that may feature in the PEEL 2021/22 report ahead of the draft release and the subsequent final publication. This was successful as 26 of the actions directly related to subsequent recommendations or AFIs.

11. In February 22 Op Reset was established in response to the existing trend of investigative performance across the Force, including the issues identified by the HMICFRS. With underpinning objectives (including understanding the end to end journey of a crime, designing a prioritised delivery plan and introducing simple and definitive information/awareness to staff) the Op Reset work programme is focussed on a number of areas including: Record to investigate; Victim needs assessments and recording decision making (e.g. evidence led etc.). The review is being carried out by a small team, led by a Superintendent. Progress reports are provided to the chief officers and the PCC.

12. Once the force was sighted on the ungraded draft version of the final report, it was then able to fully develop a detailed improvement plan (action tracker) that contains all of the recommendations and AFIs. The tracker document is RAG rated on the basis of current service provision and sets out the agreed 'steps to green' for completion. This tracker is maintained centrally by the Force Liaison Officer who is the conduit between the force and HMICFRS.
13. Ownership for service improvement is assigned to a strategic and tactical lead for each recommendation or AFI. Strategic leads are required to identify their 'Steps to Green' which are concise bullet points of the actions required to achieve completion of the recommendation or AFI. Updates are then reviewed by the HMICFRS Force Liaison Officer with a RAG status applied accordingly. Progress is shared with HMICFRS via updates on a national monitoring portal.
14. The tracker is subject to ongoing scrutiny through the Service Improvement Board (SIB), chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. The SIB is attended by key stakeholders from each of the service areas and the PCC's Senior Policy Manager.
15. In the latest version of the action tracker fifteen AFI's and one of the recommendations have been assessed amber with meaningful activity taking place, and one AFI and one recommendation assessed as yellow indicating significant progress has been made.
16. The PCC held an extraordinary Holding to Account (HTA) meeting on 23 May 2022 to focus on the findings in the PEEL inspection report. The primary aim of the meeting was to ensure the causes for concern, recommendations and AFIs set out in the report have (or were) being addressed and to seek reassurance that the force had the right resources and plans in place.
17. The Chief Constable was asked to submit a briefing document listing the causes for concern, recommendations and AFIs, and the measures being put in place (and progress of delivery where appropriate) against each. This document formed the basis of the HTA meeting. A copy of the notes from the HTA meeting is attached as Appendix 2.
18. In addition to the PEEL HTA meeting, a number of HTA meetings held earlier this year have been used by the PCC to scrutinise and challenge the force in its approach to addressing the areas identified for improvement pre-publication. This has included investigations and workforce.

Cause of concern, recommendations and AFIs

19. The sections below sets out the key findings across each thematic area, along with a brief summary of the work being done by the force and where appropriate, the PCC to address the findings.
20. For several areas, narrative from the PCC's HTA meeting has also been included to provide additional reassurance or context.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect (adequate)

21. There were two AFIs identified in this area :

AFI 1: The force should reinvigorate its work with independent advisory groups (IAGs) in all parts of the force. It should work with IAGs to ensure consistent and comprehensive

data sharing, the review of body-worn video (BWV), and meaningful scrutiny of the use of force, with actions taken in light of the IAGs' feedback.

22. All IAGs have been invited to attend officer personal training on an ongoing basis. The Chairs of the Strategic IAG and BME Co chair are invited to attend the force governance meeting on use of force, where data is scrutinised; data packs are to be developed for IAG meetings. Feedback from IAG scrutiny is fed back into officer CPD days. The PCC is represented at these governance meetings.

23. All LPA's to continue to develop scrutiny panels and ensure that use of force videos are shown as well as stop and search. The aim is to hold a regular scrutiny panel at least every quarter. The panel consist of members of the community that represent those more likely to be stop searched. The session should be led by the members of the panel and prior to the viewing of the videos training should be carried out in order that the panel are equipped to provide the best feedback they can.

AFI 2: The force should be regularly monitoring a comprehensive set of data on its use of stop and search, in line with our 2017 national legitimacy recommendation, to enhance its understanding of fair and effective use of these powers. This data should be scrutinised by the force and used to ensure that the use of stop and search powers is proportionate and targeted appropriately

24. The force has reviewed and rewritten the data pack used at its stop and search governance meeting to ensure that elements are overlaid to better understand disproportionality. In addition, a database has been developed and is in a testing phase. Once live, the database will make stop and search data more readily available across the organisation. Annual data will also be published on the force website.

25. High level scrutiny into the origins of all black stop searches is to commence with a view to better understanding disproportionality. Peer support has been used to identify good working practises to implement in West Mercia.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour (good)

26. The force received a grading of 'good' for this area of policing and its approach to early intervention and prevention is highlighted as innovative.

Responding to the public (requires improvement)

27. There were 4 AFIs identified in this area:

AFI 3 - The force should work with health partners to introduce effective arrangements to promptly support people in mental health crisis.

28. This AFI is a legacy issue from the previous PEEL report but it is one which has always been problematic as a result of dependency on partners and varying arrangements across a multi-county force. The force are now actively working with partners in line with long term national plans rather than producing ad hoc local agreements. This will likely take time but should deliver a more consistent force wide approach.

29. The PCC's budget for 2022/23 includes investment in a 'vulnerability desk' which will ensure individuals with significant vulnerabilities are identified and supported by the police and partners at the earliest opportunity. The vulnerability desk is to be known as the Safeguarding Advice Team (SAT) going forward in order to better reflect its function. It will link into the development plans for the Harm Assessment Unit (HAU), with the HAU being

the first port of call for partner organisations during office hours thereby reducing demand on the OCC. It is planned to be in a position to recruit into the roles in the autumn.

30. The role of the SAT will be to provide safeguarding advice to partners and in some cases the public, and direct them or transfer calls to the most appropriate agency. In addition it will provide expert tactical advice to the OCC Team in relation to critical areas of safeguarding. Its focus will be on safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, and the mental health approach to ensure the right agency provides the most appropriate response to the service user.

AFI 4 - The force should make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.

31. Op Reset has been designed in response to the existing trend of investigative performance across the Force, including the issues identified by the HMICFRS. Op Reset has started to look at this AFI issue in terms of crime prevention and scene preservation from an end to end investigative perspective. This is with a view of ensuring that irrespective of the touch point with the organisation, the Victim receives appropriate information at the right time. A lead officer from the OCC is working with the Op Reset team in support of this AFI.

AFI 5 - The force should make sure that repeat callers, and those who are vulnerable, are routinely identified.

32. The recording of personal vulnerability is a manual process within SAFE, the force's incident recording system. It is recognised that the use of the vulnerability checkbox is not yet consistent and that there are some issues to be addressed to empower staff to accurately assess THRIVE and update this accordingly. PNC training and a drive with OCC staff will support this improvement.
33. Significant repeat callers are now consistently identified through THRIVE and managed via an agreed Problem Solving approach by Local Policing Areas providing interventions for those who may contact the force disproportionately for reasons of mental health or lack of third party support.

AFI 6 - The force should accurately record all missing person reports on its missing person system.

34. West Mercia does have a process in place that identifies those reported as missing. The OCC record details and then those individuals are brought to the attention of OCC supervision and LPA supervision. However, some reports that come into the police are from organisations that also have statutory responsibilities, such as health care providers, who, dependent on risk, will be asked to complete their actions prior to any police involvement. If then a person is quickly located it will have been recorded on SAFE, but as this does not have a system interface with Compact (the missing persons database), it may not subsequently be captured in Compact.
35. Work to create the system interface has been delayed as Compact is one of the legacy systems jointly used by Warwickshire Police and work is still ongoing to separate out and cleanse the data. Given the delay in establishing the SAFE interface, focus on ensuring Compact records are created is being maintained through additional scrutiny from OCC supervisors and LPA SPOCs.

Investigating crime (requires improvement)

36. One cause of concern and 2 supporting recommendations were identified, along with 2 further AFIs:

Cause of concern: *The force needs to improve how it investigates crimes, supervises investigations and updates victims.*

Recommendations

West Mercia Police should, within three months:

- *Make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with supervisory oversight ensuring that all investigative opportunities are taken; and*
- *Make sure victims are regularly updated in line with the Victims' Code and that victim needs assessments and victim personal statements are recorded when appropriate, so victims are provided with suitable support services throughout the investigation.*

37. A significant focus to address this cause of concern and recommendations has been in place since Op Reset commenced in February 2022.

38. As a result of the Op Reset work West Mercia now has a consistent investigation plan template in place. This forms part of the mandatory investigation standards and has been rolled out across the force, supported by CPD sessions aimed at all relevant personnel. The final CPD session is 31.5.22 when all staff are scheduled to have received this input. Supporting materials and guides are being developed for future use. The specific focus is now on how best to support supervisors. This includes shaping a pilot supervisory training with a substantial element of that supervisory training covering investigative standards.

39. The second recommendation is also being addressed through the Op Reset work. The investigation plan template previously mentioned includes specific considerations for victims of crime such as the Victim Right to Review (VRR) and is included in the training being rolled out. The Victim Needs Assessment (VNA) and supporting process has been thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose and has formed part of the first round of CPD training. There will be a more in depth focus on meeting the need of victims through VNA and obtaining Victim Personal Statement in the next round of CPD (CPD2).

40. The PCC's budget investment for 22/23 provides for an additional uplift of 125 officer, 73 of which will be additional officers to enhance the forces investigations and ensure the best possible outcomes for victims. At an Investigations holding to account (HTA) meeting held in March, the Chief Constable provide assurance that the additional officers will have been recruited by March 23. At the more recent PEEL HTA it was reported that the significant progress made to date to address these recommendations, should ensure the force can comply with the three month timescale set out by HMICFRS.

AFI 7 - The force should improve how it records victims' decisions and their reasons for withdrawing support for investigations, and make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases.

41. As above work to address this AFI is incorporated into the Op Reset work, forming part of the mandatory investigative standards and is captured in the CPD training, with the CPD2 having a specific focus on victims' needs and officer responsibilities

AFI 8 - The force should make sure that all victims are consulted prior to and following the use of a caution, and all such victim contact should be appropriately recorded

42. As with the above AFIs this work has been incorporated into OP Reset and will form part of CPD2. Focus within the training is on where to record the conversations with the victims, the updates provided and any consultations undertaken. This AFI also links in with the improvements required in custody when recording the decision for a caution to check that the victim has been consulted and their views recorded.
43. This AFI will require specific consideration as to how the force can quality assure and audit progress, to test whether there is a record of the victim's views having been sought in all out of court disposal cases. This will also need to be built into planning the implementation of the out of court disposal two-tier project, which comes into effect in April 2023.

Protecting vulnerable people (adequate)

44. Two AFIs were identified:

AFI 9 - The force should agree a multi-agency data collection plan to enrich the strategic understanding of vulnerability by the force and the organisations it works with.

45. While the force is aware of the data it provides to partnerships to support both Safeguarding Partnerships and the Community Safety Partnerships, work is ongoing to map the inward flow of information, which is limited and inconsistent across the force area. Once this exercise is complete, the proposal is to engage with partners to better understand the data requirements of partners and how best to share it. It was recognised by the Chief Constable at the PEEL HTA that this AFI will require work with external partners to deliver and the outcome may take longer as a result of this outside working.
46. The PCC has for a number of years funded three CSP analyst posts, which are hosted and managed by the force. In 22/23 he committed additional funds to secure the future of two analyst posts in the problem solving hubs, who already work with CSP partners to deliver innovative and effective approaches to harm prevention.

AFI 10 - The force should make sure that orders such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders are considered in all appropriate cases.

47. The Force has proactively pushed the use of arrest and bail over the use of DVPN/O's over the last 12 months with briefings to staff and On-Call Superintendents to this effect, which is reflected in the declining numbers. In contrast the arrest rate for domestic abuse (where these would be used) has risen. It is the recording of the rationale for the use or non-use of the orders which needs to be addressed and this has been incorporated into the Op Reset work.

Managing offenders and suspects (adequate)

48. One AFI was identified in this area:

AFI 11 - The force should make sure that it has the capacity and capability to proactively identify breaches of orders and further offences, and that all breaches and offences are fully recorded on force systems.

49. The uplift in digital forensics capability has enabled the offender management team (MOSOVO) to successfully trial joint 'on-site' visits with the digital forensic unit (DFU) to check digital devices for breaches. The enhanced capability the DFU brings is bringing successes and is acting as a prevention/deterrent factor.

50. The PCC's 21/22 budget saw a significant investment in digital forensics to ensure that the police have up-to-date technology to investigate crime and provide faster outcomes. The first year of the digital forensics transformation project has been able to demonstrate the benefits realisation and service improvements the investment has made.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce (adequate)

51. Three AFIs were identified:

AFI 12 - The force should ensure that its learning and development provision fully meets its workforce development needs

52. The current Origin system has shortcomings in relation to recording and managing operational and softer skills. A new Learning Management System is being procured which will improve the mapping of skills across the organisation.

53. New approaches to learning products have been introduced. One example being the Professional Action Learning Sets (PALS) programme which was launched in force in 2021 and provides opportunity to recognise talent amongst ethnic colleagues and to give those officers and staff the confidence and leadership skills to improve on their performance.

54. The PCC's 22/23 budget includes an investment in resources to provide improved training and development to deliver the best possible services to the public. This includes the provision of 12 further officer posts to support learning and development as part of the additional 125 officer posts funded by the budget.

AFI 13 - Our 2019 report said that the force should improve how it manages individual performance and identifies talent, ensuring reviews are consistently and fairly applied across the workforce and valued by all, and that poor performance is managed consistently. This remains an area for improvement

55. The Force has recently revitalised its Personal Development Review (PDR) scheme known as myMAX with an emphasis not just on the PDR, but on talent and development. The force has also set a clear expectation that all Officers and staff will have an annual appraisal with effect from 1st May.

56. The wider talent management strategy has not yet been developed and this is a core piece of work to allow the force to be clear on its ambition for the future. Contractor resource has been identified and will be working closely with L& D leads to progress the project in quarter two, 22/23.

57. Talent Mapping will be re-introduced in the future as part of the PDR discussions with line managers as is part of the wider scoping work for the talent management strategy.

AFI 14 - Our 2019 report said that the force should ensure that it provides suitable training, support and capacity for its supervisors so that they are fully equipped and confident to manage the performance and development of their staff, including effectively managing poor performance and identifying talent. This remains an area for improvement

58. The LEAD programme was launched in 2021 and is a framework to develop leadership capabilities for all officers, staff and volunteers irrespective of rank and grade. There are 5 programmes within the framework with focus initially on the "Rank" programme and "Inclusion" programmes.

59. In April 2022 Learning and Development launched a Sergeant Initial Course for people who have passed the exam, but not a board, to prepare them for the realities of Acting and Temporary duties, accompanied by some digital guidance which is under development.
60. Skills data is now used consistently for posting decisions (i.e. used following boards). Local investigations skills are being mapped and a 30+ scheme is being explored by workforce planning board and this will include consideration of skills that the force wishes to retain. This will inform ongoing work around recruitment / retention of investigators.

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money (requires improvement)

61. Two AFIs were identified in this area:

AFI 15 - The force should improve the breadth and accuracy of its data and make sure there is improved consistency in working practices

62. This is a broad area for improvement. Whilst a business plan for a Data Integration project (D&I Lite) has been agreed and will have a positive impact, addressing the core concerns of the AFI will require the full D&I project, not due to recommence until April 2023.

AFI 16 - Our 2019 report said that the force should expand its skills project work to include an assessment of all skills, not only operational, including potential future skills requirements. This assessment should inform workforce plans. This remains an area for improvement.

63. Core operational skills for patrol have been mapped and are informing the Strategic Learning and Development plan. Skills across Local Investigations are now being mapped, identifying opportunities to rebalance skills on LPA directly linked to Frontline stabilisation. Skills information has been used in recent promotion processes to aid posting decisions and ensure skills are utilised.

PCC oversight and next steps

64. The PCC's oversight and scrutiny of the force response to the PEEL inspection findings is ongoing. An extraordinary holding to account meeting took place on 23 May and the themes from this meeting will be used to inform ongoing monitoring.
65. The PCC is engaged across the various levels of force governance referenced in this report, with leads identified within the PCC's Governance Team. Progress of delivery will be monitored through SIB and the relevant governance meetings. In addition, the PCC will continue to use his holding to account programme to challenge and scrutinise progress across the different areas of policing. In doing so he will seek reassurance on all areas outlined in the report..
66. The PCC has a statutory responsibility to write to the Home Secretary in response to any force inspection report published by HMICFRS. Once sent, this will be published on the PCC's website.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – [HMICFRS Inspection Report: PEEL 2021/22](#)

Appendix 2 – [Monthly Assurance Meeting May 2022– Meeting Notes](#)

Contact Points for the Report

For Panel Support: Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager,
Worcestershire County Council

Tel: 01905 844871

Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime
Commissioner Deputy Chief Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA

JOINT HMICFRS AND HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS (HMIP) INSPECTION REPORT – "REPORT ON AN UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION VISIT TO POLICE CUSTODY SUITES IN WEST MERCIA POLICE"

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

Background

2. In April 2022 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) published inspection findings following an unannounced joint inspection of West Mercia Police custody facilities. This is part of a programme of inspections covering every police custody suite in England and Wales. A copy of the West Mercia inspection report is attached at Appendix 1.
3. The inspection assessed the effectiveness of custody services and outcomes for detained people throughout the different stages of detention. It examined the force's approach to custody provision in relation to detaining people safely and respectfully, with a particular focus on children and vulnerable adults. Whilst the report includes causes of concern, recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs), the inspectorates do not provide an overall grading for custody.
4. The custody facilities in West Mercia were last inspected in 2014. Of the 29 recommendations made during the 2014 inspection, West Mercia Police had fully or partially achieved 19.

Summary of findings

5. The 2022 inspection report identified good practice in relation to partnership working, understanding vulnerabilities and decisions for child detention. However the report also identified 5 causes of concern (with associated recommendations) and a further 11 AFIs. A number of these causes of concern relate to recommendations identified in the 2014 inspection which had not been achieved or had only partly been achieved.
6. Following the inspection, HMICFRS also referred 3 specific cases relating to the use of rip-proof clothing, risk assessment and inappropriate and offensive language.

Quick time activity and action plan development

7. Quick time activity was undertaken during and immediately after the inspection to address the Inspectorates' feedback. This included the introduction of a new Temporary Superintendent (T/Supt) post in custody, the purchase of anti-ligature knives and updating and ordering new information posters. HMICFRS publically acknowledged the action taken by the force during the inspection and were confident that custody services and outcomes for detainees would improve as a result.
8. The force also utilised support from the Inspectorates, including a shadowing opportunity for the new custody T/Supt and provision of a bespoke auditing input to the custody management team. This best practice learning has informed the force's response to the inspection report and will form a key part of the roadmap to successfully improve custody provision.
9. The 3 referred cases referenced at paragraph 6 were subject of an immediate review overseen by a Chief Officer. This resulted in a referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for 1 of the cases. The other 2 cases were dealt with by way of reflective practice.
10. The force has developed a detailed action plan to monitor ongoing progress to address each of the causes for concern, recommendations, and AFIs. This action plan includes 51 actions, each of which has been RAG rated, an improvement owner identified, relevant 'steps to green' agreed, and a completion date set.
11. The action plan is subject to scrutiny through a newly established monthly Custody Improvement Board (CIB) which feeds into the Deputy Chief Constable's (DCC) Service Improvement Board (SIB). The CIB is attended by key stakeholders including the PCC's Estates Team and Criminal Justice Manager.
12. Of the 51 point plan, 36 actions are assessed amber with significant activity taking place, 3 are green (completed), with the remaining 12 being assessed red indicating limited progress achieved. The red rated actions are generally associated with the longer term issues around the facilities, whilst others await delivery of training and subsequent audit assurance before the status is further reviewed.

Holding to account

13. The PCC held an extraordinary Holding to Account (HTA) meeting on 29 May 2022 to focus on the findings of the custody inspection report. The primary aim of the meeting was to ensure the causes for concern, recommendations and AFIs set out in the report have (or were) being addressed and to seek reassurance that the force had the right resources and plans in place.
14. The Chief Constable was asked to submit a briefing document listing the causes for concern, recommendations and AFIs, and the measures being put in place (and progress of delivery where appropriate) against each. This document formed the basis of the HTA meeting. A copy of the notes from the HTA meeting is attached at appendix 2.

Causes of concern, recommendations and AFIs

15. The inspection report identified 5 causes of concern (with associated recommendations) and a further 11 AFIs across 5 thematic areas. The sections below summarise the key findings across each thematic area, along with a brief summary of the work being done by the force and where appropriate, the PCC to address the findings. A full list of all causes for concern, recommendations and AFIs can be found in section 6 of appendix 1.

Leadership, accountability and partnerships

16. There were 2 causes of concern (each with a single recommendation) identified in this area. One cause of concern related to governance and oversight of custody provision. 1 cause of concern related to compliance with legal requirements and guidance.
17. There has been significant progress in improving force governance and oversight of custody provision. This includes the appointment of the T/Supt and the establishment of robust governance structures as set out in paras 7 -11. CPD training for custody and detention officers took place in May 2022 and focused on addressing both causes of concern.
18. The impact of the new arrangements and training will be monitored on a monthly basis through a new audit regime. The audit process has been informed by the auditing input and best practice examples provided by HMICFRS.
19. The force is due to review the service provided by Bidvest Noonan (service provider for detention officers) and the interim leadership structure in quarter 2 to consider the longer term plan. The PCC was given reassurance that any future model of service delivery would continue to address the leadership and accountability concerns raised by HMICFRS, (including representation of the workforce in custody).

Pre-custody: first point of contact

20. There was 1 AFI identified in this area. The AFI focused on ensuring frontline officers had access to quality information to inform decision-making when responding to an incident. This includes initial information from call handlers, as well as advice and assistance from mental health professionals.
21. Custody and OCC leads are working together to ensure sharing of key information. This is being supported by ongoing training and systems changes in the OCC. Work is also ongoing with Health partners to ensure effective arrangements are in place to support people in a mental health crisis, including plans for dedicated mental health ambulances.
22. The PCC's budget for 2022/23 includes investment in a 'vulnerability desk' which will ensure individuals with significant vulnerabilities are identified and supported by the police and partners at the earliest opportunity. This should assist the force in accessing and relaying information as set out in the AFI.

In the Custody Suite: booking in, individual needs and legal rights

23. There was 1 cause of concern (and associated recommendation), and 3 AFIs identified in this area. The cause of concern related to risk management practices. The 3 AFIs related to detainee dignity and privacy, meeting individual and diverse needs, and access to the police complaints system.

24. Several quick time actions were undertaken by the force to address concerns in the custody suite. This included immediate direction to the workforce to ensure compliance with guidance; purchase and distribution of 120 anti-ligature knives and delivery of CPD to include effective risk assessments and the use of rip-proof clothing.
25. Stock checks are taking place across suites to ensure provision of resources to meet individual and diverse needs. In 2021/22 the PCC provided £2,000 funding to bulk buy reading materials and other distraction activities for the 5 custody suites. The monthly custody audits will ensure that this investment is utilised to improve the custody service.
26. Work is ongoing with the ATHENA Management Organisation (AMO) to make system changes to support the force in addressing the learning highlighted by HMICFRS. The impact of steps taken in para 25-27 will be monitored through robust monthly audits.
27. The PCC will need to invest significantly in the custody estate in the next 1-5 years to bring the facilities and infrastructure up to the standard required. All elements of the privacy provision and provisions for detainees with disabilities will be considered as part of the remedial estates work being managed by the PCC's Estates function. A survey of all custody blocks has been arranged for the week commencing 27 June. This will identify the scope, extent and cost of works required. In the meantime, any remedial repairs will be undertaken as and where required.
28. Alongside this, the force have already submitted estimated costs of £500k to replace aged, obsolete and damaged CCTV & recording equipment.
29. Whilst information on how to make a complaint is now displayed in custody suites, the PCC has asked for further reassurance that there is a fit for purpose process for recording and referring complaints to the Professional Standards Department. The DCC will review this through SIB.

In the custody cell, safeguarding and health care

30. There were 2 causes of concern (each with a single recommendation), and 6 AFIs identified in this area. 1 cause of concern related to oversight and governance of use of force in custody. 1 cause of concern related to detainee care including the provision of food and drink.
31. The 6 AFIs covered a myriad of themes relating to safeguarding and health care including: the safety and environment in custody; use of force training; the approach to appropriate adults; and working with partners in relation to alternative accommodation, health care outcomes and transfers to hospital.
32. A programme of work is underway to ensure all custody and detention officers have up-to-date training on use of force, officer safety and first aid. A new recording system for use of force is now in place, enabling more accurate recording and review of use of force as part of the monthly custody audits. In the medium to long term, the investment in CCTV will enable more effective scrutiny of use of force in custody.
33. The force are considering how best to enable independent scrutiny of use of force in custody. Discussions are ongoing to determine whether the PCC's Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) scheme could be utilised. The PCC is also working with the force to understand how the ICV scheme could be strengthened to provide more structured scrutiny of the areas highlighted by HMICFRS.

34. Provision of food and drink was covered in CPD in May and compliance is checked through the monthly custody audits. Concerns regarding quantity and variety of food stocks has been raised by the PCC's ICVs. The PCC will work with the force to ensure that these concerns are escalated and addressed through the appropriate governance forums.
35. The PCC's Estates team have procured a new cleaning contract and custody will form part of the monthly governance over the service delivered within this area. Estates have implemented a regime of custody block 'deep cleans' and are developing a mechanism for inspections with the cleaning contractor.
36. The PCC's Estates team are also working with Health and Safety for a physical safety audit of all custody suites to identify and remove any ligature points. Other maintenance issues will be addressed via the quarterly joint inspections by the force and Estates team which are already in place. Inspection reports will be reviewed at the CIB and the Estates Forum to ensure all actions arising are progressed.
37. More support is required from local authorities to improve the provision of alternative accommodation for children who are charged and refused bail. The inspection identified that 36 cases were children were charged and remanded in custody. In 29 cases requests were made for alternative accommodation but only 1 child was moved. In 7 cases a request was not made as it was deemed impractical (e.g. because of the time at night, court attendance etc.)
38. The force's strategic leads have written to the Directors of Children's Services and are working with the Youth Justice Service (the service is hosted within the Office of the PCC) to seek a response to this issue. The PCC is also considering how his Local Criminal Justice Board can be used to hold partners to account to drive improvements in the provision of alternative accommodation for these vulnerable children.

Release and transfer from custody

39. There was 1 AFI identified in this area. The AFI focused on the force's approach to releasing detainees safely.
40. The learning identified by HMICFRS was included in the CPD in May, and compliance will be monitored through the audit process.
41. The force are also part of a national pilot to provide Liaison & Diversion staff with access to digital escort records in a bid to improve the quality of medical and mental health information shared within the secure estate.

PCC oversight and next steps

42. The PCC's oversight and scrutiny of the force response to the custody inspection findings is ongoing. An extraordinary holding to account meeting took place on 29th May and the themes from this meeting will be used to inform ongoing monitoring.
43. The PCC is engaged across the various levels of force governance set out in this report, with leads identified within the PCC's Governance Team, Estates Team and the hosted Youth Justice Service. These leads are engaged with the force in delivering the required service improvements. Progress of delivery will be monitored through the CIB, SIB and Estates Forum meetings.

44. The PCC has requested an immediate review of his ICV scheme in light of the inspection that will be completed by mid-June. The review will consider how the PCC's ICV scheme can most effectively provide support to ensure the improvement activity set out above is embedded and leading to improved outcomes for detainees.
45. The PCC has a statutory responsibility to write to the Home Secretary in response to any force inspection report published by HMICFRS. Once sent, this will be published on the PCC's website.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – [HMICFRS & HMIP Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in West Mercia Police](#)

Appendix 2 – [Custody Inspection Holding to Account meeting notes](#)

Contact Points for the Report

For Panel Support: Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager,
Worcestershire County Council
Tel: 01905 844871
Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime
Commissioner Deputy Chief Executive
gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and provide an update on police performance.

Delivery plan and assurance

3. A delivery plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the plan and is scrutinised at the PCC's monthly governance meetings. As previously discussed and agreed with the Panel an extract of the delivery plan is no longer included with this report.
4. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections. This includes an update on the Alliance withdrawal in the 'Reform' section.

PCC's team update

5. After six years of working alongside the PCC, the Deputy PCC has announced her decision to step down from the role and will leave the PCC's office in June. In addition, since the last Panel meeting, the Chief Executive has also left the organisation. Both roles have been externally advertised and will be subject to open and transparent recruitment processes. In accordance with legislation, the preferred candidate for each post will be subject to a confirmation hearing by the Panel.
6. The Deputy Chief Executive is fulfilling the statutory duties of the Chief Executive until the successful applicant takes up their post.

Commissioned service provision

7. The 2021/22 financial year saw a significant additional investment in commissioned services, in part helped by additional funding secured from both the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. In total the PCC had £10.4m of resources to allocate in the year to support services. Of this:
 - £4.8m was spent on Victims services.
 - £0.5m was spent on road safety
 - £0.26m was spend on CCTV
 - £0.88 was spent on specific services run by the police including VAL and the Rural and Business Officers
8. The remaining investment was directed towards Community Safety Partnership (CSP) activity, CLIMB project, drug and substance misuse projects and other prevention and intervention activities. More detailed information on some of the initiatives this money supports have been included within the Putting victims and survivors first and Building a more secure West Mercia sections of this report.
9. The resource allocation for 2022/23 is £8.3m. This does not include any additional funding that may be secured through the year, or the £1m secured through the 2022/23 precept for Prevent activity.

Putting victims and survivors first

Prevent activity

10. The PCC's office has been working with the force lead to develop a joint PCC and force Prevention Strategy. The Strategy has now been finalised, after which it will be shared with partners and stakeholders. Key objectives of the strategy are fewer victims, less crime, increased public confidence in policing, and greater public involvement in preventing harm. In conjunction with the strategy's development, work is ongoing to develop joint proposals for the £1m prevention fund. Proposals are due to be submitted to the West Mercia Governance Board in June.
11. In support of the prevention activity, commissioning engagement work with key partners such as CCG's, local authorities and the Fire Service has begun to better understand how the PCC can work more closely with partners on a preventative approach. Further engagement sessions are planned with other partners and stakeholders over the coming months.

Victim support contract

12. The Victim Support contract has been renegotiated and extended for a further year to 31 March 2023. The new contract has received an uplift of £73,128 to include some specific provision for Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT) victims. Victim Support have accompanied the force on police investigations into MSHT, to inform the development of the new role. This has seen some early successes and positive responses from the local community. In addition Victim Support have been awarded an additional £54,000 for a 12 month Hate Crime pilot project across West Mercia. The project will employ Hate Crime Co-ordinators to deliver an engagement and awareness programme to increase public awareness of and confidence in reporting hate-related crimes and incidents. This investment supports the PCCs commitment to giving victims the confidence to come forward, knowing that they will be supported to cope, recover and restore.

Out of Court Disposals

13. The PCC's office is working with the Force around upcoming changes to the Out of Court Disposal (OCD) process which are to be implemented in April 2023. The changes will reduce the number of out of OCDs to two and allow police to attach conditions, which may require a potential uplift in the number of intervention projects available for all ages of offenders. This work involves further understanding of need and demand in relation to the commissioning of services. This work will potentially result in amendments to existing services or commissioning of new services.

Op Lincoln

14. At the end of March the final report of the Ockenden Review into maternity services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust was published. The police investigation, Op Lincoln is ongoing, and a quarterly status report is submitted to the West Mercia Governance Board to provide the PCC and Chief Officers with strategic oversight. The PCC's Commissioning Manager has been working with partners to ensure the provision of support for families who are part of the investigation. This has included working to address an identified gap in terms of psychological support for families who are part of the Police investigation, but do not fit the criteria for existing support services. This has involved regional and local commissioners, as well as the Ministry of Justice and Department for Health and Social Care at a national level.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Perpetrator funding

15. The PCC has been invited by the Home Office to extend the existing Perpetrator Funding awarded in 2021/22, for a further year (2022/23). The PCC's commissioning team are currently working with providers to understand whether existing services can be extended with the additional funds. This funding provided the DRIVE project in Herefordshire, as well as the Men & Masculinities and MyTime programmes across West Mercia. Each of these services also provided additional support for domestic abuse victims.

Safer Streets 4

16. In March the Home Office launched the fourth round of its Safer Streets funding. This round of funding provides an additional £50m of funding to support areas persistently and disproportionately affected by high levels of neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls, fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour. The PCC office submitted the maximum number of four funding bids in May, covering projects to be delivered in West Mercia, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Notification of the outcome of these bids is expected shortly.

Homicide funding

17. The Home Office have announced a £1m fund specifically targeted at addressing homicide, one of the government's national policing priorities. Recognising the sustained increase in the volume of recorded homicides in West Mercia (19 in 2021/22, compared to 12 in 2019/20) the PCC has submitted a bid into the fund to expand and enhance an existing Steer Clear prevention project which focusses on serious violence, specifically youth knife crime. Steer Clear currently delivers solely to Telford & Wrekin and if the bid is successful will enable this to be rolled out across the whole of West Mercia.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

18. During March the PCC along with his Deputy and Assistant PCC's undertook a month of action which saw various activities and visits to a range of diverse groups take place. Alongside these visits, to hear the voices of the community, a series of VAWG dedicated podcasts were hosted to hear from experts including West Mercia Women's Aid, and the Domestic Abuse lead for West Mercia Police.

CSP Summit

19. The PCC has introduced a bi-annual CSP summit where he meet with CSP Chairs and lead officers from each partnership to discuss key issues and plans. The Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill recently received Royal Assent and introduces a new duty for CSPs to prevent and reduce serious violence. The legislation also gives PCCs a role to assist the local partnership. The CSP summit meetings are proving invaluable in establishing how each CSP is approaching the new duty, and how the PCC can best assist CSPs to collectively reduce serious violence.

Regional collaboration

20. The PCC works collaboratively with regional colleagues to ensure that the Strategic Policing Requirement is met and oversight of the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), National Air Police Service (NPAS), Roads Policing, Counter Terrorism (CT) and other national programmes is maintained. Three regional policy officers shared between the four Police and Crime Commissioners, support the PCCs. Examples of regional activities include:

- The PCC along with regional counterparts and their Chief Constables undertook a desktop exercise to understand their respective roles in the event of a major incident such as a terrorist attack. The exercise tested processes and procedures and a report was produced off the back of the session with a number of recommendations which will now be progressed.
- The PCC engaged in a national consultation regarding reform of Special Branch services which would see these functions move into CT Policing. The PCC has sought assurance the new arrangements will benefit West Mercia communities through his local CT briefing.
- Regionally PCCs have been engaged in scrutinising the ROCU budget for 2022/23, the new ROCU control strategy and the new performance framework, with a focus on ensuring the impact for local communities is well-evidenced.
- A review of the regional governance arrangements across criminal justice has been initiated by PCCs to ensure that the right priorities and work streams are in place following the pandemic and in readiness for change coming out of the PCC review part 2.
- The regional disproportionality committee commenced a new programme of work to understand disproportionality across the criminal justice and put in place and action plan to address the areas of concern. The committee is meeting monthly to work its plan.
- The PCC has continued to seek assurance that the regional forces are working effectively together in the delivery of specialist policing capabilities such as firearms, public order, roads policing and forensics. This will be a continued area of focus in 2022/23.

Criminal justice

21. A significant backlog remains in the number of Crown Court cases and the PCC continues to work with partners to seek to address this. There are now just over 1,130 Crown Court

cases in the backlog which has increased slightly since the last update. One of the key issues is the lack of judges in the Midlands. The other significant issue contributing to the backlog is the continued closure of the Crown Court in Hereford, which closed in June 2020 due to damage to the building's roof.

22. Whilst the PCC continues to push for better access to justice in the area, overall West Mercia's criminal justice performance remains above the National and Regional Averages for many key performance metrics including:

- A Magistrate Court conviction rate of 86%, compared to a national average of 82%
- A Crown Court conviction rate of 86% compared to a national average of 79%.
- A witness attendance rate of 88% compared to a national average of 84%

23. A renewed focus on end-to-end performance and 'getting it right first time' has been agreed by the West Mercia Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), chaired by the Deputy PCC.

24. The Deputy PCC also continues to chair an independent Out of Court Disposal Panel which reviews criminal cases, dealt with by way of community resolution or caution to ensure consistency in the outcomes. While the panel, made up of subject matter experts including Senior Magistrates, cannot change the outcome of a particular cases, it can make recommendations which lead to organisational change in how the force operates moving forward.

Reforming West Mercia

Alliance Update

25. The termination of all remaining ICT services hosted by West Mercia in support of Warwickshire Police has been mutually agreed. West Mercia will no longer be providing ICT support to Warwickshire as of the end of June this year. This means that as of July, file storage will be the only remaining area where West Mercia will provide any legacy services to Warwickshire, following the termination of the strategic alliance between the two police forces in 2018. This ending of ICT support is welcome progress and will enable West Mercia to have a much greater focus on its own digital transformation.

Police officer uplift

26. The PCC and Chief Constable have received a letter of thanks from the Policing Minister for achieving West Mercia's contribution to the National Police Uplift Programme (PUP) for years 1 and 2. Quarterly (restricted) data provided by the national programme has assessed the force as 'on track' to deliver the final year of officer uplift. However, due to a reduction in applications and an increase in attrition rates; the student officer pipeline needs to be carefully monitored to ensure this is not at risk. Current projections show that the pipeline looks tight from September. Mitigations have been put in place to try and bolster recruitment including a workshop with regional and national leads; consideration of alternative entry routes and development of a 30+ scheme. In relation to the internal uplift (125 posts), the force are still in the process of developing a timetable for recruitment, which will be shared with the PCC once complete.

27. Ongoing monitoring and scrutiny of the force's delivery of the local and national uplift is provided through monthly workforce planning boards. Any issues are escalated to the DPCC who meets with the Director of Business Services on a bi-monthly basis. Concerns regarding the achievability of local/national uplift targets were raised by the PCC at May's

workforce holding to account meeting. Notes from this meeting are published on the PCC's website.

Estates update

28. As part of the One Public Estate Programme (OPE), the PCC has been working to identify where savings can be made by co-locating buildings without reducing the level of service the public receives. One recent example of this is the local policing team in Tenbury Wells have now moved from the police station to the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) station. This will allow members of the public to still access their local policing team and maintain the presence within the town.
29. Following a review into the accessibility, and visibility of policing, including response times in Shifnal, Shropshire, the estates team has been working in partnership with Shifnal Town Council, to create a Police Safer Neighbourhood Office in the old police station building. Again this project is part of the OPE programme.
30. The PCC has successfully secured £600,000 from NHSE/I to contribute towards the re-development of the Telford Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). The Estates Team are now progressing the procurement of a consultant to begin the design and feasibility elements of this project.
31. A draft Estates Strategy has been developed in conjunction with West Mercia Police and will go out for public consultation in the very near future.
32. A separate briefing document has been provided to the Panel for its June meeting setting out in more detail how the investment in the estate at Hindlip Hall supports operational policing.

Financial management

33. Since the PCP meeting February we have finalised the budget for the 2022/23 financial year. At the end of March the West Mercia Governance Board (WMGB) approved the budget, including a detailed plan of savings to be delivered by the Force during the financial year. The finance team has provided support to the PCC to review the Force proposals and have concluded that the saving plans are reasonable, based on a risk assessment that they are deliverable and do not adversely impact on the service to the public. The finance team will monitor delivery of the plans during the year. Improvements to the budget build process have been identified and are being implemented for the 2023/24 cycle.
34. With the end of the 2021/22 financial year there has been a focus on finalising the outturn position and preparation of the financial statements. The overall position for the financial year has been reported to WMGB in May. There is a net underspend of £7.717m against a total budget of £245.039m (represents 3.1% of the budget). The outturn position for 2021/22 has given the opportunity to the PCC to decide on how to allocate this available resource. The 2022/23 budget includes a commitment to ensure that there is an affordable borrowing strategy and that the servicing of debt is sustainable. By making a one off contribution to capital to reduce borrowing, resulting in an ongoing revenue saving, it ensures that we keep the organisation on a stable financial footing. The annual revenue saving from this decision can then be redirected back into front line policing. The remaining underspend has been allocated to reserves to pay for known projects and budget pressures such as the major Investigation into maternity deaths at Shropshire and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. Reserves also ensure that the PCC has the resources available to

manage risk, such as the current global economic position, particularly the impact on inflation.

35. The assessment of the Treasurer is that the reserves held will ensure that West Mercia has the resources available to support the PCC in achieving his objectives, whilst ensuring resilience to cope with unexpected financial burdens. Going forward the PCC has asked for reassurance that the investment decisions he has made in the 2022/23 budget are being delivered and every penny is being utilised for the benefit of the public. The finance team are working closely with the Force to ensure that the plans are in place to manage the causes of underspend and ensure budget is being spent effectively.
36. Whilst we have completed the majority of the work on the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts and the 2022/23 budget is being managed as part of the annual business cycle, we have already started to plan for the 2023/24 budget setting. The PCC has been clear that the budget needs to ensure that it delivers clear outcomes for the investment being requested. It should be built around the priorities in the Police and Crime plan, with the public voice being central to this. A 12 month budget setting programme has been agreed between the PCC and CC. The PCC has already written to the CC to set out his priorities to be included in the budget setting process. He has also launched a significant public consultation to obtain a clear, evidence based confirmation of what matters to the public. These are providing the building blocks on which the budget will be prepared. Monthly meetings are in place with PCC and Force leadership to provide a continued assessment of how the budget is being prepared.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

Firearms licencing

37. In response to an increase in the volume of outstanding firearms applications, reflected in a rise in correspondence into the PCCs office, a position paper was submitted to May's West Mercia Governance Board to provide reassurance to the PCC and Chief Officers that that the reasons for the backlog are understood and appropriate mitigation is in place to address it. One of the main drivers for the increased demand is that many new applicants did not apply for a licence during covid owing to the closure of shooting clubs/venues and a reduction in firearms trading, leading to a bulge in demand once covid restrictions started to ease. This demand is now easing and a programme of staggered early renewals is being planned to better manage future demand.
38. The Firearms Licensing Unit (FLU) make every effort to expediently manage new applications and renewals with strict adherence to the new national guidance. The more recent guidance emerging post Plymouth shootings is used to educate prospective applicants in forums such as gun fairs, public engagement opportunities and through the tasking of Rural and Business Officers when engaging with rural communities etc. On an individual level, applicants are informed of the likely time taken to process applications and facilitate contact with General Practitioners in the NHS to ensure any application is not unduly delayed awaiting medical letters.
39. The FLU will prioritise applications based on the necessity. For example, a member of the farming community may have their firearms licence issued ahead of an earlier application in order that their livelihood and their statutory animal control measures may be met. A recreational clay pigeon shooter is less likely to be a priority, however the FLU still endeavour to process all applications and renewals as quickly as possible. whilst maintaining the safety and security of West Mercia' communities.

West Mercia Local Policing Community Charter

40. The Commissioner and his team have worked with the Force to develop the metrics associated with the Charter to track its success and delivery for local communities. The PCC also maintains an active oversight role in monitoring activity against the Charter's commitments. End of year data for 21/22 shows that:
- 17,427 people have now signed up to Neighbourhood Matters
 - SNTs have used the engagement vans on 788 occasions
 - 1940 events have been attended
 - 46 community speed watch schemes are now live
41. In terms of agreed community priorities, the latest monthly data for April 22, shows that speeding traffic remains the dominant priority in every local policing area except Shropshire where crime is currently the highest community concern (36%). North Worcestershire's has the highest percentage of communities (51%) with speeding traffic as their number one concern.
42. The Local Policing Community Charter has been in place for just over a year and is being reviewed, with an aspiration to widen the reach and impact of the charter beyond town and parish councils. The PCC's holding to account meeting in July is focusing on connecting with communities. The impact of the charter to date and its future development will form part of this meeting.

PCC's media and communications

43. A public survey has been created to capture the views of the public well in advance of the PCC starting work on setting next year's budget and ensure they are strongly represented in proposals put together by the police force. This survey is open until 11th July and asks questions around concerns, priorities and whether or not the public are happy with the level of visibility and accessibility of West Mercia Police. It also asks people if they know who their local policing team is. The survey is being used as a conversation starter with members of public during face-to-face engagements.
44. The team has arranged to attend nine public events, all of which are large-scale and pre-planned events. These will be attended in the next few months, alongside other public engagements
45. To strengthen messages to the public, the OPCC communications and engagement team are working with the West Mercia Police communications team on campaigns around SOC, VAWG and roads
46. A holding to account Facebook live meeting will be taking place at the end of June on safer roads. A media campaign will be run in advance of the meeting to encourage as many people as possible to participate by submitting questions and watching the meeting. Once ended a recording of the meeting will be posted on the PCC's website.
47. A campaign plan and delivery plans are being pulled together to support the communication and engagement strategy and, in turn, the Safer West Mercia Plan.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

48. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding the force to account. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website. Since the last Panel report six formal meetings have been held. These have addressed: homicide performance, quarterly performance, investigations and workforce. Most recently meeting have been held in response the HMICFRS PEEL inspection report and the Joint Inspectorate report on West Mercia's custody suites.

49. Key findings/outcomes from the thematic meetings include:

- **Homicide performance**

- The force are working with partners to mitigate impact on drivers behind offences namely, mental health, domestic abuse and drugs.
- Anecdotally, knife related crime is perceived to be as a result of county lines/gang related, however data does not support this.
- It is hoped that the serious violence duty will help to drive activity with other partners.
- The force are working with the PCC's office to understand if there are any gaps in commissioned services.
- It was acknowledged that the current investigative demand is high and despite upcoming investment into local investigations both locally and nationally there are concerns around a shortage of investigators.
- Community impact is considered during initial stages of an investigation, moving forward the force will use proactive comms at key points.

As referenced in the 'Secure' section of this report, the PCC has worked with the force to submit a funding bid specifically to address youth knife crime.

- **Quarterly performance**

- The force did not meet any of the aspirations set around satisfaction rates in 2021/22. The Chief Constable confirmed that there will be an immediate focus on burglary, acknowledging the impact on victims.
- The force are going to continue to use workforce surveys to understand organisational culture and confidence to challenge behaviours.
- Crime data integrity (CDI) is critical to ensure victims get the right service, access and response. Action has been taken from both a people and process perspective to identify and remove the errors being made.
- The force agreed that there may be an opportunity to better define and communicate the service offer around DA to the public.
- SOC is still a priority for the force as set out in the investment in resources in the 22/23 budget.

Following the meeting the PCC commissioned exploratory work to better understand the feasibility of expanding the Smartwater offer to properties adjacent to domestic burglary victims.

- **Investigations**

- As part of the budget investment for 22/23, an uplift has been provided for the investigations function. The Chief Constable was confident that this would be achieved.
- Increased diversity will be seen in specialist posts as student officer's progress through their career.
- The force is working with the CPS around challenges faced including court backlog and changes in file disclosure submissions.

- The force have recently implemented a new deployment approach for domestic abuse incidents, initially piloted in two policing areas before being rolled out.
- The force is facing challenges in attracting and training specials and PCSO's
- Staff networks are now influencing how the force do business

- **Workforce**

- Inclusion is now one of the force values.
- A plan and timetable is in place for delivering the internal uplift, but the recruitment pool is currently very small so this is becoming more difficult.
- Student officer attrition is higher in West Mercia than the other regional forces and work has been commissioned to better understand this.

50. The findings from the holding to account meetings into PEEL 21/22 and West Mercia's Custody suites are included in the separate Panel reports included as part of the June 2022 agenda.

51. The next scheduled holding to account meeting is a public Facebook Live with a focus on reducing harm on West Mercia's roads.

West Mercia perception survey

52. As part of the Commissioner's commitment to ensure both he and the force are acting on community concerns locally, and that the service provided by the force leads to increased confidence in local policing, the PCC commissioned a confidence survey which has been running for over two years. The survey results are published on the PCC's website.

53. Overall, performance over 12 months has remained comparable to that seen in the previous quarters findings following a period of poorer performance, however a number of key measures (accessing the police, satisfaction with policing, feeling informed, powers are used fairly/respectfully, overall confidence) have seen marked improvement in Q4 data. Headline findings from quarter four 2021/22, are set out below:

- 89% of residents are confident they could access the police in an emergency, whilst 65% are sure they could in a non-emergency. Following a continued downward trend confidence in accessing the police in both an emergency and non-emergency saw improvements in Q4.
- Satisfaction in Q4 has seen a 19% improvement when compared to the previous quarter, however the 12 month average has seen a slight reduction. Likely as a result of poorer performance in previous quarters.
- Residents from North Worcestershire are least likely to feel informed (40%) whilst those in Herefordshire feel most informed (47%). Surprisingly, North Worcestershire has the most residents signed up to neighbourhood alerts and the most messages sent using the service whilst Herefordshire has one of the lowest figures.
- Residents in Shropshire were least likely (64%) to agree that the police understood their needs, whilst those in North Worcestershire were most likely to (76%).
- BAME respondents are less confident the police use their stop and search power fairly and respectfully compared to their white respondents. At the last Strategic Stop and Search in March 22, additional analysis was requested to understand the impact travelling criminality has on performance.
- Confidence currently stands at 81% in West Mercia. Levels have been on a downward trend following their peak at 89% in Q1 20/21, however a sharp increase was seen in Q4 when compared to the previous quarter (75% to 84%).

Force performance reports

54. A number of internal performance products are produced by the force to enable senior officers and the PCC to maintain strategic oversight of force performance. In particular the PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly and quarterly summary reports. The latest, quarter four performance report for the period January to March 2022, is attached at appendix 1. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practices.
55. The force performance framework uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels. The quarterly report focusses on gold level key performance indicators (KPI), however there are some measures at a silver level included to create a comprehensive picture across the force.
56. The quarter 4 report includes a summary table demonstrating how metrics agreed for the Safer West Mercia Plan are integrated into the gold performance framework.
57. To make the performance information published on the PCC's website more accessible, work has begun on exploring how key data can be presented in a more user friendly way, to highlight particular data that are of most interest to communities or are particularly pertinent to the PCC's work at any given time.

HMICFRS inspection reports

58. Following a number of delays HMICFRS has recently published the Force's PEEL 21/22 inspection report and in the same week the Joint HMICFRS and HM Inspectorate of Prison report on West Mercia Custody provision. The PCC has held a formal holding to account meeting on each report with the Chief Constable to seek assurance that the force is addressing the inspection findings and to provide reassurance to West Mercia's communities. A separate more detailed report on each report has been submitted to the Panel for its June 2022 meeting.
59. HMICFRS has also published one joint thematic inspection report since the last report to Panel on A the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape and Work is ongoing to review the recommendations in this report. The Deputy Chief Constable retains oversight of the force's progress against any recommendations or any areas for improvement through the Service Improvement Board, attended by one of the PCC's staff.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – [West Mercia Police Performance Report January to March 2022](#)

Contact Points for the Report

For Panel Support: Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager,
Worcestershire County Council

Tel: 01905 844871

Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the PCC's Office: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner Deputy Chief
Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk