

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Agenda

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

**Friday, 3 February 2023, 11.00 am
County Hall, Worcester**

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West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
Friday, 3 February 2023, 11.00 am,

Membership:

Cllr Aled Luckman (Chairman)	Substantive Member - Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Barry Durkin (Vice Chairman)	Co-opted Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Sebastian Bowen	Substantive Member - Herefordshire 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 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 David Wright	Substantive Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Paul Watling	Co-opted Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Rob Adams	Substantive Member - Wychavon District Council
Cllr James Stanley	Substantive Member - Worcester City Council
Cllr Graham Ballinger	Substantive Member - Wyre Forest District Council
Mrs C Clive	Co-opted Independent Lay Member
Ms B McDowall	Co-opted Independent Lay Member

Agenda

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

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Date of Issue: Thursday, 26 January 2023

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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.



Minutes of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Wyre Forest District Council, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint

Way, Kidderminster DY11 7WF.

Wednesday, 23 November 2022, 11.00 am

Present:

Cllr Aled Luckman (Chairman), Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Cllr Helen Jones, Cllr Nigel Lumby, Cllr Jeff Anderson, Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Vivienne Parry, Cllr Rob Adams, Cllr James Stanley, Cllr Graham Ballinger, Mrs C Clive and Ms B McDowall

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Gareth Boulton, Chief Executive

Tim Rice, Head of Service for Safer Communities, Public Health
Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 September 2022 (previously circulated).

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

456 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

457 Named Substitutes

None.

458 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Wednesday, 23 November 2022
Date of Issue: 16 January 2023

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Durkin, Tom Wells, Nyear Nazir, Jim Lavery and Paul Watling.

There were no declarations of interests.

459 Public Participation

None.

460 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

461 Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report

The Panel received an update on the activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and also an update on police performance.

The PCC introduced the report and in doing so highlighted that:

- The two Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP) had now been set up in West Mercia and were based on the Integrated Care Board footprint. There was one CDP for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and one for Shropshire and Telford. The PCC was the Senior Responsible Officer for both CDP's.
- Included in the 2022/23 budget was a further uplift of 125 Police Officers for West Mercia. The Chief Constable had reassured the PCC that this target was on track and by the end of the financial year there would be an over recruitment of 20 Police Officers.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- Paragraph 66 of the Agenda Report described that between September and October 2022, the PCC's office had received 232 pieces of correspondence. A Member questioned how many pieces of correspondence had been replied to and whether there were any trends that could be identified from the correspondence. The PCC explained that there was a system of reviewing and identifying trends and that he reviewed most of the correspondence himself. The recent restructure of the PCC's Governance Team would also make it easier to respond to concerns.
- In response to a question about Operation Lincoln (the investigation into maternity services at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust) the PCC advised that he had engaged with local, regional and national partners to understand the demand for support services for victims. As a result of these discussions, the PCC had submitted a bid to the Home Office for

further funding of £100,000 to provide support to these victims. The PCC confirmed that the outcome of this bid was still awaited.

- For 2022/23, the PCC had provided £339,782 to West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, to support therapeutic counselling for survivors of sexual violence. This funding had allowed the service to recruit permanent counsellors, who were previously on zero hours contracts to provide sustainable support for survivors, and to reduce waiting lists.
- The PCC had submitted a funding bid to the Ministry of Justice, for £276,500 up to 31 March 2025, to provide an out of court diversionary service, for females at risk of entering the criminal justice system. This was linked to the Commissioner's commitment to deliver effective, early intervention for vulnerable people, with the outcome of reducing the likelihood of reoffending.
- A Member questioned whether the cashless society was driving, controlling behaviour in situations of domestic violence, the PCC was unsure whether this was the case.
- It was noted that for the period April – September 2022, out of the 17,630 referrals for support from victims of crime, only 16,145 victims had been provided with support, a Member questioned why this was the case. The PCC explained that the right people were getting help but there was a drive to increase the number and quality of assessments.
- The PCC clarified the difference between victim services and support for victims. Victim Services was the direct support commissioned by the PCC accessed by direct referrals and the support for victims was provided the West Mercia Police Victim Care Unit mainly for victims going through the criminal justice system and requiring long term support, although there were some areas of overlap.
- It was agreed that in order for the Panel to understand the progress being made by the 2 CDP's, an update on the performance metrics would be provided twice per year.
- In response to a concern expressed about the capacity of the Police to investigate drugs related crime, the PCC explained that there was a commitment in his Police and Crime Plan to tackle drugs related crime and also the intention to continuously improve performance in this area. The PCC reminded Members of the Panel that in the first instance it was important to contact the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) with local concerns and if there were any concerns about how the SNT's were working, to provide the PCC with feedback.
- The PCC advised that the first cohort of West Mercia's Professional Policing Degree (PPD) Programme had gone through the System.
- A Member highlighted that speeding in communities was a very big concern and welcomed the PCC's 2022/23 budget commitment. The value of this investment for 2022/23 was £515,800, with a further £400,000 ringfenced pending a business case. The PCC highlighted the need for a mixed approach to tackling speeding which included education, environment and enforcement. The PCC was also developing a specification for a refresh of the road safety needs assessment, which would be used to inform future commissioning in this priority area – it was agreed that the Panel would be updated on the specification when available.

- A Member highlighted some successful work in Derbyshire tackling car cruising.
- Members expressed concern about the 60,000 cases in the criminal justice backlog across England and Wales. In West Mercia, the number of cases in the backlog had risen by more than 70% since before the pandemic. In Shrewsbury, there had been a rise of more than 120% in backlog cases and more than 40% in Worcester since before the pandemic. Members expressed concern about the impact of this on the victim and the accused whose lives were on hold.
- The PCC expressed concern about the criminal justice system and in particular the impact on effectiveness of the Police as a result of the ongoing closure of Hereford Crown Court. Members of the Panel were very concerned to hear this and it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Leader of Herefordshire Council to express the Panel's concerns
- It was noted that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act included a new Serious Violence Duty that required specified authorities (i.e. police, local authorities, fire and rescue, health bodies, probation services and youth offending teams) to collaborate regarding serious violence making the responsibility for working together a joint responsibility.
- The PCC continued to monitor and support the Force's delivery of the local and national uplift of police officers through holding to account mechanisms and the fortnightly uplift meetings with the force and National Uplift leads. Efforts had been made via the uplift programme to improve diversity and representation within West Mercia and progress had been made in respect of increasing the recruitment of female officers and those from ethnic minorities. It was, however recognised that further progress was still required.
- Significant work was underway across the West Mercia Estate as part of measures to drive energy efficiency. This work was intended to both reduce West Mercia's carbon footprint, and also offset increased pressures that the Force faces around energy costs. Projections for 2023/24 showed that West Mercia Police's energy costs would increase by 90% compared to 2022/23.
- The PCC was actively engaged in the current public consultation around the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review, specifically around the status of Police Headquarters at Hindlip. The review proposed to remove Major Developed Site status for Hindlip Park. If confirmed, this would threaten the long-term viability of the site as an operational headquarters for both the police force and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
- In response to a Member question, the PCC suggested that 2023/24 Budget would be different; inflation pressures and increased energy costs would mean that the gap was likely to be bigger.
- A Member questioned how much the 'Tommy' Statues in Shropshire had cost – the PCC agreed to check and report back.
- The report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for England and Wales - An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service was referred to and the PCC was asked whether he was content that the vetting

process in West Mercia Police was effective. In response, the PCC explained that although it could never be certain, he was reassured by the Force's response when a situation occurred in West Mercia.

- With regard to the Perception Survey, 21% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – a reduction from 24% in the previous quarter – A Member questioned why this was. The PCC advised that the Chief Constable was confused by this result, although it wasn't a bad result it needed to be maintained. The PCC suggested it wasn't always about seeing a Police Officer directly but the ease of getting hold of them when needed.
- The increasing number of rough sleepers in the communities was referred to and the associated crime problems. The PCC explained that supporting rough sleepers was a partnership issue with local Councils being responsible for supporting rough sleepers and the Police being responsible for the crime related elements.
- The PCC explained that policing for large events eg football matches was co-ordinated by the Operations Planning Department.
- It was noted that both 999 and 101 call handling had seen improvements when compared to the previous month, however 101 was still significantly below target.

462 Satisfaction and Outcomes

The PCC introduced the Report and explained that satisfaction was not at the aspirational level set and was disappointed with the current levels. Ensuring that crime was effectively investigated was a key part of victim satisfaction, including the follow-up. The PCC confirmed that he was holding the Chief Constable to account for this work and the Chief Constable had committed that the uplift programme of police officers would be achieved by Christmas, following which improvements should start to be seen. The PCC explained further that there was increased demand and complexity on the police system and delivering the aspirational satisfaction levels were a challenge.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- A Panel Member suggested that satisfaction and outcomes were disappointing, it was not possible to triangulate the information in the report with other performance and activity reports and the Holding to Account Minutes were not clear in terms of the drivers for the poor performance in this area. In addition, none of the aspirational targets relating to the satisfaction data at Force level between April 2021 and September 2022 had been achieved, which was statistically significant. That said, public confidence levels were good when compared with other forces.
- The PCC acknowledged the comments and agreed that public confidence levels were good in terms of expectation but levels were lower when actually engaging with the Police. The PCC believed that the biggest difference would come from improved follow-up which would help to manage situations better.

- The PCC further highlighted that West Mercia was an outlier in Outcome 16 (where the victim doesn't support prosecution) which if improved would also have a significant impact on victim satisfaction.
- The PCC was asked to provide reassurance and clarify what measures would be put in place to achieve better outcomes and satisfaction. The PCC explained that the uplift programme of Police Officers was still working through the system, which would provide more capacity. The timeliness of investigations needed to improve as well as the training of staff in the specialisms associated with the more complex crimes. The Chief Constable had committed to increasing the number of police officer posts by Christmas and then training would follow. Additionally, there would be a focus on victims needs assessment to ensure better quality and the ability to commission the right services. The PCC explained that this would not be a quick fix but he was reassured that West Mercia Police were on the right journey.
- A Member suggested to the PCC that the investment in the increased number of Police Officers would not necessarily result in a robust response to bringing offenders to justice (paragraph 20). In response the PCC confirmed that this had to be the drive and that West Mercia Police needed to provide a high quality service.

463 Work Programme

The Work Programme was considered and it was agreed that:

- There would be an informal budget briefing on 5 December (10am).
- The Budget Task Group Membership would be: Beth McDowall (Lead Member), Carole Clive, Sebastian Bowen and James Stanley.
- The Estates Strategy would be discussed at September 2023 meeting.
- Training would be arranged for new Panel members (as required) in June 2023.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 3 FEBRUARY 2023

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2023/24

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) considers the:
 - (i) West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Proposed Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2027/28;
 - (ii) report of the PCP's Budget Scrutiny Task Group; and
 - (iii) provides a report to the PCC on the proposed precept, including any recommendations, outlining whether it vetoes the precept or not.

Background

2. Each police force area raises extra money to pay for policing activity through council tax. This is called the police precept and is included in every council tax bill. The level of police precept is set locally every year (in February) by the PCC.
3. Under the provisions of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCP has a statutory role to review the PCC's proposed precept level and formally respond to it. The Panel is required to submit a formal response to the PCC.
4. The legislation only requires that the Panel 'responds' to the proposed precept – there is no requirement that the Panel has to either support the precept or veto it; therefore, the Panel can choose to only comment on the proposal if it wishes. Guidance related to the scrutiny of the precept by Police and Crime Panels is attached at Appendix 1.

Budget Scrutiny

5. During December 2022 and January 2023, a Task Group met with the PCC and his officers to discuss the proposed budget for 2023/2024, the Medium Term Financial Plan through to 2027/2028 and the proposed Precept for 2023/24 in context of the Policing Plan and the Commissioner's election promises. The Report of the Task Group is attached at Appendix 2.

West Mercia PCC proposed Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2027/28

6. The West Mercia PCC Proposed Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 3.

Consultation

7. The PCC ran a budget consultation as a two stage process.
8. The first survey ran from the 27 April 2022 until the 11 July 2022. The purpose of this survey was to understand the views of the public on local policing, contact and engagement and crime and anti-social behaviour issues. This informed the PCC prior to firming up his draft budget proposals for 2023/24.
9. The PCC followed this up by carrying out a second survey, specifically on the draft precept and budget proposals. This consultation launched on the 6 December 2022 and ended at 12pm on the 6 January 2023. A precept proposal, the Proposed Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24–2027/28 was published as part of the consultation process, along with a short online survey to enable people to comment on the proposals being put forward. The Budget Consultation Summary is attached at Appendix 4.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Guidance related to the Scrutiny of the Precept by Police and Crime Panels

Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police and Crime Panel – Budget Task Group Report (to follow)

Appendix 3 West Mercia PCC proposed Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2027/28

Appendix 4 - Budget Consultation Summary 2023/24

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, Chief Executive

gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

Police and Crime Panels – Scrutiny of Precepts

This guidance note explains the process for the police and crime panel's (PCP) scrutiny of the police and crime commissioner's (PCC) proposed precept and should be read alongside:

- Schedule 5 of the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) ("the Act")
- Part 2 of the [Police and Crime Panels \(Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments\) Regulations 2012](#) ("the Regulations")

A separate [guidance note setting out the scrutiny of chief constable appointments](#) has been published alongside this guidance note.

Background

Schedule 5 of the Act sets out the process for issuing a precept, including the panel's role in reviewing the proposed precept, their power to veto the precept and the steps to be taken if they do veto the proposed precept.

The Regulations provide greater detail to the Act, including time limits applicable to the stages of the process and the process for reviewing and issuing a revised precept.

Schedule 5 requires:

- the PCC to notify the panel of his/her proposed precept;
- the panel to review the proposed precept;
- the panel to make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept (this may include recommendations);
- the panel's report (if they veto the proposed precept) to include a statement that they have vetoed it;
- a decision of veto to be agreed by two-thirds of the panel members;
- the PCC to have regard to the report made by the panel (including any recommendations in the report);
- the PCC to give the panel a response to their report (and any such recommendations);
- the PCC to publish the response.

It is for the panel to determine how a response to a report or recommendations is to be published.

If there is no veto and the PCC has published his/her response to the panel's report, the PCC may then issue the proposed precept - or a different precept (but only if in accordance with a recommendation in the panel's report to do so).

The Regulations require:

- the PCC to notify the panel of his/her proposed precept **by 1 February**;
- the panel to review and make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept (whether it vetoes the precept or not) **by 8 February**;
- where the panel vetoes the precept, the PCC to have regard to and respond to the Panel's report, and publish his/her response, including the revised precept, **by 15 February**;

- the panel, on receipt of a response from the PCC notifying them of his/her revised precept, to review the revised precept and make a second report to the PCC **by 22 February**;
- the PCC to have regard to and respond to the Panel's second report and publish his/her response, **by 1 March**.

Panel's report on the proposed precept

If the panel fails to report to the PCC by 8 February the scrutiny process comes to an end, even if the panel have voted to veto the proposed precept, and the PCC may issue the proposed precept.

PCC's response to a veto

Where the panel vetoes the proposed precept, the PCC must have regard to the report made by the panel, give the panel a response to the report and publish the response, by 15 February. In his/her response, the PCC must notify the panel of the revised precept that he intends to issue.

Where the panel's report indicates that they vetoed the precept because it was:

- too **high**, the revised precept must be lower than the previously proposed precept.
- too **low**, the revised precept must be higher than the previously proposed precept.

The PCP may only veto the first proposed precept. Such a veto must be agreed by two-thirds of PCP members (the full membership rather than those present at a meeting). Where a veto occurs, the report to the PCC must include a statement to that effect.

Panel's review of the revised precept

On receipt of a response from the PCC notifying them of the revised precept proposal, the panel must review the revised precept proposal and make a second report to the PCC on the revised precept by 22 February. This report may:

- indicate whether the panel accepts or rejects the revised precept (although rejection does not prevent the PCC from issuing the revised precept); and
- make recommendations, including recommendations on the precept that should be issued.

If the panel fails to make a second report to the PCC by 22 February, the PCC may issue the revised precept.

Issuing the precept

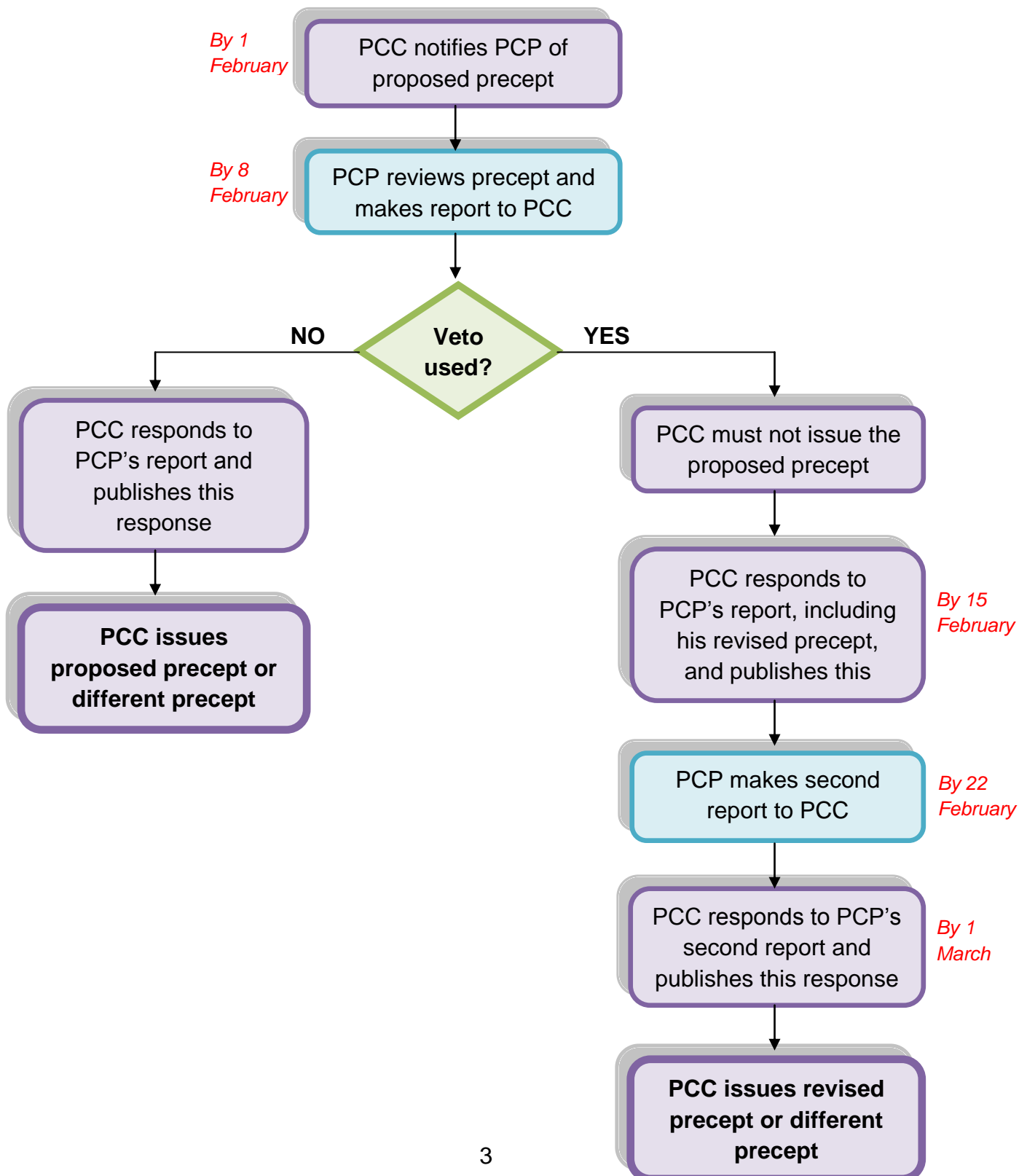
Excluding where the panel fails to report on the proposed precept by 8 February or make a second report on the revised precept by 22 February, the scrutiny process ends when the PCC gives the panel his/her response to their second report.

The PCC may then:

- issue the revised precept; or
- issue a different precept, although:

- they must not issue a precept that is higher than the revised precept if the revised precept was lowered following the panel's initial report on the first proposed precept indicating it was vetoed because it was too high;
- they must not issue a precept which is lower than the revised precept if the revised precept was raised following the panel's initial report on the first proposed precept indicating it was vetoed because it was too low.

Process for PCP scrutiny of PCC's proposed precept



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Budget 2023/24

and

Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2027/28



Foreword from the PCC:

With the UK feeling the pressure of rising costs and restrictions to public spending, this year's budget in West Mercia will look and feel different to those I have set in previous years as PCC.

There is no avoiding the fact that the cost of living is rising, with many people having to make tough decisions in order to balance their household budgets. Public sector organisations, including policing, are facing the same inflationary challenges. As PCC I have always committed that I will ensure every penny spent on policing is spent wisely before I ever ask the public to pay any more. That principle is even more important this year. There is an ever-greater need for efficiency, maximising the benefit of the resources and assets at my disposal to keep our communities safe. This year's budget will tackle the unavoidable cost pressures we face, maximises the value of investments I have made in the journey to deliver a safer West Mercia, and addresses key priorities for our communities.

I have remained resolute in delivering a safer West Mercia and, ultimately, what the public want – increased visibility and accessibility of police officers. I am therefore boosting officer numbers by a further 40, taking West Mercia's establishment to 2,496 which is the highest establishment number on record in the force. These additional officers will be based at the heart of communities in new Neighbourhood Crime Fighting teams and as Community Safety Engagement Officers. These new officers will continue the focus on neighbourhood policing and addressing key community concerns. I will support the force in continuing to prioritise the greatest possible proportion of resource towards frontline policing and ultimately delivering the best for communities. However, this won't be possible unless difficult decisions are made.

This next financial year must be focused on consolidating investment already underway and ensuring the maximum benefit of that investment is felt by all communities in West Mercia. This year's budget of £274.8 m represents an increase of £14.3m (5.5%) compared to last year's budget. However, it also brings an unavoidable £17.4m million in inflation and £13.4m of additional costs associated with continuing to delivering service improvements such as essential IT transformation. This imbalance between funding required and funding available will inevitably mean significant challenges for West Mercia Police in meeting the required savings, especially in light of significant service redesign.

Whilst I am increasing the amount of council tax I am asking residents to pay, residents should be reassured the proposed rise is significantly below the prevailing rates of inflation, and that an ever-greater proportion of the police fund is being directed towards police officers. The rise this year should also be seen on the backdrop of West Mercia seeing the fourth lowest percentage increases of the 43 police forces in the police precept since 2016.

I am proud to have ended West Mercia Police's reliance on reserves to balance annual spending. The challenges in delivering a balanced budget have involved working with the Chief Constable to identify the savings needed, ensuring the funding available is directed to frontline policing, and bolstering the areas that are key community priorities. I am grateful to the Chief Constable and her team for working with me to help use the 'Your Views' survey in shaping the budget building process and ensure the focus is on the right issues. This budget features key measures to improve road safety, as well as tackling crime and anti-social behaviour through a boost to not just Safer Neighbourhood Teams, but also the Special Constabulary and development of the role of PCSOs.

As your PCC I am confident that this budget continues to deliver my high ambitions for the communities of West Mercia. The proposals put forward by the force will continue to see ever greater innovation and continuous improvement in many of the services delivered to the communities across the three counties.

The biggest issues in society cannot be addressed in isolation by myself as PCC, nor West Mercia Police; this budget delivers key resources to tackle vulnerability and prevention, and to work alongside key local partners to prevent harm wherever possible and protect those most at risk. There are dedicated resources for our new Combatting Drugs Partnerships in West Mercia. The budget delivers on the recommendations arising from the Independent Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Telford. There is also funding to build on and replicate the success of the Safer Communities Project in Telford & Wrekin in other parts of West Mercia, where I will seek to work with partners to deliver effective prevention and community problem solving.

Whilst I am reassured by the steps already taken by West Mercia Police to be visible and accessible in the heart of the communities they serve, this budget will ensure there will be an ever-greater focus on community engagement. This will be done by implementing new technology to improve efficiency and accessibility for the public. This ease of contact, that so many communities feel is lacking, will improve relationships and ultimately boost trust and confidence.

As part of the 2022/23 budget, I announced that I would be investing in greater technology to tackle speeding, such as the introduction of more average speed cameras schemes. As these are progressed, it will support wider work from myself and the police to address the disproportionate levels of both physical and anti-social harm that is caused on West Mercia's roads and the number of people killed or seriously injured is reduced.

It is widely expected that pressures around the cost of living will have a significant impact on crime levels, particularly domestic abuse. It is therefore vital that services, that provide support to victims and survivors, are supported to cope with the increased demand that may be placed on them. This budget includes provision to ensure victim services in West Mercia can cope with demand and provide the right support at the right times, to enable people to cope and recover.

Having increased investigative capacity within West Mercia Police, as part of the 2022/23 budget, I will build on this by supporting the introduction of new roles that are focused on improving the timeliness of serious sexual offence investigations. There will also be a focus on

prevention and improving the victim journey by working with other agencies and third sector organisations. The force has committed to improving the victim journey across all crime types, resulting in improved satisfaction and confidence and victims getting the best possible outcome.

This year's budget proposal will further my commitment to reducing the environmental impact and increasing the efficiency of policing. This budget achieves this by bringing more electric/hybrid vehicles to West Mercia Police's fleet, as well as making changes to improve the efficiency of the police estate. This will not only ensure the force is 'greener', but it will deliver increased value for money and financial sustainability at a time when it is even more important.

This year's budget proposals are instrumental in the next phase of fully delivering my Safer West Mercia Plan and ensuring that the communities of West Mercia are at the heart of policing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner, West Mercia

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WEST MERCIA BUDGET 2023/24

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/28

1. Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed budget and precept for decision by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It delivers one of his key responsibilities as PCC, under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the:

- Net budget requirement for 2023/24
- Proposed precept for 2023/24
- Proposed medium term financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28
- Outline capital budget 2023/24
- The community priorities and service improvements that will be delivered for the public as a result of this budget
- Statement on soundness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves

This budget sets out the allocation of resources to deliver on the objectives in the Safer West Mercia Plan, as well as ensuring that policing delivers on national requirements.

The central theme in setting spending plans is that they have taken into consideration the strategy and vision of the elected PCC. As part of setting out these financial spending plans, it is important to set out the issues that influence and contribute to the build of the budget for 2023/24 and the medium-term financial plan.

This is the seventh budget that the PCC has set for West Mercia and comes at a time of economic uncertainty and budget pressure. This primarily stems from rising prices due to the largest and fastest inflationary increases seen in 40 years.

The PCC has reflected on the knowledge and experience from his previous term in office and the outcomes from the plans and targets he set the previous year. The PCC recognises the events that have occurred during the year, many of which are either predicted to continue into the new financial year, or the effects of which will still be relevant to the environment around policing and crime. The PCC also recognises the challenges that this creates to set a balanced budget which reflects the core objectives in the Police and Crime Plan.

In determining his budget proposals, the PCC acknowledges:

- Priorities within the Safer West Mercia Plan

- National policies and strategies which are required to be delivered at a local level
- The operational advice and guidance provided by the Chief Constable
- Strategic Policing Requirement
- The outcome of public consultation
- The impact of the global economic conditions and the effect of rapid price inflation on the cost of running a police service. Elements of which were unknown and not reflected in the current budget and its likely effect over the coming years
- Government policy on public spending, as set out by the Chancellor in the Autumn Spending Review 2023/24 and subsequent policing provisional grant settlement which was issued on 14th December
- Medium term financial obligations
- Prudent use of and contributions to the financial reserves
- The drive for continuous improvement and value for money
- The development of future collaborative arrangements and the risks involved
- The major investigation into allegations of manslaughter and corporate manslaughter at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
- Plans and policies of other partner agencies relating to community safety and crime reduction

Report of the Treasurer

Recommendations

The PCC is recommended to approve:

- a) A Net Revenue Budget after savings of £274.768m
- b) A contribution of £1.730m is made from reserves
- c) A net budget requirement of £273.038m
- d) A Council Tax for a Band D property at £264.50
- e) A Council Tax for a Band D property calculated as follows:

	£m
Budget Requirement (Net Revenue Expenditure)	273.038
Less Funding	
Police Grant	81.576
Police PUP Grant	4.300
Revenue Support Grant	52.296
Council Tax Support Grant	9.200
Council Tax Freeze Grant	
2013/14	0.800
2011/12	1.975
Sub Total	122.891
Less: Collection Fund Surplus/(deficit)	0.767
Amount required to be raised by Council Tax	122.124
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Divided by Aggregate Council Tax Base	461,718.30
Basic Amount of Council Tax at Band D	£264.50

f) *The consequential Council Tax for each property band will be as follows:*

Band A (6/9th)	£176.33
Band B (7/9th)	£205.72
Band C (8/9th)	£235.11
Band D	£264.50
Band E (11/9th)	£323.28
Band F (13/9th)	£382.06
Band G (15/9th)	£440.83
Band H (18/9 th)	£529.00

All Figures are rounded to 2 decimal places

g) *That the Chief Executive to the Office of the PCC for West Mercia be authorised to issue Precepts Notices on the West Mercia billing authorities as follows:*

Bromsgrove District Council	£10,029,691.88
Herefordshire Council	£18,798,837.59
Malvern Hills District Council	£8,694,440.34
Redditch Borough Council	£6,957,656.63
Shropshire Council	£31,239,058.16
Telford and Wrekin Council	£14,631,055.55
Worcester City Council	£8,716,359.45
Wychavon District Council	£13,869,189.75
Wyre Forest Council	£9,188,201.00
TOTAL	<u>£122,124,490.35</u>

h) *The reserve strategy set out in section 12.*

i) *The outline capital budget in section 13.*

j) *All officers be instructed to exercise tight budgetary control and individual budget holders should ensure compliance with financial regulations. Caution will be exercised in entering into expenditure which creates additional commitments in future years. The PCC will be kept fully informed of the financial position throughout the year.*

k) *In approving the budget, the PCC notes the Treasurer's comments in section 14 in respect of the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.*

l) *That the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) be reviewed and revised by 30th September 2023. As part of this, the business planning and budget setting process will be reviewed and improved.*

m) *Prior to April 2023, the Chief Constable will produce and agree with the PCC a detailed plan for the implementation of West Mercia Police element of the budget, including the delivery of the savings required to balance the budget.*

2. Priorities and challenges facing West Mercia

As we, as a community, move from a time when we were largely restricted due to a pandemic, we are now facing different restrictions as financial strain from cost-of-living pressure is placed on the public. Whilst the country has been facing a cost-of-living crisis for a number of months, the Government's autumn budget confirmed that the country is now entering into a period of likely recession. This will impact communities across the country, including West Mercia, and will influence the challenges policing faces in every conceivable way.

Financial challenges

The Covid pandemic naturally had a major impact on the economy, due to a large number of factors, ranging from the furlough scheme through to vaccine rollouts. The Government is now facing the challenge of not only needing to address the debt gap but deal with the rising cost of inflation, which reached a 41-year high of 11.1%. This inflation has been driven by surges in the cost of energy and food.

The increases in energy and food prices have been worsened by Russia's war in Ukraine. The UK is now facing much higher energy price caps and rising costs in food – which is placing strain on families, businesses and public services. Disposable incomes of households are also falling, which will be further impacted by the request for increases in council tax payments from local authorities and emergency services. It is predicted that this pressure will continue.

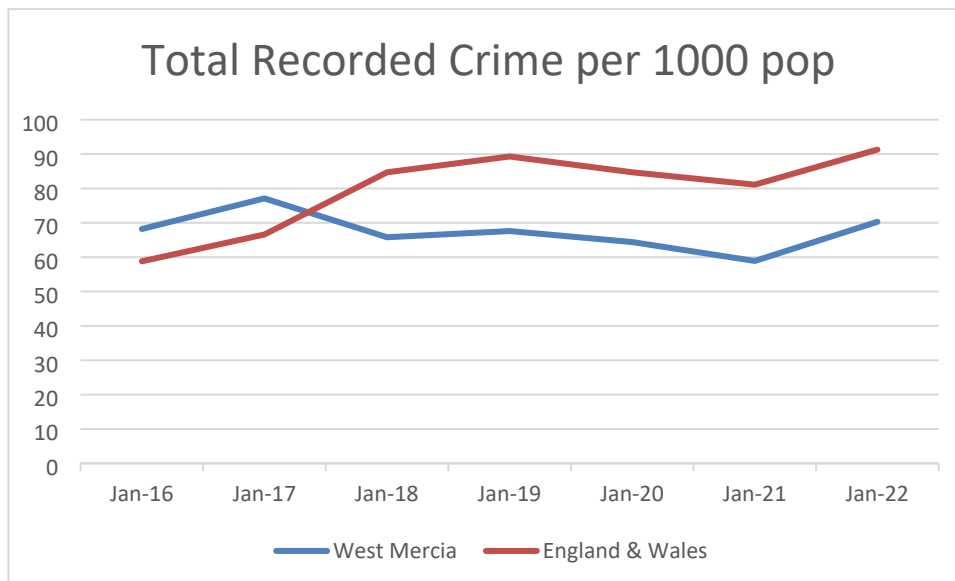
These cost pressures have already had an impact on current year budgets. The pay award of £1,900 to all officers and staff is equivalent to a 5% increase, which is significantly higher than the 2% which was budgeted. It is also outside the upper limit of 3%, which was modelled as part of risk assessment in the 2022/23 budget. This increased cost has had to be considered first, in terms of finding efficiencies and savings from budgets, before factoring the impact of a further pay award expected in September 2023.

Like other public sector organisations, the cost associated with remedial work, and the building of new facilities for the police estate, has been impacted by the rising cost of building materials as well as contracts and wages increasing. West Mercia Police has also been affected by the rising costs of fuel and cost of ensuring police vehicles are safe and roadworthy.

The additional resources made available in the Autumn Statement are prioritised towards funding the increasing annual cost related to the Government's uplift in officer numbers. This means that there is minimal additional funding to put towards other priority areas. Also, as the funding from the Government is linked to officer numbers, it limits the ability of the force to manage this cost pressure and therefore the remaining budget from which to identify any efficiencies and savings from.

Crime trends

Since 2016, recorded crime levels have been on a general upward trend nationwide. An 8% increase in recorded crime was seen at the end of 2021/22 when compared to 2016, albeit with reductions in crime during Covid, where significant reductions were seen. As can be seen in the table below, West Mercia, as a policing area, is not alone in the increase in total recorded crime but remains significantly below the national average.



Whilst police recorded data has increased, estimates from the Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) show levels of actual crime continue to decrease nationally. A statistically significant decrease (8%) was seen for the 12 months ending June 2022, when compared with the year ending March 2022. Improvements in police data are likely as a result of more accurate crime recording, as well as improved awareness and confidence to report offences to the police. This creates a situation where crime can appear to be falling, but demand on policing through recorded offences continues to increase.

Volumes of recorded acquisitive crime, including robbery, vehicle offences, shoplifting and theft from the person, have increased when compared to the pandemic. Levels remain below those seen before the pandemic for all crimes except for business robbery. Both business and residential burglaries have seen increases this year, but are still below levels seen before the pandemic.

Public order and violence against the person offences have seen the largest volume increases so far this year. These crimes were also key drivers behind an overall increase in crime when compared to before the pandemic. However, it is likely that increases are in part driven by greater awareness and more accurate crime recording.

The PCC continues to focus resources and scrutiny in respect of homicide in West Mercia. Whilst base levels in West Mercia remain much lower than many force areas nationally, in recent years West Mercia has seen significant percentage increases in homicide rates. West Mercia Police was previously subject to scrutiny along with other outlier forces from the Home Office, as well as more locally focused scrutiny by the PCC, around recorded homicide levels at the end of last year. Given the highly impactful nature of this crime it remains an area actively monitored to try and reduce and prevent this offending as much as possible.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a priority in both the Safer West Mercia Plan and the Government. Around one in five recorded offences across West Mercia are classified as VAWG, with a substantial increase in offences seen after the pandemic. This is likely as a result of a number of high-profile national cases that has increased awareness and given victims more confidence to report. The PCC continues to focus on resources and scrutiny to ensure victims receive a level of service they expect, and that appropriate support is in place to allow those affected to cope and recover.

When looking at the breakdown of crime year-to-month, the makeup of crime has changed when compared to the same period in 2016/17. Currently, there are less instances of some acquisitive crime (such as burglary, vehicles offences, shoplifting and theft from person) when compared to 2016/17. Whereas other crime types, such as homicide and violent offences, have increased. Improved crime recording against national standards will be a factor in the increase, but greater awareness and changing offending behaviour will also play a part.

Investigation into standard of maternity care

The budget for 2022/23 noted that the PCC would be allocating significant resources to support the investigation into the standards of maternity care at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals Trust (Operation Lincoln). This investigation, and resources that will go into it, are to ensure justice and answers for victims and their families. By its nature, this continues to be a complex investigation that needs to consider large volumes of material over many years, so it will be of significant size and longevity. Whilst a grant was secured from the Home Office to meet some of the costs, it does not meet all of the necessary costs, meaning a significant amount must be met from local budgets to ensure the investigation can be carried out thoroughly.

The PCC will continue to ensure that additional support is provided to those affected through the commissioned Victim Advice Line (VAL) and Victim Support services. In addition to this, the PCC is in the process of commissioning specialist psychological support for families affected by Operation Lincoln, who do not meet the eligibility criteria for other existing services. This is being carefully managed alongside the police investigation to ensure timely support is provided, to enable these victims to cope and recover as far as practically possible.

Delivery of 2022/23 objectives – what has been achieved

The PCC continues to fund the delivery of his Safer West Mercia Plan, with the four main pillars:

- Putting victims and survivors first
- Building a more secure West Mercia
- Reforming West Mercia
- Reassuring West Mercia's communities



- Put victims and their voice at the heart of the criminal justice system
- Ensure an appropriate range of support services for every victim
- Early intervention
- Sustainable services



- Reduce crime and reoffending
- Robust response to serious and organised crime
- Improve response around domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Reduce excess harm associated with roads



- Manage resources to maximise value, effectiveness and meet demand
- Fit for the digital age
- Establish and maintain a clear, strong identity
- Ensure facilities, police and community needs are delivered
- Resources will be prioritised towards front line services
- West Mercia Police will form partnerships in the best interest of local communities



- Ensure all communities have a voice that is heard
- Ensure all communities can access their police service
- Ensure West Mercia's local policing community charter delivers on its commitments
- Empower communities
- Ensure all individuals are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully

The PCC has continued to prioritise investment to deliver his Safer West Mercia Plan and ensure West Mercia Police has the resources it needs to effectively respond to the demands and challenges our community continues to face. The priorities have included

further bolstering of police officers to increase visibility, allocating resources to investigations to increase the outcomes for victims and ensure offenders are brought to justice, and increasing investment to tackle the harm caused on West Mercia's roads.

As a result of working with the Chief Constable and her team, the PCC has made progress against the objectives in his Safer West Mercia Plan, some of the investments are highlighted below

Putting victims and survivors first:

The PCC is committed to ensuring victims and survivors are put first and they receive a level of support they would expect in order to help them cope and recover. The PCC has secured more than £3.5m of additional funding in 2022/23 to bolster support services. A total of 17,630 referrals for support were made for victims of crime, with the Victim Advice Line being above target for 'quality referral rates' (76%).

An enhanced service was introduced to residential burglary victims, which is being monitored via the victim satisfaction survey. People will be asked whether they saw a police officer, whether they were offered practical help, were made to feel reassured and were offered a Smartwater kit and support pack.

What was delivered

Set out below are the outcomes of the investment that was promised by the PCC in the 2022/23 budget:

- To ensure the outcome for victims is improved, with greater continuity and support, an additional 55 dedicated and specialist investigative officers were placed in local investigation teams
- In order to identify people with significant vulnerabilities at the earliest opportunity, a Safeguarding Advice Team is being introduced
- An increased proportion of resources and allocation of funding around specialist services for victims and survivors
- As part of the focus on prevention, funding has been allocated to Barnado's to deliver trauma informed training to police officers and staff. This gives officers the skills needed to deal with trauma in a considerate and effective way when supporting victims

Building a more secure West Mercia:

The core duty of policing is to protect the public by detecting and preventing crime, hence a central theme in the Safer West Mercia Plan. The PCC is clear that West Mercia Police should use the totality of the resourcing available to them to build a more

secure West Mercia. The 2022/23 budget provision provides over £245m to achieve this.

To ensure the police are performing in accordance with national standards, forces are subject to an annual assessment from HMICFRS in the form of PEEL, which assesses efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy.

The last assessment was in April 2022 and identified the following:

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		

The assessment identified that West Mercia Police is ‘good’ regarding preventing crime, but concerns were raised around the investigation of crime and responding to the public. As a result of this, the PCC made the commitment in the 2022/23 budget to put more officers into investigations and to improve public contact. West Mercia Police has responded to all the recommendations in the PEEL report and action plans are in place, which the PCC is monitoring as part of his holding to account role.

Going forward, the HMICFRS is moving to an intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, as opposed to annual inspections.

What was delivered

Set out below are the outcomes of the investment that was committed by the PCC in the 2022/23 budget:

- Through investment from the PCC, West Mercia Police is on course to deliver the additional 125 police officers to a total of 2,456 in 2022/23, which takes the force close to the highest establishment figure on record
- an additional 55 dedicated and specialist investigative officers were placed in local investigation teams
- Tackling county lines drug dealing with a focus on protecting young people from exploitation
- Additional officers in the economic crime unit to protect against fraud, with a particular focus on vulnerability, tackling one of the fastest growing areas of crimes that has direct public impact

- As part of the commitment to reducing crime and harm linked to drugs, two Combating Drug Partnerships (CDPs) have been formed across West Mercia, in line with government guidance. The PCC has taken up the role of Senior Responsible Officer for both
- Additional resources dedicated to investigating the crimes that cause the most harm in society, such as homicide, sexual violence and domestic abuse, and achieving the best possible outcomes

Reforming West Mercia:

The PCC has an ongoing commitment to keep council tax at a minimum whilst delivering a balanced budget that does not rely on the use of reserves. Within the West Mercia policing area, the following has been achieved in the current financial year:

- the fourth lowest increase in council tax for 2022/23 since 2016
- a predicted underspend against the current year revenue budget
- as at December 2022 the Force have achieved 79% of recurring revenue savings which are required to balance the budget in year. The force is on track to deliver 94% of the plan
- delivered pilot roll out of Microsoft 365, ahead of the wider roll out to all staff in 2023/24 as part of the final year of a total £40m program that is on budget and on time

The force have been able to meet the challenge set by the PCC to use resources effectively.

What was delivered

Set out below are the outcomes of the investment that was promised by the PCC in the 2022/23 budget:

- The PCC and West Mercia Police have worked in partnership to develop and deliver a Prevention Strategy, which focuses on intervention and preventing crime from happening in the first place and reducing harm in communities
- The PCC has allocated £100,000, from his prevention fund, to support a wider budget commitment of £370,000 to roll out the award-winning Steer Clear programme across West Mercia. The pilot programme is currently operating in Telford & Wrekin, working with children and young people affected by knife crime, with the aim of intervening earlier to divert away from the criminal justice system
- In addition, the PCC is also working with partners as part of his Senior Responsible Officer role within the Combatting Drugs Partnerships, to understand gaps in local service provision. As part of this work, the PCC has set

aside £400,000 from the prevention fund to commission services, which aim to address the harm caused by illegal drugs

- Working with partners to have a more effective, and long term, approach to crime. The Safer Communities project, in partnership with Telford and Wrekin Council, is an example of this, in which the PCC has invested £500,000 and delivered a wide range of community outcomes.
- Continued investment around digital transformation, such as the rollout of Office 365 across West Mercia Police to improve efficiency and ensure the force is fit for the digital age
- Ongoing investment in the police estate. Funding for a new fit-for-purpose firearms range/training facility has been confirmed, to ensure armed officers are trained in accordance with national training requirements and the police can call on these specialist resources when communities need them.
- Further reduction in West Mercia Police’s carbon footprint through the introduction of additional electric vehicles. A joint campaign to save energy across the police estate has also been introduced

Reassuring West Mercia’s communities:

The PCC’s primary focus is on the communities of West Mercia and ensuring that people have confidence in their police force and the services that they provide. The most recent results from the confidence survey, which is run by the PCC, are as follows:

Confidence survey – question	2022/23	% change – 12mths
Thinking about your local area, how often would you say you see a police officer or PCSO?	19% see an officer once a week	0%
How satisfied are you with the level of policing in your local area?	60% are satisfied	6%
Overall, how well informed do you feel about what West Mercia Police is doing in your local area?	54% feel informed	11%
Would you agree that West Mercia Police understand the issues that affect your community?	74% tend to agree	10%
Do you think crime and anti-social behaviour are in your local area?	20% think it is a problem	-4%
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: Taking everything into account I have confidence in West Mercia Police?	81% tend to agree	-1%

The above results highlight that there has been an increase in satisfaction levels regarding the level of policing and people feel informed about West Mercia Police is doing in their local area. The PCC recognises that there is more to be done around improving public confidence and increasing the visibility of police officers. However, the investment in additional officers is focused on improving that.

What was delivered

Set out below are the outcomes of the investment that was promised by the PCC in the 2022/23 budget:

- Refreshed and renewed local policing community charter, delivering on key community concerns such as improving visibility and accessibility of Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- £365,000 has been allocated to provide an increase of staff within the West Mercia Police's Road Safety Team. A one-off allocation of £400,000 has also been made to deliver an effective approach to the prevention of excessive speed. It is proposed, subject to further development, that this will be used to deliver further average speed camera schemes across West Mercia's geography
- Increased, and improved channels for engagement between police and communities, such as Neighbourhood Matters. This platform has over 25,000 subscribers, enabling communities to receive information about local policing, crime prevention and obtain contact details for their Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Further investment to tackle violence against women and girls from within policing, through West Mercia's Professional Standards Department. The investment helps provide reassurance that all police officers and staff have the integrity, legitimacy and levels of conduct that the public expect from such a trusted role.

3. The 2023/24 budget – 'Your Views' public survey

The PCC has consistently worked to ensure the public are at the heart of policing in West Mercia. As part of that commitment, the PCC sought views from the public to ensure that policing in West Mercia continues to meet the needs of residents, businesses and communities.

The survey, which ran from 27th April to 11th July 2022, aimed to seek community views well in advance of setting the 2023/24 budget in order to ensure concerns and considerations were captured and could be used as guiding principles from the very beginning of the process.

The PCC wanted to ensure that the key community safety issues in people's local area were captured, as well as how people felt about the visibility and accessibility of West Mercia Police. The PCC was also keen to understand more about the community's lived experience of West Mercia Police and if people knew who their local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) were.

In total, 1,407 responses were received from the consultation.

The key findings are shown below:

Key findings

- The top three community safety issues/priorities were: anti-social behaviour (61%), road safety (43%) and drugs (36%)
- Respondents were asked how they felt about the visibility and accessibility of West Mercia Police, compared to 12 months ago. For visibility, 50% said they felt indifferent, 40% felt worse and 10% better. For accessibility, 55% felt indifferent, 37% felt worse and 9% felt better
- When respondents were asked whether they had any experience of West Mercia Police, 62% said yes and 38% said no. Of those that said yes, 44% described it as being positive, 32% said it was negative and 24% said neither
- The majority of respondents (78%) said they did not feel informed about West Mercia Police activity
- The majority of respondents (79%) did not know who their local SNT were

Council tax

- Within the 'Your Views' survey, a question was not specifically asked about council tax levels due to this survey being conducted so far in advance of budget setting.

The feedback above was an integral part of both the PCC and force's considerations when developing the priorities and identifying the allocation of funding in 2023/24.

To further support the above findings, a short online survey was launched to enable people to comment on the draft budget proposals put forward by the PCC, which were informed by the first round of consultation. The online survey asked two questions specifically on the precept and included one open question, enabling respondents to comment on their reasons for either supporting or opposing the proposals.

The survey asked whether respondents would be willing to pay, on average, £9.84p* (3.94%) more for policing per year based on a band D property. The majority of respondents (74%) supported this proposed increase.

As the consultation was launched before the additional precept flexibility was announced, the PCC was not able to present specific proposals to the public to gain full support for an increase. However, the PCC did supplement the question by asking whether respondents would be willing to pay more than the 3.94% increase. 57% responded 'yes'.

A key part of the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan is to ensure all communities have a voice that is heard. Therefore, the PCC provided an opportunity for people to leave comments. The main themes arising from the comments were:

Financial concerns/increase in cost of living – a number of people made a finance related comment, many were concerned about other household price increases, the perception that additional funding should come from Government and queried how effectively the budget was spent.

General support – there were some positive comments, which did not align with any of the main themes

Officer numbers/police visibility – some comments were from those who remain concerned about a perceived lack of police presence, including the closure of some police stations

Police response/action – some comments were focused on concerns about a perceived lack of police action to incidents. There were some references to specific issues, namely rural crime, road safety, drugs and ASB

A full report on the consultation, including the PCC's response to the comments made, is included in the appendix. This report highlights how the totality of the budget proposals are being utilised to deliver the priorities in the PCC's Safer West Mercia plan, which includes visibility and accessibility, whilst recognising the pressures that households are facing.

4. Delivery of the Safer West Mercia Plan in 2023/24

To continue delivering these objectives, the PCC's budget for 2023/24 and medium-term financial plan will make good the investments that he has already made and set out previously in this report. In addition to this, the PCC and West Mercia Police have made the following commitments, that will be delivered in 2023/24, to improve existing services and build on the investment made in previous years:

Putting victims and survivors first

- *Build on the 2022/23 investment of five dedicated violence against women and girls (VAWG) officers through the introduction of an additional operational lawyer to pursue all protect and prevent opportunities, increasing the number of offenders brought to justice and protection for victims*
- *Ensure an improved journey for victims, with greater continuity and support through dedicated, specialist investigative resources. There will also be the adoption of operating models that build on learning and best practice from across all forces, with an increase in training and more accredited officers*
- *Further increases in budget to safeguard services that support victims and survivors of crime*

- *Seven Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) officers to improve investigative timeliness and quality, whilst enhancing victim care*
- *A new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Telford to provide victims with an enhanced safe and comfortable space when receiving specialist medical support. Delivery of an accredited facility will also ensure greater quality of evidence in court*
- *Protecting those most vulnerable and at risk of child sexual exploitation, by working with partners to deliver on the recommendations set out in the independent inquiry (IITCSE)*
- *Five extra roles for the provision of specialist support to victims of domestic abuse provided by West Mercia's Women's Aid. Two of which are specifically dedicated to supporting children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse*
- *Investment in technology to enable rapid video response for victims of domestic abuse, allowing them to receive the support and swift police action that the public expect*

Build a more secure West Mercia

- *40 additional police officers to be based at the heart of communities, within Safer Neighbourhood Teams, focused on neighbourhood policing and addressing key community concerns, such as anti-social behaviour and the harm caused by illegal drugs*
- *Ensuring that the investment made in the last four years for new officers is fully realised, as those finishing their two or three-year training programme are fully deployed and are focused on keeping the public safe and being visible to communities*
- *Funding to build on and replicate the success of the Safer Communities Project in Telford & Wrekin, as part of the 2022/23 budget, in other parts of West Mercia by seeking to work with partners to deliver effective prevention and community problem solving*
- *Increase Special Constable numbers in 2023/24, to support the police in West Mercia's communities, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour*
- *Development of ten senior PCSO roles to focus on identified high impact/low confidence areas*
- *The creation of digital investigation hubs in each local policing area to give specialist skills and advice to investigators*
- *£400,000 to support the work being carried out as part of the Combatting Drugs Partnerships, in a bid to tackle the harm associated with drugs. Ensuring the war on drugs locally, regionally and nationally is as effective as possible*
- *Greater focus on partnership working to create local 'safer streets' initiatives and tackle violence against women and girls*

- *Investment in an additional Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) to address the 20% increase in referrals from the National Crime Agency*
- *Increased focus on improving timeliness of investigations and safeguarding*

Reform West Mercia

- *Prioritising a greater proportion of the policing budget towards police officer resource*
- *Transformational change through improvement and investment in technology used in the Contact Resolution Centre to improve the access to key services the public require*
- *Completing a four year multi-million-pound investment in modernising West Mercia Police's digital capability. This has been a large-scale project to ensure the force has the tools they need to do their job efficiently and effectively*
- *Ongoing reduction of West Mercia Police's carbon footprint through further electrification of the fleet and reviewing the police estate – saving money and reducing the impact of policing on the environment*
- *Embed net zero carbon deliverables into all capital bids*
- *Implement a Sustainable Procurement ISO 20400 plan and use the PCC's buying power to incentivise suppliers towards net zero*
- *Revise and refine governance arrangements with West Mercia Police to continue to ensure the effective delivery of the budget and the realisation of the benefits to the communities of West Mercia*
- *Further development, and review, of the police estate to ensure efficiency and effectiveness is maximised*
- *Delivery of key estates enabled projects such as the new firearms training facility at Hindlip and the new police/fire station in Redditch*

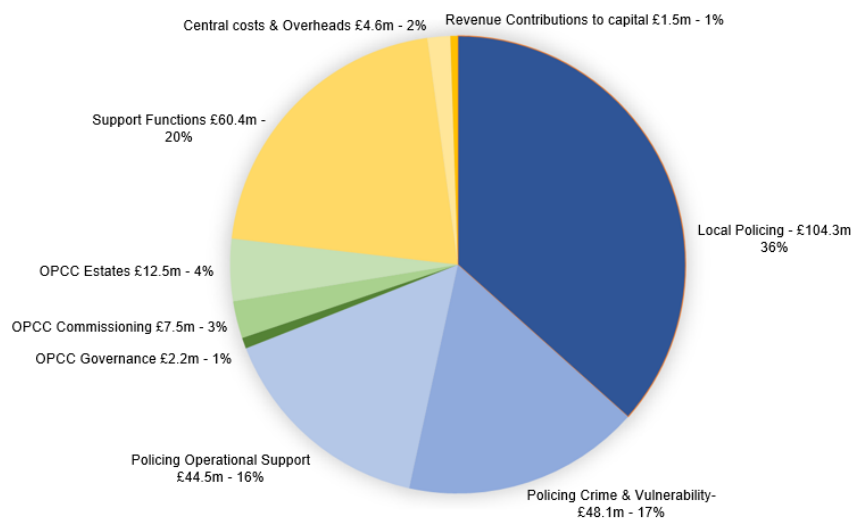
Reassure West Mercia's communities

- *Support West Mercia Police to be more visible and accessible by making the best use of technology, so the public have more options on how they can contact the police. Such as through online reporting, call back services and a text messaging service*
- *Increased use of technology to deliver on the commitments outlined in the Local Policing Community Charter, with a view to improving confidence and satisfaction*
- *Further investment in Neighbourhood Matters to develop an interactive tool for police officers and staff to record all community engagement on a central system*
- *A new Youth Commission to engage directly with children and young people and ensure their voices are heard*

- Continued investment in road safety, such as the creation of a Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) to focus on prevention and reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on West Mercia’s roads
- Increase the number of hours of mobile camera enforcement on priority roads within West Mercia, as well as further data and intelligence to target those roads which are of highest concern
- 20 dedicated investigators to provide resolution at the first point of contact with victims of crime to provide a better outcome
- Increased investment in Community Speedwatch to give people the tools to support the police and help address speeding concerns where they live

5. Investment in policing for the whole of West Mercia

The total Draft budgeted expenditure for 2023/24 is £285.6m, which is an increase of £25.1m on the previous year. The force has identified £261.9m of expenditure it requires in order to deliver operational policing.



Of the force spend, 40% (£104.3m) will be prioritised for local policing. This includes Safer Neighbourhood Teams, response officers and detectives. Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the response teams are perhaps the most ‘visible’ to the public, in a conventional sense. They are out in communities focused on providing reassurance, as well as identifying and supporting those that are vulnerable to criminality. These officers are focused on problem solving and, where possible, resolving issues early with the community. Local crime investigation officers provide the first response to those that have been a victim of crime, supported by the force’s forensic and specialist investigations teams within the Crime and Vulnerability directorate.

The PCC has funded a large number of new officers into the local policing directorate over the last three years, with a view to addressing community priorities around visibility and accessibility. The PCC has made it clear that local policing is a key priority,

therefore he has committed to boost officer numbers by a further 40 to ensure the greatest possible focus on tackling community concerns.

As part of the delivery of the Local Policing Community Charter, every community across West Mercia has a contact agreement with the force and the ability to contact their local policing team. In addition, every community has identified three core priorities to inform joint working between the local policing team and communities. In 2023/24 these local policing teams will be focused on these issues which matter most to the public. Neighbourhood Matters (a new platform for communicating between the police and the public) has been in place for a year. Further investment will go towards developing the technology, and ensuring the force is focused on utilising the platform to the best of its ability and enabling the best possible engagement with communities.

The training of new officers has been a key focus for West Mercia Police, working together with Staffordshire University. Training is key to ensuring that the force has the right people with the right skills. This principle follows to police staff, by ensuring the relevant training programmes are in place.

The Crime and Vulnerability directorate budget allocation is £48.1m, the directorate received a large investment from the 2022/23 budget. The directorate brings offenders to justice following some of the most impactful crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, serious organised crime and online child abuse. Investment will continue in order to develop the detective provision in these high harm areas, addressing a key area of identified need.

Forensic Services is key to collecting evidence to convict offenders. Over the last two years, the department has received investment in order to meet the high levels of accreditation and standards required nationally, as well as being able to deliver an excellent service to victims. Forensic Services has implemented digital hubs with local policing to deliver technical, forensic advice and support as early as possible in a larger number of investigations – which aims to increase the number of offenders that are brought to justice.

The core function of the Operational Support directorate (£44.5m) is the first point of contact with the public on the telephone and through digital channels. West Mercia has seen an increase in 999 calls of 11% (October 2022 compared to October 2021). The PCC continues to focus on public contact, specifically the non-emergency (101) and emergency (999) lines, as part of his holding to account agenda to ensure the public have the access they need to their police force, when they need it. This budget enables the force to use technology to improve the level of service the public are receiving, when they contact West Mercia Police, with a view to improving public confidence and satisfaction.

West Mercia Police has made improvements around accessibility as part of its new communications strategy, which places an emphasis on improving links with under-represented communities. For example, there are now emergency call takers that can use British Sign Language. The increase in digital channels, through which the force

can be contacted, has led to a 26% increase in contact in the last year. Forensic Services also now works directly within the force's public contact team to ensure that forensic opportunities, such as preserving evidence, are secured from the first contact. That investment is being taken further in 2023/24 with investment in technology to improve the service.

The directorate also includes specialist policing support, such as firearms, public order, roads policing officers and the dog unit. Through these teams, the force is visible to the public at local sporting and other community events during the year. It is expected that these teams will also support significant national events including the King's Coronation in May 2023, as they did with the Commonwealth Games and the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2022. Through the Firearms Licencing team, the force is responsible for actively managing the highest number of licence holders nationally. There have also been national process changes following high-profile instances nationally, of shootings using legally held firearms, which has added to demand. The PCC continues to monitor the backlogs that have developed within the team, ensuring that public safety is paramount.

The remaining £65.0m of the force's budget is allocated to the corporate and support services. This includes the Professional Standards and Vetting, monitoring the integrity of the force and those that work within it, and undertaking investigations of improper conduct where appropriate. Support services, such as IT and training, are required to enable police officers to carry out their roles efficiently and effectively. This area is under constant review to ensure that the force is operating as efficiently as possible, whilst identifying savings. As part of this, the force is reducing its reliance on contracted resources to deliver project management by securing internal resources and investing time, training and development of those staff.

In last year's budget, greater investment was allocated to deliver a more stable digital infrastructure that will allow the force to exploit new technologies as they are developed. In 2023/24, the force will roll out electronic monitoring systems in police vehicles to provide data on their maintenance and performance. This will provide vital information regarding the vehicle replacement programme, drive efficiency improvements, and will tie into the work around making the fleet fully electric.

Within the force's analytical and support functions, analysis work is undertaken to understand drivers of victim satisfaction. The department has produced a comprehensive profile on VAWG, which highlights victim perceptions as well as data on crime and incidents. These tools will allow the force to identify how re-victimisation can be prevented and reduce harm.

The PCC has a central role in the commissioning of services related to victims, community safety and crime reduction. Within the wider PCC budget, an annual budget of around £7.5m is set aside for the commissioning of these services, which includes support for victims, as well as a range of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention interventions.

On top of this budget, the PCC also receives a grant from the Ministry of Justice for the commissioning of victim services. The PCC works with his team to identify external funding opportunities, in a variety of areas, to support the provision of preventative and victim services, to reduce crime in West Mercia.

For 2023/24, the PCC and his team are currently preparing for three known funding opportunities, for interventions around reducing and tackling domestic abuse perpetrator behaviour, violence against women and girls' programmes, as well as funding to support local implementation and delivery of the upcoming serious violence duty. In addition to this, the PCC is working with providers to identify innovative ways in which services can continue to be delivered, as efficiently as possible, within the current economic environment coupled with increases in demand for services.

The PCC is also widening the award winning knife crime prevention programme, Steer Clear, across all areas of West Mercia, which will provide a 1:1 service for children and young people involved in knife related crime.

Under the direct control of the PCC is the estates service. The estates service is responsible for the buildings that West Mercia Police use and operate from. The PCC's estates service is there to ensure that the available assets are being used as efficiently and effectively as possible, and that they allow officers to be visible and accessible to communities. The team is also responsible for ensuring that the team is delivering sustainable and affordable buildings that are in the right places and aligned to operational need.

With over 91 sites and 111 buildings, the annual revenue budget of £12.5m is used to regularly inspect buildings to ensure they are compliant with health and safety requirements and contribute to the force's aim of being a good place to work. The budget also includes carrying out work to rectify any issues identified.

The estates service is also responsible for delivery of significant capital programmes. This currently includes an £20.1m project to deliver a new fit-for-purpose and more energy efficient joint police and fire station in Redditch and bringing forward plans for a new firearms range, which will provide the much-needed facility to effectively train firearms officers and bring them in-line with national standards.

Changes in working patterns, and the technology that is now available, is driving a shift in how police buildings are used. The estates service is working alongside the force to adapt and respond to these challenges to ensure the right buildings/assets are in place. The estates service also supports the review of the policing estate. The PCC is committed to ensuring that the assets held are providing value for money. Where there are sites that are no longer required, because they do not effectively deliver a public facing police service, there is consideration to dispose of these in order to identify savings and realise capital receipts to reinvest in services.

6. What it means for the public

Community engagement

Through investment to boost police officer numbers, the PCC has brought the establishment figure to 2,456 in 2022/23. As part of this year's budget, the PCC is boosting officer numbers by a further 40. These officers will be based at the heart of communities, focused on addressing community concerns and tackling crime. These additional 40 officers will bring West Mercia Police's establishment figure to the highest level on record in the force.

As part of the increase in officer numbers 35 additional officers will go into five new local policing area based crime fighting teams. Through reprioritisation of existing officers, these teams will be made up of 55 officers in total. These teams will be agile and able to effectively respond to community based crime and concerns, with each team operating at a local level to tackle crimes that are causing the most harm as well as identifying emerging crimes and threats. The teams will also focus on improving the visibility of policing among communities. The Local Crime Fighting teams will support, and work with, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

To further reassure communities, Community Safety Engagement Officer roles are being introduced. Five additional police officers will work alongside five existing officers who will bring a wider and agile approach to communicating and celebrating success with communities, as well as responding to feedback from communities. These officers will focus on continuous engagement and local relationship building. They will also help to improve the understanding about what the police and CSPs are doing in local communities, and focus on building trust and confidence on policing.

Building on the successes of the Safer Stronger Communities project, which was delivered in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council, the PCC is proposing a two year, £2m commitment for 'Safer Communities Plus'. These projects will be partnership based across the other local policing areas and will address issues that are bespoke to community needs and priorities.

There is a continued focus on increasing the visibility and accessibility of West Mercia Police officers to address a sustained priority the PCC hears on a regular basis from communities. As a result of new teams which are being introduced and the work that the SNT's are already doing in the community, the PCC wants to see an improvement in relationships, as well as trust, confidence and victim satisfaction.

Building on the previous years of significant investment, an enhanced neighbourhood policing model will be supported by technology and will allow officers to be even more visible in their communities. Communities will be able to see that their local policing teams are dealing with the issues that matter to them most, such as anti-social behaviour, and they will receive timely communications on the matter. This will be bolstered by additions to the Special Constabulary, increasing the number of Specials volunteering in communities and focusing on local issues of concern.

Greater investment in mobile police vans will make it easier for officers to be present in areas that don't have police stations.

Measures

- Reduction in volume of domestic abuse
- Increase in charges for domestic abuse crimes
- Increase of victim satisfaction with the service received

Road safety

Road safety continues to be a major concern for communities across West Mercia, with the PCC regularly hearing from the public via correspondence, engagements and consultations/surveys about speeding or anti-social use of the roads. Within the 'Your Views' survey, 43% of respondents said that road safety is a community safety issue/concern.

Despite West Mercia Police already being one of the most resourced forces in terms of road safety, the investment will continue, as will the drive to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the roads, and those affected by the anti-social use of the roads.

The creation of a Serious Collision Investigation Unit will focus on prevention and improving the service victims and families receive. The unit will also work in partnership with other organisations to reduce KSIs and causes of harm, as well as respond to community concerns. Criminals who disproportionately cause harm on the roads will be targeted through an intelligence led/evidence-based approach to enforcement.

This team will be part of a wider team that is focused on targeting those that are causing the highest harm on West Mercia's roads using alcohol, drugs, mobile phones, and speed.

Powerful messaging will also be produced and shared to the public about roads policing activity, as well as enforcement and prevention messages.

Violence against women and girls

With violence against women and girls (VAWG) continuing to be a concern within society, the PCC has committed to keeping the focus on this issue and the wider issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A key part of the PCC's investment this year is to rollout the domestic abuse perpetrator programme, DRIVE, across the whole of West Mercia. This programme identifies those who are at a high-risk of perpetrating abuse. DRIVE currently runs in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with Case Managers using various interventions as follows, to ultimately reduce risk and increase victim safety:

- Support – addresses the needs of the perpetrator by removing barriers to change

- Disruption – put barriers and obstacles in place to prevent abuse from taking place
- Behaviour change – focused and specific interventions which address attitudes and behaviours

In the year to date, DRIVE has worked with 138 perpetrators across the two force areas, who have 139 associated victims/survivors and 301 associated children.

If DRIVE were to be rolled out into Shropshire and Telford, the following crimes are to be reduced:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- harassment and stalking
- jealous, controlling and coercive behaviours

Within the force, and building on the 2022/23 investment of five dedicated VAWG officers, an additional operational lawyer will be introduced as part of this budget to pursue all protect and prevent opportunities, ultimately increasing the number of offenders that are brought to justice and helping protect victims earlier. There will also be seven Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) officers introduced to improve investigative timeliness and quality, whilst enhancing victim care. This helps address the PCC's commitments to ensure that communities receive an improved service that results in bringing offenders to justice and victims getting the best possible outcome.

The PCC will be working closely with providers to ensure victims receive the ongoing support they need, particularly in the current climate. The PCC will therefore be assisting with submitting any additional funding opportunities, as well as taking advantage of opportunities on behalf of providers. This includes the most recent Home Office VAWG fund, that opens in January 2023, and the PCC has had early sight of.

Support services are continuing to see increases in demand, which is compounded by the delays in the criminal justice system. The PCC has repeatedly stressed his desire to see improvements within the criminal justice system for the community. He will continue to work closely with Senior Leaders of Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service to drive forward those improvements, including in relation to the ongoing closure of Hereford Crown Court, which continues to deny access to justice to people within the county.

The PCC will also be working to develop and strengthen his Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), Victims Board and Crime Reduction Board, to ensure that they are focusing on driving improvements around reductions in crime, as well as putting victims and survivors at the heart of the criminal justice system. Another area of focus is around the accreditation of the Sexual Assault and Referral Centres (SARCs), which comes into effect in October 2023. The PCC will be working closely with partners to ensure that existing SARCs in South Worcestershire and Telford are fit for purpose. The PCC

will also ensure that these spaces provide somewhere that is safe and comfortable for victims at a time when they need it most.

The PCC will also be looking to submit a funding application to the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Fund, which opens in January 2023. This is to ensure that West Mercia continues to have a comprehensive package of domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, focused on tackling the root causes of perpetrator behaviour. This will include a potential expansion of DRIVE into Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire, for high-risk perpetrators and group-based interventions for those of a standard and medium risk. PCC match funding will be provided as part of these bids, with a value to be determined once funding rounds have opened.

Building on the additional investigators that were funded as part of the 2022/23 budget, West Mercia Police will continue to grow their ability to protect women and girls from serious harm. The force will concentrate efforts on a preventative approach, increasing satisfaction and confidence for victims and survivors by improving the victim journey, and increased training to produce accredited officers.

Measures

- Reduction in volume of domestic abuse
- Increase in charges for domestic abuse crimes
- Increase of victim satisfaction with the service received

Children and young people

The PCC is committing to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of work with West Mercia Police, and partners, to prevent children and young people from being drawn into criminality or being exploited. The issue of child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE) continue to be a concern, with the Independent Inquiry into Telford CSE highlighting several recommendations that will be delivered in partnership with the local authority and other public sector organisations.

There will also be a focus on online safety to protect children and young people from the harm that can be caused on these platforms. Building on the additional investigators, that were brought in as part of the 2022/23 budget, West Mercia Police will enhance this by developing a further specialist team dedicated to investigating online sexual offending.

To detect offences more effectively and efficiently, specialist investigators and digital evidence detection dogs will be funded through this budget which will result in more of the most harmful offenders being brought to justice.

As part of the work around prevention, young people that are at risk of being drawn into criminality will receive intervention through their school. A new Youth Commission will also be set up to give young people a focus, as well as an opportunity to have their voices heard. It will also enable the police force to better understand and build relationships with young people.

Measures

- Reduction in volume of domestic abuse
- Increase in charges for domestic abuse crimes
- Increase of victim satisfaction with the service received

Delivery of the investment in infrastructure

The organisation is entering into the fourth and final year of its planned £40m investment in its digital infrastructure and modernisation of West Mercia Police's digital capability. This has been a large-scale project to ensure the force has the tools it needs to deliver an efficient and effective service. This investment is currently on budget and the aims and objectives are on track ensure that the systems are in place and rolled out across all users by March 2024.

2023/24 will be the year that the investment, to date, will help transform how the force operates and the impact on how the force operates on the front line will be seen.

- The rollout of Office 365 across West Mercia Police will improve efficiency and ensure the force is fit for the digital age, allowing officers to be more flexible in how and where they work. Travel time will be reduced, as meetings can be easily held virtually, allowing for more time to be out in communities and responding to reported issues of crime
- There will be an increased use of technology, such as apps, which can be used in real time to record attendance at crimes and to capture victims' concerns. This will help to deliver on the commitments outlined in the Local Policing Community Charter, with a view to improving confidence and satisfaction
- Investment in systems that have the capability to upload digital evidence directly onto force systems through the internet, which means that victims can provide evidence quickly and efficiently, ultimately reducing the time that officers need to spend collecting evidence after attending the crime scene
- Investment in technology to enable victims of domestic abuse to access rapid video response, allowing them to receive the support and swift police action that the public expect. This will mean that victims don't have to wait for an officer to attend a call in person before receiving any help
- The force will be rolling out electronic monitoring systems in police vehicles to provide data on their maintenance and performance. This will provide vital

information regarding the vehicle replacement programme, drive efficiency improvements and will tie into the work around making the fleet fully electric

- £1.7m of cost reductions in digital services for 2023/24 have been identified. The investment made ultimately reduces the infrastructure that is required for its delivery, in turn reducing the cost of operating policing in West Mercia

Measure

- Delivering cashable savings.
- Increase of victim satisfaction with the service received
- Increased public confidence with visibility of policing

Reducing the environmental impact of policing in West Mercia

The PCC is committed to reducing the carbon footprint and wider environmental impact of policing. There are currently 18 fully electric and 47 hybrid vehicles in the fleet, with charging points at all the divisional headquarters and principal sites. The total fleet currently stands at 786 vehicles and there are plans for further investment to bring the electric fleet to 27% of the total fleet with an additional 60 charging points across the estate. The force is undertaking work to identify how the fleet can transition over time to become fully electric, whilst ensuring the fleet continues to meet operational requirements. There is currently a review taking place in one location using seven electric vehicles. Following the outcome of this review, the PCC is committed to continue introducing electric/hybrid vehicles to replace the fleet where it meets operational requirement.

The police estate is also recognised as having an environmental impact. With increasing energy prices, it has focused attention on how energy is consumed. It has already been identified that there are simple things that can be done, such as ensuring energy efficient LED lighting is used across the estate. This will reduce carbon emissions as well as energy usage, which will result in savings and better value for the public purse. A detailed plan is being commissioned to deliver this project in the coming months. Over the medium term there is a wider challenge of ensuring the current estate is as energy efficient as possible. It will also be identified whether certain assets can be retained, or replaced, based on their environmental impact and carbon footprint.

The PCC has been clear that any new investments in assets must meet the environmental challenge. He will therefore use his buying power to incentivise suppliers towards net zero. The new joint police and fire station in Redditch, which will be built during 2023/24, has been designed with the environment in mind. This includes:

- A focus on passive design measures, including use of natural daylight and ventilation

- Additional investment in the building fabric to increase air tightness and insulation
- Specification of environmentally friendly or recyclable materials wherever practical
- Use of energy efficient heating and lighting systems and controls, linked to a Building Management System
- Incorporation of facilities for separating waste and recycling within the external servicing and storage area
- Landscaping proposals to incorporate a net increase in species to encourage ecological diversity

The design of the building includes environmental considerations which are significantly above current building regulation requirements. This is part of the PCC's ongoing commitment to reduce the environmental impact of policing and working with suppliers who are also committed to supporting this aim.

Measures

- Reduction in West Mercia's carbon footprint
- Cashable savings

The prioritisation of resources in 2023/24

The PCC has focused on ensuring the resources he has for policing in West Mercia are deployed efficiently and effectively. He has supported and challenged West Mercia Police to ensure it is a modern, fit-for-purpose organisation, delivering high quality policing for all communities. He has prioritised the best use of the funds available to him as well as implementing efficiency programmes and maximising the benefit to the public.

Since May 2016, the force has delivered £28.2m worth of efficiencies and savings, on top of further cost avoidance and productivity improvements through optimising the way that it operates. A number of these savings and efficiencies have been enabled through the ending of the previous Alliance with Warwickshire.

In 2022/23, the force is on course to deliver 94% of the £6.0m of the required savings plan to ensure that it delivers a balanced budget and is not reliant on reserves to safeguard its financial sustainability into the future.

With the economic crisis squeezing the finances of the public and public sector organisations, the PCC is committed to making good the investment that has been placed into West Mercia Police over the last three years. Further efficiencies and savings will need to be identified in increasingly challenging times to maintain a

balanced budget. This budget is intended to deliver value for money as well as efficient and effective policing.

Given the current economic conditions, there is an even greater awareness of the need to be financially sustainable as we enter 2023/24. The PCC is aware of the limited resources available, which frames the challenge to ensure that he is delivering what is needed for the public. He is focused on delivering an effective and efficient police service that delivers on what the public expect. The challenge has been set to West Mercia Police that they maintain and improve on the commitment to the public to be visible and accessible.

7. Monitoring the delivery of the budget investment

To support the delivery of the Safer West Mercia Plan 2021-2025, the PCC agreed a comprehensive range of metrics with the Chief Constable to enable monitoring of performance against priorities. 70 metrics were agreed in total and included within the force's performance management framework. 46 (66%) of these metrics were monitored by way of the monthly and quarterly force performance reports, with the rest being easily accessible through other mechanisms and forums (inc. a self-serve performance dashboard and management information products produced for various governance meetings).

The force has recently undertaken a review of the organisational performance management framework and performance reports to ensure they are fit for purpose, driving the right behaviours and successfully delivering against local and national policing priorities. A central objective of the review was to create a simpler strategic landscape, with focused priorities aligned to the Safer West Mercia Plan metrics and the Government's Beating Crime Plan which includes a number of national policing priorities. Whilst the full range of Safer West Mercia Plan metrics will continue to be monitored, the intention is to simplify the performance management framework and reports to focus on a subset of key policing and crime issues affecting communities. This will lead to clear ownership of priorities and subsequent activity, and clear lines of accountability to enable robust performance management and service improvement within the force and by the PCC.

Accountability for policing performance from the spend of the total budget

The key metrics have already been agreed by the PCC and the Chief Constable. These metrics put traditional police and crime metrics including domestic abuse, violent crime and neighbourhood crime, and criminal justice outcomes for victims at the heart of performance regime.

Safer West Mercia Plan

Improvement Areas

Key Performance Indicators

Putting victims and survivors first	Victim satisfaction	% of victims satisfied with service
Building a more secure West Mercia	Total recorded crime	Volume of total recorded crime
		TRC - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Violent crime	Volume of violence with injury
		Violence with injury - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Rape	Volume of rape offences
		Rape - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Robbery	Volume of Robbery offences
		Robbery - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Residential burglary	Residential Burglary
		Residential Burglary - % outcome 1 & 1A
	Vehicle crime	Volume of vehicle crime
		Vehicle crime - % outcome 1 & 1A
Domestic abuse	Volume of domestic abuse	
	Domestic abuse - % outcome 1 & 1A	
Reassuring West Mercia's Communities	Call handling	% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds
		% of 101 calls answered within 30 seconds
	Public confidence	Overall Confidence - % of respondents that agree or strongly agree they have confidence in local policing
		Visibility - % of respondents that report seeing a police officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) at least weekly
Reforming West Mercia	Emergency response times	Median Grade 1 response time
		Median Grade 2 response time
	Finance	Financial Outturn is within the agreed budget
		Savings plan is delivered (as part of achieving financial outturn)
		Unqualified annual VFM conclusion is received from the External Auditors
Environment	Reducing the carbon footprint associated with policing	

It has been agreed that in the main, performance management framework metrics will be used to monitor the delivery of the budget in 2023/24. This will ensure the activity of the force in delivering the commitments in the budget lead to improvements across key local and national police and crime priorities that most impact communities. The PCC and Chief Constable have both set out a clear commitment to pursuing continuous

improvement in relation to the metrics attached. Performance will be regularly monitored by way of weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting. Performance against the metrics will also be subject to formal holding to account activity as part of the 2023/24 holding to account calendar.

Monitoring financial commitments and value for money

The performance management framework provides the assurance that the totality of policing is delivering positive outcomes for the communities of West Mercia. The whole budget of £275m is directed to achieving continuous improvement in reducing crime, supporting victims and increasing public confidence in policing, which support the central aims of the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan.

8. The economic context

The economic environment

On the 17th November 2022, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Autumn Statement 2022 accompanied by the Office of Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook. The Autumn Statement followed a series of fiscal announcements, which had previously resulted in a strong negative reaction from markets and investors. Many of the measures originally announced had since been either cancelled or scaled back.

The Autumn Statement is important as it came at a time of inflation running at a 41-year high at 11.1%, and the Bank of England Base Rate (3%) is also at its highest since 2008. It has been estimated that the Government has a budget deficit of approximately £55bn. The Chancellor had indicated that £20bn would be met through tax rises and the remaining £35bn through spending cuts.

Whilst the impact on the economy from recent Government announcements has been the focus of scrutiny, there are clearly wider global factors which are significantly impacting the economic conditions above, including Brexit, the Covid pandemic, now coupled with the UK's response to the conflict in Ukraine. These are issues that are not just exclusive to the UK and many other countries are dealing with similar economic pressures.

The forecast for the UK economy is that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is set to increase by 4.2% in 2022 but then will be significantly down in 2023 to a negative growth of -1.4%. The Chancellor announced during his speech on the Autumn Statement that the economy was already in recession. The Government's aim for inflation to be at, or below 2%, is not being met, with a forecast of CPI inflation of 7.4% in 2023. Energy and food costs are causing significant inflationary effects in 2022 and are projected to continue to do so in 2023. A reduction in energy bills is not expected until 2024 at the earliest.

Forecasts for public sector net debt (PSND) as a proportion of GDP is expected to rise to a peak of 106.7% of GDP by 2023/24 and continue to remain high through to

2027/28. Borrowing is now at its highest levels in peacetime history. In March 2022 forecasts suggested that PSNB would fall to less than 2% of GDP by 2023/24. However, borrowing requirements since then have been revised upwards and, under new fiscal rules announced by the Chancellor, the aim is that public sector borrowing must be below 3% of GDP over a five-year rolling period.

Announcements in the 2022 Autumn Spending Review

There was no specific mention of policing in the Autumn Statement. The Autumn Statement confirms that Departmental Expenditure Limits will be maintained at least in line with those set at the Spending Review 2021 (SR21). Information accompanying the Autumn Statement shows that 2023/24 Department Expenditure Limits for the Home Office appear to have reduced by £0.2bn to £15.4bn. It is not clear if this would have any impact on funding allocations to PCCs.

To keep spending focused on the Government's priorities, and help manage pressures from higher inflation, Government departments will be required by the Chancellor to continue to identify efficiency savings in day-to-day budgets. To support departments to do this, the Government is launching an Efficiency and Savings Review. It is not clear what impact this may have on funding provided to the PCC.

Council tax regime

The OBR would normally provide an outlook forecast around growth in the tax base, but this hasn't been provided alongside the Autumn Statement. Without this information being available it requires assumptions to be made about growth by PCCs in consultation with their local Government partners.

West Mercia within the wider economic environment

The Autumn Statement has not reduced the resources as set out in the Spending Review in October 2021. However, this has not provided additional resources to offset the impact of both pay and non-pay inflation. West Mercia has identified that the impact of inflation on the organisation is £17.4m. With the expected increase in funding bringing in an additional £14.2m, the organisation is faced with an inflation funding gap of £3.2m. This is before the impact of demand pressure on services has been recognised.

The 2023/24 budget, the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Capital Programme aims to balance the following factors:

- The expected level of Government funding as set out in the Autumn Statement. These limits were set prior to the impact of the current economic factors, specifically pay inflation, were realised
- Deliver the priorities in the Safer West Mercia Plan, which is the PCC's commitment to the public to deliver effective policing services
- Maintaining police officer number increases that have been achieved through local investment and as part of the Government's policy to recruit an additional 20,000 officers nationwide by April 2023

- The need to invest in West Mercia's infrastructure to ensure that the police can operate effectively in how it delivers its service to the public

The PCC is conscious that any council tax increases must be justified and provide assurance to households, which are facing significant pressure on their finances, that they are receiving service improvements in return for their investment. West Mercia will also continue to build on the investment in policing that has been made in recent years.

To achieve this the Chief Constable has undertaken a detailed review of all budgets and followed a Priority Based Planning (PBP) process. The process undertakes an extensive review of all the force's services and the resources applied to delivering those services. This review has used a tried and tested methodology involving managers, officers and staff at all levels of the organisation, directed by a Chief Officer. The process identifies the service that the police provide and the level of resources that are required to provide that service. The model can be optimised and invested in and sets out the expected increases in demand in services and the provides a clear options appraisal of efficiencies that are available to ensure the budget is balanced.

The current environmental economic pressures dictate that while there are more resources available in this budget, it cannot be one of overall growth when factoring in issues such as inflation. The PCC has asked the Chief Constable to make sure that the investment that has been made over the last few years, particularly the increases in the number of police officers, continues to be delivered on through 2023/24. The PCC has been clear that he expects the force to continue its transformation journey, with a focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness, and providing the best service possible to local communities. This has meant that to set a balanced budget the Chief Constable has had to review services throughout the organisation to identify savings that offset the costs pressures that have been identified. Some of those savings will have to be delivered by reducing service levels.

A key factor is that where costs are already being effectively managed, services can only then be improved or maintained through the management of demand. This is a key focus of the PCC. The impact and potential benefit of additional investments in diversionary, or intervention projects will continue to be explored. As part of this commitment, the delivery of the agreed Prevention Strategy is a key part of demand management. The commissioning of projects, that work to divert people away from crime or prevent crime from happening in the first place, and investing in initiatives that could be seen to be linked to crime going down are key. These provide a more cost-effective option than dealing with the crime after it has happened, whilst also having societal benefits in respect of prevention of harm.

The aim is that this preventative work, alongside the continued investment in the transformation programme and the benefits it will generate, will enable the PCC to keep council tax increases to the minimum necessary to deliver a safer West Mercia. However, there is pressure on council tax to continue to rise in future years because of the unavoidable pressures police forces face.

9. Sources of funding for the budget

It is intended that the proposals contained in this document will be funded from a variety of sources.

Government grants

The PCC receives most of its grant funding from central Government, specifically the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice. The principal sources are annual revenue grants, including:

- Police and Revenue Support Grant
- Council Tax Support Grant
- Council Tax Freeze Grants for 2011/12 and 2013/14
- Victims Support Grants from the Ministry of Justice

The Home Office Settlement follows on from the three-year Spending Revenue 2021 (SR21) announcements. The SR21 set out department resource allocations over a three-year period. This is the second year of that settlement.

The Provisional Funding Settlement was announced by the Home Office on the 14th December 2022. The core funding was confirmed as being £138.172m which is an increase of 3.45% on the previous year. The funding was in line with the SR21 expectations. £4.3m of the £4.8m increase in funding has been allocated to meet the ongoing cost from the national police uplift programme, with the remaining £0.5m available to fund inflationary and other cost pressures. .

Income received from council tax

The tax base

The tax base is the number of properties that have a council tax charge placed on them. The tax base will increase with additional houses being built. However, the tax base is reduced by other factors such as claimants of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTS), Single Person Discounts and empty properties.

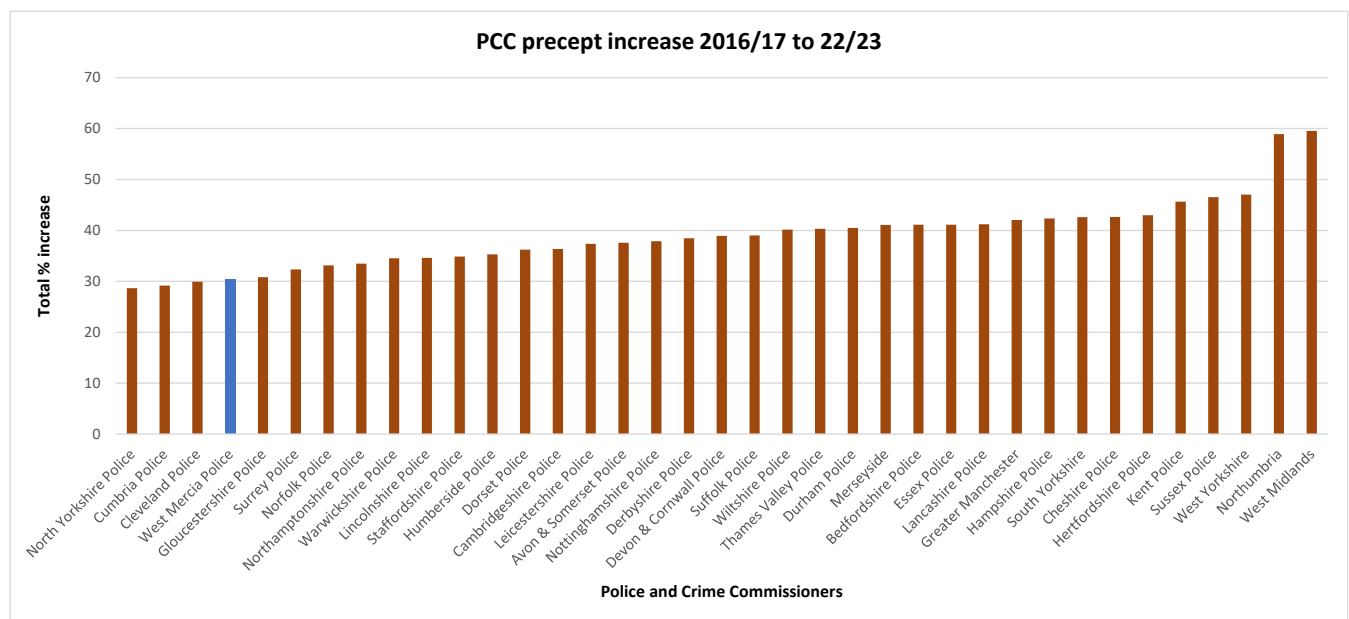
Throughout the 2022/23 financial year, the recovery from the Covid pandemic has continued, with the number of new houses being built increasing and more people reported as being in employment. The 2022/23 council tax base included strong growth in the base of 1.98%.

Given the Chancellor's announcement of being in recession and tough future economic conditions the expectation was that the growth in the tax base would be lower for 2023/24. The confirmations from local authority partners is that the increase in the tax base will be 1.37% worth an additional £1.6m. The assumption is that through the medium term the tax base will continue to grow at a rate between 1.69 and 2.12%

The precept

As part of the provisional government settlement the Home Office announced that PCCs in England and Wales would be given an additional £5 flexibility in 2023/24 in addition to the previous year's referendum limit. PCCs now have a £15 council tax referendum limit on a Band D equivalent property.

The proposal of the PCC is that the council tax charge will be increased by 5.94% for a Band D property for 2023/24. This will raise an additional £6.9m. The increase in both the tax base, and the precept Band D charge, will bring in a total of £122.1m of funding, which is an additional £8.4m on the previous year's precept demand.



The PCC is conscious of the pressure that council tax places on households. The PCC has the 4th lowest increase in council tax since 2016/17 when he was first elected as West Mercia PCC.

The Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit

The administration of the council tax system is undertaken by local authorities through the Collection Fund account. This records the amount of income collected and the amount that has been precepted out to fund councils, police and fire.

The impact of the Covid pandemic was unprecedented and made it difficult to predict how much council tax would actually be collected. The surplus declared in 2022/23 was £1.4m, which is the highest to be declared in the last five years following on from a deficit reported in 2021/22. For the 2023/24 budget the assumption has been made that there will be a surplus, but that it is more likely to be in the region of £0.8m. This reflects that more people are suffering financial hardship and may need support to pay their council tax.

The increase in sources of funding available in 2023/24 is:

2022/23 funding (excl. reserves) (£260.485)

Increase in Gov funding	(£4.763m)
Increase in Council Tax Base	(£1.555m)
Increase in Council Tax Precept	(£6.852m)
Increase in Collection Fund Surplus	(£0.455m)
Change in utilisation of reserves	(£0.658m)
2023/24 funding	(£274.768m)

10. The revenue budget

The proposed revenue expenditure budget for 2023/24 financial year is £285.6m which is an increase in expenditure of £25.1m from the previous year.

2022/23 net revenue budget	£260.485m
Price and pay inflation	£17.391m
Service level demand	£136.447m
Identified efficiencies	(£5.714m)
2023/24 net revenue budget requirement	£285.609m

There is an identified budget shortfall of £10.8m, as the totality of policing must be delivered within the funding envelope identified of £274.8m

As set out previously, the force has used a process of Priority Based Planning (PBP) to review all of their budgets, to identify demand pressures and efficiencies that would maintain the level of service that the force currently provide.

The force identified that to deliver the same service levels as in previous years the budget would need to increase by £17.4m (6.7% increase) due to the impact of inflation, which are cost increases outside the direct control of West Mercia. This covers increases in pay of an assumed 2% in 2023/24 and also includes the impact of the higher than expected £1,900 (average 5%) pay award in 2022/23. In total this is an additional cost of £13.1m to employ the same officers and staff as in the previous budget. Non-pay inflation on all other relevant costs is assumed to be equivalent to CPI which is currently predicted to be 7.5% worth £2.1m, with the final £2.2m a result of a 90% increase in West Mercia's energy costs due to higher unit prices for energy and the impact of green taxes.

On top of the pressures from inflation there are other factors which are recognised as increasing the budget to be able to maintain services. A total of £13.4m of these pressures have been identified. These include:

- An additional £2.6m in digital infrastructure to continue West Mercia's investment in technology that will help transform how the force operates
- £1.3m increase in the cost of borrowing in relation to the capital programme
- The ending of £2.2m specific grant allocation to pay for the uplift in police officers to meet government targets
- The review of budgets has also identified an increase in costs of £1.3m in relation to funding of regional activities including the ROCU and how county lines drugs investigations are paid for

Efficiencies of £5.7m have also been identified, where the investments that the PCC has made over the previous budgets has enabled services to be provided in a different way, resulting in a reduction in budget requirements. This includes £1.1m of cost reductions in digital services as the investment made reduces the infrastructure that is required for its delivery.

Departments have put forward proposals for investment in services. Cost pressures dictate that in many cases investment is not able to come from having additional funding available, but rather through using existing resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. Section four of the report has already detailed what additionality the force is providing during 2023/24 to ensure that they focus on the priorities that the PCC and the public have.

Delivering a balanced budget

The increase in Government funding is £4.8m (3.5%) of which £4.2m is ringfenced for the cost associated with the uplift of 300 additional officers. This leaves the remaining £0.5m of additional funding from government in 2023/24 to contribute to all other costs including identified inflation pressure.

When setting the budget, whilst the PCC has challenged the force to make every penny count, there is the pressure on budgets from pay awards and the recognised need to continue to invest in systems and infrastructure. Therefore, without the additional Government funding, the pressure falls onto council tax. The table below shows that for an approximate 2% increase in the amount raised from council tax, is worth an additional circa £2.5m.

Precept Inc. (%)	Band D Charge	Increase in Band D	Council Tax Funding £m	Additional Funding £m	Impact on the Budget Gap £m
0%*	£249.66	£0.00	113.7	1.6	18.2
1.99%	£254.63	£4.97	117.7	2.5	15.7
3.94%	£259.50	£9.84	120.0	2.3	13.5
5.94%	£264.50	£14.84	122.3	2.3	11.2

* Funding increases due to change in the tax base.

As can be seen from the model, council tax increases do not solve the financial challenges for 2023/24. Even with an increase close to the maximum uplift, there is still a reported £11.2m budget gap (3.9% of the proposed 23/24 budget). In December 2022

the budget gap was £13.5m, based on a precept increase of 3.94%. Recognising that action was required to resolve this deficit, the force immediately put resources and processes in place to be able to propose a full savings plan by the start of the financial year. There is inevitably a risk that there will have to be a reduction in the establishment. With an average non-officer employee costing circa £40k annually, the lower the council tax rise the resulting number of employee posts at risk increases. The more posts at risk then the more significant the impact on the force's ability to deliver policing.

The PCC has prioritised investment in front line policing, with additional officers targeted at Safer Neighbourhood Teams, delivery of the Safer West Mercia Plan and areas that the public have highlighted as priorities.

To realise a balanced budget, the force has undertaken a review of all its budgets to identify potential savings and will continue to develop implementation plans to deliver them. Prior to April 2023, the Chief Constable will agree with the PCC a detailed plan for the implementation of West Mercia Police element of the budget, including the delivery of the savings required to balance the budget.

To date, the PCC has agreed the following adjustments and savings as part of bridging the gap.

	2023/24
	£m
Total Budget Gap identified (based on 3.94% precept)	13.500
Savings agreed for inclusion in Plan	
Utilisation of 2022/23 underspend	-0.650
Reduction in transfers to reserves	-0.750
Reduction in deficit payments required on pension fund	-0.870
Confirmation of the tax base	0.184
Changes to the capital programme and borrowing requirement	-0.571
Savings plan from investment in Digital Services	-1.700
Budget adjustments for pay award	0.052
Additional funding from 5.94% precept flexibility	-1.004
Force review of all individual budget lines	-0.270
Force decisions to reduce budget	-0.309
Agreed savings	-5.888
Savings proposed to be agreed	-1.725
Savings being reviewed by Budget Implementation Team	-2.992
Remaining budget gap	2.895

Below is how the budget has been built for 2023/24 showing the principal movements in expenditure and income between the two years.

	2022/23 Budget	Inflation budget Pressure	Service budget pressure & Efficiency	2023/24 Draft Expenditure Budget	Proposed Changes & savings	2023/24 Net Revenue Budget	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	145.382	0.464	4.327	150.173	-0.026	150.147	4.765
Council Tax Precept	114.030	6.755	-0.022	120.763	2.128	122.891	8.861
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	259.412	7.219	4.305	270.936	2.103	273.038	13.626
Police Officer Pay	131.026	8.594	-0.432	139.188	-0.390	138.798	7.772
Police Officer overtime	2.775	0.096	-0.080	2.791	-0.017	2.774	-0.002
Police Staff Pay	71.583	3.875	-0.408	75.050	-1.208	73.842	2.259
PCSO Pay	8.160	0.535	-1.394	7.301	-0.045	7.256	-0.904
Police Staff overtime	0.652	0.021	-0.061	0.612	-0.003	0.609	-0.043
Temporary and Agency Staff	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.000	0.113	0.000
Injury & Ill Health Pensions	3.606	0.000	-0.007	3.599	0.000	3.599	-0.007
Other Employee Expenses	2.689	0.142	-0.193	2.638	0.155	2.793	0.104
Premises	9.539	2.384	-0.438	11.485	0.000	11.485	1.946
Transport	4.219	0.481	0.123	4.823	0.018	4.841	0.622
Supplies & Services	30.544	2.082	2.424	35.050	-0.666	34.384	3.759
Third Party Payments	18.594	0.300	2.329	21.223	0.274	21.497	2.903
Contribution to Reserves	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	-0.750	0.250	0.250
Capital Financing	6.895	0.000	1.427	8.322	-0.529	7.793	0.898
Gross Expenditure	290.395	18.510	4.290	313.195	-3.161	310.034	19.557
Income	-29.910	-1.119	3.443	-27.586	-0.069	-27.655	2.255
Net Budget before further savings	260.485	17.391	7.733	285.609	-3.230	282.379	21.812
Savings Identified to be approved	0.000	0.000	-11.826	-11.826	10.102	-1.724	-1.724
Savings to be identified	0.000	0.000	-1.659	-1.659	-4.146	-5.887	-5.805
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	260.485	17.391	-5.752	272.124	2.726	274.768	14.283
Funding from Reserves	1.074	0.000	0.115	1.189	0.541	1.730	0.656

Further details on the 2023/24 budget proposals are set out in Appendix B which outlines a summary of the gross expenditure by both subjective and objective analysis.

11. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The key working assumptions in the MTFP are as follows:

Funding

- The precept will increase by 5.94% in 2023/24 and 1.99% thereafter across the remainder of the medium term. There is additional flexibility available to the PCC to use in 2024/25 (2%), given the announcement by the Home Office that the maximum increase in each of these years will be £10.00
- Council tax base will increase by 1.37% in 2023/24 and then increase by between 1.69 and 2.12% across the medium term based on assumption that the economy will recover and therefore more people will be contributing to council tax with additional housing being built and brought into scope
- Government grant uplift of 3.45% has been included for 2023/24 and a 0.6% increase in 2024/25. The remaining years of the MTFP assume a 1% uplift in line with the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

Costs

- Future years pay increases have been modelled using information received from the NPCC finance committee as per the table below.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Pay Assumptions	2%	2.5%	2%	2%

- Inflation assumptions contained within the MTFP have been reviewed and allocated as per the table below (obtained from OBR). According to the Bank of England, inflation is expected to peak at 14% in quarter four of 2022 before finally starting to fall to 5% at the end of 2023. The Bank of England expects to be back to its target level of 2% by the end of 2024.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Inflation	7.5%	3.4%	1.6%	1.9%

- Energy prices remain volatile and prices continue to rise significantly. West Mercia Energy have provided an initial budget for 2023/24, the result of which is a 90% increase in projected costs. The final price cap will not be determined until April 2023. Prices remain challenging to predict, but there is an assumption that there will be a fall in prices and therefore a negative inflation rate in years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The MTFP is as follows:

	2022/23 Budget £m	2023/24 MTFS £m	2024/25 MTFS £m	2025/26 MTFS £m	2026/27 MTFS £m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	145.382	150.147	150.976	152.366	145.382
Council Tax Precept	114.030	122.891	127.796	133.052	114.030
Funding from Reserves	1.073	1.730	0.000	0.000	1.073
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	260.485	274.768	278.772	285.418	260.485
Employment Costs					
Police Officer Pay and Allowances	133.801	141.572	144.769	148.014	151.019
Police Staff Pay	72.235	74.479	76.347	78.168	79.877
PCSO Pay	8.160	7.256	7.435	7.611	7.774
Other Employee Expenses	6.408	6.477	6.541	6.603	6.692
Other Costs					
Premises	9.539	11.485	10.245	10.147	10.362
Transport	4.219	4.841	4.604	4.165	3.595
Supplies and Services	30.544	34.384	35.513	36.024	36.640
Third Party Payments	18.594	21.497	21.264	21.386	21.547
Contribution to reserves	0.000	0.250	0.700	0.700	0.700
Capital Financing	6.895	7.793	11.180	12.804	13.484
Gross Expenditure	290.395	310.034	318.598	325.622	331.690
Income	-29.910	-27.655	-28.044	-28.491	-28.950
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	260.485	282.379	290.554	297.131	302.740
Savings identified for approval	0.000	-1.724	0.000	0.000	0.000
Savings Required	0.000	5.887	11.782	11.713	42.255

It should be noted that the savings targets are cumulative, and that in-year budget gaps will be covered by savings targets and associated transformational initiatives to deliver on the PCC commitment to have a balanced budget.

12. Reserves strategy

The use of a significant proportion of reserves over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan is an important element of the financial strategy. The following table shows the full expected deployment of reserves over the life of the plan.

	£m
Projected reserves on 1st April 2023	14.679
Increase in General Reserve to reflect increase in total budget	1.750
Utilisation of reserves to smooth the impact of the SR21	-1.000
Investment in infrastructure (Estates and ICT programmes)	-0.590

Amount required to fund the costs of a major investigation (net of a successful application for Special Grant over the life of the medium-term financial plan)	-0.080
Management of the Insurance & Legal reserve	0.200
Funds to address demand management issues, prevent crime and ensure public safety	-1.305
Youth Justice Service	-0.109
Reserves remaining at the end of the MTFP period.	13.545

The table below shows the estimated reserve balances at the end of each year

Total Reserves at	31/03/2023	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/03/2027
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Reserves	7.500	7.750	8.250	8.750	9.250
Earmarked Reserves					
Budget Equalisation reserve	1.000	0.365	0.000	0.000	0.000
Investment in Infrastructure	0.748	0.508	0.258	0.158	0.158
Major Investigation Reserve	2.175	1.095	1.095	1.595	2.095
Road Safety Reserve	0.675	0.225	0.125	0.025	0.075
Commissioning Reserve	0.705	0.263	0.000	0.000	0.000
Insurance and Legal Claims	1.500	1.100	1.200	1.400	1.700
Council Tax Collection Fund	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
YJS*	0.376	0.267	0.267	0.267	0.267
Total Earmarked Reserves**	7.179	3.823	2.945	3.445	4.295
Total Reserves	14.679	11.573	11.195	12.195	13.545

* This is a collaborative arrangement with local authorities

** The 2023/24 budget figures currently only accounts for calls on major investigation reserve and YJS, all other assumed utilisation of reserves are subject to approval from the PCC

Each year the Treasurer carries out an assessment of the risks facing the PCC to determine the minimum level of reserves which the PCC needs to continue to hold. This year the assessment is that £7.500m needs to be held in general reserve at all times to provide adequately for these risks. Further details of the risk assessment are included in section 14.

13. The capital budget

The Capital Programme for 2023/24 has been prepared based on bids for capital funding by each department across West Mercia Police considered against public benefit and affordability.

Bids have been scrutinised by the PCC and the force leadership team to ensure that they reflect the priorities of West Mercia, and that timescales and costings are reasonable. The existing capital programme schemes have been updated to reflect where spend is to continue into 2023/24.

The capital budget is an outline commitment to inform future planning, borrowing decisions and assessment of the revenue impact. Final approval of any scheme is subject to a full business case being approved by the PCC. The capital budget may change as a result of business cases being progressed to full proposals.

The current programme reflects the priorities of the PCC to transform and reform police activities, services and systems as quickly and effectively as possible. It recognises the need to modernise ICT systems and further develop the estate to ensure that policing responds to changes in demand and the nature of crime as efficiently and effectively as possible. Consequently, the PCC is planning significant capital investment of £28.6m for 2023/24.

Capital Expenditure	2023/24
	£m
Change Programmes	3.051
Digital Services Transformation	11.490
Estates Programme	8.567
Fleet Replacement Programme	2.500
ICT Replacement Projects	2.230
Other Capital Projects	0.786
Total	28.624

The expected funding of the programme is outlined below. The PCC has low levels of capital receipts and revenue reserves from which to pay for capital schemes. The significant proportion of funding is from borrowing, which the PCC is very aware creates an ongoing revenue cost, where the principal and interest costs must be repaid. The PCC has made a commitment to make sure that the capital programme remains affordable. The long term strategy includes increasing the funding from revenue budget. Where schemes are funded from borrowing, the focus is on ensuring that it provides a revenue return on that investment.

The level of borrowing for the capital programme needs to be based on capital investment plans that are affordable, prudent and sustainable and there is a requirement to publish a Capital Strategy. The Capital Strategy is approved annually before the start of the financial year at West Mercia Governance Board.

Funded By	2023/24
	£m
Revenue Contributions to capital	1.500
Capital Grants	0.000
Capital Receipts	0.500
Reserves	0.410

Borrowing	26.214
Total	28.624

Treasury management

Government regulations require the PCC to approve the investment and borrowing strategies and borrowing limits for 2023/24 prior to the start of the financial year. This is incorporated within an over-arching Treasury Management Strategy which is reviewed by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee each year and approved at the West Mercia Governance Board.

To demonstrate that the objectives of affordability, prudence and sustainability have been achieved, the Prudential Code requires indicators to be determined by the PCC. These are designed to support and record local decision making and for comparison over time. They are not designed to be comparative performance indicators. These are included within the strategy to support the delivery of affordable revenue budget annually and in the medium to long term.

14. Treasurer’s statement on the soundness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves

In setting the MTFP, the PCC needs to consider the revenue budget, implications of the investment in capital and the level of reserves held. The PCC holds a General Reserve, Earmarked Reserves and Capital Reserves. These will, in part, be governed by known or likely commitments, and, in part, by the appetite for risk. As the Treasurer, I have reviewed thoroughly the financial risks facing policing in West Mercia and assessed the level of reserves required.

In doing so, I have complied with CIPFA guidance on the establishment and maintenance of local authority reserves and balances.

Compliance with the 7 key principles in CIPFA’s guidance

CIPFA Key Principles	Current situation in West Mercia
The treatment of inflation and interest rates	This year has seen the most uncertainty as factors, outside the direct control of the PCC and the force, have driven increases in inflation. These include an impact from Covid, Brexit, the conflict in Ukraine, and market reaction to Government policy. These factors have driven inflation up to 11.1% for RPI in November 2022. CPI is considered to be a more accurate measure of the price increases that impact on our business and the budget has reflected the assumption as to what price increases are likely to be during the financial year
	West Mercia Police makes full and appropriate provision, based on agreed estimates of the future pay and price rises. The assumptions on what the rises will take reference from the Spending Review & OBR predictions, as well as the estimates made by other bodies in the

	<p>Police Sector and reports from PACCTs. Whilst previous assumptions were based on information available at the time, they can be overtaken by future events. Pay and non-pay inflation continues to be applied to appropriate areas of expenditure based on the best available information at the time the budget is set.</p> <p>An informed assessment is made of interest rate movements using information provided from the Spending Review & OBR Predictions and from sector updates provided by our Treasury Management Advisors.</p> <p>Individual expenditure lines in the budget are reviewed as to whether they are impacted by the general inflation or interest rate changes. Known pressures, such as energy price increases and contractual obligations are included in the budget at their full cost.</p> <p>The revenue budget is prepared and published at estimated outturn prices.</p>
Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts	<p>The PCC and West Mercia Police make a prudent assumption of future capital receipts. There is a rationalisation plan, as part of the wider estates strategy, which identifies potential disposals and estimated receipts. This informs expectation around the level and timing of receipts.</p>
The treatment of demand level pressures	<p>The force has implemented a Priority Based Budgeting (PBP) process in 2022 to inform the budget setting and it has continued to embed this into its business processes to provide a robust programme to feed into the 2023/24 budget setting. The process involves identifying volume (demand) and method (efficiency) changes within each business area that are expected to occur in the following financial year. These are expected changes which will impact on the service levels that are currently being provided.</p> <p>Led by the force executive team, panels were held with each business area to review the proposed demand pressure and to challenge the assumptions behind the assessment. This ensures management oversight of the budget proposals.</p> <p>The Chief Constable retains an operational contingency within the annual revenue budget to help finance corporate operations or issues and to deal with day-to-day changes in demand and pressure.</p> <p>The PCC has created a number of earmarked revenue reserves to help finance specific, non-recurring expenditure commitments. Appropriations are made to and from these reserves on an annual basis as required.</p> <p>Finally, general balances are used as a last resort to manage and fund demand-led pressures. The General Fund Balance is based on a risk assessment of factors which could potentially occur, rather than the known costs which are already accounted for in the revenue budget. The PCC has requested the Treasurer make an assessment of the appropriate level of general reserves to manage risk against having resources available to deliver services to the public.</p>
The treatment of planned efficiency savings and productivity gains	<p>The force has made substantial cash savings over the last 10 years. This cumulative level of budget reduction will inevitably mean that operational budgets will come under greater pressure and/or risk of overspending in future years. The force consistently achieved its annual efficiency target in previous years.</p>

	<p>The force overspent by £0.386m in 2020/21. The savings target was achieved in year.</p> <p>The reported outturn for 2021/22 was an underspend of £7.717m. The savings achieved during the year was £3.237m against a budget of £4.056m.</p> <p>The budget for 2022/23 has savings of £6.037m that were required to be delivered during the year to ensure that the revenue budget is delivered within the resources available. Currently the force is on track to deliver 94% of the plan.</p> <p>The efficiencies identified on current services do not cover the wider budget pressures where resources are less than the total demand. The significant funding gap identified requires further work to draw up a detailed plan of how the outline saving initiatives will be delivered as part of producing a balanced budget.</p>
<p>The financial risks inherent in any significant new and existing funding partnerships, collaboration, major outsourcing arrangements or major capital developments</p>	<p>The financial consequences of partnership, collaborative working, outsourcing arrangements or capital investment are reported to the PCC as part of the medium-term planning process. Where relevant any additional costs are incorporated in the annual revenue budget. These are reviewed regularly during the year in the Money Matters report and where necessary the MTFP is amended.</p> <p>During 2022/23 the remaining significant Warwickshire hosted service agreements have been terminated so that all services of significant note have now been separated from West Mercia. This means that through the second half of 2022/23 and into 2023/24 the force is able to focus on delivery of investments directly in West Mercia to see improvements, particularly in digital infrastructure, to improve the service that the public receives.</p> <p>There is clearly a risk that local authority partners will continue to withdraw funding as a result of pressures on their own budgets. There are also risks related to the continued viability of charities and other partners with increasing demand for services. The commissioning team are managing services and working with providers to manage these pressures.</p> <p>The Estates Service have produced their Estates Strategy which provides an outline has to how the estate will be managed and developed. The service has also reviewed the project management arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose to deliver both capital projects and estates rationalisation. The plan balances the need to deliver improvements to the estate and ensure that buildings are fit for purpose, whilst also trying to maximise capital receipts and reducing the risk from backlog maintenance.</p> <p>During 2022/23 there has been the commencement of the project to deliver a new joint police and fire station in Redditch and approval of the business case for a new firearms range and training facility. The business case set out the capital case and also the revenue implications of the capital projects, recognising both the cost of borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirements.</p> <p>MRP and borrowing costs are a key element of the Medium-Term Financial Scenario, which is produced alongside the revenue budget cycle. A key element in setting the capital programme for 2023/24 is identifying the revenue implications that the approval of the capital</p>

	<p>budget would create over the medium and long term. Given the lack of capital resources to fund this, the PCC has challenged the force to demonstrate that the plans are affordable to the revenue budget and that the projects being agreed have clear benefits (with a focus on cashable revenue savings) going forward.</p>
<p>The availability of reserves, government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions.</p>	<p>The 2023/24 budget has been set to meet both the recurring revenue spend commitments and priorities, whilst recognising there are risks that need to be managed. This has taken account of the level of government grants and other sources of income. The force is being proactive in recognising the need to be prudent in managing unplanned risks, through the insurance reserve, and also how they manage the funding of the capital programme.</p> <p>There has been an assessment of the adequacy of general reserves to meet unplanned budget impacts. This has identified the potential risks to the budget that has been set and provides a sensitivity analysis of what the financial impact might be. The overall assessment is that the minimum level of general fund balances should be maintained at circa £7.5m - £8.0m. The PCC has not been required to make a call on the general reserves in the last two budget cycles.</p> <p>The PCC has created a number of earmarked revenue reserves and provisions to meet specific expenditure items. The details of each of the reserves held are included in this report. The largest held are the Major Investigation Reserve and the Insurance & Legal Claims reserve.</p> <p>The force is undertaking an investigation into allegations of manslaughter and corporate manslaughter at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust. The costs will be considerable, and the PCC has been allocated a special grant from the Home Office. The criteria for special grants is that it will fund a proportion of the cost of the investigation based on a taper. This taper is expected to be 70% of costs incurred in 2023/24. The reserve has been built up over the last budget rounds to meet the additional cost that will fall onto the PCC. The reserve is not currently sufficient to meet ongoing cost of an investigation if it continues over the MTFP. There is an expectation that the force will manage the scope and length of the investigation.</p> <p>The Insurance and Legal Claims reserve is there to manage the decision taken to increase excess exposure, in return for reduced premiums. The decision is that we will use self-insurance through an earmarked reserve to meet the cost of any claims made. This also relies on proactive risk management to avoid incidents happening that lead to a claim being made.</p>
<p>The general financial climate to which the authority is subject.</p>	<p>Section 8 of this report sets out the general financial climate that the 2023/24 budget is being developed in. The Chancellor's Autumn statement in November 2022 set out the headline funding for the public sector, which included a commitment to the Departmental Expenditure Limits announced from the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) which provided a three-year Government departmental spending budget. The Draft Settlement released on the 14th December confirmed that there would be continued increase in police grant funding to fund the recruitment of the last tranche of the additional 6,000 police officers. and that council tax could be increased by up to £15.00 in 2023/24 as a one year increase, returning to £10.00 per year in the future. The</p>

	financial planning for 2023/24 has been based on the % increase in funding
	The four-year MTFS reflects our local best estimate of future inflation rates, increases in government grants and contributions and revenues raised from council tax.
	General inflation in the UK has increased significantly over the last six months with RPI currently at 11.1%. There is an expectation that this will fall back down to the 2% target but not until 2024, which will cause further strain on the budget through the medium term
	A provision of 2% for the pay award has been included in the MTFP for 2023/24 and then 2.5% in 2024/25 and 2% p.a. thereafter.

General reserve

In recent years, a review has been undertaken of the significant risks and pressures facing the PCC before setting a minimum level of reserves held in General Reserve. A reduction is then made to reflect the fact that not all risks will occur during the life of the Medium-Term Financial Scenario.

The key risks the PCC faces (and for which no specific provision in earmarked reserves is made) are:

Efficiency savings not being met	£1.140m	<p>£5.7m of efficiencies and corporate savings have been proposed through the PBP process to be delivered by the force. This will be monitored during the year and expectation is that action will be taken if there are efficiencies that are not met in year. However, there is a risk that some fail to be delivered and alternatives cannot be found. Assumption is that there will not be a budget underspend in other areas to offset this.</p> <p>Assume that 20% may not be delivered (which would equate to £1.140k)</p>
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<p>Achieving a balanced budget through savings</p>	<p>£3.500m</p>	<p>The current projection is that the force needs to identify £10.8m of savings in order to achieve a balanced budget for the 2023/24 financial year</p> <p>The force has a track record of delivering its savings plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The force overspent by £0.386m in 2020/21. The savings target was achieved in year - The reported outturn for 2021/22 was an underspend of £7.717m. The savings achieved during the year was £3.237m against a budget of £4.056m. - The predicted outturn for 2022/23 is an overspend of £1.346m of which savings of £6.037 were required to be delivered during the year to ensure that the revenue budget is delivered within the resources available. Currently the force is on track to deliver all but 0.086m (2%) of the plan. <p>The significant increase in the total revenue savings required to deliver a balanced budget, after years of delivering savings and efficiencies means that there is a significant risk of not being able to deliver these. Whilst it is a challenging target this year, the force does have a good record of delivering the savings that they have identified as being required. An allocation of £3.500m has been made in the general fund from reserves to cover the risk of non-delivery of the target (33.3%)</p>
<p>Major Investigation Funding</p>	<p>£2.700m</p>	<p>In 20/21 the force became responsible for a major investigation into the care of mothers and babies who died or suffered serious harm in a maternity care setting at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust.</p> <p>The force has been able to claim a special grant from the Home Office and are in received of a tapered grant (85% - 70%). To cover the cost of the majority of the investigation. Requirement on West Mercia to identify £1m of resource in 2023/24 to support the investigation which is held within the reserve.</p> <p>However, there is the potential that another significant investigation could be required. It is expected that a force would cover up to 1% of the revenue budget before it is eligible to support from special grant from the Home Office. This would be a financial impact of £2.7m.</p>

Budget assumptions – risk of Collection Fund deficit from changes to tax base / LCTS	£0.250m	The deficit across all Local Collection Funds at the end of 2020/21 as a result of the impact of both Brexit and the pandemic was £0.4m for West Mercia. The current economic climate with rising costs through inflation, combined with a likely recession has clear potential to impact on employment and therefore amount of people claiming LCTS. The resulting reduction in the Collection Fund would reduce the surplus distributed into the funding. Current assumption is that the surplus would be £0.700m. I have assessed the risk of not achieving the target as being £250k.
Budget assumptions – risk of pay inflation being 1% higher than budget	£1.000m	Provision for pay award and contractual inflation made in MTFP. A provision of 1% of the pay budgets should be included to reflect the economic uncertainty that is currently being experienced in the UK. Pay budget is approx. £202m - 1% = 2.0m for half a year £1.0m
Budget assumptions – risk of non-pay inflation being 1% higher than budget	£0.750m	Provision for pay award and contractual inflation made in MTFP. A provision of 1% of the non-pay budgets of £72.2m should be included to reflect the economic uncertainty that is currently being experienced in the UK.
Change in interest rates	£0.260m	Based on 1% increase in interest rates on planned external borrowing of £26m in 2023/24. This reflects the increasing economic uncertainty
Additional costs to establish arrangements to reform policing in West Mercia	£0.500m	Refers to revenue impact of capital expenditure which can be cash limited. Substantial provision for both revenue and capital expenditure already made in the Medium-Term Capital Programme and MTFP. In the year 2023/24 it is assumed that in-house project and programme management costs of £1.5m can be capitalised. There is a risk that this resource may be used to support revenue projects. A provision will be made here to mitigate this risk.
Replacement of Airwaves Network/ESN/ESCMP	£2.000m	Lack of detail and clarity on implementation from Home Office. Substantial provision made in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme but that may not be affordable given other budget pressures
Impact of review of Police Funding Formula	£0.000m	Outcome unknown and timing of review delayed by Home Office
General Contingency provision for extraordinary events	£2.750m	Based on 1% of net revenue expenditure of circa £275m
	£14.850m	
Reduction to reflect the fact not all of these risks will occur in the short term	£7.425m	50% reduction to reflect that not all events will occur in this time period
	£7.425m	

The aggregate cost of those elements which it is feasible to estimate is £7.425m. It should be noted that the impact of any major investigations, changes as a result of a funding review or increased economic and political uncertainty cannot be accurately estimated and could prove to be significant. The PCC does not necessarily have to provide money in reserves for each of these elements individually unless they are certain to occur, as one contingency can provide for several possible events, provided that all of the events are unlikely to occur together, and an adjustment has been applied to reflect this. However, he does need to consider the likelihood of their occurring during the period covered by the plan.

I therefore recommend that the minimum level of reserves be set at £7.500m. It is recognised that this is slightly below the 3% of the net revenue budget threshold which is generally considered to be best practice, but is sufficient based on the assessment of risk undertaken. The budget for 2023/24 includes a requirement to increase the General Fund Reserve by £0.250m, which then continues to increase at £0.5m through the Medium Term, providing an additional contribution to offset the risks identified.

Provided that this sum is available at all times within reserves, I am satisfied that this budget is soundly based and adequately provides for the risks facing the PCC.

Earmarked reserves

The predicted balance on 31st March 2023 for each earmarked revenue reserve, which has a specific purpose and particular timescale, is shown in the table below.

Earmarked Reserve	Forecast Balance 31/03/23	Purpose of Reserve
	£m	
Budget Equalisation reserve	1.000	To provide additional resource to invest in transformational change programmes.
Investment in Infrastructure Reserve	0.748	To invest in the infrastructure (ICT and Estates) including delivering schemes such as cost saving energy efficiency schemes.
Major Investigation Reserves	2.175	Funds held to meet costs of major investigation above the taper funding provided through the special grant. The 2023/24 taper funding is expected to be 70% of the costs incurred. The remaining 30% will be offset by the call on this reserve.
Road Safety Reserve	0.675	Funds held to fund road safety initiatives
Commissioning	0.705	To support spend on non-recurring PCC commissioning initiatives.

Insurance and Legal Claims Reserve	1.500	Provides a self-insurance fund where it is cost effective to do so.
YJS Reserve	0.376	Funds held on behalf of the responsible authorities to fund the costs of youth justice services.
Total Earmarked Reserves	7.179	

The tables in section 12 show the deployment of all reserves over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Scenario, and the remaining reserve balances at the end of each financial year.

Capital reserves and balances

In addition to the revenue reserves, capital reserves can also be maintained. These can be used to finance the capital programme.

There is a reserve holding Capital Grants Unapplied. This holds the capital grants from the Home Office that have not yet been spent. These grants are applied to fund the capital programme and can be carried forward without penalty until required. It is expected that all capital grants awarded will have been spent during 2022/23 and the balance on the reserve as of 1st April 2023 is expected to be £0.0m.

There is a Capital Receipts Reserve. This holds receipts from the sale of land and buildings which are no longer needed for operational policing as more efficient use is made of partners' and the policing estate. The funding table in section 12 above outlines the receipts expected from asset sales from 2023/24 to 2025/26. Currently any receipts in year have been used to invest in the capital programme and avoid borrowing. The balance on the reserve as of 1st April 2023 it is expected to be £0.0m.

The PCC has instructed the Estates Service to identify how we can maximise capital receipts from the estates and also make effective decisions to reduce the revenue costs of the estate. This will ensure that we are using the assets we have as efficiently as possible. The raising of capital receipts is an important part of offsetting borrowing required to deliver improvements and ensuring the capital programme remains affordable.

Summary

There has been a comprehensive review of all reserves held by the PCC and the spending plans that are set out in the budget. This report sets out clearly and transparently the reserves held, the purpose for which they are held, the plans for their use and the risks and assumptions underpinning them.

The 2023/24 budget represents a significant increase in the risk and uncertainty in the ability of the PCC to set and deliver a balanced budget. The impact of inflation comes at a time when the organisation is into the third year of a £40m investment in its digital infrastructure. This investment is required to ensure that it can operate effectively using the technology that is available to drive service efficiency, but it is a costly undertaking.

This necessary investment comes at a time when the establishment number of police officers is at almost the highest level on record. These two competing costs fall on a limited amount of resource available making it challenging to set a balanced budget.

I remain satisfied that a balanced revenue budget is set, but that it is reliant on a concerted commitment from the force to deliver the planned cost reductions agreed with the PCC. I consider that the force has a positive record on delivering savings plans over the past few years.

As already mentioned, the requirement to invest in our digital infrastructure, our estate and other assets means that there is an increasing cost both in terms of MRP and borrowing costs. This has been recognised and included in the MTFP. This is one of the driving factors of the deficit in 2024/25 financial year. Planning will begin immediately, alongside delivering the 2023/24 saving plans to ensure that we can live within the resources available over the medium term.

West Mercia deliberately holds a low level of reserves to ensure that available resources are focused on the delivery of services for the public each year. However, this means that the response to further pressures on revenue costs would place considerable risk on the ability of the force to deliver efficient and effective public focused services within the set revenue budget.

Summary of West Mercia Grant Settlement

The estimated Police Funding Settlement from the Home Office is:

2022/23	Funding Stream	2023/24	Change
£ m		£ m	%
81.292	Police Grant (including Community Support Grant)	81.576	
52.115	Revenue Support Grant	52.296	
0.00	PUP uplift Grant	4.300	
11.975	Legacy Council Tax Grants (freeze grants and plus council tax support grant)	11.975	
145.382	Total	150.147	3.3

The 2023/24 grant settlement has identified the PUP grant as a separate element of core funding which has meant that comparison of individual changes in funding is not representative year on year.

In addition to the main central Government grants shown above, the PCC also receives grant funding for Victims Services Commissioning and Restorative Justice from the Ministry of Justice. The anticipated grant allocation for 2023/24 that has already been announced is £2.6m

Appendix B(i)

West Mercia PCC

Subjective analysis of income & expenditure

	2022/23 Budget	2023/24 Net Revenue Budget	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Government Grant (Core Funding)	145.382	150.147	4.765
Council Tax Precept	114.030	122.891	8.861
Total Funding / Net Budget Requirement	259.412	273.038	13.626
Police Officer Pay	131.026	138.798	7.772
Police Officer overtime	2.775	2.773	-0.002
Police Staff Pay	71.583	73.842	2.259
PCSO Pay	8.160	7.256	-0.904
Police Staff overtime	0.652	0.609	-0.043
Temporary and Agency Staff	0.113	0.113	0.000
Injury & Ill Health Pensions	3.606	3.599	-0.007
Other Employee Expenses	2.689	2.793	0.104
Premises	9.539	11.485	1.946
Transport	4.219	4.841	0.622
Supplies & Services	30.544	34.303	3.759
Third Party Payments	18.594	21.497	2.903
Contribution to Reserves	0.000	0.250	0.250
Capital Financing	6.895	7.793	0.898
Gross Expenditure	290.395	309.952	19.557
Income	-29.910	-27.655	2.255
Net Budget before further savings	260.485	282.297	21.812
Savings Identified to be approved	0.000	-1.724	-1.724
Savings to be identified	0.000	-5.805	-5.805
Net Force Budget / Expenditure / Variance	260.485	274.768	14.283
Funding from Reserves	1.073	1.730	0.656

West Mercia PCC

Objective analysis of income & expenditure

	2022/23	2023/24	Variance	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%
Business Services Directorate				
Business Operations	7.943	9.118	1.175	14.8%
People and OD	9.547	10.389	0.842	8.8%
Strategy Planning & Insight	4.029	4.441	0.412	10.2%
	21.519	23.948	2.429	11.3%
Commercial Services				
Digital Services	20.955	21.689	0.734	3.5%
Legal	3.189	3.474	0.285	8.9%
Change	3.129	2.289	-0.840	-26.8%
Finance	0.823	0.890	0.067	8.1%
Procurement & Contracts	0.174	0.395	0.221	127.0%
	28.270	28.737	0.467	1.7%
Corporate Support Directorate				
PSD & Vetting	1.668	1.911	0.243	14.6%
Corporate Support	1.875	1.875	0.000	0.0%
Audit Risk & Compliance	1.041	1.172	0.131	12.6%
	4.584	4.958	0.374	8.2%
Local Policing				
Local Policing Directorate Level	-3.256	0.609	3.865	-118.7%
South Worcestershire	21.505	21.938	0.433	2.0%
North Worcestershire	21.974	23.379	1.405	6.4%
Herefordshire	13.984	14.415	0.431	3.1%
Shropshire	19.358	20.003	0.645	3.3%
Telford	18.192	18.593	0.401	2.2%
Problem Solving	4.631	5.335	0.704	15.2%
	96.388	104.272	7.884	8.2%
Operations Support				
Ops Support Directorate Level	1.978	2.092	0.114	5.8%
Force Operations	22.130	21.654	-0.476	-2.2%
Public Contact	19.239	20.522	1.283	6.7%
	43.347	44.268	0.921	2.1%
Crime & Vulnerability				
C&V Directorate Level	0.602	2.222	1.620	269.1%

Criminal Justice	3.908	4.246	0.338	8.6%
Custody	7.234	8.064	0.830	11.5%
Forensics	7.222	9.475	2.253	31.2%
Intelligence & Authorising Officer	4.173	5.331	1.158	27.7%
Investigations	8.515	9.574	1.059	12.4%
ROCU	4.622	5.420	0.798	17.3%
Special Branch	0.009	-0.002	-0.011	-122.2%
Vulnerability & Safeguarding	1.898	4.597	2.699	142.2%
	38.183	48.927	10.744	28.1%
Corporate Budgets	7.722	3.288	-4.433	-57.4%
Police and Crime Commissioner				
Estates	10.335	12.459	2.124	20.6%
Governance & Commissioning	9.137	9.989	0.852	9.3%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1.000	1.500	0.500	50.0%
	20.472	23.948	3.476	17.0%
Savings Identified to be approved	0.000	-1.724	-1.724	
Savings to be identified	0.000	-5.854	-5.854	
TOTAL	260.485	274.768	14.284	5.5%

Appendix C

Detailed Capital Programme 2023/24

2023/24 Capital Programme			
Area	Project	Chief Officer Sponsor	23/24 Project Value
Digital Services Transformation	DST - Application Transformation	Richard Muirhead	£ 5,500,000
	DST - End User Experience	Richard Muirhead	£ 2,850,000
	DST - Data & Integration	Richard Muirhead	£ 1,815,000
	DST - Tech Modernisation	Richard Muirhead	£ 950,000
	DST - Future Operating Model	Richard Muirhead	£ 375,000
	DST Total		
Other Change Programmes	Business Services Support System	Rachel Hartland Lane	£ 1,250,000
	Digital Forensics Transformation	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 935,000
	Custody CCTV & Infrastructure Replacement	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 400,000
	Public Contact Changes	ACC Rachel Jones	£ 273,000
	PSD Data Monitoring (ATA)	DCC Alex Murray	£ 85,000
	ESN Programme	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 40,000
	Learning Management System	Rachel Hartland Lane	£ 35,000
	Occ. Health Case Management System	Rachel Hartland Lane	£ 32,700
Other Change Total			£ 3,050,700
Estates Programme	Redditch Police Station	ACC Rachel Jones	£ 6,000,000
	Firearms Training School / Firearms Range	ACC Rachel Jones	£ 2,000,000
	New SARC	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 500,000
	HAU Relocation - Shropshire MASH	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 40,000
	CSI Estate Transformation	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 27,000
	Estates Total		

Fleet Replacement Programme	Vehicles - Fleet Replacement Programme	Rachel Hartland Lane	£ 2,500,000
	FRP Total		£ 2,500,000
ICT Replacement Projects	Replacement Servers	Richard Muirhead	£ 460,000
	Switches	Richard Muirhead	£ 400,000
	Mobile Devices - Radios	Richard Muirhead	£ 310,000
	Forcepoint Firewalls	Richard Muirhead	£ 250,000
	Mobile Devices - Phones	Richard Muirhead	£ 225,000
	Software Upgrade for Core IT Infrastructure	Richard Muirhead	£ 185,000
	Mobile Devices - Laptops	Richard Muirhead	£ 150,000
	Load Balancers	Richard Muirhead	£ 150,000
	Remote Access Solution	Richard Muirhead	£ 100,000
	ICT Replacement Total		£ 2,230,000
Other Capital Projects	Body Armour Replacement	ACC Rachel Jones	£ 600,000
	CIU Accreditation Equipment	ACC Richard Cooper	£ 155,992
	Road Safety - Av. Speed Cameras	ACC Rachel Jones	£ 30,000
	Other Capital Total		£ 785,992
2023/24 Capital Programme Total			£28,623,692

Budget Consultation 2023/24 - Summary

1. **Background**

- 1.1. The budget consultation ran in a two-stage process.
- 1.2. The first survey ran from the 27th April 2022 until the 11th July 2022. The purpose of this survey was to understand the views of the public on local policing, contact and engagement and crime and anti-social behaviour issues. This informs the PCC prior to firming up his draft budget proposals for 2023/24.
- 1.3. The PCC followed this up by carrying out a second survey, specifically on the draft precept and budget proposals. This consultation launched on the 6th December 2022 and ended at 12pm on the 6th January 2023. A precept proposal, the Proposed Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24– 2027/28 was published as part of the consultation process, along with a short online survey to enable people to comment on the proposals being put forward.
- 1.4. In total, 1,972 responses were received from both surveys. 1,407 of these were in response to the first survey. 565 were in response to the second.

2. **Publicity and media coverage**

- 2.1. A range of communication tools were used to promote both consultations to communities across West Mercia. These included:
- 2.2. *Social media:* Press releases and consultation links were shared via the West Mercia PCC Facebook and Twitter pages for both surveys on launch and throughout. Accompanying graphics were used to replace existing banners on both social media accounts.
- 2.3. All social media platforms are monitored and where appropriate comments on the precept have been responded to, however the 'instant' nature of this media means it is not practical to include them in this report.
- 2.4. *Press release/media:* A number of press releases were issued for both consultations. Regularly issued PCC Newsletters highlighted that the surveys were open, and encouraged people to take part during the period each was open. This was covered by a number of different media outlets.
- 2.5. The Neighbourhood Matters platform also saw the consultations promoted directly to thousands of residents.

3. **Survey Findings**

- 3.1. Set out below are the findings from the two consultation exercises undertaken to inform the budget and precept setting.

1.Your Views Survey

- 3.2. Ahead of developing the budget for 2022/23, the PCC ran a public survey to understand public priorities/concerns and engagement with the West Mercia Police. An online survey was used to seek these views. The survey included a number of multiple choice answers with up to 10 questions in total.

Demographics

- 3.3. In total for this survey, 1,407 responses were received.

- 3.4. A breakdown of respondents by council tax area is shown below.

45% (581) Worcestershire
30% (392) Shropshire
11% (142) Telford and Wrekin
14% (177) Herefordshire

- 3.5. Of those that responded, 94% were a resident of West Mercia with the remaining 6% not.

- 3.6. Around 97% of respondents were responding as a member of the public with the remaining 3% responding as a business owner.

Consultation findings

- 3.7. The first section in the report focused on people's perceptions towards crime and antisocial behaviour in their local area. The headline findings were:
- Anti-social behaviour, road safety (including speeding) and drugs were identified as the top three issues or priorities for respondents. Areas least identified as a priority or issue include modern slavery and night time economy.
 - When asked how visible West Mercia Police are compared to 12 months ago, 50% of respondents felt indifferent, 40% felt it was worse and the remaining 10% feeling it was better.
 - When asked how accessible West Mercia Police are when compared to 12 months ago, 55% felt indifferent, 36% felt it was worse and remaining 9% feeling it was better.
 - Question 4 asked respondents if they had any experience of West Mercia Police, 62% said they did whilst 38% said no, they hadn't. Of those that

responded yes, 44% said their experience was positive, 32% said it was negative and 24% said it was neither.

- The majority of respondents did not feel informed about West Mercia Police and what was happening in their area or know who their local safer neighbourhood team.

- 3.8. The PCC took these findings into account and used them in the development of the draft budget. This budget delivers a further 40 officers, taking West Mercia's establishment to 2,496, the highest establishment number on record in the force. These additional officers will be focused on neighbourhood policing and addressing key community concerns. This includes a focus on community engagement. This will be done by implementing new technology to improve efficiency and accessibility of the public.
- 3.9. This extends to making sure funding is also focussed on commissioning victim services and crime prevention. This budget includes provision to ensure victim services in West Mercia can cope with demand and provide the right support at the right times, to enable people to cope and recover. Working with partners funding will also be targeted at initiatives that deliver effective prevention and community problem solving. The themes identified in this survey are reflected in a number of ambitions and measures that the Commissioner will use to ensure resources are used effectively by the force.

2. Budget Consultation Survey

- 3.10. To further support the above findings, a short online survey was launched to enable people to comment on the draft budget proposals put forward by the Commissioner, informed by the first round of consultation. The online survey asked up to 2 questions specifically around the precept and included one open question enabling respondents to comment on their reasons for either supporting or opposing the proposals.

Demographics

- 3.11. A total of 565 responses were received. A breakdown of respondents by council tax area is shown below.

36% (203) South Worcestershire
21% (120) North Worcestershire
21% (118) Shropshire
14% (76) Herefordshire
9% (48) Telford and Wrekin

- 3.12. A number of additional demographic questions were asked as part of this survey to further understand those who are engaging with the survey.
- Around 56% of respondents were male, 37% were female, 6% preferred not to say and 1% said other.
 - Almost 36% of respondents were aged 61 to 80, 29%, aged 46 to 60, 20% between 31 and 45, 8% between 18 and 30, 7% preferred not to say and remaining 1% aged 80+.
 - The majority (91%) of respondents were White/English/British/Other, 8% preferred not to say with the remaining 1% split between Mixed Ethnic Background, Other Ethnic Group and Asian/Asian British.

Consultation findings

- 3.13. The second survey asked whether respondents would be willing to pay, on average, £9.84* (3.94%) more for policing per year based on a band D property. The majority of respondents, 74%, supported this proposed increase, whilst the remaining 24% did not.
- 3.14. Those that showed support to the first question were asked if they were willing to pay more than the 3.94% increase. Around 57% responded yes whilst the remaining 43% said no.
- 3.15. When asked if they had any further comments, 284 respondents chose to respond. A summary of all the comments are shown below, grouped by common theme or concern (please see appendix for complete list of comments). It should be noted that a number of the comments referred to more than one theme and that there is a degree of subjectivity in the interpretation of each comment.

Main themes

- 3.16. The main themes arising from the comments were:
- 3.17. *Financial concerns/increase in cost of living* – a number of people made a finance related comment, many were concerned about other household price increases, the perception that additional funding should come from government and how effectively the budget was spent. The size and cost of the PCC team was also raised by some.
- 3.18. *Officer numbers/Police visibility* – The comments were generally from those who remain concerned about a perceived lack of police presence including the closure of some police stations. There was some reference to the need for police staff in roles to support operational policing and some negative perceptions around the effectiveness of PCSO's.

- 3.19. Police response/action- Comments were generally from those who remained concerned about a perceived lack of police action to incidents. Some reference to specific issues, namely rural crime, road safety, drugs and ASB.
- 3.20. General support – a number of those supporting the proposals just left a positive comment which did not align with any of the main themes.
- 3.21. Miscellaneous comments – a number of respondents both for and against the proposals left a comment which does not directly fit into the above themes.

4. Commissioner's response to the comments received

- 4.1. Within both surveys a number of people chose to comment on the proposals. The comments have been grouped into themes, based on the predominant message in each comment. A response to each of the main themes is shown below.
- 4.2. Financial concerns/ increase in cost of living – I am dedicated to delivering the best service and have heard loud and clear from the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire about where their concerns lie.
- 4.3. There is no avoiding the fact that the cost of living is rising, with many people having to make tough decisions in order to balance their household budgets. Public sector organisations, including policing, are facing the same inflationary challenges.
- 4.4. As PCC I have always committed that I will ensure every penny spent on policing is spent wisely before I ever ask the public to pay any more. My record as a low tax PCC is clear throughout my term. That principle of achieving best value is even more important this year. There is an ever-greater need for efficiency, maximising the benefit of the resources and assets at my disposal to keep our communities safe.
- 4.5. This year's budget will tackle the unavoidable cost pressures we face, maximises the value of investments I have made in the journey to deliver a safer West Mercia, and addresses key priorities for communities.
- 4.6. Officer numbers/Police visibility – This survey provided communities with the opportunity to voice their views and inform the budget setting process. I have, as I promised, taken these views to shape this budget proposal.
- 4.7. I have remained resolute in delivering a safer West Mercia and, ultimately, what the public want – increased visibility and accessibility of police officers. I am therefore boosting officer numbers by a further 40, taking West Mercia's establishment to 2,496, the highest establishment number on record in the force. These additional officers will be based at the heart of communities, focused on neighbourhood policing and addressing key community concerns.

- 4.8. Whilst I am reassured by the steps already taken by West Mercia Police to be visible and accessible in the heart of the communities they serve, this budget will ensure there will be an ever-greater focus on community engagement. This will be done by implementing new technology to improve efficiency and accessibility of the public. This ease of contact, that so many communities feel is lacking, will improve relationships and ultimately boost trust and confidence.
- 4.9. Police response/action - As your PCC I am confident that this budget continues to deliver my high ambitions for the communities of West Mercia. The proposals put forward by the force will continue to see ever greater innovation and continuous improvement in many of the services delivered to the communities across the three counties.
- 4.10. The biggest issues in society cannot be addressed in isolation by myself as PCC, nor West Mercia Police; this budget delivers key resources to tackle vulnerability and prevention, and to work alongside key local partners to prevent harm wherever possible and protect those most at risk.
- 4.11. I will support the force in continuing to prioritise the greatest possible proportion of resource towards frontline policing and ultimately delivering the best for communities.

No	Free Text Comment
1	I think it is important to still be able to have the option to walk in to a police station and speak to a person, despite the digital world we live in there is still a large portion of society, especially elderly, vulnerable, vision impaired, hearing impaired and people with mental illness that actually would like to speak to a person, and not be left with the only option to make a report online, or spend over an hour waiting for a 101 call to be answered
2	Are you going to make cuts in your ridiculously large team to save costs? It seems most of them are there to boost your own PR and political agenda. How is this a good investment in keeping West Mercia safer?
3	I would ask that you insist on additional funding from Government to support the safer communities every law abiding citizen wants. Conservative Party policies have led to cuts. I believe that those cuts have allowed criminal activity to rise in Redditch, especially in relation to drugs. West Mercia staff and officers work extremely hard, for which I am grateful. Additional officers are welcomed.
4	Appreciate the pressures that the current climate are presenting but increasing an optional precept at this time places further pressures on those who are facing the hardest conditions and challenges. Improved efficiencies and cutting out endemic wasteful practices in the policing service will no achieve the same outcome without the need to place further costs on already stretched finances that the public you serve are encountering. Better use of resources, utilising the talent of your officers and staff more effectively and, like all public bodies, reduced use of overly expensive external temporary resources will provide savings. It is a vicious cycle and like other costs I highly doubt you will reduce your precept in better years.
5	Money should be found from within the service. A look at the structure of the service needs to be made. Perhaps no further funding for non- critical projects and protect and reinvest in those so we can get a police officer out in a timely manner when we call. The PCC has added two assistance PCC's to his office. Remove them. Find further savings from the PCC's office. Remove unnecessary and non critical projects from the force itself and get back to basics. The continued rising of the council tax is not sustainable when the public can see the enormous wastage ongoing with West Mercia Police and the PCC's office.
6	Having the fourth lowest rise in precept since 2016 is nothing to be proud of- the cumulative effect of these poor historical decisions are exaggerating the crisis now being faced by West Mercia. The overly simplistic focus on police officer numbers is also lamentable. The precept this year needs to be maximised not positioned as some form of political decision. A PCC that cannot deliver an effective service should be punished at the ballot box.
7	We need you to focus the police on crime rather than providing other services which nhs local authorities should be providing
8	You increase the costs every year with no improvement in service. I disagreed with you last year and I disagree again this year. Get your officers out of their cars and walking around the streets that should save you money on fuel and car servicing and save the public money. How about a vote on getting rid on PCCs too.
9	Struggle to see the value for what we already pay.
10	The PCC is doing a fine job ... and has particularly impressive hair !
11	There is enough money wasted on projects that are not needed which could be shifted into policing
12	Police locally are awful. A friend investigated his own break in and caravan theft and collected evidence but no one was interested. If you are going to invest in staff do not make it on uniform carrying cso's. They are hopeless. I watched them in Shrewsbury walk past anti social behaviour too afraid to intervene.

13	The lack of investment in your fleet is notable. The police cars in West Mercia not only look unprofessional, they are hardly roadworthy. The continued use of old diesel vehicles also does not support your commitment to reducing your carbon footprint. The expansion of the PCC's office is also a concern. The ever growing workforce and eye watering salary's for deputy and assistant PCC's is not conducive with budget restraints and you are simply deceiving the public when you ask for more money. The public want to spend money on a Bobby on the beat, not refurbishing PCC accommodation, expenses or political salaries. The PCC often talks about holding the Chief Constable to account, it is now time to hold him to account by diverting funding from his own department to the frontline and providing officers with the right tools to do the job.
14	Look at the budget plan you've got residence within shropshire paying almost the highest, yet with a low crime rate and LOWEST amount of officers as they're never seen, yet Telford is one of the LOWEST payers yet they always have hundreds of police officers. You Mr champion out of his office and up to shropshire and Telford to see the reality!
15	Additional investment in smarter tools to help fight crime is required. The force needs to modernise.
16	You are so out of touch ... you have a team of 25 personnel and ask us the public for more money ... corruption at the top!!!
17	There would be plenty of money in the pot to pay for policing if we didn't have the office of PCC the assistants, offices being refurbished for them and however many thousands of pounds being claimed in expenses.
18	How can you ask for more money when you spent over 800k on land for a new police station in hereford 3 years ago which has not gone all quiet!!!! You have 2 deputies and 25 members of staff according to your website ... I think you need to save money there before asking us for more!
19	Until our woke, cultural Marxist, political activist, diversity & LGBTQ obsessed, excuse for a police service, is completely reformed, I don't want to spend a single penny on them (or the Fire Service).
20	Officer numbers will not be maintained due to retirements and new recruits resigning as they realise the job is rubbish. But do invest in early intervention.
21	I believe that it is important for police to be a visible presence in local areas. Its a shame that so many of the local station have been closed over the years
22	Every year you promise more police officers and take above inflation rises off us, police are noticeable by their absence from the streets and yet you still want more and more money. Your rises have outstripped every other part of the council tax and now its time to stop taking excessive amounts
23	Efficencies within the police should be highlighted and actioned before hitting the public pocket. IT in West Mercia appears to be getting worse as I have never seen so many notifications of issues in the call centre, despite being a modern building with newer tech.
24	I think you could reduce back room staff would be a big saving. Too many staff sitting around with no work to do. (ex employee. I know). Turn heating down also. Save money that way to pay for more PC on the street.
25	As long as all of the additional money goes straight into the pay budget to avoid staff redundancies - then I'm in. However, more scrutiny should be placed on your contracted staff, are they delivering for what they are costing? WHO is monitoring their work and checkpoints?
26	Why do you have police officers, being paid the full amount, doing either 'made-up' jobs or jobs that historically were done alongside other work? I don't want a police officer carrying out licensing checks, I want them responding to incidents.
27	i need that money to keep myself warm and fed. the money needs to go to giving police officers a pay rise, and retention of officers is concerning

28	Don't see the benefit for the increase - reported a crime and didn't get any response from anyone.
29	It would be nice to see actual local proactive Policing in the mornings. Especially were the commuters are using local estate roads as rally tracks between the hours of 0600 and 0700 hrs ta.
30	I often see PCSO driving around in Police vehicles, last week I saw two in a riot van. This gives a false impression of officer numbers on the street. Either increase their powers or make them drive vehicles that identify them as PCSO.
31	We are in a cost of living crisis. This money should be coming from central government
32	consideration should be made on selling buildings which are under occupied to reduce any budget gap
33	The uplift of police officers was not based on a comprehensive understanding of how we should respond to the challenges of modern-day policing. What about the ratio of officers to police staff? With fraud and cybercrime on the rise, the need to understand and interpret complex data is ever increasing so have officers the skills to do this?
34	I would be willing to pay more, but not an unlimited amount.
35	The provision of policing needs to be vastly improved - WMP doesn't just need more officers it needs more staff
36	I am willing to keep up with inflation, Anything else is a cut. Are the Government planning the same...
37	You cannot keep asking the public to pay more when we are not receiving pay rises in line with inflation. We only have so much money to spend and disposable income is at an all time low. The rise may seem relatively low but with everything else rising and wages not keeping pace there has to come a point when tax payers need to be given a break.
38	The service would appear to have deteriorated over the tenure of the PCC system
39	West Mercia Police have been underfunded for years, are not paid enough money and are not valued for they work they do however they just get on with the job. But unless things start to change many staff will leave the job as it really isn't worth it anymore. Then our communities will not be protected from harm. The hardworking staff need to be recognised, thanked and looked after.
40	The money could be found elsewhere. Such as reducing the PCC's office budget. Is it true the PCC (including office and support staff) takes 18% of all West Mercias budget?
41	Any rise should benefit the force but, I do not want to see knee jerk reactions around green efficiencies. We have no infrastructure or vehicles capable of covering the miles required for our policing.
42	I don't believe the Force is being run effectively with value for money and until change is made in terms of delivery of service I would not support an increase in contribution
43	As long as we can see that the money is being spent. More investment in local Policing to see the officers out on the beat not having to back fill for empty posts at the station
44	I hear how utterly broken the force's IT structure is. I have also read the PCCs comments about how successful the implementation of Athena was. This is not true. Significantly more work for officers without the required support. The split of the two forces created a significant amount of additional work for West Mercia, now with less resources. Stop messing up our police force.
45	It seems money is wasted in the PCCs structure which seems to be so much more resource hungry than the old police authority. It would been good to see that money diverted into policing.

46	Asking the public for more money at what is a very difficult time for families and when the precept has increased at it's maximum level in recent years is a tough pill to swallow. £10 may not seem like much but added together with other price increases it is a lot. Whilst this may make effective policing even more difficult in the current climate instead of asking for more money a re-think of how policing should take place should be looked at. For example, what incidents to attend are where police are called to matters which aren't crimes.
47	I would be willing to pay more but would like some guarantees that the additional funding will go directly to frontline services and not to further recruitment in the PCC office.
48	Are you investing in Police Staff posts? Because without them police officers cannot do their jobs
49	If it meant more money for actual policing and saving jobs, particularly back office roles too, then I'd happily pay£15 per year!!!
50	How many employees are now working in the PCC office? How much of the budget is spent in the PCC's office? The previous Police Authority were volunteers.....
51	No
52	The reduction in budget to policing will be disastrous. Whilst I do not believe this should be passed on to the public, when central government could prevent it, I would also want to ensure front line services are protected.
53	I haven't seen any increase in service levels over the last few years when precept levels have gone up. Not sure why a further increase would be any different.
54	Mr Campion keeps promising improved policing in return for increased precept but isn't delivering
55	I think that here in Wellington we have a very good relationship with the police. There are always people wanting to complain.
56	There too much money from the existing budget wasted on non core policing functions and roles. Other PCCs manage without additional, unnecessary support staff and ridiculous amounts spent on consultants.
57	Greater investment in technology to make policing smart
58	We are in a cost of living crisis. The service levels are not acceptable. HMICFRS has highlighted poor performance, I'm not prepared to pay more money for inadequate policing.
59	Because this money is largely wasted by the PCC pet projects and not delivered to front line policing. When money is placed into increasing numbers on the front line to enable a experienced and fully staffed response then the PCC may have more support for his other pet projects.
60	How about paying specials a bit like military reserves that way you would get a greater uptake of people wanting to do the job. Also ensure all officers are tazer trained and carrying when on duty.
61	I would want any extra payments to go towards wildlife crime including illegal fox hunting
62	In my experience where I had evidence of a vehicle used in a theft the police were not willing to approach the owner of the vehicle. I don't think more money is the answer.
63	Round it up to 5%
64	Maybe in normal times but the cost of living is having a massive impact on my financial status
65	i do not believe we should any more for police in herefordshire till we get a service when a guy phones up to report a assault and is told the guy who assaulted him has been getting away for years no we cant come out

66	Get no policing now so is that little going to make a difference. Redditch resident police station being pushed out of town, so foot patrols out of the window. I will take a photograph next time I see a police officer walking in the town centre. Police officers seem to have abandoned wearing hats, was that a money saving exercise? I thought they wore distinctive headgear so they stood out in public.
67	You have already grabbed a huge increase in your precept in the last year or two. In these difficult times, we simply cannot afford to pay even more on top of that. I suggest you go back to your beloved government and demand a substantial increase in their contribution from general taxation for which I have already paid once. I do not intend to pay twice.
68	You have had more money year on year and you still do nothing about my priorities of illegal and dangerous cycling and electric scooters which is a serious problem for pedestrians. Special constables are policing on the cheap. Get your officers out of their cRs and walking the streets.
69	We need to be able to access police station via front counters, Kidderminster counter is open only from 0830-1630 weekdays and shorter hours of a weekend. The next closest station is Worcester or Telford where the hours are probably the same. WHY when people who work need to access stations out of work hours, surely police stations can make themselves accessible and available until 8pm at least everyday??? It used to be like this, how is this progress, report online you say, half the time there is an error, phone lines are not working, west Mercia Police are tweeting and posting about reporting emergency calls only as phones are playing up again. At least if we could get into the stations we could be heard and seen, have some confidence in the force. Then and maybe then we would say yes to your first question of the £9 odd a year extra towards policing Thanks
70	My home finances are already overstretched due to the cost of living rising faster than my pay which has remained the same
71	There needs to be foot patrols present around the difficult areas to protect the public from anti social behaviour.
72	Nope!
73	I would be willing to pay more if we had policing in rural areas, 2 police officers of an evening to cover Tenbury Wells - Bodenham - Kington is totally unacceptable, and the crime in rural is rising considerably. And for the budget not to be wasted on 70K's worth of new leaflets for yourself and I would also like to know why what happens with 18% of the budget that you take!!
74	No
75	No
76	Really dependent on what crimes are being suggested for increased policing; if for policing social media comments, then I'm unwilling to sanction any increased spending; if on the other hand, its for things like increased detection of real crime eg burglary or neighbour anti-social behaviour or for the proper, unbiased policing of illegal hunting with dogs, then I am very willing
77	Telford had grown over the 46 years I have lived here and policing has not grown with it we need more police on the streets with a presents, I severed has a special for many years and understand your frustration but we need to tackle the serious drug problem and gang mentally in the area and also have confidence we see more police on the beat, back to basics, we need more community support policing our area may be a app to report an incident with gos location for non emergency incidents with automatic alerts to the community. I would gladly pay more if I saw a larger presence on the streets
78	Make better use of the money you already get

79	We have far too few police to be deployed on urgent matters. I have listened to police everywhere, not just West Mercia and frankly it is the PCC who should be telling the government in no uncertain terms that our police cannot and should not be baby sitting mental health patients or spending police resources on mental health. That belongs to the NHS budget and they get enough money for it. If the NHS demands money they get it but the police do not. The public need to feel safe and to see police officers out and about. Incidents are put on the back burner so that police time can be wasted. Unless the PCC stands up strongly for their staff and makes it very plain to the government exactly what happens and how much of your resources are wasted on NHS matters everywhere will become less safe from crime. Push back, is what it is called. Push back, stand up for your staff and take no nonsense from the Home Office.
80	It would be good to see some visible policing in Malvern. They are all hiding somewhere. When you do see a police car they always seem to hunt in pairs. The whole situation is pathetic.
81	Do not feel we have enough presence with current policing units and local snts so why shoujld we have to feel to pay more on minimum wages
82	The caveat is better results - more community policing and visibility of police in the community
83	Would like to see more 'bobbies on the beat' around church hill, and thank you for all the cover provided so far, on the beat is the best way but I completely understand that this is us not necessarily best use if financial resources, just my thoughts. Church Hill North centre needs a zebra crossing between car park and road and Redstone Close needs speed bumps and a 20mph speed limit please if you could sort either of these that would be great.
84	There is enough money going to policing. It needs to be spent better. Cuts to the amount of admin, filling in forms and reports need to be looked into as far too much time is wasted on these.
85	Because it wouldn't change anything
86	We need police on the streets, not hampered by IT systems that don't work and make it difficult for them to be able to cross reference incidents and jobs. Too much time is taken doing paperwork. The recruitment needs to be stronger. Too many young officers put onto the streets with very little life skills or experience which put extra pressure on more experienced officers having to take up the slack. WMP need to treat their staff better and provide them with the equipment to do their jobs. Officers having to wait for stab vests until March 2023 isn't acceptable. You have a duty of care to look after your staff. Raising standards of police uniforms should be looked at. Is it outdated for officers to wear the old helmets when bump caps are far more appropriate for today's needs. Recruitment and retention at OCC should be looked at too. Staff making decisions on NFA on incidents without them being resourced isn't good enough. Members of the public being left without any response when they are victims of crime isn't good enough. Staff not knowing how to make basic enquiries through the crime bureau or to pass through incidents to local CCTV Control Rooms who can help doesn't happen. WMP are not using their full support from partners and agencies because OCC staff don't know or have the capacity to call through to the agencies.
87	A larger increase will enable you to increase the pay of officers and other staff so as to keep up with inflation. Not to do so would be unforgivable.
88	Yes , living in a narrow country lane as I do, I am concerned at the speed which traffic comes up and down the lane . Whilst the majority are young people , it would be fair to say that older people don't realise the danger that they are putting people in including themselves.
89	Id like to know what the last increase was spent on because it certainly wasn't policing in our area

90	I would pay more if I noticed a difference in crime reduction. Staff have to turn the heating down in their office, and wear warm clothing. Cut costs in back room staff. Too many people with not enough work to do. I.e. vetting and covert
91	Provided solid results for rural communities could be achieved.
92	We have witnesses a lot of crime in our rural area recently (Corse Lawn) and I have not increased any increase in police activity. I would like to see more money directed at apprehending criminals as opposed to the administration of minor speeding offences.
93	So long as he is not Empire Building! and increasing hi domain.
94	We have Council provided CCTV cameras in Madeley High St outside the house. When will they be switched on? Might some cash!!!
95	But I'd want the money to go on proper policing, not on enforcing political correctness on people.
96	Living where I do, I only see police cars racing past my house to get to problems on the motorway.
97	population 1.2m so 10p per year good value
98	Save money and abolish the office of the police commissioner
99	I wouldn't mind paying a little more-not as much as you are proposing-but I would need to see tangible results. I don't feel that I or the community I live in, is seeing good results and certainly no action. So what exactly are we paying for?!
100	Money needs to be provided by the government and better managed to provide the services actually needed
101	No
102	I do not mind paying a little more for policing provided that those of us that live in the rural villages get the level of service that we need in-order to address the issues of dangerously speeding vehicles and break ins, a better police presence in the rural villages would be welcome
103	No
104	This is meant to be Government funded from our contributions. Why should we pay the cost of government mishandling of funds?
105	Only if the extra cost is used wisely, tackling antisocial behaviour, burglary, car crime etc, not to subsidise the salaries of senior management and the overpaid the PCC.
106	Our household is struggling to meet the increases demanded by all sectors with an income that is not linked to the inflation rate.

107	I have just finished "A Policeman's Lot" a book on my experiences of policing during 60's and 70's. One chapter deals with Crime v Crime Prevention which I am hoping to send under separate cover for your perusal as there regrettably isn't sufficient space here for me to fully elucidate my point. I was in a department called "Community Relations" responsible for Crime Prevention/NHW/Schools/etc. In the chapter I am attempting to remind the reader that Sir Richard Mayne in 1829 said "The primary object of an efficient Police force is the prevention of crime. The next that of detection and punishment of offenders if a crime is committed".. We all know the importance of catching criminals/punishing them/Keeping the public safe/Keeping them Feeling safe - but my question is - "Is there a balance?" Could more be done on the Crime Preventive front as well as the CID front? eg If both departments require more money, the question may be asked of CID "How many criminals have you caught this year?" the answer is simple and quantifiable "We have had 'x' number of arrests." If the question "How many crimes have you stopped this year?" is asked of Crime Prevention Unquantifiable! How often has a crime been thwarted by a policeman being simply seen on the street, or the opportunist being stopped by the motorist locking his car door or a myriad other crime preventive actions? Surely there needs to be a coming together of the two areas? I know people like to see where, how and why money is being spent but Aren't both equally important, actually imperative, for society to function correctly and well?
108	We cant afford not to.
109	Rural Communities, The people who put food on your table need better policing and the C.J.S. needs to start dissing out stiffer penalties for Hare Coursing, Poaching, and thefts of Agricultural Machinery
110	Need to see more Police on the streets
111	There is a condition in me saying yess To 3.94% , that is all the money goes on front line policing , preventing and investigating crime and bringing a higher percentage of criminals to justice , in other words prosecuting . Talking to police officers far too much is spent on overhead , bureaucracy and box ticking activities.
112	Up to £12 pa
113	I would be willing to pay more if initiatives are properly thought out, services are effectively risk assessed, staff are appropriately managed and Twitter wasn't seen as a high priority. We are evolving into such a digital society that this needs to be leading the change, however we still need an appropriate officer presence. It currently feels like this balance is not being effectively addressed to maximise the capacity of the service.
114	At Longcarrant Retirement Park we were promised road signage and a safe place to stand in middle of road outside Shell garage opposite our entrance/exit on A46 - the only vehicle access to our park. Several of us have nearly had lorries crash into the back of our vehicles when leaving or returning by car, one neighbour did! this work was supposed to be carried out by Highways Agency 3 years ago but even our MP can't get it done. i suppose one or more of us will have to die before it is carried out? Lorries thunder over an incline on A46 (from Teddington Hands roundabout. There are always accidents outside the garage as people try to enter garage to fill up and then leave, ditto coffee shop, caravan sales.
115	I would be willing to pay a higher amount as long as the plan included the removal of the PCC. Give the responsibility of policing the WestbMercia area to a Police officer with policing experience rather than a politician.
116	I live in Evesham. We have a Police Station at which the public are not welcome. We used to have a Police Desk in the Library but this has gone. I tried to report a drugs offence but gave up after waiting 20 minutes on phone. I have ticked 'Yes' above but I would like to see this situation remedied. Thankyou for your message which is appreciated - at least as far as it goes at this time.
117	It would be good to see police presence on the streets

118	Rural crime is an ongoing problem and needs attention.
119	We need far more police officers in rural areas. thefts happen on a daily basis in and around my area of Harley. Farm thefts in particular. Please pay more attention to rural crime.
120	Do PCSO's produce enough results to be economically worthwhile I am not the only one to express doubts on their effectiveness and standing in the community. Younger people know they have little authority and disregard them
121	Please look at non front line staff, like Diversity and equality managers who appear to contribute nothing to actual policing, redistribute their wages to front line officers.
122	i might agree it if i knew how it was to be spent -- what is the focus -- how the money is spent not wasted is paramount
123	More wildlife crime needs policing. The countryside is lawless. The hunts do whatever they want, most of it illegal
124	We have had constant rises in our rates, already they are higher than any other councils around. Two years ago we had a massive rise in police rates, followed by 4% last year. I don't think we are getting value for money
125	I caveat my yes responses with the following. I want the Police to focus on crime. Not virtue signalling nonsense but real, proper crimes. I would then support additional funding but not otherwise!
126	Living in a rural community I am concerned about increasing rural crime and given the lack of available policing in these areas, would like to see better police presence and support in our rural communities.
127	Police need to show up more before expecting a rise to cover more officers. Policing should be a rewarding career but society doesn't respect you anymore because sentencing is a joke and cps are lazy.
128	The previous question asked if I was willing to pay an increased percentage but it didn't say of what. The question was meaningless without that information.
129	Yes, I would like to know how I will see and recognise the changes after the price increase. Usually there is an increase and I don't see any difference in services. Thank you
130	None
131	no
132	With more crimes being treated as minor and not being responded to, you should be giving money back to the community, not asking for more so that your existing staff can do even less by way of crime reduction.
133	Nil
134	Officers a credit to you , long hours and not so nice customers
135	I begrudgingly agree to the funding increase only due to the realities of inflation. The generally poor service provided poor attendance, low morale disinterest and lack of action is a sad indictment on the Pcc, his failure to understand policing, his politicisation of policing undermining of peels policing principles and interference with operational policing mean he should resign with immediate effect.
136	As long as the money is spent wisely and will benefit the public. Seeing police officers around the place would be good - something we rarely see these days. I know they need to be targeted but when people feel they're not around then the good guys feel less protected and the bad guys feel freer to commit crime.
137	You need to focus on what will make me feel safe. Anti social behaviour. The ability to leave my house and feel I will be coming back to a house that I left

138	No, other than the importance of sufficient policing, and visible policing on the streets.
139	Money should be spent on policing, not on the self promotion of the PCC.
140	There is a total lack of a visible police presence in Craven Arms to address both anti-social behaviour and act as a crime prevention deterrent. As a Craven Arms Town Councillor I hear this on a regular basis.
141	Max 5%
142	When you consider that on average the west Mercia police get circa 13% of my council tax which equates to £360.62p paid by me every year and we have thugs walking and gathering on the streets of droitwich writing graffiti on our council signs and private property, you better ask your self would you want to contribute more when the local police are not dealing with these people please ask why would you ever suggest that I would want to contribute more. I would like to see Police officers ,PCSOs on routine walks around the forgotten under passes doing what they have signed in to the job for not Just attending for a short period after a event then forgetting about it until another event happens . Let's do something that last and follow the criminal path until we have caught the culprits and they have been punished or sentenced follow it throughout , this is how we should Police be prepared to get out of your vehicle and walk this is called Police patrol . Droitwich is a local town to west Mercia police and this should be regarded as a shop front for how we west Mercia Police with in our Local community, I don't see this, it is a lovely place to live with the older generation of retirement homes considering it to be a place to rest let's keep it like this but I am afraid that graffiti and local thugs are abusing the town and the local police are not Patrolling the areas as they should be . Their are far more houses being built in the county the addition of 20 extra police or local community officers does not equate to the revenue that West Mercia police receive from the council tax bill it receives much more so fund the extra financiers you require from the developments be more efficient .Happy to meet and discuss with any one from wet Mercia police. Matt.whiteman@yahoo.co.uk
143	We must have good policing to remain safe at home, on the streets and on the road, especially if you're a senior citizen.
144	Less neighbourhood matters and more neighbourhood policing!
145	I am happy to pay more as long as it is spent wisely on PROACTIVE policing. I don't want more police who are just going to talk a good job & then do nothing, they need to be visible to the public & deliver results, how about starting with the long suffering girls in Telford who are still being abused by predominantly Pakistani men. I used to go to a YOGA class for 20 years but now that the class has been moved to a building in central Wellington I no longer go far too risky for a lone woman at 9pm at nigh in Wellington.
146	The police in my area do a good job. Much appreciated
147	Really need more Bobbies on the beat. I know our local team regularly have an open shop in Hadley, but you rarely if ever these days actually see police patrolling the streets.
148	There needs to be more efficiency in delivering services first. Better organisation of the personnel who turn out to incidents. Let's us see some officers in the town centres.
149	The police need to be more VISIBLE on the ground.
150	We had very little policing in Ross-On-Wye. It's only in the past few weeks that police have been more visible. If the presence of the police continue and they respond a lot quicker then I would be willing to pay
151	If we were ever to see a police officer £9.84p might be worth it. Post code HR4 8PT
152	Providing that any increase is used wisely and adds value to the service we get. It is important that things like county lines and knife crime are addressed for the benefit of future generations, Educating younger generations and removing temptation is so important.

153	Police need to be more efficient. Have management levels working across pcc areas and share costs that can then be used at operational level.
154	no
155	As long as it is spent on local policing.
156	Yes to both on basis of more visible policing
157	Increases have to be justifiable and reasonable. I accept that inflation has impacted us all and such an increase was impossible to plan for. Pay increases are required for staff and officers to account for the increased cost of living. The budget constraint is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it forces the organisation to cut costs and become more efficient, however, there is no guarantee that the efficiencies and cost cutting will occur in the correct places. Properties should NOT be sold to cover the deficit, this is a very short term solution to an issue which occurs virtually every year. Staff redundancies and termination of contracts should be a LAST resort. The organisation needs to improve where funding is spent, such as: terminating unnecessary expenditure, using the facilities it already has to their full capabilities, maintaining existing facilities rather than allowing them to dilapidate to the point that it is cheaper to build anew. Ensuring that normal staff roles are filled by West Mercia citizens at reasonable costs, not consultants on high daily rates.
158	I would like to see permanent police in Ledbury again. Especially as we are getting more & more houses in the area.
159	Stop wasting funding. For example remove your deputy and let the Chief Constable oversee the budget they need. Reduce PCSO numbers all they do is drive around in police cars pretending to be Police and offer NO value to the public. Use this funding to recruit further officers. Capitalise on the Special Constabulary you have so many assets in here and a little more funding would greatly enchants numbers and visibility of officers with powers, there would then be no need to raise funds further.
160	West-Mercia Police needs funding to bring it up to speed on so many levels-the force is being left behind by others-the Organisation's IT infrastructure is inadequate and placing residents in danger by regularly failing-it is all very well saying you'll invest in new technology for domestic violence victims, but you need to concentrate on the basics first, and get your current systems operating to an acceptable level, more software will just grind the current infrastructure to a dangerous halt. Likewise you need to invest in the vehicle fleet, it is in a shocking state, why have you wasted millions on telematics, when it already failed a few years ago-you could have improved the fleet with the money that has been wasted on that, and the electric bikes are a joke, they were used for the first few weeks, they now lie in the garages gathering dust-more money wasted-we don't have the luxury of having Dixon of dock green on his pushbike now, Police can't answer the calls that are coming in. Stop wasting your money, on PR stunts, and having your name emblazoned on everything, you won't be PCC for ever, so eveything will have to be rebranded. It's great that you are investing in new recruits, but again, it is retention that is the issue, West Mercia has one of the worst attrition rates for new recruits leaving in the country-Police Oracle quoted this, as well as officers who could stay on, are leaving-you have to ask the question why? Morale is at its lowest ever in the organisation, along with public confidence being low-this is partly due to you, concentrate on answering 999's, cutting bureaucracy, and allow Officer to actually Police, and catch criminals. One day you'll need the Police, and might not be any, as they are all tied up carrying out pointless, bean counting exercises, to assist your portfolio, or an aspiring leaders promotion prospects!
161	Yes, I would like to see more police walking the streets rather than just driving up and down the High Street.
162	Must support the police
163	Rather than charging householders more how about slimming down your staff first. The cost of the PCCs office is too high.
164	Not at this present time as people struggle with energy bills. However, in near future hopefully as things settle. Energy saving costs could go to the police.

165	Visibility of police officers definitely puts off criminals and a zero tolerance to crime gains the Police more respect. If the criminals get let off with petty crime then they often continue to bigger things.
166	We would be willing to consider paying more than 3.94% if different scenarios were presented: what is gained for what increase? What are the additional Costs and expected benefits etc etc
167	We already pay a lot and never see a police presence out in the country
168	What is the value in the fleet of vehicles at any one time. From observation at both Shrewsbury Telford and at a verity of times, both day and night, there is on average 20 vehicles parked on each site. What justification is there for this number to be parked at any one time?
169	If extra money means more visibility and presence to prevent increasing number of burglaries then yes would be prepared to pay.
170	I most certainly would if Astwood Bank had more visible presence of the Police on a daily basis . Theft and other crime has rocketed in the past year or so . Therefore it seems that it would be a good idea ! Thank you anyway for other work that you do .
171	NO
172	It's important that we support our police services at this time. I feel that we need to ensure we support the PCC in ensuring the Chief Constable has enough resources to keep communities safe.
173	we need more police presence on the streets
174	What ever it takes to feel safe on our streets and community
175	Increase to 5% and increase seeing police on foot in neighbourhoods and get them out of cars. They need to be more visible and come to every community event possible. They keep not turning up to local meetings where it would make a real difference with better communication. Please take more action to stop speeding cars and noisy exhausts. Please respond better to 101 phone calls. Just ask for more money and do more with it!
176	I would like to see high profile policing of rural areas and a clear dedicated team dealing with it.
177	3.94% is fine for an improved service. I'd be worried about committing to more as other services will also require an increase in funding, so a balanced approach is required
178	I would like to see policing of illegal hunting and wildlife crime in Shropshire. We know this is a big problem and that these illegal activities are linked to other rural crime.
179	We have virtually no coverage in Hollywood. When PCSOs have to make their own posters it just sums it up . We need a base in the area with an administrator so police and PCSOs can actually spend time doing what we pay for and not admin. I'm sick of complaining to my MP . All I get back is a diatribe of useless statistics. We want a proper police presence in the area not public volunteers in hi vis vests.
180	I live at The social housing owned by Connexus on Upper Galdeford, Ludlow SY8 1QB And the surrounding properties drink & smoke Cannabis around the clock.
181	Any increase must be coupled with targets for the police to actually get out and investigate crimes rather than sitting behind a desk and allocating a crime number. What do the police actually do these days?
182	1:Being willing to pay more is very different to being able to afford it unfortunately. 2:There would need to be metrics in place to ensure the extra money was actually reducing & solving more crimes that matter to the public. 3: Having spoken to West Mercia Police officers, I'm concerned that there are not enough experienced officers available able to mentor new recruits properly

183	I understand speaking to an officer in December meet-up, that there are 2 officers covering our area of 50 sq miles (we are Hagley; I recall I think they said corners are to Rubery, to Redditch, to Kidderminster, to Kinver, or beyond). This clearly is not enough to support 20k people(?) and counter the regular crime I read in Neighbourhood emails, mostly vehicle thefts and burglaries, let alone drugs, behaviour, etc. It seems to go against your positive text above. We are still desperately short of resources.
184	depends if itsfor more beat police than high level salaries
185	I believe our police forces throughout the country do an amazing job and are not recognised for their hard work & effort. All too often their valuable time is used as a crutch to social services dealing with domestic problems. Further support should be provided to officers to enable them to undertake policing as the general public require.
186	No
187	Open Police Stations in Towns such as Oswestry and have Police visibly on patrol both day and night with a view to preventing drug trafficking
188	It is not correct to ask for an increase in the percept whilst carrying un earmarked reserves. The tax payer does not have the luxury of asking its employer to pay them more so they can have reserves and there is no justification for the public sector to be sitting on reserves that could be used to improve services or reduce cost pressure on council tax payers. There is far too much emphasis on victim support and not enough on prevention. SNT's are not a ring fenced set of resources and local SNT's complain that they are constantly taken off SNT work to fill other roles- if the PCC is serious about SNT's he needs to a) Ring fence the resource b) Stop cross allocation of SNT resources across multiple teams- in essence my snt has no resource as its cross allocated across multiple teams- not really an SNT c) Get them visible- still have not seen 1 d) Produce stats for each SNT area- my area cannot get crime stats information so we have no idea if the SNT is winning or loosing the battle on crime. So despite meeting with them every 3 to 6 months they can provide no useful information on success of failure and no guidance to priorities apart from gross generalisations and words- unsatisfactory. If you ask what crime has increased in your snt you are told there is no snt specific information- so relatively pointless and certainly not worthy of more funding until it is corrected e) We still have little or no idea what the SNT is doing or working on to prevent crime f) There is nothing in the document about improving contact with the police- it should not take hours to get through to the police when reporting a crime in action- by the time its reported the perpetrators are long gone g) Once again we have a ask for £260m odd million and no KPI's to measure success against- what little we do know is that West Mercia has 1 of the lowest crime investigation and detection rates in the country- so any increase in demand for money should be backed up with meaningful statistics and KPI's
189	I would certainly welcome more policing with officers more visible and being more pro active in Much Wenlock and I would be willing to pay the extra for this.
190	The increase in officer numbers and greater focus on tackling ASB & drug crime are personally important having experienced the impact of these on friends and colleagues growing up
191	I agree with the proposals, our streets should be safe for ordinary hard-working people to walk freely without the fear of being attacked and left traumatised, injured and shocked, family members also being left shocked, and this doesn't go away quickly. The ordinary working people and pensioners should be able to have this safety in England without being asked to pay higher council tax when everything else has increased in price as well. This additional cost would add to an already stressful situation, therefore not bringing peace of mind. With so many new houses being built, each one bringing in more council tax, the streets should be safe for people to walk.

192	Policing is not visible in the rural community. We have a huge problem with speeding traffic in villages which is not being addressed. I have raised this issue via the Parish Council, messaging the local police and also Marc Baylis.
193	Take a pay cut
194	Regardless of rising costs that we all have to endure, you mention crime rising by on average 8% per year. Is this reported crime? How does the conviction rate track the crime rate. Perhaps as a measure you should ask if victims are happy with the perpetrators punishment or sentence. Recently in Shropshire a young woman was given no punishment at all for 2 separate offences of assaulting a police officer and a paramedic. She also was still serving a suspended sentence. If the police dont work in tandem with other parts of the justice system, how on earth do you expect to make any improvement at all. I think if we all started seeing criminals treated as such and punished appropriately we wouldnt mind paying for that. But paying for police officers to be invisible, sat inside their police stations where they dont have to interact with the public serves no one. This is why the police are portrayed in such a poor light at the moment.
195	*The greater than 3.94% question depends as not willing to have an open limit.
196	Approx £10 seems fair to ask of everyone. Anymore starts to hurt.
197	Possibly yes if a justification was put forward
198	Round it up to 4 or even 5%
199	front line police officers and pcsos are the only officers we see they need to stay on the front line.
200	Living in a Rural area we see very few police I would be prepared to pay more if we had an improved service
201	As long as the money is used to provide more bodiea on the ground
202	Yes Pickersleigh team took months to remove a Van using the Footpath as it's Parking Space, I and my Dog very nearly got Hit after stepping into the road to go round it, should have taken a few minutes to sort either by chat or a Ticket.
203	I would happily pay more, for extra police, not for a load of admin and filled in documents. Also, unless the extra actually results in the number of police required to attend all crimes and then hopefully resolve them. Otherwise there seems little point in the increase. Crime statistics reported in the press are depressing and almost unbelievable. TV programmes regularly show three or more police cars and a police helicopter chasing down a stolen car or youth on a scooter and yet we hear that burglaries, for example, are normally not attended.
204	As long as it was used for front line Policing and not squandered on PCSO's who have little or zero powers.
205	Real need for neighbourhood policing.
206	I would prefer not pay an increase.
207	I don't consider myself "rich" but I do live in a Band E house, so maybe I am "rich" and I could afford to pay 9.34% more (just to use the same numbers as you but in a different order!)
208	Perhaps 5%. With the rapid increase in Computer and Fraud Crime the need for more working Police Hours has become necessary.
209	Ensure there is a better police presence and faster response times in rural areas
210	So long as it spent on policing and not creating more paper and managers.

211	It would have been better and more cost effective not to have cut the numbers of police in the first place! Austerity has been a false economy and we are all now paying the price. The whole legal system is in a terrible state, from policing, through to courts, the probationary service, social services and the prison service and so on. The justice system is in a mess. Not only is this costing the country money now, but putting it right will take huge sums, showing just what a false economy austerity has been. The effect on individuals, both accused and victims can be paralysing. The whole system is a disgrace.
212	Providing there is a better police presence in rural areas
213	It would be reassuring to see more patrols in rural areas, engaging with residents.
214	What a sham of a consultation! Basically it is down to residents to fork out more money because the Government has failed, or continue with inadequate policing! What a choice! Basically this Government has cut police numbers, and now expect us council tax payers to pay to get them back to where they were in 2010, whilst they, the Government, takes the credit! Taking the Mickey, more like. Just appalling.
215	I would be prepared to spend more if the additional results could be tracked and reported. This would require setting measureable targets and regular progress reports.
216	Willing to pay a small amount more for a better service (in terms of value for money) and if it meant easier to engage/ communicate with WMP & the PCC. WMP seems to have improved its engagement with communities and individuals in the last year or so. Thank you, Mr Campion.
217	Visible police officers are the greatest deterrent to potential law breakers. I live in a small village c.250 houses and can't remember the last time I saw a police officer in person. It should be possible for officers to patrol on a random basis to give residents, especially the elderly, reassurance for their personal safety and also their property. I recall in the past when we had an active PACT committee the local officers promising random visits but these have fallen by the wayside post-COVID.
218	Scarcity of visible policing in my area of Worcestershire. Speeding on A441 is "out of control" in my opinion. Would like to see more enforcement and greater use of Speed Cameras.
219	I've answered yes to Q1 on the assumption the increase would be applied to front line policing and have a direct and quantifiable impact on the number of rural thefts that are occurring in our area. If it is simply going to be absorbed in admin and bureaucracy - then NO.
220	My income does not allow increased payment across the board
221	Why need for a firearms facility? Surely this should be a national centre - how many firearms incidents are there? The PCC has publicly stated that you have more officers than ever yet the press always quotes police numbers being cut from 2010. Don't agree that anticipated increase is "below" inflation rate - ask those people who are not getting a salary from a state body what their cost of living is going to look like come April.
222	I would be willing to pay £ 9 84 per year for policing if I knew the entire amount would be spent on policing. I suspect various "overheads/admin costs" would erode the actual amount available for policing? It should not be another way of funding the organisations infra structure. I would also be interested in more information about how the Police and Crime Commissioners post represents value for money and how (and who) is involved in setting the outcomes for the Commissioner are agreed and monitored. I am not really clear about this. At the end of the day as a tax payer I am already contributing to the Policing budget so in my opinion I should not keep contributing more through the "back door" of the Council Tax because the Government is underfunding the service.
223	As long as it targets theft and not speeding in safe areas.

224	As an Adderley PC Councillor we would welcome a visit/briefing by our local police to one of our PC meeting. Policing in Rural areas to be increased re theft
225	I feel that the words in statements by the PCC are not backed up by actions. 20 extra officers will take 2 years to be effective and in that two years how many frontline officers will retire, resign, transfer meaning actual frontline staff reduce again and again. Wasted money on tech systems which budget holders and decision makers have no idea about the effectiveness or need for, would have provided far greater front line presence.
226	There was an above inflation rise last year, but not seen much benefit as anti-social behaviour and petty crime have visibly increased in the last 2 years.
227	I would be happy to pay more to see an fit-for-purpose police service return after 12 years of underfunding.
228	The Government should put back the police staffing number back to those pre 2010. It is gauling that government argues it is increasing police numbers when they are the very ones to cut police numbers in the first place. Although I can understand your reasoning in increasing the precept, surely the government should provide the funding? The government has already increased taxation to the highest in 70 years, and this is another burden onto hard working families who are experiencing extreme financial difficulties.
229	If your having extra officers they should be operational not put into office roles as you are currently doing
230	It would very much depend on what we are paying for. Your annual objectives state that you are truly committed to Community Policing yet police stations are closing and the confidence of the police must be at an all time low as is morale and camaraderie among the officers. My book on this subject will be published soon.
231	I would be more than happy to pay it if you could assure and make a solid promise that I would see more uniformed police officers on the streets, on foot, visible and accessible to talk to walking the "beats" providing vital engagement, reassurance and community policing! Our local team are brilliant but only so much can be achieved by a single Police officer with a population of over 25000 people. PCSOs are a useless resource for your policing model. Overpaid, under worked and have no power, responsibility or authority needed in a modern Britain. We need bobbies back at our local stations and pounding the beat!
232	When I see a lack of Police Officers but constant adverts by the PCC's Office for 'non' jobs! Latest example x2 assistant Policy Officers. Leave the Home Office to make the Policy's!
233	Budget increases need not come from ordinary tax payers through an increased precept, but via central government and a fairer tax system throughout the country.
234	How much are we paying for the Pcc , how many staff do they have ?
235	We need to cut back on the red tape and go back to the fundamentals of policing. Making them visible and responsive to criminal activity
236	Austerity has left our public services in a poor state. We have to pay if they are to improve.
237	No
238	Put cctv in villages and help people in serious problems and Larson listen to people
239	Like all current public bodies too much spent on talkers not enough on front line doers
240	Until the force can provide adequate protection in my area for everyone then I have no confidence in the force

241	More of a police presence in communities reduces the amount of incidents. Opportunity breeds offences regularly. Needing to feel safe and secure in our area is paramount.so more PCSOs would help tackle this.....especially in the younger generation.
242	WMP should be doing better with the money they have. Money should come directly from the government for Policy improvements!
243	Police are highly under staffed, not just officers but how officers have to do so much paperwork etc after an arrest/incident. Higher more staff to deal with that, then get officers out on the street etc.
244	Real need for rural policing, which seems to always be a low priority and less effectively enforced.
245	I note your pay increase assumptions are 3%, whereas your inflation assumptions are 7.5%. These assumptions may prove unrealistic. If correct, your staff will suffer a (further) real terms pay cut, in which case your recruitment and retention of staff is likely to be adversely affected, let alone the impact on staff morale.
246	Living in a rural area of Shropshire we rarely see police locally. Apart from the odd instance of rural crime we feel fairly safe. It hard to be asked to pay more for what appears to be very little service.
247	More patrols and local police in rural areas are required
248	Despite the near record number of police officers in West Mercia, we do not see police around our neighbourhood. I consider that there is still insufficient police officers to deal with problems, especially vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which appear to be a very low priority for the police. I would be willing to pay for more police officers to be patrolling our streets. As for road safety, vehicles are constantly driving at speed through red lights on a road crossing a railway line which is closed to all vehicles except buses, emergency vehicles and bicycles. This has been reported time and again. There is even CCTV either side of the bridge operated by the county council but nothing is done to prevent this behaviour. There will be a serious accident one day with the potential to affect the railway line, so perhaps road safety is not just about speed but about careless and dangerous driving. It is easy to catch speeding drivers, what about dangerous driving?
249	Improvement MUST be noticeable very quickly. The introduction of digital recording has coincided with lack of face to face police contact and that is missed
250	No - no value for money from police. Never seen any out and about. I thought the safer teams are supposed to be out walking / cycling their patch. What value do the PCSOs make - never turn up to local surgeries with other agencies or seen in the area. Only time I see them is speeding past in cars.
251	It would be better to get the PCSO'S to do more foot patrol and less vehicle patrol as this would save fuel and increase public confidence
252	What is the point of raising the council tax. We pay more every year but don't see more officer's and the numbers are being stripped back as it is.
253	£10.208m for Governance and Commissioning sounds a lot. How is this justified when policing services are under so much strain? It should also be noted that cutting support staff numbers will affect operational policing as Police Officers will inevitably have to carry out Support functions instead.
254	Police should be properly funded from central government

255	More pressure needs to be placed on Central Govt to provide funding for Policing - particularly as resources are regularly used in a 'Mutual Aid' capacity. In addition, as a Police Staff member, we appear to be organisationally 'top heavy' with Officers at C.Insp level and above - several of who appear to be in Project- rather than operational related roles. If there is not a requirement for a 'Warranted Officer' do these - and many of the subordinate lower ranked officers need to be in these non front line roles ? - In addition many Officers in non front line roles often seem to change post every 2-3 years- so there is a lack of continuity and constantly learning/changing with is both time consuming and costly (as previous decisions are undone/reimplemented)
256	Perhaps we could look at how many snr officers the force has or how much Mr Campion and his team cost the taxpayer each year.
257	The police could benefit from reducing 'politically motivated' aspirational roles with officers, i.e Positive action police officers or other similar roles where the occupant of the role could very well be a member of Police Staff, costing a great deal less. Non frontline officers are not exercising the powers afforded to them in the office of constable, and given the need for front line police, this a huge waste of ability and skill.
258	The additional money would need to be spent sensibly. Crime reporting seems complicated.
259	Percentage increase in current financial climate is worrying. However to ensure a safer community this is worth it. More viability in rural areas would be most welcomed
260	Officers are not visible in the community - they are having to sit at their computers constantly.
261	When the force has wasted millions on inept ICT systems I see no point I giving them more money to waste.
262	I have stated 'NO' as increasing police officer numbers on paper is literally that, as front line numbers do not increase. Officers are moved into back office roles that could be more cost effectively be covered by police staff. Special Constables numbers have collapsed and no recruitment has been undertaken for years as PCs are being prioritised, which is again reducing numbers of the front line as SCs leave. Maybe the PCC needs to actually get with reality and not be a political, maybe just get rid of the PCC office, as the money can then be distributed to the police force and used more effectively, and returning to a board that more appropriately reflect the area the force polices with only expenses being paid.
263	I would pay more if it was going to make a marked difference in the service given. More Police presence not just in response to incidents, more double-crewing as I see it as being safer and officers are more productive & proactive.
264	We need local police back on the 'Beat'. To instigate 20mph on every street and road where residents live, work and attend schools. Also start prosecuting motorists who break speed limits, park on pavements, park directly in front of access points to home properties, have very loud exhaust systems and who drive in an anti-social manner.
265	When you say 3.94% more on policing do you mean Police itself or PCC separately. Whereas as a Council Tax payer I am willing to pay for Police. I do not see why I should also have to pay for PCC which is within the Police. So instead of paying for one organisation (Police) I am expected to pay for Police & Crime Commissioner on top. Coupled with Fire, County Council & City Council which provide tangible benefits whereas PCC are a duplicate of the Police.
266	when you say you want to maintain and increase police officer number do you mean frontline police officers or just number on a sheet? I hear that police staff are at risk and could be replaced with police officers which will mean new or current officer not being frontline
267	I do not want extra officers, they are expensive and trained for all eventualities which are not needed to dell with all current day crimes. You don't need to be a police officer to fight cyber crime for example. You don't need to be a police officer do lots of tasks. Robust back office support to the front line officers so they can do the things their powers are needed for is what I would like to see investment in.

268	If more were to be charged, I would like to see it well spent on visible Police presence.
269	Rural Crime is on the rise due to living costs is there going to be more assets given to the small rural crime teams that we have? I know the team in Shrewsbury don't even have a vehicle at the moment. However you have PCSO's driving around in Ford rangers.
270	Only if the money is spent on front line resource.
271	Reduction in overall costs of the PCC's office urgently required and diverted to the frontline
272	No
273	A significant reduction in costs associated with the PCC's Office is urgently required. The funding of social projects to promote the PCC is diverting much needed funds from the frontline. Fly tipping is a council matter, funding youth and health groups has nothing to do with the police. There is no forward planning associated with the forces fleet management. Officers are driving vehicles that are no longer fit for purpose, some with 100,000 mile plus. Urgent investment required in IT systems. Officers do not want laptops, they require PDA's similar to West Mids and Staffordshire to reduce the time spent crime recording. The precept can not be justified when funding for politics is being put before frontline policing.
274	It is not for the public to pay more for local Policing whilst the PCC remains unaccountable for the size of budget wasted on trying to fulfil his manifesto pledges and failing. West Mercia ICT is the worst it has ever been, is not fit for purpose and has cost millions which is now being clawed back from the front line and the public pocket.
275	this money needs to be out towards supporting the officers within the force also so there is retainment and not turn over. officers who are under pressure in general life due to the cost of living crisis are having to make even tougher decisions than the PCC or force are budget wise and need more support. officers need to be able to do the job they are paid to do and dealing with things that are not even a police matter are the cause of the strain on the force and police services due to forces reluctance to tell people no out of fear of dislike. the police are not there for people to judge, the laws and powers are in place for a reason so if they are unable to use these effectively out of fear of repercussion in the media or from MOP with no backing from the force they work for, this is why retainment is at an all time low and recruitment is also suffering.
276	Better use of Police Officer resources - too many Police Officers in roles which do not need warranted Police powers. Herefordshire is still poorly staffed with Police Officers and is still seen as the poor relation of West Mercia.
277	I would rather pay slightly more and the Police maintain their level of service than pay less and see rises in crime
278	Policing money is being wasted on schemes and equipment which don't work
279	I know it wasn't a top three priority for the public, but its disappointing not to see more effort to tackle fraud.
280	Can we stop wasting resources on futile initiatives such as We Don't Buy Crime, Prevention and carpet bombing the rural areas with posters that have had absolutely minimal impact, if any, on bringing offenders to justice. There are severely under staffed CID offices in desperate need of additional support, that could come from redeploying officers engaged in such low risk and no reward initiatives.

281	I've lived in West Mercia most of my life (half a century) and have to say that things have gone backwards for West Mercia Police in the last few years with their inability to meet demand, failure to investigate volume crime and all too often failure to protect the public from harm. Too much money from the budget has been wasted on IT that either doesn't work or simply creates more bureaucracy for officers. West Mercia also recruits far too many police staff into roles that did not exist 5-10 years ago and which add no value to policing. The PCC office is probably the best example of a waste of tax payers money and should instead be spent on Police Constables to increase numbers both on patrol and in CID depts. Its a case of the tail wagging the dog, the cart before the horse. Radical change is needed if West Mercia Police wants to get back to providing a good service to the public.
282	Will any of this rise go towards increasing police staff?
283	No



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 3 FEBRUARY 2023

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.
4. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.

PCC's Team Update

5. The new Deputy Chief Executive, Anthony Morriss commenced in his new post in December 2022.
6. Following on from the governance restructure mentioned in the previous report, and several recruitment exercises conducted during November and December, some changes have taken place within the PCC team, to fulfil some of the posts in the new structure. Recruitment to fully staff the new OPCC governance structure remains ongoing.

Putting victims and survivors first

Operation Lincoln

7. The PCC has committed **£70,000** towards provision of support for victims of Operation Lincoln. The PCC has been liaising with Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Systems (ICS) commissioners, to ensure provision of specialist therapeutic support for victims who do not meet eligibility criteria for existing services, working alongside specialist Police investigators to determine the levels of need. It is likely that this provision will be

available in February/March 2023 and will support victims to cope and recover from their experiences, whilst providing advice and support for the criminal justice system.

Sexual Violence

8. The PCC has been successful in a partnership bid of **£650,000** across 2 years, with Shropshire & Telford ICS, and Herefordshire & Worcestershire ICS to NHSE/I in December. The bid is for a complex care multi-agency service, to support victims of Sexual Violence that have complex needs. The service will enable tailored provision, triaging, case meetings, stabilisation or faster access, overall achieving better outcomes and service that puts the victims at the centre of their own recovery.
9. The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) forensic accreditation project is now underway, being led by the PCC's Sexual Violence portfolio lead, alongside the Estates team. This is a 2 year project and will ensure that the existing SARC sites meet the national required standards, ultimately resulting in higher quality capture of evidence, better criminal justice outcomes and better support for victims.

Victim Services

10. For the Q3 period October – December 2022, the PCC commissioned Victim Support and Victim Advice Line services have received 3,802 referrals for victims, which are lower than Q2.
11. Victim Support have seen an increase in restorative justice referrals for Q3 to 15 and have accepted 12 of these referrals as live cases, all of which were identified as “enhanced cases” under the Victim Code of Practice.
12. The PCC is in the process of negotiating a contract extension with Victim Support from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. This is the last extension which can be made on the existing contract, so work will commence during April/May to look at the re-commissioning process, to ensure that the service is meeting the needs of victims. The PCC has commissioned a victim needs assessment to be produced by May 2023 which will inform this activity.

Trauma Informed Training

13. The PCC has previously awarded **£40,000** to Barnardo's, via West Mercia Police, to provide trauma informed training. For Q3, Barnardo's have delivered sessions to 61 officers ranging from Sergeants to the Assistant Chief Constable. Early insight from the sessions show a 31.6% increase in knowledge and understanding of the benefits of a whole organisation approach, and a 39.4% increase in officer knowledge and understanding of the area. A full programme evaluation will be conducted as part of the project.

Early Intervention

14. The PCC is in the process of re-commissioning the DIVERT drug diversionary scheme, for which **£31,337** of funding has been committed for 23/24. The current contract ends on 31st March, and the PCC is seeking to co-commission the new contract with other regional PCC offices from 1st April. This scheme will also be part of the service offer to Police as part of the introduction of the new Out of Court Disposal arrangements, also from 1st April.

15. For the period October – December 2022, DIVERT received 146 referrals, an increase of 3.4% on the previous quarter, bringing the total referrals year to date to 437. Out of the referrals to date, 147 people have attended the group sessions.
16. The PCC commissioned CLIMB service, working with children and young people at risk of, or experiencing Child Criminal Exploitation, has received 246 referrals for April – December 2022, with 586 children and young people currently engaged in their support services.

Building a more secure West Mercia

From Harm to Hope: A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives

17. The next round of the PCC chaired Combatting Drugs Partnerships (CDP) meetings took place in November 2022, where the PCC sought reassurance that local areas were on track for the completion of needs assessments as per national guidance.
18. These assessments were produced and sent to the PCC by the end of November. The findings have been used to shape a draft delivery plan and performance framework for each area. These delivery plans are currently out for consultation with stakeholders. The CDPs will meet again on the 31st January 2023 where the delivery plans will be signed off.
19. Interviews are taking place in January 2023 for a Senior Policy Officer role in support of these partnerships.

Road Safety

20. The biggest single issue around death and serious injury in West Mercia's communities continues to be our road network. The number of people killed on rural roads is nearly 10 times higher than on motorways (source: UK Government THINK! campaign). It is clear that communities share the PCC's concerns about this, as well as his appetite to improve the situation and keep people safe.
21. The PCC's budget for 2022/23 demonstrated an ongoing commitment to directly tackle speeding in communities. The PCC has invested more than £900,000 to reduce harm on the roads across West Mercia. The funding is to be invested into three measures. Approximately £400,000 will be invested in exploring further use of the latest technology in average speed cameras, £150,000 to improve mobile enforcement capability and activity, and £366,000 to increase resources in West Mercia Police's Road Safety team to support enforcement and education activity.
22. The investment of the additional 11.5 staff within the Road Safety Team remains ongoing and alongside the procurement of additional vehicles and associated equipment is expected to be fully in place before the end of the financial year.
23. West Mercia Police is currently undertaking a review of all potential high-risk routes within the force area, taking into account a number of factors with the outcome of this process expected in Spring 2023.
24. The PCC is also developing a specification for a refresh of the road safety needs assessment, which will be used to inform future commissioning in this priority area. This specification is due to be commence around May/June, following the victims and serious violence needs assessments which are currently being progressed.

Regional Collaboration

25. The Regional Policy team developed and presented to a regional roads policing and roads safety meeting chaired by West Mercia Superintendent Steph Brighton. All four offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in the West Midlands were represented. This meeting provided an opportunity to understand the roads picture across the region, the work already being done in each locality and identify possible areas of future collaboration. A follow up session is taking place on Wednesday 8th February.
26. The Regional Drug Strategy and Commissioning Lead has been working with officers from the four offices to develop a proposal for a regional pre-arrest drug diversion scheme (DIVERT). With agreement in principle from all offices, he is now helping to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU), coordinate the timeline and finalise the specification prior to going to market.
27. Following on from the 'deep dive' session that was arranged by the regional policy team and the West Midlands regional organised crime unit (WM ROCU) in early October 2022, the regional policy team prepared an extraordinary Regional Governance Group meeting in December to consider and agree the WM ROCU budget for 2023/24. Having the budget agreed at this stage helps all four PCCs make an informed choice when setting their local policing and crime budgets for 2023/24.

Criminal justice

28. There are currently 60,000 cases in the criminal justice backlog across England and Wales. In West Mercia, the number of cases in the backlog has risen by more than 44% since before the pandemic. In Shrewsbury, there has been a rise of more than 85% in backlog cases and more than 22% in Worcester since before the pandemic. Although this is a considerable improvement in numbers since the start of September this continues to put a strain on resources.
29. The PCC has actively and consistently called for improvements within the criminal justice system, to ensure access to justice for victims and to make sure offenders are brought to justice. This continues to be the case, with the PCC recently becoming the Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and will be supported by his new in post Deputy Chief Executive to ensure improvements can be made. Court backlogs continue to be a standing agenda item at this meeting.
30. The PCC review part 2 provides the LCJB with a statutory footing defining the role of the PCC as Chair, setting out expected members and their roles within the board. National guidance will be published in due course and will be used to review existing arrangements locally to ensure they are fit for purpose and driving impactful change for victims of crime.
31. A further area of ongoing work is centred around the continued closure of Hereford Crown Court. The PCC's Chief Executive met with the Chief Executive Officer of Herefordshire Council, as well as HMCTS to work with and challenge partners to identify interim solutions, pending the repair work required at the current site. Further activity is being scheduled to progress this issue, although the absence of an operating Crown Court in Herefordshire remains an area of key concern for the PCC, in respect of access to justice for local communities.
32. Overall performance in the CJS in West Mercia remains stable since the last panel report:

- The conviction rate for the Magistrates Court sits at 85% in West Mercia compared to the National average of 83%.
- West Mercia's Domestic Violence conviction rate stands at 80% compared to the National average of 76%.
- West Mercia's Hate Crime conviction rate stands at 92% compared to the national average of 84%.
- Witness Attendance rates remain the highest in the region at 92%. The PCC allocated additional funds into the Witness Care Unit for 2 additional witness care officers which has immediately resulted in an uplift in witness attendance at the crown court.

Serious Violence

33. The Home Office have now confirmed that the Serious Violence Duty commencement date is 31st January 2023. Whilst the PCC is not subject to the Duty, he is playing a key role in supporting delivery of the Duty through convening, monitoring and grant making functions.
34. The Home Office anticipate that in most areas specified authorities will spend the initial months after the 31st January familiarising themselves with the Duty and identifying the partnership under which the Duty will be delivered. Partnerships will then need to prepare a Strategic Needs Assessment as well as a local strategy to be implemented in their area. Strategies will need to be published by the 31st January 2024.
35. In December, it was confirmed by the Home Office that West Mercia have an allocation of almost £790,000 for the 3 years up to 31st March 2024, to support the implementation of the Duty. The Home Office have confirmed that PCCs will be allocating grant funding to specified authorities to meet costs arising from the Duty. The funding application process closed on 9th January 2023, and the PCC has submitted a bid for the total amount.
36. Preliminary meetings have been held with all specified authorities across West Mercia to inform the application process, and one of the options being considered for the funding is a West Mercia Police hosted Partnership Manager role.
37. The PCC has continued to engage with specified authorities through Community Safety Partnerships to ensure preparedness for implementation of the duty. Further engagement activity took place in December to determine the partnership delivery models that will be utilised across different areas. Responses are currently being collated and will be shared with partners to inform ongoing activity.
38. In January, the PCC met with Crest Advisory, who have been commissioned by the Home Office to support local areas to execute their requirements under the Duty. Crest will be presenting to partners at the next partnership meeting on 6th February.
39. The PCC commissioned serious violence needs assessment has commenced and is due to be completed in May. The PCC is also working alongside each of the CSPs, who have commissioned more local area needs assessments.
40. Contract negotiations are currently taking place with The Children's Society, to expand the Steer Clear 1:1 mentoring model across West Mercia from 1st April.

Reforming West Mercia

41. Included in the 2022/23 budget was a further uplift of 125 officers for West Mercia, supporting all four core strands of the PCC's strategic objectives within the Safer West Mercia Plan. This will bring the total number of officers in West Mercia to the highest it has been since 2009 and close to the highest number of officers on record.
42. There has been ongoing engagement with the national Uplift team regarding additional recruitment allocations for 2022/23. This has been based on national workforce planning projections that show many forces have an ability to recruit over and above original uplift allocations. As part of this engagement, the force confirmed that they would be able to recruit an additional 20 officers over and above the original uplift of 125.
43. There has since been further correspondence from the national programme (December 2022) setting out an opportunity for a final application process for further additional recruitment (over and above the already agreed extra 20 officers).
44. The force has confirmed an application to the Home Office to recruit a further 12 officers this financial year, above and beyond its original 125 allocation as part of the national uplift programme. If confirmed, this would take the Force to 32 officers above allocation (an additional recruitment of 20 officers has already previously been sanctioned).
45. The Chief Constable has provided reassurance to the PCC that the force remains on track to onboard the current agreed allocation of officers (including the 20 additional officers) by March 2023, despite a challenging employment market.
46. The PCC continues to monitor and support the force's delivery of the local and national uplift through holding to account mechanisms, monthly review of the national uplift data and fortnightly internal force meetings. Efforts have been made to make use of the uplift programme to improve diversity and representation within West Mercia. Progress has been made in respect of increased recruitment of female officers and those from ethnic minorities, however it is recognised further progress is still required.

Estates Update

47. Significant work is underway across the West Mercia estate as part of measures to drive energy efficiency. This work is intended to both reduce West Mercia's carbon footprint, and also offset increased pressures that the Force faces around energy costs. Research shows that 75% of electricity usage in offices is controlled by individuals. A '*Turn it Off*' energy saving campaign is commencing, whereby staff are encouraged to take that extra second to turn a light off, unplug a phone charger or shut down laptops at the end of the day. Activities such as this will make a big difference in helping West Mercia Police to reduce its energy consumption and keep resources focused on vital policing work. In addition, there are plans to install LED lighting at the five divisional headquarters as well as the force HQ at Hindlip. These steps will significantly reduce electricity consumption and costs at these sites over the next 1-4 years.
48. The PCC is actively engaged in the public consultation around the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review, specifically around the status of police headquarters at Hindlip. The review proposes to remove Major Developed Site status for Hindlip Park. If confirmed, this would threaten the long-term viability of the

site as an operational headquarters for both the police force and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

49. Work on major projects continues at a good pace, including in respect of a planned new Firearms Training Unit at Hindlip HQ and a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre.
50. The PCC has confirmed a £20m investment to enable construction to commence on the new combined police and fire hub in Redditch. The new facility will provide modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation for the police force whilst also delivering environmental efficiencies and maintaining the physical presence for the service at the heart of the community it serves. Work to clear the site for the new hub will commence shortly.
51. Progress also continues in respect of work supporting a pathfinder project of electric police vehicles at Worcester police station and estate improvements in support of Force ICT resilience.
52. Delivery of the annual planned programme of minor works & refurbishments continues to provide significant improvements to the estate. Examples include the provision of a new Learning & Training Hub at Bridgnorth police station, major refurbishment of the Hereford MASH facility and improvements to the Dog Section Training facility at Hindlip. All of these works have improved the working, learning and training environments for the Force.
53. OPCC Estates continue to develop and refine their service, with improvements to and the streamlining of the supply chain, thereby achieving best value on various term contracts to include but not limited to Grounds Maintenance, Waste, Fire Safety systems, etc.

Financial management

54. The central focus over the last three months for the Treasurer and the finance team has been the preparation and presentation of the 2023/24 budget. Through October and November they have been working closely with the Force to ensure that the budget represents the best value to the public delivering effective policing services, set against the difficult economic conditions that exist.
55. A second phase of consultation was undertaken through December on the PCC's proposals for investment. During this time confirmation of funding from government and the Council Tax base was received and the PCC updated the proposed budget following careful consideration of what, if any, additional funding would be raised to deliver more services. The budget report sets out the PCC's proposed council tax precept and how it will be used to deliver the priorities set out in the Safer West Mercia Plan.
56. At the end of the third quarter of the financial year, the financial position of West Mercia is an estimated revenue underspend of £4.388m (1.6%) against the total budget of £261m. The underspend has mostly resulted from the profile of recruitment of Police Officers occurring towards the end of the financial year, and also from managing Staff recruitment to ensure that police officer recruitment could be prioritised and in order to manage the effect of the larger than expected pay award for 2022/23.
57. The other area of significant underspend is in respect of purchase of supplies and services. The PCC is scrutinising the impact and return on investment on behalf of the public to make sure that services are being maintained and that the force are investing in infrastructure and people as effectively as possible.

Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

58. The PCC, Deputy PCC and Assistant PCC continue to carry out engagements with communities, such as attending parish council meetings, visiting local community groups, and those that receive funding from the PCC. A total of 74 engagements took place between October and December. This is a significant increase on the previous quarter.
59. The PCC continues to monitor data on his engagement and reach with communities, across all social media platforms. Between October and December 600 posts were uploaded, more than 4,000 people engaged with posts, and more than 130 new followers were gained across the PCC's channels. There are now 8,521 people signed up for PCC news updates via the Neighbourhood Matters system and 1,810 people receiving the PCC's monthly newsletter, with an anticipated increase in signs ups following the budget consultation. Over 150 episodes of the Safer West Mercia Podcast were downloaded during this time.
60. During the period October to December, more than 30 press releases and statements have been issued. This resulted in 79 items of media coverage, helping to ensure that the PCC maintains a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing his part in community leadership and providing reassurance where necessary.
61. During the period October to December, the PCC's office was in receipt of 391 pieces of correspondence. The most common theme was around road safety and speeding with other key trends around ASB and police visibility. As a result of this, the PCC, Deputy PCC or Assistant PCC have visited areas of concern to understand the issues and identify solutions, if necessary.
62. Between October and December, circa 5,000 people visited the PCC's website. Work is on track to improve the accessibility of the website, allowing people with a range of additional needs to have better access to information.
63. There were 565 responses to the PCC's budget consultation, which ran throughout December. The consultation was promoted across a wide range of channels.
64. A targeted social media campaign, which launched in December, focused on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG). This linked to several ongoing campaigns and topical events and issues, including the White Ribbon Campaign and the football world cup. The PCC's office worked in partnership with West Mercia Police across three strands: perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Other key issues highlighted between October and December include road safety, fraud, crime prevention and criminal justice.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

65. Since the last Panel report, three holding to account meetings have been held with the Chief Constable. The focus of these meetings was on Impact of Budget Investment (November 2022), Quarterly Performance (November 2022) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG; December 2022).
66. The notes from the meetings are published on the PCC's website.

67. Key findings/outcomes from the thematic meeting on budget investment include:

- 64% of internal uplift posts had either been filled or had an officer identified for the post. The Chief Constable would anticipate the benefit of the uplift in officers would be realised at the start of the next financial year when all officers are in post.
- The uplift includes 4 Sergeants who will be focused on investigation quality by mainstreaming support, audit and intervention work daily within Local Policing.
- Assurance was provided that force's existing governance arrangements provide robust scrutiny of delivery against the commitments in the budget. However, more work needs to be done to ensure the budget metrics agreed by the PCC and Chief Constable are fit for purpose for both organisations.

68. Key findings/outcomes from the Q2 Performance meeting include:

- Continued scrutiny of key performance pressures highlighted in the quarterly report including: victim satisfaction, compliance against the victim code, outcomes, call handling, response times, recorded crime (inc. acquisitive crime) and preferred staffing levels.
- As part of a virtual HTA in August the Chief Constable set out a number of short, medium, and long-term activities that needed to be delivered to improve victim satisfaction. It was confirmed that all of the activity planned for August – November had been delivered, including the consolidation of a range of action plans, and the development of a draft victim reassurance / care communications strategy.
- The Ministry of Justice has yet to confirm their data capture or reporting requirements linked to the victims' code, however the force has been instrumental in shaping thinking regionally and nationally.
- The Chief Constable was not satisfied with the current focus on outcomes and set out that the force has increasing ambitions in regard to positive 'action taken' outcomes for victims. In order to help improve performance the Deputy Chief Constable has been reviewing the performance management framework to help simplify the data and renew the focus within regular performance products and forums.

69. Key findings / outcomes from the VAWG meeting include:

- The Vulnerability & Safeguarding department have strategic / tactical oversight of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The department is also supported with dedicated resources to support the focus on VAWG (2 Sergeants supported by the budget uplift of 5 PCs as VAWG coordinator.)
- The Force has produced a Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse and Other Vulnerability Crime policy which directly addresses recommendations arising from the Centre for Women's Justice national 'super complaint'. The policy provides clear expectations including the response to perpetrators and victims when there is a work connection to the organisation.
- Following changes to the force's wider domestic abuse policy and a commitment to 'attend, arrest and investigate', the arrest rate for domestic abuse offences has increased. However, further improvements are required in respect of the arrest rate and subsequent Crown Prosecution Service referrals and charge/ summons' rates.

70. Upcoming formal meetings include: a public meeting on Public Confidence (January) and thematic meetings focused on Criminal Justice (February) and the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation recommendations for the force (March).
71. To supplement the formal meetings, the PCC also runs a virtual holding to account process, whereby performance and service issues are scrutinised on an ad hoc basis. The virtual process is run via email with the Chief Constable providing a written response to the issues raised. In November, a virtual holding to account was submitted to the Chief Constable focussed on Local Policing Priorities Team (subject of budget investment in 2019/20). A response was received from the Chief Constable in December and is currently being reviewed.

West Mercia Perception Survey

72. Headline findings from the latest results of the West Mercia commissioned perception survey, quarter 2 2022/23, are set out below:
- The majority of residents (81%) agreed that they had confidence in West Mercia Police with a similar proportion confident that they would receive a good service from the force (81%), this is comparable to findings in the previous period.
 - Around 70% of residents agreed that West Mercia Police understood the issues that affect their community, this is an improvement on the previous quarter.
 - 87% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 65% in a non-emergency – stable compared to the previous quarter.
 - 21% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week, this is comparable to findings in the previous period. Over half of residents are satisfied with the levels of policing in their area.
73. Following an overall reduction in confidence and key measures since quarter 1 2020/21, a public holding to account meeting on Public Confidence has been scheduled for 30th January 2023. This meeting will provide an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and concerns related to confidence in the police for the PCC to put to the Chief Constable. However it is important to note that confidence within West Mercia's communities remains stronger than the national average.

Force Performance Reports

74. The PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly and quarterly summary reports. An update on the latest report (Q2) was provided as part of the last panel update. A copy of the Q2 performance report can be found here - [Police Quarterly Performance Reports - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/police-quarterly-performance-reports-west-mercia-police-crime-commissioner).
75. As set out in the previous report, performance areas of concern included victim satisfaction, public confidence, 101 call handling and outcome recording. These areas have been subject to recent scrutiny through formal holding to account processes.
76. A virtual holding to account request was submitted to the Chief Constable in August with a focus on satisfaction, investigations, and outcomes. The PCC is clear that despite this action, the performance as set out in the Q2 report has not made sufficient

progress. As a result, a follow up performance holding to account meeting took place on 29th November.

77. At the meeting in November, the PCC sought clarity and reassurance around force activity across a number of performance areas including victim satisfaction, positive action outcomes for victims, 101 call handling performance and increased recording of acquisitive crime.
78. The PCC was reassured to see a sustained focus from the force on improving the service to victims, ensuring more victims are satisfied and that confidence in policing is strengthened across communities.
79. The Q3 performance report is not due to be published until mid-January. A copy of the report will be published on the PCC's website, and an update will be provided as part of the next Police and Crime Panel performance report.

HMICFRS Inspection Reports

80. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have published 3 inspection reports since November:
 - An Inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service (national report published 2nd November);
 - A report into the effectiveness of vetting and counter-corruption arrangements in West Mercia Police (published 17th November); and
 - An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations (national report published 1st December).
81. Oversight and governance of force activity against HMICFRS report recommendations (local and national) is through the Force's Service Improvement Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. This meeting is attended by a PCC representative to monitor progress and provide support. The findings from the recent reports are also being used by the PCC's office to inform wider scrutiny activity including through the PCC's quarterly meetings with the Deputy Chief Constable and the Professional Standards Department, and the holding to account timetable for 2023/24.
82. As required by law, the PCC has written to the Home Secretary in response to the local and national reports focussed on vetting and counter corruption. These responses are published on the PCC's website. The response to the digital forensics report is due to be drafted in January 2023.
83. HMICFRS, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), and the College of Policing have published a super complaint report since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting. The super-complaint was submitted by the Tees Valley Inclusion Project and focuses on the police response to victims of sexual abuse from ethnic minority backgrounds and honour-based abuse. The report included one specific recommendation for all PCCs regarding support to victims.
84. This recommendation is being reviewed and a response will be submitted via the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners in February 2023.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

None.

Specific Contact Points for this 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, Chief Executive
gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

3 FEBRUARY 2023

WORK PROGRAMME

Summary

1. From time to time the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

Background

2. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Panel is responsible for scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) exercise of their statutory functions. This includes:
 - (a) The power of veto, by a two-thirds majority of the total panel membership, over the level of the PCC's proposed precept;
 - (b) The power to review the Police and Crime Plan and make recommendations to the PCC who must have regard to them;
 - (c) The power to review the PCC's annual report and make recommendations at a public meeting, which the PCC must attend;
 - (d) The power to require the PCC to attend the Panel to answer questions.
3. Some of these functions are carried out at a specific time of year – for example the precept must be considered and a view given to the PCC by 8 February each year.
4. As a Scrutiny body the Panel reviews decisions made by the PCC, performance and issues of concern or interest. It is not possible to carry out all these functions in detail and it the Panel needs to plan its workload and agree its priorities.
5. The enclosed work programme takes into account 'routine' items, items which are required to be considered by the Panel at particular points in the year and topics for which the Panel has asked the PCC to provide a report.

Dates of Future Meetings

6. Dates and details of future meetings are available on the County Council website. The next planned Panel meeting is on 12 June 2023 (11am).

[Browse meetings - West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/west-mercia-police-and-crime-panel)

Purpose of the Meeting

7. The Panel is asked to consider the 2023 Work Programme and agree whether it would wish to make any amendments. The Panel will wish to retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Work Programme

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01905 846011 Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - Work Programme 2022/23

Meeting Date	Area of scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
3 February 2023	West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed Precept and Budget 2023/24	4 February 2022 25 November 2021 (half-year monitoring)	
	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	23 November 2022	
	Work Programme	23 November 2022	
12 June 2023	Draft Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	15 June 2022 31 August 2021	
	Update on the Crime Disorder Partnerships		Discussed at 23 November 2022
	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	3 February 2023	
	Work Programme	3 February 2023	
19 September 2023	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	12 June 2023	
	Update on the Implementation of the Estates Strategy	7 September 2022	
	Annual Report on Complaints	7 September 2022	

		15 September 2021	
	Work Programme	12 June 2023	
2 November 2023	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	19 September 2023	
	Update on the Crime Disorder Partnerships		Discussed at 23 November 2022
	Specification for the refresh of the road safety needs assessment		Discussed at 23 November 2022
	Work Programme	19 September 2023	
Potential items			
TBC	Update on the progress of Combating Drug Partnerships (CDPs)	23 November 2022	Update twice yearly
TBC	ICT improvement programme		
TBC	Update on the Criminal Justice system		
TBC	Update on the Prevention Strategy	7 September 2022	
TBC	Update on the progress Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) PEEL 2021/22 – An inspection of West Mercia Police	15 June 2022	

TBC	Update on the progress of Joint HMICFRS & Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Inspection Report: An unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in West Mercia Police.	15 June 2022	
Statutory items			
	PCC's Proposed Precept (and Medium Term Financial Plan) including budget briefing/Task Group arrangements	February/July/December	
	Draft Police and Crime Plan (or variation to it)	15 September 2021 - Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2025 25 November 2021 Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2025 (Consultation Results)	
	Annual Report of the PCC	Annually	
	Review the PCC's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and/or the Deputy PCC	As needed	
Regular items	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report	Every meeting	
	Work Programme	Every meeting	

	Annual Report on Complaints	Annually