



MEDIA RELEASE

Our Commitment to Improving our Service

West Mercia's Chief Constable and Police & Crime Commissioner have reaffirmed their commitment to delivering improvements in the police force following the publication of a HMICFRS PEEL report, whilst strongly refuting some of its findings.

The report rightly recognises significant improvements made around tackling serious organised crime. However, the Chief and PCC have already written to HMICFRS to voice their concerns that sections of the document around efficiency and the ending of the Alliance with Warwickshire are out of date, not evidenced, not reflective of the current position and contain misleading inaccuracies.

The report fails to reflect the benefits communities will see when police in West Mercia are no longer financially supporting a neighbouring force. The report also does not recognise that some functions, such as local policing, moved to a standalone structure earlier this year with absolutely no detriment to public service or risk to public safety.

Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said: "This report relates to an inspection that was carried out nearly nine months ago and it fails to provide evidence of some of its findings, particularly around the ending of the strategic alliance. The respective reports for West Mercia and Warwickshire simply provide more evidence that the Alliance disproportionately benefits Warwickshire, is working against West Mercia, and reaffirms the decision to end the current arrangement."

"We do recognise that some things need to improve and we began work on these immediately following the inspection. We are in a fundamentally different place from when the inspection was carried out. For example we have invested heavily in recruiting extra officers; by the end of this year we will return to numbers that we haven't seen since 2012.

"I'm pleased the report acknowledges the significant improvements around serious organised crime, the positive impact we are making to prevent crime and the good service that we are giving to victims of crime. I'd like to reassure our communities that we will keep building on these successes and that we are committed to continuously improving the service we give them."

PCC John Campion said: "Elements of this report are helpful in giving the force areas where improvements are needed, while acknowledging other areas where clear, significant improvements have been made. I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure progress is made and sustained."

"However, other parts of this report are misleading and inaccurate. West Mercia is fully prepared and ready to operate as a standalone force. Based on the evidence I have seen, I am reassured that the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service our communities receive will improve with the ending of the Alliance with Warwickshire. The fact this is completely ignored by HMICFRS, can only amount to a wilful misrepresentation of the situation".