



## **WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 21 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCIES PROGRESS REPORT**

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#### **Recommendation**

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

#### **Background.**

2. Notice was served to end the Alliance in its current form in October 2018 as it was hampering the delivery of effective and efficient policing in West Mercia and attempts at reform had failed.
3. Negotiations took place over a period of time around the possibility of an alternative, mutually beneficial collaborative relationship with Warwickshire Police. This could have enabled the limited benefits of the Alliance to be retained and further developed, however delivered under different governance arrangements and resourcing model that would have enabled improved service levels and ensured West Mercia was not subsidising its partner. Unfortunately, these negotiations proved unsuccessful.
4. In October 2019 the Home Secretary directed that both forces continue to collaborate under the existing Alliance until April 2020. The direction also included additional independent support to both forces. Some services had already been removed from the Alliance collaboration.
5. As a result of the Alliance governance arrangements and the delay in its dissolution, West Mercia Police have been as yet unable to fully achieve efficiencies resulting from the transformation of business support functions. This delay to the delivery of savings and increased efficiency is costing West Mercia Police resources which could otherwise have been invested in front line services, but they are only delayed, not unachievable.
6. The 2020/21 budgets were prepared to reflect these less than ideal arrangements and include the costs of the extended dissolution of the "Alliance" and the few remaining joint operations which run on to the end of March 2021.

#### **The 2020/21 Budget and MTFP 2020/21 - 2022/23**

7. Despite the above mentioned circumstances, as a result of the delays to the end of the collaboration agreement with Warwickshire Police, improvements have been enabled allowing for full control over policing resources and their use, as well as general service improvements.

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8. This has strengthened the Commissioner's commitments to build a more secure and reformed West Mercia and has contributed to enabling an overall saving of £5.284m to be incorporated into the 2020/21 budget and a further £4.574m budgeted savings over the following two years as follows:-

	<b>2020/21 £m</b>	<b>2021/22 £m</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<b>2020/21 Savings Previously Identified</b>	0.498	0.000	0.000	0.498
<b>2020/21 Savings Plan:</b>				
Buying Better (Procurement)	1.490	0.000	0.000	1.490
Maximising Officer Time	1.395	0.000	0.000	1.395
Back Office/Administration	1.086	0.000	0.000	1.086
Capital Financing	0.346	0.000	0.000	0.346
IT efficiencies	0.213	0.000	0.000	0.213
Working more economically	0.210	0.000	0.000	0.210
Travel Efficiencies	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046
<b>2021-2023 Business Services Programme (including Estates)</b>	0.000	2.789	1.785	4.574
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.284</b>	<b>2.789</b>	<b>1.785</b>	<b>9.858</b>

9. The specific cost savings directly attributable to the "Alliance" split identified for the 2020/21 budget amounted to £0.754m and are as follows:

### Alliance Separation Direct Savings Budget 2020/21

Pay growth for hosted services	3.796
Offset by recharge for hosted/shared services pay costs	-4.248
Warwickshire outsourced contracts share	-0.367
Airwave charge reduction	-0.172
Vetting staffing reduction	-0.444
Vetting income (Warwickshire national contract)	0.681
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	<b>-0.754</b>

10. In part these savings arise from the more accurate cost-share apportionment ratio which has changed by 1.4% in West Mercia's favour. These are expected to change further following the planned cessation of the further collaborations with Warwickshire in April 2021.

11. In addition, West Mercia has been able to progress programmes of work that were not supported under the Alliance, in particular the Business Services Programme.

### Progress in delivering financial efficiencies

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12. Monitoring of the first five months of 2020/21 indicates that the savings of £0.754m identified above are being delivered.
13. In respect of the business services programme savings of £3.2m are on track to be delivered in 2020/21 with a further circa £0.6m deliverable from network changes.

### **Progress in delivering organisational effectiveness and efficiencies**

14. Alongside financial savings, the dissolution of the Alliance has also enabled West Mercia to realise wider organisational benefits; most notably in relation to improved systems, strategic planning & governance, performance management, Crime & Vulnerability and criminal justice processes. A number of examples are set out below.

#### **Systems**

15. The Force's new command and control system, SAAB Safe, went live at the end of June 2020. SAAB Safe was implemented more quickly than anticipated towards the end of the Alliance, with the implementation simplified and the process significantly streamlined when acting as a single force.
16. The new system integrates with local and national intelligence tools, enhancing the information available to the Operational Control Centre (OCC) and officers responding to calls for service, reducing duplication associated with accessing multiple systems. As such, it supports officers and staff to serve the public more effectively.

#### **Strategic Planning & Governance**

17. The separation from Warwickshire has enabled a clearer focus on priorities within West Mercia. The Force have developed a series of strategic documents setting out the Policing Priorities, Service & Leadership Ethos and Vision & Values.
18. These documents were informed by local and national priorities (in particular the Safer West Mercia Plan), and clearly articulate to the workforce and the public the overarching mission, priorities and culture being cultivated within West Mercia. These documents inform all other business / strategic plans, including the development of the new People Strategy and Performance Management Framework.
19. West Mercia has launched a new People Strategy which is aligned with the Force's Service & Leadership Ethos and Vision & Values. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure West Mercia has the right people, in the right place with the right resources and training to provide an excellent, inclusive and consistent public service. The Force have established new and improved governance arrangements to monitor delivery of the People Strategy and enable greater oversight of this business area at Chief Officer and PCC level.

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20. The development of new governance arrangements is not limited to Business Services. Following the dissolution of the Alliance, governance arrangements across all directorates were reviewed to ensure they were fit for purpose. This has resulted in more efficient and streamlined business planning, enhanced oversight and scrutiny of delivery plans, improved accessibility and analysis of management information, clearer lines of accountability and a reduction in duplication across forums.

## **Performance Monitoring & Management**

21. Since leaving the Alliance, the force has developed a new Performance Management Framework (PMF). The PMF sets out agreed principles for performance management and ensures a streamlined, integrated planning framework. The PMF has enabled the force to establish a clear reporting hierarchy and develop a balanced scorecard approach to performance reporting, with a focus on the whole health of the organisation and West Mercia's priorities. This shift towards a structured and evidenced-based PMF should lead to improved performance monitoring and management at all levels within the organisation.

22. It should be noted that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on police demand and recorded incidents/ crimes locally and nationally. As such, it is not possible to use traditional performance data to reliably gauge improvements in effectiveness and efficiency following the dissolution of the Alliance.

## **Serious & Organised Crime**

23. As set out above, the separation from Warwickshire has allowed for greater articulation and focus on West Mercia's priorities. One such priority is Serious and Organised Crime (SOC).

24. In the 2017 PEEL Effectiveness report, HMICFRS graded West Mercia as 'inadequate' in the response to tackling SOC. In the same inspection, Warwickshire was graded as 'requires improvement' (one grade above). The disparity in gradings was related to the more mature partnership arrangements for tackling SOC in Warwickshire (where the Alliance approach was initially piloted).

25. The Force committed to developing and delivering a West Mercia-specific improvement plan and SOC strategy to address the concerns highlighted in the HMICFRS report. West Mercia-specific governance arrangements were established with a Delivery Group chaired by the ACC for Local Policing. Performance related to SOC was also subject to scrutiny through the PCC's holding to account process.

26. Following enhanced scrutiny and focus in West Mercia, there has been a significant improvement in the Force's response to SOC. This improvement was recognised in the last HMICFRS PEEL inspection report, with the Force's response to tackling SOC rated as 'good'.

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### Crime & Vulnerability

27. Alongside a renewed focus on SOC, changes in the command of the Crime & Vulnerability directorate following the Alliance separation has enabled better identification of priority areas, and the development of key strategies and 4P plans.
28. The development of these strategic documents ensures the Force is now able to set out a considered and consistent approach to tackling and safeguarding against high harm/risk crimes such as Modern Slavery Human Trafficking (MSHT), Domestic Abuse (DA), Cyber Crime (in draft), and Fraud & Economic Crime (in draft).
29. The dissolution of the Alliance also provided an opportunity for the Force to review its investigative model, to understand and meet current and future requirements in West Mercia. Chief Officers have determined a single, preferred model for West Mercia which will enable greater management of investigative demand and enhanced governance around local and central investigative issues through the Ch Supt for Crime & Vulnerability.

### Criminal Justice

30. A number of benefits have been realised following the creation of a single West Mercia Criminal Justice & Custody department and the appointment of a new West Mercia Head of Service. These benefits have been associated with more streamlined communication channels, reduced duplication across leadership teams, and more efficient decision making.

31. Benefits realised during this period include:

- Improved accessibility and scrutiny of information management through ATHENA including Released under Investigation (RUI) and bail;
- Improved file quality standards leading to more cases resulting in successful outcomes (charging decisions);
- Improved guilty plea rates;
- Improved compliance with the victims' code of practice; and
- Improved witness care performance/witness attendance rates (West Mercia is currently the best in the region).

### Conclusion

32. The Force are on target for achieving both the operational and organisational budgeted savings of £5.284m of which a significant proportion can be directly attributed to the Alliance split. It should be noted that this progress has been made during the current COVID19 pandemic.
33. Alongside financial savings, the dissolution of the Alliance has also enabled West Mercia to realise wider organisational benefits; most notably in relation to

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improved systems, strategic planning & governance, performance management, crime & vulnerability and criminal justice processes.

## Contact Points for the Report

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## 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.

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