

## AGENDA ITEM 7

### WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 27 NOVEMBER 2020

### POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2020)

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#### Recommendation

Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

#### Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the West Mercia 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.
2. Following the recent introduction of enhanced restrictions for Coronavirus, the PCC's office remains open, however, staff have been advised they should work from home unless they need to come into the office for a specific purpose. Although contact details on the PCC's website have been amended requesting people to email their enquiry, the public phone is being monitored remotely and anyone ringing the office is contacted by a member of staff.
3. Although the pandemic continues to impact on the delivery of the PCC function, the Commissioner and his staff have sought to minimise this impact as much as possible, ensuring the PCC is able to carry out his key functions and for the PCC and his staff to establish a business as usual approach where possible.

#### Delivery plan and assurance

4. A delivery plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the plan is updated on a quarterly basis. The delivery plan is subject to monthly scrutiny at the PCC's governance meeting where activity supporting the plan is subject to closer scrutiny. The next full update of the delivery plan is due at the end of December 2020, therefore the extract included at appendix 1 is to the end of the second quarter.
5. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.

## **Putting victims and survivors first**

### **Additional funding success**

6. In 20/21 so far, the PCC has been successful in securing over £1.5m of additional funding from a variety of sources to support victims of domestic abuse and reduce criminality in West Mercia. Over half a million was given earlier in the year to support services that work with victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, many of which had to change the way they work during the COVID-19 lockdown to ensure much needed support was still available. The remainder of the fund was recently awarded to the area of Brookside, in Telford, to improve the lives of its residents and make sure the area is as safe as possible. This includes funding a number of crime prevention measures and building up the community cohesion. In summary the funding received is:

- COVID-19 funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence – £521,909.17
- ISVA funding – £179,267
- Safer Streets - £550,000
- DRIVE programme - £178,863
- Respect Young People's Programme - £207,163
- Sexual Violence support - £50,000

### **Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Services**

7. The PCC is currently re-commissioning the CSE and ISVA services, with a minimum 3 year commitment for the contract terms, evidencing the PCC's commitment to the security of victim service provision. Service specifications for both services have been developed in conjunction with the Force and the Victim Advice Line, as well as the PCC procured victim needs assessments, which have been able to capture service user feedback to inform the assessments. Specific requirements of the new services are to include out of hours provision, further enhancing the availability of support for victims as well as specific requirements to engage with groups who are under-represented within current services and emphasising early intervention and prevention.

### **Domestic Abuse Strategy launched**

8. Following a consultation, which involved public and partner input, the PCC has reaffirmed his drive to tackle domestic abuse and has launched his domestic abuse strategy. The strategy highlights that the cycle of abuse must be broken and it will only happen by working together; professionally, personally, as a society, and as a community. The key focus areas will be around prevention, supporting recovery, working together and challenging perpetrator behaviour. A delivery plan is being developed in support of the strategy.

### **Building a more secure West Mercia**

#### **Safer Roads Fund**

9. In September, as part of the PCC's ongoing commitment to improving road safety, and ultimately reducing road deaths, the PCC launched the Safer Roads Fund (SRF), a new £280,000 fund for initiatives which aim to improve road safety. The closing date for applications was at the end of October and the PCC has been working with the Road Safety team as well as referring to the needs assessments to understand where gaps in current service provision are and evaluating the bids accordingly. The successful bids will be announced in the coming week.

10. As part of the PCC's ongoing commitment to making roads safer, two online driver sessions will be taking place in November. The training, held in partnership with national driver-education providers TTC, will test drivers on their Highway Code knowledge including speeds, signs and hazard perception. Participants will also gain an insight from a Roads Policing officer on collision statistics, the affects poor driving can have on lives and how technology, such as dash cameras, can help. Similar sessions were held last year however in keeping with the current climate the sessions are being held online rather than in person. Dependent on the success and uptake of these, the PCC will look to hold more in the New Year.

## **Perpetrator funding**

11. The PCC has been successful in securing additional external funding to expand DRIVE into Herefordshire. The PCC will be working with Worcestershire and Herefordshire County Councils and other partners to roll out the DRIVE model, adding a Team Leader and 2 further Case Managers to the existing Worcestershire provision. Referrals to the service will be via the local multi-agency MARAC and the service aims to work with up to 125 high risk perpetrators per year. It is anticipated that the new service will go live in the New Year.

12. The PCC has also been successful in securing additional external funding to commission Respect to deliver their Young People's Domestic Abuse (DA) Perpetrator Programme to over 200 partners from a variety of agencies such as Police, YJS and Local Authority. The programme is a targeted and accredited programme working with young people who are displaying DA perpetrator behaviour.

## **Policing demand**

13. The force has been awarded £466,243 of extra funding from Government to support more visible policing in West Mercia around Coronavirus. This West Mercia's allocation from £30m of national funding made available to police forces across England and Wales to increase patrols and ensure COVID-19 legislation is being adhered to. It will also provide police support to local authorities and the NHS to make sure that people are self-isolating if NHS Test & Trace has identified a need for them to do so.

14. A separate report has been submitted to the panel on the policing response to COVID-19.

## **Criminal Justice (CJ)**

15. The Coronavirus pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the wider criminal justice system (CJS). The backlog of cases within the Magistrates' Courts is being addressed and it is anticipated that all cases deferred during the first lock down will be heard by the end of November, however there are still significant challenges to overcome within the Crown Court. The backlog of cases in the Crown Court has grown by 26% over the past 7 months and continues to grow each week. Addressing the backlog in the Crown Court has become a priority for Government.

16. The PCC and his office have continued to be actively engaged at national, regional and local levels, working to help resolve some of the issues. At a national level the PCC is engaged in a fortnightly meeting chaired by the Secretary of State and at a regional level he is part of a strategic CJ forum. The force has established a West Mercia CJ gold group, which is attended by the PCC's Chief Executive. Addressing the slow development

of a courts' recovery plan and better coordination of criminal justice agencies continues to be the main focus of their work.

17. The four PCC's in the West Midlands region have been approached by the National Probation Service (NPS) to help support the delivery of the NPS Dynamic Framework which is being used to commission accommodation, education training and employment, women and health service services in each regional area. PCC staff members are assisting with the tender evaluation exercises.

## **Reforming West Mercia**

### **Virtual Remand Hearings**

18. The PCC written to both the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Justice to voice his concerns about the current situation around court backlogs and the video remand hearings that have been introduced, and sought support for the system to be made better for victims and for it to not affect policing. The PCC believes that digital and video solutions play a part in realising a more efficient and effective criminal justice system, however those solutions need to be implemented in a fair and justifiable way across the various agencies, which didn't happen in this instance. In order to mitigate the impact video remand hearings has had on policing, the PCC has asked for additional funds from the Home Office to meet the operational costs for delivering the service. He has also asked the Government to consider longer term solutions involving changes to both legislation and the prisoner escort services contract.

19. Following discussions, the Courts Service have now agreed to enable a live link between the Telford Court building and Kidderminster Magistrates so that remand hearings can be heard remotely. This removes the need for detainees to be transported from Shropshire to Kidderminster. While this is only a temporary arrangement it is a welcome development.

## **Estates Services**

20. With the withdrawal of Worcestershire County Council from Place Partnership Limited (PPL) to take effect 31 March 2021, considerations have been given to the future of PPL, as an entity and as a vehicle for the delivery of property management services to the remaining partners: the PCC, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWRFS) and Warwickshire Police.

21. PPL presented options for the future provision of property services to Shareholders. The collectively preferred option was to proceed with a Members Voluntary Liquidation, plus re-establishment of in-house services at each Authority.

22. Following investigations, the establishment of an in-sourced Property Management Service is being progressed. This will be a streamlined function that will manage the delivery of Estate Management, Facilities Management and Project Management services, utilising service providers, contractors as well as providers from relevant outsourced property related frameworks.

23. Given the winding up of PPL, the establishment of the in-house teams represents an ideal opportunity and case for change. In addition, it also presents opportunities for the PCC and West Mercia to provide both a better value for money and enhanced property management service model. An insourced model will enable West Mercia and Hereford &

Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) to realise their mid and long term visions as well as delivering their Estates and Financial strategies.

## **Financial management**

24. The Treasurer and her staff are working with the Force CFO and his staff to prepare the 2021/22 budget. Regular monitoring of the 2021/22 budget and net expenditure is taking place with progress against savings targets being scrutinised. The external audit of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts is nearing completion and will be considered by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee on 26 November 2020.

## **Reassuring West Mercia's communities**

### **PCC's media and communications**

25. Despite lockdown restrictions, the PCC's communications and engagement function has maintained as much community engagement as possible.

26. One way in which the PCC is providing reassurance to communities is through his use of podcasts. The PCC has used podcasts to talk to the people that deliver vital public services every day, giving an insight into real life scenarios and practical advice on how and when to access services. Fourteen podcasts have been produced to date on a range of topical issues including rural crime, COVID-19 community funding, romance fraud and the Drive project. The podcasts can be found on Spotify, Buzzsprout, Apple Podcasts or the PCC website.

27. In addition to the online driver training sessions mentioned earlier in the report the PCC is planning a series of online engagements bespoke to each county within West Mercia. During this time, those that join can speak to representatives about speeding, acquisitive crime and rural issues. There will be four sessions taking place in the run up to Christmas.

28. The PCC will continue to review and revise his community engagement in light of changes to coronavirus regulations.

## **Public Consultation**

29. In October, the PCC launched a public consultation seeking people's views on their priorities, what it's like in their community from a policing perspective, and in which areas of policing would they choose to spend more or less money. With COVID-19 impacting on the economy, and wider public finances, there are greater uncertainties than usual ahead of next finalising year's policing budget and through wider consultation, the PCC is seeking to ensure that the public's views are at the heart of his decision making. A summary report outlining the survey results is attached at appendix 2.

## **Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme**

30. In September the PCC's ICV scheme, was able to recommence physical visits enabled by the Head of Custody who had worked to ensure sufficient control measures were in place to protect both the ICVs and the detainees. More recently in light of the enhanced restrictions in place until the 3 December and the need to mitigate any potential spread of COVID-19 in the custody environment, a decision has been made to temporarily suspend physical visits. The Scheme Coordinator has been working with the Head of Custody and the ICVs to provide an interim solution, which is now in place.

Each custody suite has a designated mobile phone which the ICVs can use to contact the custody staff and interview the detainees over the phone. The interim arrangements are being kept under review and it is hoped to revert back to physical visits as soon as safely practicable.

## Performance and accountability

### Holding to account

31. The PCC holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding the force to account. The following areas have been addressed since the last report. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website

Month	Type	Subject area
September	Thematic	Mental Health
October	Thematic	Public Contact
	Thematic	Impact of budget investment

32. The thematic meeting held to discuss public contact was an additional meeting initiated by the PCC, following a decline in call handling performance. In the meeting the PCC was seeking to understand what was driving the dip in performance and what plans were in place to address any underlying issues and to seek reassurance from the Chief Constable that performance would improve.

33. On concluding, the public contact meeting the PCC requested a follow up meeting, which was held two weeks later. Although notes are not available from this meeting the PCC and the Chief Constable agreed that the force would issue a media release to reassure the public on call handling. This was issued on 16 October.

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

- At the September meeting, the PCC expressed his concern with the force's progress on delivering the organisational improvements they themselves have identified are needed to improve the policing response to mental health.
- The number of people detained in police custody as a place of safety is very low
- At the public contact meeting the Chief Constable acknowledged that performance was not where it should be and outlined the issues influencing this, including staff absences due to sickness and the new incident recording system, SAFE, which increases call time by approximately 2 minutes per call.
- Although call times are extended with the new system the benefit is that when an incident needs to be created from a call it provides a much richer picture of information for the creation of any thrive reports and it also helps better understand demand.
- Some of the uplift seen in 999 calls and in abandonment rates for 101 calls may be as a result of people redialling 999 as they cannot get through on 101.
- The Chief Constable is confident that the uplift in officer posts agreed as part of the budget investment will be achieved in the timescales set out.
- The uplift campaign is seen as a good opportunity for the positive action resource to encourage underrepresented groups to develop into the specialist posts.
- Performance against key budget metrics was reviewed to ensure that the significant uplift in resources has brought benefits for communities. Improvements reported to date include: improved timeliness of investigations, increase in public

confidence, a significant decrease in residential burglary offences and an increase in Safer Roads activity and action.

- It is anticipated that improvements this year will translate into a more sophisticated approach to budget setting and business planning in future years.
- An overview was provided of the force's PCC funded projects. The force was able to demonstrate significant engagement with key partners and communities (including business and rural communities), and positive outcomes associated with the services being delivered by the We Don't Buy Crime team, RABOs and E&V trainers. The DCC and Chief Executive are due to further review the governance processes for such projects to ensure they continue to deliver against PCC/force priorities and provide quality services and support for communities.

35. Work is well underway in support of the November holding to account meeting which is a thematic on COVID-19.

### **HMICFRS Inspection Reports**

36. At the beginning of November, the force contributed to the HMICFRS inspection into the policing response to COVID-19. The force was inspected on one specific element of the inspection covering preparedness, partnerships and strategic leadership. The findings will form part of an inspection report which should be published early in the New Year.

37. The force is currently preparing for a follow up visit on crime investigations which will be taking place at the end of November. The purpose of the inspection is for HMICFRS to assess the progress the force has made in addressing the area of concern and recommendations set out in the PEEL Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19 report. In this report the force was assessed as requiring improvement in how it investigates crimes.

### **West Mercia Perception Survey**

38. Two years ago, as part of the PCC's commitment to ensure both he and the force are acting on community concerns locally, and that the service provided by the force leads to increased confidence in local policing, the PCC commissioned a confidence survey.

39. The latest, quarter two 2020/21, survey results have been received and headline findings from the results are set out below:

- 85% of consultees tended to agree or strongly agreed they have confidence with West Mercia Police – up 1% on last quarter
- 72% tended to agree or strongly agreed that West Mercia Police understands issues in their community – up 2% on last quarter
- 84% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency – up 2% on last quarter
- 32% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – up 1% on last quarter
- 62% say they are satisfied with the level of policing in their local area – up 4% on last quarter

40. Confidence data continues to be monitored through quarterly survey results recorded both locally and nationally. Following a dip in performance at the end of last year, performance appears to be improving in overall confidence in West Mercia Police.

## **Force Performance Reports**

41. A number of internal performance products are produced by the force to enable senior officers and the PCC to maintain strategic oversight of force performance. In particular the PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly summary reports. These performance products reflect the new performance framework which was presented to the Panel at the September meeting.

42. The second quarter performance report for the period July to September 2020, is attached at appendix 3. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practises. The report focusses on gold level key performance indicators (KPI) however there are some measures at a silver level included to create a comprehensive picture across the force. (The new performance framework uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels).

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Safer West Mercia Plan Delivery Plan Extract

Appendix 2 – Summary Report ‘Your Voice: What Matters to You’

Appendix 3 – West Mercia Police Performance Report Q2 (July to September 2020)

## **Contact Points for the Report**

For the PCC’s office: Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive  
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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.

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