

## WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

### ‘FROM HARM TO HOPE. A 10 YEAR DRUGS PLAN TO CUT CRIME AND SAVE LIVES.’

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#### Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are asked to note this report.

#### Background

2. In December 2021 the government published ‘*From Harm to Hope. A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives.*’ The Strategy aims to reduce drug-related crime, death, harm and overall drug use.

3. Drug use costs the UK around £10.5 billion a year, whilst alcohol related harm costs around £21.5 billion. Illicit drug or alcohol use is a key driver in crime, with around 45% of acquisitive crime committed by regular heroin/crack users and 48% of convicted domestic abuse perpetrators having alcohol dependence. Around 20% of ‘children in need’ are also affected by drug misuse.

4. In West Mercia, the primary crime type in over 50% of serious and organised crimes is drugs. There are around 41 active county lines gangs operating locally bringing drugs into the area with links to other crimes such as child sexual exploitation, trafficking, serious violence and possession of weapons offences.

5. The need to tackle drugs more effectively is clear. It is an established priority for local communities, contributes to numerous elements of the PCC’s Safer West Mercia Plan, and drives a large amount of demand within policing and other agencies. It is also clear that no single agency can tackle such a large societal issue by itself. A more holistic, public health approach is required.

6. In June 2022, the government published guidance for local delivery partners on how local areas should deliver the ambitions set out in its national drugs strategy, including a requirement to establish local Combating Drugs Partnerships. These partnerships will be required to develop local plans to deliver the three strategic priorities set out in the national strategy:

#### (i) **Break drug supply chains**

- targeting the ‘middle market’ – breaking the ability of gangs to supply drugs wholesale to neighbourhood dealers
- going after the money – disrupting drug gang operations and seizing their cash

- rolling up county lines – bringing perpetrators to justice, safeguarding and supporting victims, and reducing violence and homicide
- tackling the retail market – improving targeting of local drug gangs and street dealing
- restricting the supply of drugs into prisons – applying technology and skills to improve security and detection

**(ii) Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system**

- delivering world-class treatment and recovery services – strengthening local authority commissioned substance misuse services for both adults and young people, and improving quality, capacity and outcomes
- strengthening the professional workforce – developing and delivering a comprehensive substance misuse workforce strategy
- ensuring better integration of services – making sure that people’s physical and mental health needs are addressed to reduce harm and support recovery, and joining up activity to maximise impact across criminal justice, treatment, broader health and social care, and recovery
- improving access to accommodation alongside treatment – access to quality treatment for everyone sleeping rough, and better support for accessing and maintaining secure and safe housing
- improving employment opportunities – linking employment support and peer support to Jobcentre Plus services
- increasing referrals into treatment in the criminal justice system – specialist drug workers delivering improved outreach and support treatment requirements as part of community sentences so offenders engage in drug treatment
- keeping people engaged in treatment after release from prison – improving engagement of people before they leave prison and ensuring better continuity of care in the community

**(iii) Achieve a generational shift in the demand for drugs**

- applying tougher and more meaningful consequences – ensuring there are local pathways to identify and change the behaviour of people involved in activities that cause drug-related harm
- delivering school-based prevention and early intervention – ensuring that all pupils receive a co-ordinated and coherent programme of evidence-based interventions to reduce the chances of them using drugs
- supporting young people and families most at risk of substance misuse or criminal exploitation – co-ordinating early, targeted support to reduce harm within families that is sensitive to all the needs of the person or family and seeks to address the root causes of risk

7. The guidance asks local areas to:

- form a clearly defined partnership structure based on a geographical extent that is logical to local residents and consistent with existing relevant arrangements

- select a Senior Responsible Officer who can represent the partnership nationally, reporting to central government regarding its performance, and who can offer challenge and support to local partners to drive improvement and unblock issues when necessary
- involve all those people and organisations affected by drugs in developing joint solutions to these issues.

8. The footprint of these partnerships must be (as a minimum) co-terminus with a local upper-tier authority but may span larger geographic areas within local regions.

9. In West Mercia, it has been agreed with partners that there will be two partnerships across the policing area, aligned to Integrated Care Board (ICB) boundaries (Herefordshire & Worcestershire, and Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin). It has also been agreed that the PCC will act as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for both partnerships, which will include a wide range of local agencies such as police, the NHS, local authorities and probation services.

10. Specific elements of the partnerships, such as structures, staffing, governance and terms of reference are yet to be determined. However, in order to enable this work to progress (and progress at pace), the PCC has agreed to allocate an initial £100,000 of resource to the initiative.

11. The offer to act as SRO and early allocation of resources sets out the PCC's commitment to tackling such an important issue and driving better outcomes across the board for local communities.

12. Now partners have agreed to the PCC being the SRO, meetings with partners in the two ICB areas have been arranged in September to begin progressing the work required to progress the work of the Combatting Drugs Partnerships in both areas to ensure delivery of the best possible outcomes for local communities and constituent partners.

13. Attached at appendix 1 is the timeline of delivery for the implementation of local partnerships, as set out in the partnership guidance document.

### **Risk Management Implications**

None.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **Equality Implications**

None.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Implementation timeline

## **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.

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

## Appendix 1

 Action	 Timeframe	 Further guidance
 <p>Nominate your local senior responsible owner (SRO)</p>	By 1 August 2022	See <a href="#">Leadership roles</a> section
 <p>Form your Combating Drugs Partnership: bring together the different individuals and organisations who represent and deliver the drugs strategy goals, and co-ordinate activity to reduce drug harm in a local area</p>	By 1 August 2022	See <a href="#">Representation on the partnership</a> section
 <p>Confirm the footprint for your partnership: every upper-tier local authority should be covered, and where local areas can work together to create a shared arrangement across a wider footprint, such as a combined authority, they should do so</p>	By 1 August 2022	See <a href="#">Geography</a> section
 <p>Agree the terms of reference for your local partnership and your governance structure</p>	By end September 2022	See <a href="#">Governance</a> section
 <p>Conduct a joint needs assessment, reviewing local drug data and evidence</p>	By end November 2022	See <a href="#">Analyse</a> section
 <p>Agree a local drugs strategy delivery plan, including developing data recording and sharing</p>	By end December 2022	See <a href="#">Plan</a> section
 <p>Ensure that partners agree a local performance framework to monitor the implementation and impact of local plans</p>	By end December 2022	See <a href="#">Local data sources and data sharing</a> section
 <p>Regularly review progress, reflecting on local delivery of the strategy and current issues and priorities</p>	First progress report by end of April 2023 and every 12 months thereafter	See <a href="#">Review and update</a> section