

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

7 SEPTEMBER 2022

PREVENTION STRATEGY

Recommendation

Members of the Panel are asked to note this report.

Background and Introduction

1. The area of prevention has been a consistent focus of the PCC and underpins activity within the Safer West Mercia Plan.
2. Whilst recognising the permanent need to respond to policing emergencies, in order to deliver better outcomes for the communities of West Mercia, a key focus of the PCC is to prevent crime from happening in the first place. This commitment is shared by the Chief Constable. The PCC plays a central role in driving systemic change across the police and partnership agencies. In recent months this has incorporated new engagement with partners across Local Authorities, Public Health, Integrated Care Boards and Criminal Justice to discuss prevention and partnership working.
3. The 2022/23 budget commitments see a sharpened focus from the force and PCC on prevention. This year, 45% of the PCC commissioning budget has been allocated towards prevention activity, aimed at tackling the root causes of crime. The remaining 55% is allocated to providing services to support victims of crime to cope and recover from the harm they have experienced.
4. To further support the increased focus on prevention, and delivery of the strategy, the PCC has allocated a further £1 million into prevention in the 2022/23 budget.

Prevention Strategy

5. In recent months a joint Prevention Strategy has been developed and agreed between the PCC and West Mercia Police. At the centre of the Prevention Strategy, is a clear and joint commitment by the PCC and Chief Constable that prevention must play an ever greater role in ensuring that the communities of West Mercia not only feel safe, but are safe.
6. The overarching aims of the Strategy are; fewer victims, less crime, increased public confidence in policing, and greater public involvement in preventing harm.
7. The objective for the Strategy is to deliver a whole system, public-health approach, working with partners and communities to drive systematic change and improve outcomes for the public.

8. The principles of a public health approach to policing which will be adopted to deliver the strategy commitments are;

- a) Seeking to prevent an issue for a population as a whole, or a sub-population;
- b) Developing a detailed understanding of the nature, extent and impact of an issue using shared data and intelligence;
- c) Considering evidence of what is likely to cause or prevent an issue in the short, medium and long term;
- d) Understanding that police, partners, and communities can work together to address the causes and impact of an issue by taking a multi-agency whole system approach;
- e) Working with partners to coordinate tailored and targeted preventative action that aims to provide;
 - **Primary prevention**
 - Preventing an issue emerging in the first place, or re-emerging by focusing on social determinants/the causes at a population (or sub-population) level.
 - For example, early years or schools based interventions, training in social or emotional skills, problem solving and anger management for at risk children.
 - **Secondary prevention**
 - Preventing an emerging issue from becoming an established problem.
 - For example, drug diversion schemes that divert people away from criminal justice sanctions, diversion from crime and mentoring programmes.
 - **Tertiary prevention**
 - An established problem getting worse and becoming a crisis, and mitigating the immediate impact of the problem.
 - For example, harm reduction (drug & alcohol treatment), mental health support, victim/offender mediation, restorative justice.
- f) Assessing how well interventions are implanted, and how effective they are at preventing the issue;
- g) Learning from the implementation and effectiveness of actions and making any necessary changes;
- h) Building leadership across public services and communities to work together to address an issue.

9. The importance of effective engagement with communities around prevention is key. Not just to encourage active community participation, but also to ensure public understanding around the importance of prevention and the need / value in a different approach to societal issues.

Strategy Priorities

10. The priorities within the joint Prevention Strategy are;

- a) **Engage, Inspire and Empower Communities** – Ensure communities understand the need for prevention and work with us to lead and deliver positive change.
- b) **Embed Prevention** – Using a public-health approach, we will embed prevention as a core policing and PCC function to maximise opportunities in preventing public harm and reducing demand through primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. A public-health approach focusses on the needs of the community as a whole, intelligent use of data analysis & sharing, and partnership working to identify and tackle the root-causes of harm, recognising that prevention is always better than cure.
- c) **Work in partnership** – Identify shared priorities, work collectively with a wide range of statutory and third sector partners to address issues, causes and harms by aligning strategy, leadership, resources and commissioning. Utilise the PCC convening powers to bring together these partners, and facilitate a whole system approach, which is key to delivering systemic change.
- d) **Develop our evidence base** – Utilise shared data, intelligence and analysis capabilities to ensure prevention provides the most beneficial outcomes to our communities. Record and share best practice, utilising this as the core base of our decision making model. Embed evaluation into all activity, to assess impact and ensure we are trialling new approaches.
- e) **Be Trauma Informed** - Embed a trauma informed approach to the communities we serve and across the Police and PCC commissioned services, recognising the widespread impact of trauma, considering subsequent behaviour and pathways to recovery. This will be embedded from frontline officers, right through to the service providers commissioned by the PCC.
- f) **Utilise legislation** – Existing legislation, alongside guidance and strategy such as the NPCC National Prevention Strategy will be supplemented by the Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021. This strategy will utilise the PCC and Policing powers within this legislation to maximise the impact and benefits for our communities.

2022/23 Deliverables

11. The Strategy commits to delivering the following in 2022/23;
- a) **Strategic Needs Assessment** – use an evidence-based approach to gather, analyse and develop wide ranging police, partnership and community data to inform prevention activity across West Mercia force area.
 - b) **Budget** – utilise the strategic needs assessment as an evidence base to allocate the PCC's £1m prevention budget for 22/23, alongside consideration within future Policing and PCC budgets to ensure that prevention activity is prioritised, and sustained, to achieve the systemic change needed.
 - c) **Establish governance and oversight** – identify and implement governance and accountability measures for delivery of the objectives within this strategy.
 - d) **Prevention Network** – build on best practice from other forces, partners and alliances, develop and implement a multi-disciplinary West Mercia Violence Prevention Network to co-ordinate, instigate and deliver primary and secondary prevention.

- e) **Problem Solving Hub** - review and realign Problem Solving Hub resources to the prevention strategy, providing a hub and spoke model to service each local policing area.
- f) **Remodel commissioned services** – Review all existing commissioned service provision, to ensure alignment to the aims and objectives within this strategy, undertaking new or de-commissioning activity where appropriate.
- g) **Review local policing teams** - review and realign response teams, to identify opportunities where increased prevention activity can be delivered, achieving better value from the policing budget.
- h) **We Don't Buy Crime** – review, refresh and reinvigorate WDBC to ensure continued effectiveness, sustainability and impact on preventing serious acquisitive crime. Ensure seamless integration with neighbourhood policing to strengthen and support Local Policing Community Charter.
- i) **Citizens in Policing** – scale up the involvement and scale of citizens in policing across the force, actively involving communities in preventative policing such as Watch Schemes, Street Watch and Special Constabulary.
- j) **Training** - create a training schedule and products to embed a trauma-informed and problem solving approach across all departments and within partnership settings.
- k) **Communications and Engagement campaign (community & internal)** – essential engagement with the public to increase understanding and start setting conditions for societal success.
- l) **Partnership Engagement** – commencing engagement with key, identified partners and to build and reinforce relationships, set out the policing prevention agenda, identify shared strategic goals, and establish conditions for success.
- m) **Provider Engagement** – engage with service providers as part of the commissioning cycle, to identify the status of the market in relation to delivery of commissioned prevention services.
- n) **Community Charter** – review the Community Charter, to ensure alignment to the aims and objectives of this Prevention Strategy.

12. A copy of the Prevention Strategy is attached at Appendix A which provides further detail.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix A – Prevention Strategy

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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