

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 23 NOVEMBER 2022

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

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

Background

2. 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.

Delivery Plan and Assurance

3. A Delivery Plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the Plan and is scrutinised at the PCC's monthly governance meetings.
4. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.

PCC's Team Update

5. Following a confirmation hearing with the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel in July, Marc Bayliss has commenced in role as the Deputy PCC. Marc started in post on 26 September and has taken up a range of portfolios on behalf of the Commissioner.
6. The Governance Team within the PCC's office has undergone a staffing restructure during September and October, with a focus on enabling greater cohesion, resilience and strategic capacity. All of which is ultimately aimed at enabling and supporting better services to the communities of West Mercia. This has resulted in some changes within the office structure. Details of the new structure can be found in Appendix 1.
7. In September, following the recent Chief Executive recruitment process, a thorough and competitive process was carried out and the preferred candidate was identified for the vacant Deputy Chief Executive post. The individual will commence in post in the coming weeks.

Putting victims and survivors first

£1m Prevention Fund

8. £60,000 has been awarded from the £1m Prevention Fund by the PCC. The money will enable Barnardo's to deliver training around a trauma informed approach within the whole of West Mercia Police. This will include training for frontline Police Officers, as well as professional consultancy for the wider organisation. The project is designed to increase the understanding of the impact of trauma and how to respond, providing an increased quality of service to victims of crime alongside increased satisfaction and confidence, particularly amongst victims.
9. The PCC is looking to contribute £100,000 from the Prevention Fund to support the expansion of the Steer Clear programme across West Mercia. Further information about this project can be found below in paragraph 49.
10. Feedback from service providers and partners has indicated a growing trend in the increase of harmful sexual behaviour. The PCC is considering allocating some funding from the £1m Prevention Fund to support further work in this area to understand the demand and inform future commissioning activity.

Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking

11. The PCC has extended the Victim Support contract, to include an additional £71,000 to for enhanced provision for victims of Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT). The MSHT service will enable greater partnership working between Victim Support and West Mercia Police, to identify victims who may otherwise not come forward to seek support. This enhanced service went live in September.

Needs Assessments

12. The PCC recently commissioned a victim needs assessment via West Mercia Police's Strategic Planning and Insight team. Work on this needs assessment commenced in October, with the final product being produced early 2023. This will provide the evidence base to inform future commissioning of key services such as Victim Advice Line and Victim Support.
13. The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Needs Assessment highlighted in the September report has now been completed. This will be used to support an evidence-based bid for further funding from the Home Office to continue to commission perpetrator programmes, as well as preventative services for 2023/24.

Operation Lincoln

14. The PCC has engaged with local, regional and national partners to understand the demand for support services for victims as part of the major Operation Lincoln Police Investigation (investigation into maternity services at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust). As a result of these discussions, the PCC submitted a bid to the Home Office for further funding of £100,000 to provide support to these victims. The outcome of this bid is still awaited.

Sexual Violence

15. Following a successful sexual violence survivor conference in June 2022, the PCC held the first Joint Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategic Board in September. To accompany the quarterly meetings, a partnership action plan has been developed, and the Strategic Board will have oversight of delivery. The intended outcomes of the action plan are ultimately, to increase confidence in reporting, increased positive experiences of the criminal justice system, and improvement of police recorded outcomes.

16. For 2022/23, the PCC has provided £339,782 to West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, to support therapeutic counselling for survivors of sexual violence. This funding has allowed the service to recruit permanent counsellors, who were previously on zero hours contracts to provide sustainable support for survivors, and to reduce waiting lists.

Victim Services

17. For the period April – September 2022, the PCC's commissioned victim services have received 17,630 referrals for support from victims of crime. These services include the Victim Advice Line, Victim Support, and specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services, amongst others. 16,145 victims in total were provided with support during the same period, with 6,976 supported to cope and recover. 545 of these victims were either referred, or supported to self-refer, into mental health support services.
18. Specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence service providers have been using PCC funding to embed some of their newly recruited specialist LGBTQ+ and culturally responsive/inclusive roles within their organisations. Some of this activity includes partnering with Age UK for drop-in sessions, attending PRIDE events, and supporting victims to overcome barriers to access local support. The impact of these new roles is being monitored through demographic reporting information.
19. The PCC has submitted a funding bid to the Ministry of Justice, for £276,500 up to 31 March 2025, to provide an out of court diversionary service, for females at risk of entering the criminal justice system. This is linked to the Commissioner's commitment to deliver effective, early intervention for vulnerable people, with the outcome of reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

Building a more secure West Mercia

From Harm to Hope: A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives

20. As part of the commitment to reducing crime and harm linked to drugs, two Combating Drug Partnerships (CDPs) have been formed across West Mercia, in line with government guidance. Each of the CDPs are based on the Integrated Care Board footprint. There is one CDP for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and one for Shropshire and Telford. The PCC met with partners during August and September, to formalise his role as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for both partnerships.
21. Each CDP met in September 2022 with draft terms of reference agreed subject to minor amendments. Both CDPs identified leads and relevant stakeholders to produce needs assessments by the end of November as set out in national guidance.
22. The next round of meetings is due to take place in November 2022. The agendas focus on progress in producing the partnership needs assessments, and the next steps to facilitate production of the local drug partnership delivery plans.
23. To support the implementation and focus of this vital work, the PCC has provided funding for two roles, which are currently out for recruitment.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Telford (IITCSE)

24. At the September West Mercia Governance Board, the Chief Constable presented the West Mercia Police response to the recommendations arising from the IITCSE report and confirmed that West Mercia Police have developed an accompanying action plan. The PCC has committed to ensuring improvements are delivered both within his office and the police force and will continue to monitor the impact and progression of these actions through established governance processes.
25. Following a funding application from Telford & Wrekin Community Safety Partnership, the PCC has already met one of the recommendations in the report, which was to commit funding for Taxi Marshalls and Street Pastors. The PCC has funded £23,190 for these projects in 22/23.
26. The PCC will be represented on the newly created Telford & Wrekin IITCSE Strategic Implementation Group, where progress against the recommendations within the IITCSE report will be monitored.

Road Safety

27. The biggest single issue around death and serious injury in West Mercia's communities continues to be our road network. As a predominantly rural area we continue to see a disproportionately large amount of harm caused on our roads. It is clear that communities share the PCC's concerns about this, as well as his appetite to improve the situation and keep people safe.
28. The PCC's budget for 2022/23 demonstrated an ongoing commitment to directly tackle speeding in communities. Additional money was provisionally allocated in the budget, with final confirmation approved by the PCC following a comprehensive business case from West Mercia Police. The value of this investment for 22/23 is £515,800, with a further £400,000 ringfenced pending a business case.
29. The proposals from West Mercia Police included an uplift of 11.5 staff within the Road Safety Team and expanding the use of technology to deliver innovative and effective approaches to the prevention of excessive speed and enhancement of road safety. With the extra resource the Force are investigating the feasibility for further average speed cameras to target areas with significant road safety issues, building on the success of the A449 average speed system.
30. The primary objective of the investment is to provide safer roads and reassurance to West Mercia's communities through increased visibility and accessibility in local communities, with additional mobile enforcement capability reducing speed and changing driver behaviour.
31. The PCC is also developing a specification for a refresh of the road safety needs assessment, which will be used to inform future commissioning in this priority area.

Regional Collaboration

32. The PCC continues to work with both West Mercia Police and regional colleagues to ensure that the Strategic Policing Requirement is met, either locally within the Force or collaboratively with regional partners, and that oversight of the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), National Air Police Service (NPAS), Roads Policing, Counter Terrorism (CT) and other national programmes is maintained.
33. The four PCCs held a "deep dive" scrutiny session into the work of the ROCU in September. The session allowed PCCs to understand the specialist policing

capabilities delivered by the ROCU, such as covert investigation and sensitive intelligence, and how these help tackle organised crime in West Mercia. The deep dive also provided an update on progress to review the ROCU operating model and the budget position heading into 2023/24.

34. A review of the regional governance arrangements across criminal justice is continuing. The aim is to ensure Local Criminal Justice Boards and the regional forum are better connected, with the regional forum focused on problem solving the issues that all Force areas are facing. The review will conclude towards the end of year ready for a new refreshed programme of quarterly meetings in 2023.
35. The PCC received quarterly briefings in October on Serious and Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism. The briefings provided an opportunity to understand threat and risk specifically in West Mercia from these issues. The PCC was reassured that the Force, ROCU and other partners were working effectively together on these important areas of policing. There was a positive progress in the ROCU approach to safeguarding and the PCC gave his support to Prevent delivery across West Mercia.
36. Following the success of West Mercia's Divert scheme the Regional Drug Strategy & Commissioning lead is coordinating a piece of work across the four regional PCCs to see if the programme can be expanded across the West Midlands region and jointly commissioned, to create economies of scale and efficiencies.

Criminal Justice

37. There are currently 60,000 cases in the criminal justice backlog across England and Wales. In West Mercia, the number of cases in the backlog has risen by more than 70% since before the pandemic. In Shrewsbury, there has been a rise of more than 120% in backlog cases and more than 40% in Worcester since before the pandemic. This continues to put a strain on resources.
38. The PCC has actively and consistently called for improvements within the criminal justice system, to ensure access to justice for victims and to make sure offenders are brought to justice. This continues to be the case, with the PCC conducting a range of activities to drive improvements in this area. These include meetings with resident judges, reviewing the scope of the Local Criminal Justice Board, and meetings with representatives from Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunal Service (HMCTS). He is also working with the Ministry of Justice to see what changes could be introduced to increase the number of judges for the West Midlands area.
39. A further area of ongoing work is centred around the continued closure of Hereford Crown Court. The PCC is progressing with a meeting, to include the Chief Executive Officer of Herefordshire Council, as well as HMCTS. The aim of the meeting will be to challenge partners to identify interim solutions, pending the repair work required at the current site.
40. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, West Mercia Police were supporting just over 10,000 victims and witnesses. The force is now supporting just over 21,000 victims and witnesses, an increase of 110%. This increase continues to place a significant strain on resources. To address the strain placed on staff, the PCC has funded £26,000 for the continuation of two additional posts for 2022/23 to ensure victims and witnesses continue to be supported throughout the criminal justice system.
41. Overall, performance in the CJS in West Mercia remains stable since the last panel report:

- a. The overall conviction rate in West Mercia is 87% compared to the National average of 82%.
- b. West Mercia's Sexual Offences conviction rate stands at 92% compared to the National Average of 84.5%.
- c. West Mercia's Domestic Violence conviction rate stands at 83% compared to the National average of 75%.
- d. West Mercia's Hate Crime conviction rate stands at 89% compared to the national average of 83%.
- e. Witness Attendance rates remain the highest in the region at 87%.

Serious Violence

- 42. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act includes a new Serious Violence Duty ('the Duty') that requires specified authorities (i.e. police, local authorities, fire and rescue, health bodies, probation services and youth offending teams) to collaborate regarding serious violence.
- 43. Whilst PCCs are not subject to the Duty, there are a range of options available to the PCC, should they wish to collaborate.
- 44. The PCC reviewed the Force's preparedness for the Duty as part of a recent thematic Holding to Account meeting on Serious Violence. As part of this meeting, the PCC offered to support the force in engaging with partners to ensure arrangements were in place to meet the requirements of the Duty by the timescales set.
- 45. The PCC wrote to all Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Chairs on 28 July and asked them to consider a number of questions regarding preparedness and views on potential partnership models being considered by the specified authorities. The findings of this consultation were shared with CSP Chairs at the PCC's CSP Summit on 13 September.
- 46. The PCC was keen to understand what support CSPs would be looking for in implementing the Duty. Discussions across CSPs were still at their very early stages, and further engagement with CSPs is planned for December when specified authorities must identify SROs and confirm the partnership footprint they will be working too.
- 47. To prepare for the introduction of the duty, and to inform the commissioning of service provision in this area, the PCC has commissioned a Serious Violence needs assessment, which is due to be completed in early 2023.
- 48. In September, the PCC was notified by the Minister of State, that West Mercia have an indicative allocation of £804,003 up to 31 March 2025, to support the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty. A bidding process for this funding will open in November.
- 49. During October, the PCC committed funding to continue and expand the existing Steer Clear project. Up to now, the project has only operated in Telford & Wrekin. For 2023/24 it will operate across West Mercia. This project will provide 1:1 mentoring, as well as a series of workshops, for children and young people involved in carrying or using knives. This service will work closely with the PCC commissioned CLIMB service, to reduce crime and harm, and prevent exploitation of vulnerable people.

Reforming West Mercia

Police Officer Uplift

50. Included in the 2022/23 budget was a further uplift of 125 officers for West Mercia, supporting all four core strands of the PCC's strategic objectives within the Safer West Mercia Plan. This will bring the total number of officers in West Mercia to 2,456 – the highest it has been since 2009 and close to the highest number of officers on record.
51. The Chief Constable has provided reassurance that the force will be able to deliver the uplift by March 2023 as planned, despite a challenging employment market.
52. The PCC continues to monitor and support the force's delivery of the local and national uplift through holding to account mechanisms and fortnightly uplift meetings with the force and National Uplift leads. Efforts have been made to make use of the uplift programme to improve diversity and representation within West Mercia. Progress has been made in respect of increased recruitment of female officers and those from ethnic minorities, however it is recognised further progress is still required.

Estates Update

53. Significant work is underway across the West Mercia Estate as part of measures to drive energy efficiency. This work is intended to both reduce West Mercia's carbon footprint, and also offset increased pressures that the Force faces around energy costs. Prices are increasing for the police in much the same way that they have for households across the country. Projections for 2023/24 show West Mercia Police's energy costs will increase by 90% compared to 2022/23.
54. The PCC has commissioned a series of works to improve energy efficiency across the Police Estate. Reductions in energy consumption will repay the cost of this work in quick order, enabling further savings for the Force in the future and supporting an ever-greater proportion of resources to be prioritised towards frontline policing services.
55. The PCC is actively engaged in the current public consultation around the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review, specifically around the status of Police Headquarters at Hindlip. The review proposes to remove Major Developed Site status for Hindlip Park. If confirmed, this would threaten the long-term viability of the site as an operational headquarters for both the police force and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
56. Work on major projects continues, in respect of a planned new firearms training unit for the police force, a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Telford and the new police and fire station in Redditch. Progress also continues in respect of work supporting a pathfinder project of electric police vehicles at Worcester police station, refurbishment at Bridgnorth police station, and estate improvements in support of Force ICT resilience.

Financial Management

57. The process to prepare the 2023/24 budget has continued with the PCC meeting regularly with the Chief Constable to make sure there is clear understanding of how the Force are building their budget to effectively reflect the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan, and those set out by the public in the PCC's recent consultation. There has been a focus on agreeing assumptions within the budget setting process and also working towards the presentation of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) position in October.

58. The MTFS will ensure suitable awareness of the financial implications of decisions that are being taken now. Following on from the MTFS the revenue and capital budget proposals for the next financial year are being brought to meetings in November. The proposals will be reviewed and scrutinised to ensure that they are delivering the priorities in the Safer West Mercia plan for the maximum benefit of the public in West Mercia, whilst ensuring effective use of the resources available. This will inform engagement with the Police and Crime Panel in December followed by facilitated Panel budget working group in January 2023.
59. At the midpoint of the financial year, the financial position of West Mercia is a reported revenue overspend of £1.346m (0.5%) against the total budget of £261m. The Force are continuing to monitor spend closely and are putting arrangements in place to manage this position with the aim of bringing the in year spend in on budget. The PCC is scrutinising the impact and return on investment on behalf of the public for the 2022/23 budget at a Holding to Account session in November.

Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

60. The PCC, Deputy PCC and Assistant PCC continue to carry out engagements with communities, such as attending parish council meetings, visiting local community groups, and those that receive funding from the PCC. A total of 50 engagements took place between July and September.
61. In October, the PCC launched his 'Pin Your Poppy' campaign. After commissioning six Unknown Tommy statues from the British Ironworks Centre in Shropshire, communities were given the opportunity to mark their respect for servicemen and women by pinning their poppy on them. The campaign has seen a number of community groups come together and has brought about a large amount of engagement.
62. The PCC is now issuing newsletters to MPs based within the West Mercia area to ensure they are aware of updates, investments and other activity in their constituencies. The PCC's standard community newsletter currently has 2,198 subscribers.
63. The PCC continues to monitor data on his engagement and reach with communities. Across all social media platforms, the numbers of people 'following' the PCC's account has increased by almost 200. There are now 6,621 people signed up for PCC updates via Neighbourhood Matters.
64. During the period, August to September, 53 press releases and statements have been issued ensuring that the PCC maintains a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing his part in community leadership and providing reassurance where necessary. This supports the Safer West Mercia Plan priority to 'ensure all communities have a voice that is heard within policing, criminal justice and community safety matters'.
65. PCC engagement in all forms was paused for an extended period during September as the Commissioner and his office observed the national period of mourning following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
66. Over the duration of September 2022 and October 2022, the PCC's office was in receipt of 232 pieces of correspondence. The correspondence was on a range of subjects, such as road safety, ASB and general concerns around crime. The majority of the correspondence was from Worcestershire and Shropshire residents.

Performance and Accountability

Holding to Account

67. Since the last Panel report 2 thematic holding to account meetings have been held with the Chief Constable. The focus of these meetings was on Serious Violence (August 2022) and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI; October 2022).

68. Key findings/outcomes from the thematic meeting on Serious Violence include:

- a. The force had developed a Homicide Action Plan informed by a comprehensive local problem profile and national best practice. There was assurance that the plan had ensured appropriate focus and a number of key actions had already been completed.
- b. The force was actively contributing to the development of a national NPCC (National Police Chiefs Council) homicide prevention framework which would inform future activity.
- c. Key to reducing Serious Violence was prevention activity focused on domestic abuse (DA), violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the illegal drug trade. This is aligned to the PCC and Force Joint Prevention Strategy.

69. Key findings/outcomes from the thematic meeting on DEI include:

- a. The Chief Constable has implemented new governance arrangements to ensure appropriate focus on internal/external DEI issues. The PCC is represented within these forums.
- b. Improvements in data capture are required to better understand internal and external disproportionality and identify activity to explain or reduce this.
- c. The Force's new Stop and Search strategy will include enhanced scrutiny of searches. In developing more robust scrutiny, the force has consulted with Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and relevant staff networks.
- d. Going forward, the delivery of the Local Policing Charter will include renewed focus on engaging with more seldom heard communities.

70. Upcoming formal meetings include: Impact of 2022/23 Budget Investment (November), Quarterly Performance (November), and VAWG (December).

71. To supplement the formal meetings, the PCC also runs a virtual holding to account process, whereby performance and service issues that do not require a focused thematic meeting but are areas for which he wishes to retain closer oversight, are scrutinised on an ad hoc basis. The virtual process is run via email with the Chief Constable providing a written response to the issues raised. Recent virtual holding to account activity has focused on specific issues relating to performance (outcomes, satisfaction and open investigations) and the Victim Advice Line. The results of these holding to account sessions are currently being reviewed.

West Mercia Perception Survey

72. Headline findings from the latest results of the West Mercia commissioned perception survey, quarter one 2022/23, are set out below:

- a. The majority of residents (81%) agreed that they had confidence in West Mercia Police with a similar proportion confident that they would receive a good service from the force (83%), this is comparable to findings in the previous period.
- b. Around 68% of residents agreed that West Mercia Police understood the issues that affect their community.
- c. 87% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 65% in a non-emergency – stable compared to the previous quarter.
- d. 21% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – a reduction from 24% in the previous quarter.

73. A holding to account meeting focusing on Public Confidence is scheduled in January 2023, following an overall reduction in confidence and key measures since Q1 20/21.

Force Performance Reports

74. The PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly and quarterly summary reports. The latest, Q2 internal performance report for the period April to September 2022, can be found here - [Police Quarterly Performance Reports - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/police-quarterly-performance-reports)

75. The PCC is concerned around some of the performance areas within the Q2 report continuously being significantly below target, specifically around the following;

- a. Victim satisfaction continues to be an area of concern, which is specifically linked to victims being kept informed. Although some areas have seen improvements, such as domestic abuse, across the policing area, the overall satisfaction is still not good enough.
- b. Public confidence also remains below the internal targets, with statistically significant reductions since March 2021.
- c. Both 999 and 101 have seen improvements when compared to the previous month, however 101 still falls significantly below target.
- d. Recording around outcomes, bringing offenders to justice, continues on a downward trend, with West Mercia featuring 7th out of 8 for the highest proportion of cases where evidential difficulties prevent further action, or where the victim does not support the prosecution.
- e. Incidents of people being killed or seriously injured on West Mercia's roads (KSIs) are increasing, with motorcyclists in particular featuring in casualty statistics.

76. A virtual holding to account focused on satisfaction, open investigation and outcomes performance was submitted following the Quarter 1 report. The PCC is clear that despite this action, the performance is still not good enough, and will be conducting further scrutiny activity via a further thematic holding to account meeting on 29 November.

HMICFRS Inspection Reports

77. HMICFRS have published one inspection report since the last report to the panel, a national report on 2 November following an inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in policing. The inspection identified 5 areas of improvement and 43 recommendations for policing nationally. Work is ongoing to review the recommendations in this report and engage with the force to understand how relevant areas will be addressed.

78. Since the last panel meeting, the PCC has written to the Home Secretary in response to the two national thematic reports published last quarter (the police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive Crime and a joint inspection report on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)).

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – OPCC Governance Structure Chart: [Team Information - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/team-information)

Contact Points for the Report

For the Police and Crime Panel: Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Worcestershire County Council
Tel: 01905 844871
Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

For the Police and Crime Commissioner: Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive
gareth.boulton@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

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](#)