

## WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 27 JULY 2023

### COMBATING DRUGS PARTNERSHIPS

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#### Recommendation

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

#### Background

2. The UK Government's drug strategy, titled "From Harm to Hope: A 10-Year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives" was launched in December 2021 and will run until 2031.
3. The Strategy was based on three main pillars: break drug supply chains, deliver a world class treatment and recovery system, achieve a generational shift in the demand for recreational drugs.
4. In order to deliver the Strategy, Government formed local Combating Drugs Partnerships (CDPs). There are two CDPs in West Mercia, one covering Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, and one covering Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Each CDP is led by a senior responsible officer (SRO). The SRO for each of the two CDPs is the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Commissioner has committed significant financial resource to the partnerships to ensure they are effective and can deliver the best possible outcomes for local communities.
5. CDPs involve a range of partners working together in a coordinated and integrated way to achieve a common goal. The CDP is supported by ongoing investment and evaluation, with regular reviews and updates to ensure that they remain effective and responsive to new and emerging challenges.
6. In terms of breaking drug supply chains, the Police are the lead agency. The Force has adopted a proactive approach to breaking drug supply chains. The approach involves intelligence-led policing, targeted enforcement, and collaboration with partner agencies and the community.
7. The Force uses a range of tactics to gather intelligence on drug-related activity, including surveillance, covert operations, and information sharing with partner agencies. This intelligence is then used to target drug dealers and traffickers and disrupt their supply chains.

8. In Q4 of 2022/23 the Force saw an 83% increase in the number of disruptions linked to organised crime. This is highest number of moderated disruptions recorded by the Force in West Mercia.
9. The Force also reported that it had closed over 53 county lines during 2022/23. In addition, the Force seized over £446k worth of drugs, £96k in cash, made over 330 arrests and seized over 130 weapons during 2022/23.
10. In terms of delivering a world class treatment and recovery system Government are investing an additional £780m over the next three years. Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Worcestershire and Herefordshire have all received increased funding as a result. The additional investment is being used to strengthen locally commissioned services, improve quality, capacity and outcomes.
11. In addition to improving local services, the CDPs are focused on improving referrals into treatment from the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The CDPs are working with partners to improve both front end referrals from the Police and court ordered referrals. The CDPs are also working with Prisons and Probation to improve the transition from the secure estate to community, ensuring that prisoners with substance misuse needs are referred into local services upon release.
12. In addition to improving support pathways, the CDPs are focused on improving early intervention, improving training and education within the workforce, reducing drug related deaths, improving quality outcomes and improving access to services for people with dual diagnosis. In addition, the CDPs are seeking to improve access to accommodation and employment.
13. Across West Mercia there are over 5,000 people currently in structured treatment, the majority being treated for opiates. Over 1,800 people are in treatment for alcohol. Unfortunately, there is unmet need for both drug and alcohol treatment services across West Mercia which the CDPs will seek to address over the coming years.
14. In terms of achieving a generational shift in the use of recreational drugs, the CDPs, working with stakeholders will embark upon a programme of prevention, early intervention, delivering school-based programmes, family-based intervention and appropriate enforcement when necessary.
15. In order to deliver the Government's objectives, the CDPs have worked with partners to develop a strategic delivery plan and performance framework. To ensure delivery each of the local substance misuse groups have aligned local activity to the overarching plan.
16. The PCC has chaired a series of CDP meetings to track the progress of this work, the most recent in March. In addition, he has taken part in national meetings, in February and May as part of his role.
17. The CDPs are currently working with partners to conduct a series of deep dives on each of pillars. The deep dives will help the CDPs better understand what's working well and where additional effort is required. The findings were presented in June 2023.

### **Risk Management Implications**

None.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **Equality Implications**

None.

### **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 (Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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