

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 FEBRUARY 2024

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

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

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the 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.
3. A specific update on the West Mercia Police Local Policing Charter and Naloxone review has been included as requested at the last panel meeting.

Delivery plan and assurance

4. 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.
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

Sexual Violence

6. The Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Service contract is in its final year. The PCC commissioning team has started talking to the current provider about extending the service for an additional 12 months. This will allow time for a Sexual Violence Needs Assessment to be conducted. The results will inform future funding arrangements.
7. The Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) waiting list has reduced significantly showing an average 20-day wait period for adult ISVA referrals. The Child ISVA waiting list also has an average wait time of 20 days, and the Family ISVA waiting list has an average wait time of 23 days. Referrals are slightly down from Q1, but this is consistent with previous years.

8. The Branch Children and Young Persons waiting list and average number of days waiting for service has reduced during Q2 due to onboarding a part-time Branch worker for Shropshire.
9. The Forensic Science Regulation (FSR) Code is now Mandatory. This means that all Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) require UKAS accreditation for their Forensic Science activities (FSA) by 2 October 2025. After this date SARCs who are not accredited must declare compliance or non-compliance in reports and statements for the criminal justice system and may be subject to FSR compliance notices or enforcement action. West Mercia SARCs continue to work towards meeting the ISO Forensic Accreditation.
10. The Sexual Violence Complex Care Pathfinder (for adult survivors of sexual assault and abuse with complex care mental health needs) aims is to deliver a single, integrated service that meets the needs of eligible victims by putting the victim/survivors needs at the heart of their treatment and recovery plan.
11. There are two hubs in West Mercia made up of Service Managers, Counsellors, Trainers, Group Facilitators, Stabilisation & Support Workers (or similar). Clinical Psychologists are also in the process of being onboarded. The hub has been receiving referrals from 3 January.

Victim Services

12. A Victims' Services Options Paper was submitted for discussion at the PCC Office Governance Board scheduled for January 2024. This will determine next steps and future recommissioning options for the longer-term provision (March 2025 onwards) of multi-crime victim service provision. The paper utilises information from the OPCC commissioned 2023 Victim and Offender Needs Assessment.
13. Victim Support have submitted a proposal for a single point extension for the financial year 2024/25 which is currently undergoing budgetary approval and sign off process. Market engagement is scheduled for January/February 2024 to promote transparency/ market fairness.

Prevention

14. West Mercia Steer Clear Children and Young People (CYP) Diversionary service, funded by the PCC (£538,496), has fully mobilised and carried out an initial workshop in Herefordshire in November during Operation Sceptre, to promote the service and raise awareness of knife crime. Anyone can refer a 10–18 year old believed to be at risk of involvement in knife related crime to the service provided by The Children's Society (TCS). The service is to be evaluated next year by an academic partner. Meetings in January were held with the College of Policing to discuss this further.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Safer Streets Five

15. As part of the fifth round of the Government's Safer Streets initiative (SS5), the PCC bid successfully for a further £999,025 to fund a range of projects designed to tackle Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), ASB and Neighbourhood Crime within 2023/24 and 2024/25. Rapid procurement processes have been undertaken with successful conclusion, and awards have been made to providers to deliver upon the initiatives. Offers were made to a collaborative bid between WMRSASC and AXIS and also to Intensive Engagement; a service provider tackling ASB.
16. Since announcing the SS5 funding, as a result budgetary pressures across Government and the need for reallocation of resources and reprioritisation, Ministers have made the decision to reduce the funding allocation. The budget for West Mercia's Safer Streets for the 2024/25 financial year will be reduced by **£180,000** from the original award amount. The PCC remains confident that successful partnership working with the force will enable delivery of the SSF5 initiatives with minimal impact.
17. Several of the SS5 projects are already producing some very encouraging outcomes, including the Behavioural Detection Officers (BDO). The first tranche of BDOs had a very successful weekend using their behavioural detection skills in Worcester, Hereford, Telford & Shrewsbury resulting in some excellent examples of preventative policing.

Improving Responses to Domestic Abuse

18. The Men and Masculinities Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) has received 58 referrals across West Mercia in Q3, to date.
19. Cranstoun attended the West Mercia Police internal briefing to share information on the DAPP. Staff also met with the West Mercia Police Equality and Diversity officer, DARO and VAWG officers to promote the programme.
20. Conversations are ongoing between the OPCC and the force to ensure appropriate referrals are being made into services. Referrals into DA services was the subject of discussion at the PCC's Assurance & Accountability meeting on VAWG in December 2024, with both organisations committed to ensuring all commissioned services are well utilised.
21. The West Mercia wide DRIVE high risk DA perpetrator programme has accepted 58 allocations so far in Q3, working with 59 victim/survivors and 130 children and young people.

Female Offenders – reducing reoffending, Out of Court Disposals (OOCDD)

22. Willowdene have reported an increase in referrals for Q3, with 40 received prior to the end of the reporting period, this is a much-improved position from Q2.
23. Willowdene staff are continuing to deliver awareness raising sessions for out of court disposals (OOCDD) and attending training days with the force. Referrals from the force have increased and are now including women experiencing Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

24. The PCC has allocated £30,000 to fund an evaluation of Willowdene Rehabilitation Ltd. The evaluation will enable the PCC to understand the impact and effectiveness of the service, developing an evidence base to inform future recommissioning and strengthening any future external funding opportunities the PCC may bid towards.

Road safety

25. A draft of the OPCC Road Safety Needs Assessment is under review. Feedback will be provided to the Strategy, Planning & Insight (SPI) team who are producing the assessment in mid-January. The PCC's office will be requesting an executive summary that can be shared with relevant partners / contributors.
26. The Road Safety Grant round has relaunched for a second round on 11 December following an unsuccessful first round. The second grant round has been split into two lots factoring in some early findings in the draft Road Safety Needs Assessment. The two lots encourage local and West Mercia wide applications with a combined pot of £250,000. Lot 1 will include vehicle activated signs (VAS), white gates and other effective road safety interventions. This round closes on the 2nd February with the aim to evaluate and award successful projects for the start of the next financial year.

Regional collaboration

27. The PCC received his quarterly briefing in respect of the serious and organised crime threat (SOC) from force colleagues and from the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) in October. The PCC reiterated the need for ROCU to work closely with the force to provide the best service for local communities.
28. The PCC had his quarterly CT briefing in October which gave assurance that West Midlands CTU is effectively mitigating and managing the threat and risk to communities in West Mercia. Conversations specifically centred around the prison estate and Prevent referrals from West Mercia communities.
29. The PCC attended the Regional Governance Group meeting in October alongside his PCC colleagues from Staffordshire, West Midlands and Warwickshire and the respective Chief Constables. Updates from the ROCU, the regional Counter Terrorism Unit, National Police Air Service and Regional Operations were received.
30. The regional criminal justice arrangements are continuing to be developed and LCJB connectivity across the region will be refreshed imminently so as to consider more shared regional approaches in criminal justice conversations.

Criminal justice

31. A PCC led workshop took place in November bringing together partners from across the criminal justice system (CJS). The workshop was a success with clear activity and measures of success agreed for both LCJB and the Victims Board. This work will now be followed up through the normal meeting process.
32. Tackling court backlogs remains a priority for the LCJB. A court backlog task and finish group was established in September and centred on the development of a standalone action plan to tackle the significant backlogs and improve processes and outcomes for victims and witnesses. This action plan was also further developed in the November

workshop, with a further meeting of the task and finish group taking place in December to drive activity.

33. Overall performance in the CJS in West Mercia remains stable since the last panel report:

- The conviction rate for the Magistrates Court sits at 85% in West Mercia, comparable to the regional and national average (84%).
- Witness Attendance rates remain high at 86%, this is above the regional and national average.
- West Mercia are 6th highest in the country for guilty pleas at first hearing in the Crown Court.

34. The Victims' Board meeting took place in January 2024 and involved further developing the Board's performance metrics, data sharing agreements and priority commitments from partners agreed at the joint workshop in November 2023. This meeting included a victim's video account of their experience of the CJS and a review of the national HMICFRS Inspection of how well the Police, CPS and Probation Service support victims of crime.

Serious Violence

35. Following the Data Sharing events organised by the Serious Violence Partnership Manager, the missing datasets from partners have been re-requested for input and analysis within the OPCC Serious Violence Needs Assessment. The PCC has pushed the requests and a revised more condensed product, together with executive summary is anticipated for February 2024. This will ensure the needs assessment contains all relevant partner information as required under the duty to inform the landscape review and future direction for Serious Violence.

36. Proposals for allocation of the non-labour and labour components of the Serious Violence Duty funding for the remainder of 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be discussed and formalised at the February Crime Reduction Board (CRB), which is the approved governance structure for signing off / decision making in response to the duty.

Combatting drugs partnerships (CDPs)

37. The last set of CDP meetings took place in December, chaired by the PCC.

38. Partners shared their local delivery plans which was used by the OPCC to develop a West Mercia-wide CDP delivery plan aligned with the national outcomes framework. Partners also presented narrative reports highlighting successes, challenges, and risks related to reducing drug use and associated harm.

39. Partners from each Local Authority (LA) submitted their local data profiles for drug treatment and recovery which were used to populate the PCC's CDP performance dashboard. Gaps in data were discussed, and the force and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) were tasked with sharing data around reducing drug related crime and hospital admissions respectively.

40. LA partners have expressed interest in piloting a Naloxone Scheme in West Mercia. Discussions between the OPCC, force and partners are ongoing via the CDPs with a

focus on funding, training, and governance. LA leads will progress approval of the scheme at their local substance misuse groups. However, the force is still in the process of pulling together a report to go through internal governance processes. The report will build on force engagement with partners, the Police Federation and legal services and will enable Chief Officers to consider how a pilot could progress with appropriate governance. The force will report back to the CDPs once the report is finalised and approved.

Reforming West Mercia

41. The PCC has set a Net Budget Requirement of £273m. Following additional funding and use of reserves the total budget for the year is £277m. A central element of the budget investment was a commitment of an additional 40 officers to support front line policing.
42. The force have a robust process in place for ensuring that West Mercia maintains the target number of police officers. The modelling by the Force provides reassurance that they are on target to achieve the establishment target at the end of March 2024, which will ensure that the PCC receive the full government funding available to support policing activity.
43. With the establishment target achieved it has enabled the force to deliver the Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams commitment set out at the start of the year. These resources, along with the commitment for 10 Community Safety Engagement officers have put greater focus on addressing key community concerns, such as ASB and the harm caused by illegal drugs. These teams are now out in communities focusing on effectively responding to emerging crime patterns in those areas.
44. The PCC is delivering on his commitment to replace Redditch Police Station; working with the Fire Service to ensure that the force and partners have the right building to deliver public services in that locality for decades to come. The building is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2024. The PCC is also overseeing the progression of other capital projects such as on new Firearms facility and a SARC to ensure that the Police have the right facilities to train their officers to deliver good public service and to ensure that victims are supported.
45. In the last 3 months the force has continued to deliver on the budget investment in the digital transformation agenda. The force has delivered the ambitious programme of moving nearly 3500 officers and staff onto Microsoft 365. This achievement means that the force can look to implement the wealth of technological solutions that are available to drive efficiency in how policing for the public is delivered and realise both operational and financial benefits, whilst resolving remaining implementation challenges.
46. Since the last report to the Panel, the PCC has also approved additional capital investment in the Digital Forensic Unit in a Case Management solution. This investment will ensure that the service is effectively handling requests to investigate some of the most serious and harmful crimes in an efficient and effective way. Effective management of demand will improve investigatory outcomes as well as ensuring compliance with regularity requirements.
47. Previous reports to the panel have included details of the PCC's investment within the Firearms Licensing Unit (FLU), including investment in staff and fleet. The impact of

this investment is monitored through regular reporting to the West Mercia Governance Board and biannual PCC reports to the Policing Minister. The next report to the Minister will be drafted at the end of January 2024.

48. Latest data from the force (as at 13 December 2023) indicates that members of the public are waiting as long as 248 days for a new shotgun certificate, and 400 days for a new firearms certificate. Whilst this is in excess of the target set by the PCC at the time of initial investment in April (150 days), it is a considerable improvement compared to the previous quarter, particularly in respect of firearms grant (previous longest waiting time reported at 660 days).
49. The force remains committed to significantly expanding capacity of the FLU and have provided reassurance that this will lead to improved wait times and enhanced service delivery over the next 2 quarters. Options to increase capacity of the FLU are being considered as part of budgetary proposals.

Estates

50. As part of ensuring the West Mercia Police Estate is fit-for-purpose, with buildings that support new technology, the PCC has undertaken a 'pilot' LED Lighting installation at Kidderminster Police Station. This will see significant savings in energy consumption and annual revenue costs. Further LED Lighting installations for 2024/25 are proposed at Worcester and Telford Divisional HQs and Hindlip HQ.
51. Work on major capital projects continues at a good pace, in respect of:
- A new Police & Fire combined hub at the Middlehouse Lane site in Redditch. There has been significant progress with the erection of the building structure and external cladding well underway. The new facility remains on track for completion October 2024.
 - The closure of the existing Redditch Police Station was completed on time in October 2023, to allow demolition works which have since commenced.
 - Following the closure, the force has successfully relocated to a new temporary location based in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch. The force has moved in fully and this location is fully operational.
 - A comprehensive communications plan and targeted information campaign has ensured residents and communities are aware of the new location. In addition, a new digital kiosk to support public access to services has been installed at the external entrance to this temporary location.
 - A new Firearms Range & Training School at Hindlip HQ. Architects have been appointed, together with the appointment of a principal designer, and planning consultants. Various site surveys and investigations have been completed and RIBA Stage 2 design completed also, with a cost report due mid-January 2024. A pre-application for planning permission has also been submitted to the LA.
52. As part of the ongoing process to identify key estates infrastructure, the estates team commissioned a full condition survey of the Heating, Ventilation and Aircon (HVAC) systems. Surveys have been completed for HQs at Shrewsbury, Telford, Kidderminster & Worcester. This data will be utilised along the same lines as the previous building fabric condition surveys going forward to better inform long term financial, operational and strategic planning and decision making.

53. Hereford Police Station has not been commissioned at this stage as it will be reviewed as part of the proposed feasibility into a refurbishment of the site as a whole.

54. A central tenet of the Estates Strategy 2021-26 is that West Mercia's Estate will be fit for purpose. To achieve this, the PCC has provisioned significant additional investment through the annual planned programmes of minor works and refurbishments. This has led to notable recent improvements in the estate built fabric condition, performance, and management, whilst acknowledging more work is required.

55. Ongoing delivery of the annual planned programme of minor works & refurbishments continues with the improvements to numerous areas of the Estate. These projects range from minor window replacements to major internal refurbishments and have a relatively even and proportionate spread across the whole force area.

56. Almost 100 projects are budgeted and scheduled within the Estates annual capital and revenue programmes across the OPCC West Mercia Estate in 2023/24. Examples include, but are not limited to the following;

- Bridgnorth Police Station - Major roof replacement & internal refurbishment and improvement works
- Droitwich Police Station - Health & Safety and Security improvements
- Hereford Police Station - Internal redecoration works. Access and security improvements
- Hindlip HQ - Various internal office refurbishments & improvements to Dog Section accommodation & training facilities
- Hindlip HQ - Significant investment in critical Data Room cooling infrastructure and ancillary services
- Various Sites - Redecoration and refurbishment of offices and staff welfare areas
- Various sites - Replacement of heating and power supply infrastructure and improvements to building fabric
- Custody Facilities - Improvements to security and building fabric

57. Commercial advantage is a central premise of the Estates Strategy, focused on delivering the best possible value for money and enabling as much investment as possible into key services and infrastructure. Work in this regard over the last year has focused on maximising additional income and minimising costs wherever possible. A review and closer management of contracts is supporting significant efficiencies within the service.

- Reduced supply chain with numerous term contracts renegotiated on better service terms and costs, achieving value for money and revenue operational savings.
- More than £100,000 has been removed from West Mercia's waste management contract.
- In total, efficiencies totalling more than £330,000 are projected for delivery through improved management of estate contracts per year.

58. The Estates Team continue to identify potential savings from the estate's revenue budget, as well as potential capital receipt, through reasonable disposal of assets. Assets identified and in the process of disposal by 31/03/24 include:

- Disposal of the Freehold of the Land off Holmer Road, Hereford, HR4 9SW. The PCC purchased a 2.8-acre plot of land off Holmer Road, Hereford HR4 9SW, in December 2018 with the intention of developing a joint police and fire station for West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. However, in 2023, the partners officially decided not to proceed with this project. Thus, the land was deemed surplus to requirement and earmarked for disposal. The PCC has since approved this disposal, to the interested party (Wye Valley NHS Trust) negotiations are ongoing.
- Disposal of the residential properties that are The Firs & The Orchards (located at Hindlip HQ site Worcester) - sale agreed for The Orchards. The Firs out to market
- Disposal of the residential property located at 42A Albert Road Malvern – in marketing phase.
- Disposal of the redundant and vacant Evesham Community Contact Centre located at Evesham Police Station site – in marketing phase.

Financial management

59. The draft budget for 2024/25 has been presented at the PCP, along with the proposed precept increase. Even with the proposed increase in the precept the PCC has had to take action to reduce service expenditure in order to present a balanced budget. The PCC has sought reassurance from the force that they have prepared a budget which meets the service requirements for safe and effective policing, prioritises visible and accessible policing, better outcomes from investigations and improved public contact, whilst recognising that there is a limited amount of funding available.

60. The review of the financial position at the end of quarter 3 highlighted an underspend against the budget year to date, with a projected underspend by the end of the financial year of £1.583m. This is a small change from the £1.337m reported in Q2. No action is considered necessary given the underspend reported.

Reassuring West Mercia

Communication and engagement

61. Between November 1 2023 - January 1 2024, 28 press releases and statements have been issued. This resulted in 213 items of media coverage, helping to ensure that the PCC maintains a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing his part in community leadership and providing reassurance where necessary.

62. 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 35 engagements have taken place between November and January.

63. Throughout December, the PCC team visited the three counties to seek the views of the community on the PCC budget. This saw the team visit Worcester, Kidderminster, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford to give the public the chance to complete the survey in-person.
64. In total there were 915 responses to the consultation which ran from Friday 8 December to Sunday 7 January. Results are included as an appendix to the Budget Report.
65. The PCC continues to monitor his engagement and reach with communities across social media. Between November to January, 540 posts were uploaded, more than 5,700 people engaged with posts, and 460 new followers were gained. There are now 18,738 people signed up for PCC news updates via the Neighbourhood Matters system and 1,863 receiving the PCC's monthly newsletter. The PCC continues to send monthly newsletters to MPs to ensure they are sighted on activity in their constituencies.
66. Between November to January, approx. 7,577 people visited the PCC's website. Through an ongoing commitment to improve the website, the website is up to date across various pages, with a focus on maintaining this. Work also continues to ensure the website complies with accessibility regulations.
67. The PCC relaunched his Roads Focus campaign in November. The campaign focuses on road safety and gives the community a chance to talk to the PCC and key partners about their concerns and priorities related to road safety.
68. Starting in Herefordshire, two drop-in events took place in Ledbury and Leominster in December. As part of the campaign, the PCC promoted two free driver awareness sessions to give the community an opportunity to refresh their knowledge of the Highway Code. These sessions were very successful with one taking place in-person and another online. The campaign will continue in January with four sessions being held in Worcestershire, including: Malvern, Wythall, Bewdley and Broadway.
69. A follow-up Community Conversation event also took place in Pershore in November, following the PCC's visit in May. The PCC was joined by West Mercia Police's Temporary Chief Constable Alex Murray and South Worcestershire Area Commander, Superintendent Rebecca Love, who gave an update on the work being done in and around Pershore to tackle concerns and improve the visibility and accessibility of officers.
70. During the period November to January, the PCC's office dealt with 380 new pieces of casework. The most common themes were around complaint reviews, contact regarding the road safety grant, firearms delays, ASB, road safety, and budget proposals. There has also been increased contact by persistent complainants. As a result of this, the PCC, Deputy PCC, or Assistant PCC have visited areas of concern, sought assurance, and have made contact with correspondents to understand the issues and identify solutions, if necessary.

Local Policing Charter update

71. Ensuring West Mercia Police delivers the commitments set out in the Local Policing Community Charter is a key priority in the Safer West Mercia Plan. The Charter sets

out how the force will work with partners and the public to listen, understand and respond to community issues. The Charter is shaped by six key themes: visibility and accessibility, responding to communities, prevention, vulnerability, relationships and partnerships.

72. In May 2022 a review of the Local Policing Community Charter was completed. The review sought to understand how West Mercia Police have performed against each of the six themes and included recommendations to ensure the Charter evolved and delivered continuous improvement for West Mercia communities. The majority of recommendations have been completed.
73. The force has made progress in delivering against commitments to be more visible and accessible to communities, using both traditional methods (engagement vans, posters A-boards) and investments in technology such as Neighbourhood Matters.
74. Neighbourhood Matters launched in July 2021 and is an essential vehicle for delivery of the Charter. The total number of users has continued to go grow and the force reached the target of 30,000 users in April 2023 (38,008 users as of December 2023). Neighbourhood Matters is used to disseminate information and advice to the public, publicise SNT contact details, undertake targeted surveys to better understand local issues, and provides functionality that enables the force to track engagement activity digitally.
75. As part of the Charter, the force agree up to three priorities each quarter with all Town and Parish Councils who wish to engage. An agreed Parish Council Contact Contract provides a clear understanding of the preferred method and frequency of contact and identified priorities to be addressed. Priorities most commonly centre on speeding, crime (particularly theft) and ASB. A similar approach has now been taken to identify priorities across local secondary schools.
76. SNTs commit to attending Parish Council meetings on a quarterly basis. Not all councils accept this offer; some prefer to receive a written update on activity or defer attendance until new priorities are set. SNTs attended or provided updates as requested to Parish Councils on 209 occasions between 1st September and 30th November 2023.
77. As part of the Safer West Mercia Plan, the PCC committed to seek feedback in respect of the commitments made in the Community Charter. A key mechanism for seeking this feedback is the PCC's annual Town and Parish Council Survey¹. The latest survey in 2023 found the following:
 - Awareness of the local policing charter has steadily increased since 2021 from 67% to 83% in 2023.
 - There has been a considerable increase in the police contacting Town and Parish Councils to identify local priorities, increasing from 55% in 2021 to 80% in 2023.
 - However only 50% of respondents to the survey believe the police have acted on priorities; and the majority do not think the Charter has resulted in less crime or increased feelings of safety.

¹ Please note the response rate for the survey equated too approximately 37% of all Town and Parish Councils in West Mercia (highest response since the inception of the survey). Results may not be representative of all Town and Parish Councils.

78. Force wide resources across a range of departments (e.g. road safety and force operations) and volunteer watch schemes (e.g. community speed watch) are integral to supporting SNT to deliver against local priorities. Further support to the Charter has been provided through the PCC funded uplift in officer which has enabled the introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers and Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Teams.
79. The Charter's work around prevention and vulnerability is supported by the force's problem-solving teams and the joint PCC / force Prevention Strategy. Further improvements in multi-agency data collection are integral to understanding and addressing threats within the community and work is ongoing to establish required data sharing agreements and protocols with partners.
80. As part of the prevention strand, in January 2023, the force identified 'Impact Areas'; Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that suffer from high levels of crime and disorder, high levels of calls for service and low levels of confidence in policing. Areas were identified through a wide set of data, including data from health and public health.
81. In response the force deployed an additional, dedicated neighbourhood policing officer into each LSOA. These officers had additional training in problem solving, trauma informed practice, engagement and the force ensured 'ring-fencing' from abstractions. Early indications are showing improvements in reducing crime and increasing confidence levels through this targeted approach, with Brookside in Telford showing a reduction of 43% of all crime types year on year.
82. The impact of the Charter continues to be monitored through an established performance framework and delivery plan, reviewed regularly through a Local Policing Charter Governance Group. A substantive update on the Charter will be presented to the PCC and Chief Constable at the West Mercia Governance Board in January 2024.

Performance and accountability

Assurance and accountability (A&A) meetings

83. The A&A timetable for 2023/24 is published on the PCC's website. Areas of focus are informed by performance monitoring, horizon scanning of emerging issues or legislative changes, and local / national policing priorities. Two formal meetings have taken place since the last update:
- 11 December 2023: Performance Meeting - Quarter 2 2023/24 focused on the HMICFRS Victim Service Assessment (VSA), outcomes, complaints and conduct, acquisitive crime, and the national beating crime plan.
 - 19 December 2023: Thematic meeting – Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) focused on DA including officer training, local and national strategy, key performance indicators and the victims' voice.
84. The minutes from the performance and thematic meetings are published on the PCC's website ([Assurance and Accountability Meetings - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/assurances-and-accountability-meetings)). Key outcomes from the meetings this quarter are summarised below:

- The force provided an update on progress following the HMICFRS VSA revisit.
- The PCCs Head of Commissioning to work more closely with the Chief Officer leads to ensure PCC commissioned services for DA are fully utilised by the force and to identify any gaps in current provision.

85. The Public A+A on the 29 January focused on crime that had the most significant impact on towns, particularly retail crime. The public and local retailers / businesses are able to submit questions to be put to the Chief Constable. Questions can be submitted via the PCC's social media channels.

86. The PCC's A&A meeting programme is supplemented by an ad-hoc, virtual element that enables the PCC to raise issues that do not fall within the remit of a performance or thematic meeting or require a more immediate response. Ad-hoc A&A requests are sent to the Chief Constable via email, who provides a response in writing. Since the last update, the PCC submitted 1 ad-hoc request on retail crime.

87. The ad hoc A&A on retail crime seeks reassurance that all elements of the recently published NPCC retail crime action plan are being implemented locally by the force. This includes a commitment to follow all reasonable lines of enquiry. A response is due at the end of January and will facilitate discussions during the public A&A.

Force performance reports

88. The PCC scrutinises performance regularly, utilising a weekly performance dashboard and monthly and quarterly summary reports. A copy of the Q2 2023/24 performance report can be found on the PCC's website: [Police Quarterly Performance Reports - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/performance-reports).

89. Below are some key performance areas of note:

- Crime Volumes: reductions continue to be seen across a number of key crime types including total recorded crime when compared to the same period last year. Residential burglary and vehicle offences have seen small increases during the same period.
- Recording around outcomes: West Mercia continue to see improvements in levels of action taken against offenders when compared to the same period last year.
- Response times: performance has remained stable for Grade 1 incidents although is largely below the force's target. Following a review of how the force grades incidents, the force has seen a notable improvement in grade 2 response times.
- Victim satisfaction: the methodology for reporting on victim satisfaction has been amended. Of note, the force's reporting of 'satisfied' now includes those that were completely, very and fairly satisfied (previous methodology only included those that were completely or very satisfied). This was discussed at the performance A&A in June. As a result of these changes, the force are now meeting their satisfaction targets for burglary, violent and hate crime. Domestic abuse satisfaction currently sits just below the target.

- Call handling: Both 999 and 101 have seen a notable reduction in performance in 23/24. This is due to a number of factors impacting the call centre including an increased demand and system issues. However, there has been significant improvements since with the implementation of the switchboard.

90. These performance trends are used to inform the agenda setting for the quarterly performance A&A meetings, as well as ad-hoc A&A requests if there is a pressing performance issue.

West Mercia Perception Survey

91. Headline findings from the latest West Mercia perception survey (Q2 2023/24) are presented below.

92. 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 (82%), this is comparable to findings in the previous period.

93. Around 72% of residents agreed that West Mercia Police understood the issues that affect their community, this is comparable to the previous quarter.

94. 88% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 70% in a non-emergency – similar to the previous quarter.

95. 19% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week, this is comparable to findings in the previous period. 61% of residents are satisfied with the levels of policing in their area which is an improvement on the previous quarter.

96. Public confidence remains a local and national priority and the PCC continues to engage with the Home Secretary and the APCC around improving police visibility and accessibility for members of the public.

HMICFRS Inspection Reports

97. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published two national inspection reports and one national super-complaint report since the last PCP meeting:

- December 2023: Report on the Criminal Justice Alliance's super-complaint – Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and independent community scrutiny of stop and search,
- December 2023: Inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group based child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England and Wales,
- December 2023: Inspection of how well the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service support victims of crime.

82. West Mercia Police was not inspected as part of any of the national inspections. The super-complaint and the inspection on group based CSE included a number of recommendations for all Chief Constables. The force is required to provide the PCC

with an update against each of these recommendations within 8 weeks of the national reports being published (due end of Jan - early Feb 2024).

83. The PCC will use the force updates to provide a formal response to the Home Secretary in relation to each report. This response will be published on the PCC's website. The updates will also be reviewed to determine whether any further activity is required through the PCC's A&A programme.
84. The joint inspection on support to victims of crime did not include any recommendations for local Chief Constables. The recommendations were for national agencies including the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), NPCC, Home Office, CPS, Probation and the College of Policing. However, based on the findings the report will be taken to the PCC's Victims Board in January 2024. This board is attended by partners from the force, CPS and probation and will provide an opportunity to ensure all partners are sighted on the report, and to discuss the impact of national recommendations locally.
85. The last performance report to the panel provided a brief update on the West Mercia Victim Service Assessment (VSA) letter that was published by HMICFRS in October 2023. The letter set out the inspectorate's findings following a revisit to West Mercia Police in July 2023. The revisit focused on progress made by the force to address a cause of concern identified during the 2021/22 police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) programme. Progress was assessed by repeating the VSA.
86. The findings of the VSA were subject to formal scrutiny through the PCC's quarterly performance A&A meeting in December 2023. The T/CC was asked to provide an assessment of force performance as set out in the VSA letter and provide an update on activity to address any outstanding recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs). The oversight and scrutiny activity through A&A was used to provide a formal response to the Home Secretary which has been published on the PCC's website: <https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/performance-information/performance-information-hmicfrs/>
87. The PCC was pleased to confirm that the VSA identified a number of recommendations and areas for improvement (AFI) which could be closed as a result of the considerable progress made by West Mercia Police over the last 6 months. In particular, the force was able to demonstrate considerable improvements in how it keeps victims updated, provides crime prevention advice, assesses victims' needs and consults with victims regarding the outcome of investigations. However, the VSA confirmed that there is further scope to improve performance for victims in West Mercia, and as a result, the cause of concern will remain.
88. The PCC and T/CC are committed to addressing the cause of concern with various activity in train including the development of a revised improvement plan, a review of supervisor ratios and training, greater involvement of forensics staff at the point of a call for service, Project Switch in the call centre, and the implementation of the most appropriate agency and incident grading policies. The investigative quality sergeants funded by the PCC also continue to embed and have already had a tangible impact on performance against key AFIs. The force continues to review progress through robust audits to ensure performance improves and this will be monitored by the PCC.
89. Scrutiny through formal A&A meetings is supplemented by regular meetings between the PCC's Policy team, the force's HMICFRS leads and the force liaison officer within

HMICFRS to ensure the PCC remains sighted on upcoming inspection activity and reporting.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

None

Contact Points

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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.

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