



Annual Report 2014-2015



**Police and Crime
Commissioner
West Mercia**

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Foreword by Bill Longmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia

Welcome to my annual report for 2014/15, which sets out the progress that has been made in achieving the objectives set out in my Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia.

The year has seen significant progress in many areas and I must thank the Chief Constable and all the officers, staff and many volunteers, dedicated to protecting people from harm who have contributed to these achievements.

Like all public bodies, West Mercia Police face a challenging financial climate. We have healthy levels of reserves and the force has delivered on its savings targets up to now. There is still more we can do to be more efficient, like strengthening the alliance with Warwickshire Police and making better use of technology.

Looking ahead I want an even greater focus on crime prevention, building on the work of the past year to reduce demand on our resources. One idea that will be really important is the concept of “spend to save”. This follows the idea that ‘prevention is better than a cure’. We know that stopping crimes from happening in the first place is far more cost-effective than dealing with offences when they do occur. It is also important that areas of high demand are identified so that resources can be directed more efficiently.

In my opinion the reduction in funding to local authorities is placing an extra burden on the police resources. The reduction in housing provision for ex offenders and reduced youth service provision are examples of this and I shall be exploring ways of remedying this alongside our partners. Our work with local authorities and the West Mercia Youth Offending Service is a good illustration of this.

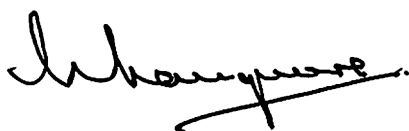
Partnership working has made great strides over the last two years but there is still some way to go. A lot of the work being undertaken is very impressive, but it needs to be better co-ordinated to ensure best value and best practise exists throughout.

The projects I have funded through the grant scheme are providing a real contribution towards making West Mercia a safer place and I highlight some of the projects receiving support in this report. In the last year I took over responsibility for victims’ services and I am determined to see victims’ needs taking priority in future.

I am confident that the work of the last two years and the coming year will lay the foundations to enable the next Police and Crime Commissioner to continue to build and improve policing and community safety in West Mercia.

Finally I must thank Barrie Sheldon, my Deputy, my community ambassadors and the staff of my office for their continued support and help throughout the year.

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

The Annual Report

Welcome to my annual report for 2014/15. This report covers my second full year in office and is an opportunity for me to share with you the progress that has been made in achieving the objectives set out in my Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia. It also provides an overview of how I, along with my Deputy Barrie Sheldon, the staff of my office and my Community Ambassadors have worked to ensure that we are carrying out all the duties expected of a Commissioner and their office.

My role

The role of a Police and Crime Commissioner has continued to grow since I came into office in November 2012. For example, following an intense period of preparation, I became responsible for the commissioning of local victims' services in October 2014. You can read more about this important work later in this report.

Also in this report you will read more about an exciting new venture to establish a social enterprise, which will market and sell products made by inmates of our local prisons. My unique role has enabled me to bring different parties together and secure funding to get the project off the ground.

My role involves working with the police, the public and a wide range of partners to ensure that there is an effective and efficient police service within West Mercia. My responsibilities include:

- Setting the strategic direction and accountability for local policing. This includes holding the force to account through the Chief Constable, and consulting and involving the public.
- Working with partners to prevent and reduce crime.
- Acting as the voice of the people and ensuring that the most vulnerable in our communities and victims of crime are not overlooked.
- Ensuring that West Mercia Police has the capability to meet its regional and national responsibilities.

Progress on the Police and Crime Plan

To ensure an efficient and effective police service

Objective 1: To provide an effective neighbourhood policing model, with a focus on areas of greatest need

Achievements

- ✓ The Alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police enters new phase
- ✓ Asset management company established
- ✓ Policing model changes

Alliance with Warwickshire

Since my election in November 2012 I have given the alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police my full support and I believe it has progressed strongly. However, to gain an independent and objective view of the Alliance, I along with the Warwickshire PCC commissioned the Police Foundation last year to review the progress made by the Alliance since it was instigated in 2012, and make recommendations for its future direction. The Police Foundation is an independent think tank focused on developing knowledge and understanding of policing and challenging the police service and the government to improve policing for the benefit of the public.

The Police Foundation report praised the 'significant' achievements of the Strategic Alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police, and stated that it should be 'trumpeted as a model that others could follow'. Some of the key achievements highlighted by the report include how the Alliance has provided local people with 'greater protection from harm and more visible policing, alongside evidence that value for money is being secured'.

The recommendations in the Police Foundation report have helped to inform the thinking behind the next phase of organisational change which is aimed at strengthening and deepening the strategic alliance between both forces and I am fully committed to support this going forward. This work is being led by the StraDA team, (Strengthening and Deepening the Alliance,) and the team has already completed a detailed analysis of the current and future demands which face the Alliance. This will then inform the next phase of work which will design a new policing model to address demand for policing services whilst delivering the savings that will be required over the next three years and the life of the medium term financial plan.

In the last 12 months we have made significant decisions as an Alliance which have included signing up to Athena, a police collaboration IT system, and securing funding from the Police Innovation Fund to develop a new joint Operations and Communications Centre (OCC) based across two sites, one being in West Mercia. Looking forward into 2015/16 I will be working to strengthen and deepen the alliance with Warwickshire and this work will be driven by the StraDA team.

Place Partnership

In January 2015 I published my formal decision to approve a full business case for a Joint Property Vehicle which has since been incorporated as Place Partnership Ltd. This ground breaking public sector initiative brings together six founding partner organisations to form a public sector asset management company. The partners are - West Mercia Police, Warwickshire Police, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council.

The company will work to deliver significant economic and regeneration benefits by maximising the value of its estates portfolio, which includes 1,323 assets across for counties. The company aims to deliver gross cost saving of approximately £58 million (excluding school savings) between 2015 and 2018.


Policing model resources:

People

Throughout the year I have closely monitored and scrutinised the overall number of police officers, special constables, police community support officer (PCSOs) police staff and volunteers working for West Mercia. During 2014 Ron Ball, the Warwickshire PCC and I raised concerns with our Chief Constables that the level and pace of police officer recruitment was too slow.



Sajid Younis, Community Ambassador for Telford & Wrekin, at a Telford job fair sharing a stall with West Mercia Police aimed at recruiting more Specials.



The original recruitment plan for 2014/15 was for 140 student officers across the Alliance; however with our intervention this was increased to 240. The actual number recruited is 183, of which 131 are in West Mercia. In addition there have been 72 transferees into the alliance, 42 into West Mercia.

The recruitment of Special Constables also continued during 2014/15, with 110 joining in West Mercia. I am pleased that the force is doing more to match skill sets to operational needs and to recruit people wanting to serve in the community where they live. I do however remain concerned about the large turnover of Special Constables and the cost to the organisation. Some of the turnover is due to Specials being recruited in to force as student officers, which is very positive, however I have asked the force to do more to understand the reasons why people leave to see if there are any organisational lessons to be learnt. In addition a training review has commenced.

Buildings

It has always been important to me that the views and concerns of communities were listened to with the introduction of the new local policing model in September 2013. My approach has not changed and I have continued to press for alternative or shared use of police buildings to ensure that local policing presence can be maintained. We are in advanced negotiations with a number of organisations to utilise space in premises including Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Oswestry, and Wellington police stations.

Where buildings have been deemed surplus to requirements I have pushed for a pro-active management strategy. This has resulted in speedier decision-making and the sale or approval to sell 12 former police buildings during 2014/15 which has generated a significant capital income and revenue savings.

Demand

In February 2015 police patrol bases were reinstated in Malvern and Ross on Wye. I wasn't happy with the policing model in these towns as I had received feedback from both local communities and police officers that they were isolated from the patrol base in Ledbury. As a result I asked the Chief Constable to look again at the policing arrangements and a review took place. The resulting changes have not altered how many local officers there are but means they operate out of local bases again, ensuring more of a local presence and a better service for local residents and businesses. I know these changes have been well received in local communities and given added confidence to people living in these areas.

Progress on the Police and Crime Plan

To reduce crime and disorder

Objective 2: To reduce the volume of violent crime with an emphasis on addressing the harm caused by alcohol through partnership working

Achievements

- ✓ Grant funding to support local projects

Performance

The level of violent crime has increased in West Mercia when compared to the previous year. During 2014/15 7466 offences of violence with injury were reported to the police compared to 5,828 in 2013/14, a 28% increase. Although I am disappointed with these figures, I am aware that other forces across England and Wales have also seen increases. In part the increase is a direct result of the HMIC Crime Data Integrity Inspection which recommended changes to crime recording practices. Here in West Mercia this has led to a detailed review of incidents that were opened as a crime but closed without a crime actually being recorded and dissemination of the recording practises to all officers. I am satisfied that although this has resulted in increased figures it is the right thing to do. However, it is not possible to provide a definitive assessment of how much the change in recording practices has contributed to the overall increase and going forward I shall be closely monitoring the level of violent crime recorded by the force.

Partnership working

I am particularly concerned about the role that alcohol plays both in offending and in making individuals more vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime across a wide range of offences including; violence, hate crime, sexual assault and domestic abuse. Police data shows that alcohol was a contributing factor in over 3000 violence with injury offences recorded in 2014/15. These issues cannot be tackled by the police alone and require an ongoing commitment by partners to work together to address the problems. With the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board I have recently established a Crime Reduction Board which will bring partners together to develop an evidenced based approach to addressing the harm caused by alcohol.



Sajid Younis, Community Ambassador for Telford & Wrekin, joins the Street Pastors in Telford to see the work they carry out.

Grant support

During 2014/15 I have been able to use monies from my grant scheme to support activities and initiatives which seek to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. Some examples are provided below.

Lean-on-Me Pilot Hereford

I contributed £25,000 to Herefordshire Vennture for the 'Lean-on-Me' pilot project which aims to create a better care pathway than custody and/or Accident and Emergency, as a means to transforming the care of people in the night time economy. People who become unwell or suffer minor injuries are assessed and recover safely under supervision until they are collected by family or friends. It also provides a place of safety for young people who become isolated from their friends. These services are provided at Emilia's Place, run by trained volunteers from 10pm until 4am (or later if required). Feedback from the project indicates that over the three month period from December 2014 to March 2015, 48% of referrals were from street pastors, 31% from door staff and 14% from the ambulance service. Being inebriated was the most common cause for referral, followed by assault.

Street Pastors

I have continued to provide funding and resources for street pastor schemes as I believe they can save a considerable amount of police time. Seven schemes now operate within West Mercia including Bewdley which recently received £4,500 from the rural and business crime fund. I have also donated a former police van to Telford street pastors. In Evesham, I donated £3000 towards the first year running costs of the scheme. In the first 9 months of operating, this scheme has assisted in reducing problems associated with alcohol, substance abuse and anti social behaviour and has been well received in the town.

“The street pastor teams have become an integral part of the evening community in town. They have been an asset to us and our customers often in the early hours of the morning, offering support and assistance when needed and I can’t praise their commitment and efforts highly enough” (Manager of Marilyns).

CCTV

CCTV is a tool that can provide a deterrent to anti social behaviour linked to the night time economy and can also provide evidence when problems do occur. I have provided grant funding towards a number of CCTV systems across West Mercia, often to upgrade old equipment which was expensive to run with more modern hardware to reduce the cost of maintenance contracts. One of the grants I provided to Shropshire Community Safety Partnership in support of CCTV schemes across the county is in Oswestry. Here since a new system was installed officers have carried out 845 reviews of evidence and 49 evidential recordings have been produced for prosecution purposes. In particular, significant evidence was obtained from the new cameras in respect of the ‘stranger rape’ which occurred in Oswestry in the early hours of 1st January 2015.



Hereford CCTV control centre is supported by grants from the PCC.

Objective 3: To reduce the harm caused by drugs with a focus on treatment, and targeting those that cause the most harm

Achievements

- ✓ Target police operations
- ✓ Continued funding for drug intervention programme

Policing focus

The Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police drugs strategy was launched in September 2013 with three key themes of reducing supply, reducing demand and reducing harm. Throughout the year the police have continued to use intelligence led policing to reduce the supply of drugs. For example, two men from Telford were convicted and sentenced following an investigation into the supply of cocaine. The pair were arrested in November 2014, when officers recovered a quantity of cocaine and adulterants which had a street value of up to £50,000. They were given a total prison sentence of more than nine years. During Operation Protect in March 2015, 47 simultaneous drugs warrants were executed across the alliance area to publicly demonstrate the forces' commitment to protecting people from harm.

Another way in which the police can hinder criminal activity in relation to drugs and other crimes is to use powers under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to seize cash and identify assets, such as cars and houses that have been bought by criminals through the proceeds of their crimes. During 2014/15 investigations conducted by the alliance's Economic Crime Unit (ECU) resulted in more than £2.4 million in confiscations orders being granted by the courts and more than £750,000 was awarded to compensate victims from some of these crimes. I fully support the use of POCA by the police and hope to see its use strengthened in the forthcoming Police and Criminal Justice Bill.

Drug intervention programmes

Much of the work to reduce demand and reduce harm requires the police and other partners to work together. During 2014/15 I provided £263,869 of grant money to community safety partnerships in support of their Drug Intervention Programmes (DiP). Offenders testing positive for drugs on arrest are referred into the DiP programme and onto local substance misuse providers. Over 200 offenders across West Mercia were referred onto and supported by local substance misuse providers.

Young people

In the course of my work I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of senior people working in the drugs field and one concern many have expressed to me is the impact substance misuse can have on an individual's long term mental health, particularly when a person starts using drugs at a young age. The impact on life opportunities as well as their mental health can be great, which is one of the reasons it is important to provide targeted help for young people.

The West Mercia Youth Offending Service provides a specialist service to undertake assessments and interventions to young people in the youth justice system whose drug or alcohol use is a significant risk factor associated with their offending behaviour. During 2014/15 I contributed over £103,000 towards this valuable work.

Objective 4: To reduce the volume of anti social behaviour incidents

Achievements

- ✓ Community Remedy introduced
- ✓ Grant funding provided to projects across West Mercia

Performance

Last year's saw a reduction in the number of anti social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to the police with 47,192 incidents reported compared to 49,174 in 2013/14.

Although for a number of years there has been a downward trend in reported ASB I have ensured it remains a priority in West Mercia. The force recently consulted on its ASB policy which aims to ensure a consistent and effective approach to tackling all aspects of ASB. The overriding aim is to identify those who are vulnerable, including repeat victims through effective assessment, and ensure that every possible action is taken to protect them from harm. In November 2014 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary assessed the force as 'good' in its approach to tackling ASB.

Community Remedy

Between August and September 2014, in conjunction with Warwickshire's PCC I consulted with partners and the wider public on what actions they would consider appropriate for inclusion in a joint Community Remedy Document for the two force areas. The results of the consultation were used to inform the final document which came into effect in October 2015

The Community Remedy document is used as part of the existing process for delivering community resolutions. It gives victims of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour a say in the punishment of perpetrators out of court. The community Remedy document is a list of actions that the victim will be invited to choose from when a community resolution is to be used. The lists of possible actions have been agreed between myself and the Chief Constable. Find out more by reading the briefing document in the 'Publications' section of my website.

Grant Funding

As I stated in last years annual report I have agreed with the police and partners not to produce an ASB strategy, but instead have continued to work closely with Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and others to use my grant fund to develop local solutions to address local ASB problems. Examples of my support include:

Herefordshire - £20, 000 to the Brightstripe Cultural Health Community Interest Company (CIC) for the y.Art+ y.Sport Be all you can be project which has run 88 creative sessions, and 48 sports based sessions involving 162 young people. During the period of the project there were fewer police call-outs and fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour in the areas where the project was running. This has been confirmed by feedback received from Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Scheme (HVOSS) and also statistics compiled by Herefordshire Council.

South Worcestershire - £8,600 to the CSP to purchase two deployable cameras to enable the partnership to continue a targeted approach in proactively dealing with an increase in ASB or crime. In Evesham a camera has been situated in Waterside monitoring the reported ASB in Workman Gardens. As a result of this, and public consultation, a Public Space Protection Order is being introduced in the area. The camera will continue to monitor the situation there in the early stages of proceedings.



Brightstripe Cultural Health Community Interest Company has received funding from the PCC

Objective 5: To reduce reoffending and bring offenders to account

Achievements

- ✓ Inside Products established
- ✓ Grant funding to support rehabilitation and reoffending schemes awarded

Performance

I am disappointed that reported crime has risen in West Mercia by 4.8% during 2014/15, compared to 2013/14 as it does not reflect the hard work undertaken by the police and partners to prevent crime, protect people from harm and improve community safety. Undoubtedly part of the increase is linked to changes in police recording and an increase in reporting in certain crime types, particularly sexual offences. However, these two changes do not explain all the increase and I shall be challenging the force to identify and address issues contributing to increasing crime profiles in the coming months.

To assist the force earlier this year I made the decision to increase the policing precept for 2015/16 by 1.99%, which will generate an additional £1.5 million. This additional money will be used entirely on programmes to reduce and prevent crime and the rehabilitation of offenders.

You can find more crime figures in appendix A of this report.

Criminal justice

The last year has seen a significant change in the way probation services operate in England and Wales. A National Probation Service has been created to manage high risk offenders and the Government has created 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) to manage medium and low risk offenders. The contract for Warwickshire and West Mercia CRC was awarded to EOS. While this change programme was underway, I worked with local practitioners to ensure that our communities remained safe and that affected practitioners received the required level of support needed to tackle crime and reoffending.

During 2014-15 I invested over £116,000 in supporting our local Integrated Offender Management (IOM) teams. Most of that investment was targeted at providing early intervention with offenders. For example, in several areas IOM teams adopted an innovative approach with local care farms which saw those farms work with and alongside criminal justice partners to break the cycle of offending. Recognising the fact that short term prisoners were more likely to commit further offences in the first 12 months after being released from prison, I invested a further £100,000 in supporting non-statutory offenders in the community. An independent assessment of the Youth Support Services (YSS) intervention scheme demonstrated that for every £1 invested there was a £16 return. Moving forward, it will be the responsibility of EOS and the CRC to support and work with non-statutory offenders.

Voluntary sector support

In addition to the IOM scheme I have used monies from my grant scheme to support a number of voluntary sector initiatives aimed at reducing reoffending. This included:

- A grant of £24,040 to Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Scheme (HVOSS) to establish an ex-offenders volunteering scheme for Herefordshire. After contacting over 200 organisations, 30 responded and 20 identified roles that would potentially be suitable for the volunteers. Of the ex-offenders referred to the scheme just over 20% have gone on to volunteer.
- The Shropshire Criminal Justice Forum were granted £6,800 to develop the 'Employ with conviction' project which held three events aiming to demonstrate the benefits of employing people with a criminal conviction.
- RITE Social Enterprise Ltd received a grant for £35,000 for a project to reduce and prevent reoffending for women offenders through a residential Alternative to Custody (AtC) programme.
- In South Worcestershire the CSP were given £6,400 in support of their offender management intervention scheme. 13 individual offenders received funding to deal with issues including emergency clothing and counselling sessions.

Social Enterprise Initiative

In last year's report I mentioned that I had begun talks with the prisons in West Mercia to explore opportunities around enhancing existing community pay back schemes and to look at new ways of enhancing services for the rehabilitation of offenders. A year later, I am delighted to report that an innovative new company has been set up, with the aim of reducing re-offending, rehabilitating prisoners and helping victims of crime in West Mercia.

I have provided an interest-free loan to establish Inside Products Ltd, which will sell services and goods made within prisons, to the public. The company will run as a social enterprise, re-training and rehabilitating offenders and increasing their chances of employment upon leaving prison.



Inside Products

"Offenders Making Good"



The company will provide high quality manufacturing services across West Mercia, and the wider Midlands area. Production will be entirely based within HM Prisons, and carried out by prisoners who will use resources and facilities that are already in place in prisons.

Separate to the 'Inside Products' initiative I have been able to encourage other organisations and business to consider developing links with prisons. For example a manufacturing business based in Shropshire now has a contract with Stoke Heath Prison and Whitchurch Town Council recently agreed to involve offenders from Stoke Heath in the refurbishment of the town's bandstand. The council were so impressed with the work undertaken that they intend to involve the prison in future projects.



One of the jewellery boxes made by Inside Products

Objective 6: To develop and implement a business crime strategy

Achievements

- ✓ Rural and business crime governance board established
- ✓ Community Safety Partnership led action plans
- ✓ Funding directed to local projects

Partnership approach

Rural and business crime are issues which cause concern to many of West Mercia's communities, but historically have not been a focus of attention. Choosing to have them as a key objective within my Police and Crime Plan has finally made them a focus and last year the Alliance published a business crime strategy and a rural crime strategy in support of my objective. To implement the strategies at a local level, the five Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) within West Mercia have agreed to reflect rural and business crime in their own priorities and lead on working with the local policing superintendent in their area to develop a rural and business crime action plan.

To help in delivering this objective, with my counterpart in Warwickshire I have committed £1.5 million per year from police reserves over 5 years in support of tackling rural, business and cyber crime. This equates to approximately £1 million per annum for West Mercia.

Rural and business crime governance board

A Rural and Business Crime Governance Board has been established to provide governance for and oversee delivery of the rural and business crime strategies, including oversight of funding. The Board covers the alliance area and comprises both PCCs, Deputy PCCs, police personnel, CSP representatives and representatives from the business and rural communities including the Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce and the National Farmers Union. The first Board meeting took place at the end of October 2014.

Supporting initiatives

The two strategies have provided a real impetus to address rural and business crime. For example, as part of the police commitment:

- One of the local policing superintendents now leads on rural and business crime on behalf of the alliance;
- A review of the provision of specialist wildlife crime officers has been undertaken to improve resilience.
- Some of the money from the budget is being used to enhance the use of police mobile contact centres. At least one new vehicle is being purchased and a small number of vehicles already in the police fleet are to be converted to contact centres. I very much believe that these vehicles will provide a flexible and accessible form of policing. Once in place they will enable the police and partners to go out and more proactively engage with rural and business communities.
- Working with 7 other forces, West Mercia has very recently launched Operation Leviathan in conjunction with the Angling Trust and the Environment Agency. This initiative focuses on poaching, increasing confidence and intelligence and addressing issues around migrant anglers.

Our CSPs have identified local projects requiring support and have received funding. These include: the 'purple flag' scheme in Shrewsbury town; an enforcement tasking team in South Worcestershire; additional taxi marshals in Telford; street pastors in North Worcestershire and rural and business crime forums in Herefordshire.



Promoting activity

An initial launch of the rural crime strategy took place in Herefordshire in May 2014 at a rural crime conference hosted by the county's High Sheriff. Local events have since been held in Shropshire and Telford to promote the strategies and to emphasise the commitment both I and the police have around tackling rural and business crime. I am pleased that these events have been well attended by local rural and business representatives.



At the launch of the rural crime strategy

I am keen that the Board also provides assistance and support in promoting and developing activity around the two strategies to raise awareness in the wider business and rural communities and see future initiatives supported. To assist in this a communications plan is being developed jointly between my office and force communications.

At a national level, I have joined forces with a number of other Police and Crime Commissioners, police forces and other organisations, all of whom have a common interest in rural crime to establish the National Rural Crime Network, to share best practise, develop areas and influence policy at a national level. The Network has secured police innovation funding to carry out what is hoped will be the biggest ever rural crime survey in England and Wales. I am pleased to be associated with this project and look forward to the results which will come out later in 2015.



A rural crime conference was held at Harper Adams University

Progress on the Police and Crime Plan

To protect communities from harm

Objective 7: To work in partnership to protect the most vulnerable people in our society

Achievements

- ✓ Commitment to mental health
- ✓ Additional resources to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation
- ✓ Increase in the reporting of hate crimes
- ✓ Services sustained through funding

Performance

2014/15 has seen a significant increase in the number of sexual offences reported to the police. The force recorded 697 rapes, compared to 395 in 2013/14 and 1295 other sexual offences compared to 897 in 2013/14. In part this increase is because of an increased confidence in reporting such crimes to the police as a result of recent high profile cases. An indication of this is the number of people coming forward to report 'old' crimes; 27% of other sexual offences reported during 2014/15 had been committed over a year before. The internet and other social media are also providing new opportunities for individuals to carry out crime.

Although these increases reflect a national pattern, I need to be assured that the force fully understands the scale of the problem and that resources are aligned to demand.

Mental Health

In 2014 along with the police and a range of other partner agencies including the NHS, councils and charities, I became a signatory to the West Mercia mental health concordat declaration, which seeks to improve outcomes for people experiencing mental health crises. Action plans have since been developed and are in place at a local policing area level as part of the concordat work.

Ensuring that people at crisis point who are in need of immediate care are taken to a health based place of safety rather than detained in police custody under section 136 of the Mental Health Act is a shared objective across all the action plans and one that I fully support. First and foremost it means people in crisis get the immediate care they need, but it will also help a great deal in freeing up police time.

Child protection

Earlier this year I agreed with Warwickshire's PCC the release of an extra £2.6M of funding to the alliance in order to increase resources and capability in this challenging area. This will include an additional 27 officers working to protect vulnerable people across Warwickshire and West Mercia. In the coming months I intend to carry out some focused scrutiny around CSE as part of my wider responsibility to hold the chief constable to account and to further raise awareness of this problem, which is now recognised as a national threat.

Last year I reported that the multi agency support hub (MASH) was operational in Herefordshire. Phase 1 of Worcestershire's MASH is now operational and Telford's should be operating by the end of September 2015. A number of organisational policing issues have slowed the roll out of MASH, however I am confident that these issues identified are being addressed.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence is, unfortunately, something that has become all too common in our society, and it exists in every city, town and village in the country. Helping victims and reducing the problem isn't just about 'throwing money' at the situation and hoping it improves. It is completely about partnerships working together – local councils, charities, myself, the police, even down to families, friends and neighbours.

Last year I asked the force to add to their existing work and partnerships, by forging closer ties with the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) – which helps women and men who suffer abuse at home, regardless of their financial situation, by getting fast and free (to the victim) injunctions against their partners

That work is now well underway, and is showing notable success. Statistics show a significant increase in the number of victims locally, who are now being referred to the NCDV. In the first ten months of 2014 a total of 115 people from the West Mercia area were referred by the Police, compared with a total of 39 in all of 2013.

I have also used my grant scheme to provide funding for projects to raise awareness of domestic abuse. This included £6,000 through Herefordshire CSP for the 'Great Project'. It works to educate and raise awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationships in order to prevent domestic violence and abuse. In total 289 pupils took part in the project and 89 teachers attended 'twilight' sessions.

Service provision

I explain more fully in the next section of this report how I am developing a commissioning model for the provision of support services for victims' services including specialist services for the victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse. In 2014/15 I sustained these services through grants. One example is Women's Aid who received £153,500 of funding to provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Telford. Over 1000 domestic abuse victims were referred to them during the last year.

Hate crime

On the 1 April 2104 Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police launched a new Hate Crime Strategy that aims to reduce the harm caused by hatred, focusing on the victim and targeting those who cause harm. Each local policing area has developed its own action plan reflecting local needs in support of the strategy. The number of hate crimes reported to the police is monitored and 2014/15 saw 630 such reports, which is an increase on the previous year. I very much support the focus on increasing reporting and would encourage any hate crime victims to come forward to the police.

I have given a number of grants towards projects in support of the Hate Crime strategy. These have included: £8,000 towards the safe place scheme in Herefordshire and £20,000 towards wider expansion of the scheme across Worcestershire; £5,000. Towards the South Worcestershire Hate Crime Awareness Campaign and a £9,500 contribution to the Worcestershire's Speakeasy N.O.W. project. This project offers support and training in school to those who may have experienced hate crimes, providing diversionary activities and resources to influence young people to think and act positively with those affected by learning disabilities.

Ruth Jones OBE, Founding Director of the University of Worcester's National Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Abuse (NCSPVA), with Deputy PCC Barrie Sheldon.



Objective 8: To deliver a supportive and effective response to victims and witnesses

Achievements

- ✓ Victims' services contract agreed
- ✓ Additional funding for victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse
- ✓ Joint Commissioning of Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Services
- ✓ Grants awarded to service providers to support and enhance services to victims

Victim Support

The last year was a critically important year for me as I, along with all other Police and Crime Commissioners, prepared to take over responsibility for commissioning locally most of the emotional and practical support services for victims of crime that are provided by the third sector.

The Ministry of Justice allocated £1.3m a year for the new services to be provided in West Mercia. In order to secure the best possible value for money I entered into negotiations as part of a national framework and in January 2015 I agreed a 3 year deal with Victim Support to provide the services. The result is a programme that has been tailor-made to meet local needs, and will be both delivered and managed locally with Victim Support.

The type of help on offer from Victim Support will range from a detailed needs assessment over the phone, through to emotional and practical support. They will also provide a link into specialist agencies for victims who need specific help for certain types of crime – such as domestic violence.

With an annual cost of just over £800,000, the outstanding money will be prioritised towards victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable victims.

Specialist Services

There are currently two organisations, AXIS Counselling in Shropshire & Telford, and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, who provide independent sexual violence advisers (ISVAs) to support victims of rape and sexual abuse.

In the last 12 months I have been successful in joint commissioning with all four Local Authorities, the IDVA provision across West Mercia and from 2015 Women's Aid provides an Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVA) across the whole area. This is a significant step forward in partnership work and joint commissioning approaches, and is currently being discussed and used as a model of best practice nationally.

Funding

Both ISVA and IDVA services are heavily reliant on funding allocated through local authorities and partnerships and will be part funded by my office in 2015/16 to ensure that these essential victim services are sustained in the short term. An example of the service provision I part funded in 2014/15 was AXIS Counselling who received £118,000. This enabled AXIS to support 460 clients during the year, including 272 new referrals. This included supporting 35 clients through a trial process, 21 of which were young people with 13 resulting in successful prosecutions. 14 adult service users secured seven successful prosecutions.

During 2014 I made a successful bid into the Ministry of Justice Competed Fund securing an additional £395,000 to enhance the support for the most vulnerable victims of crime, including £210,000 to support victims of sexual assault and £185,000 to support victims of domestic violence. The funds were used to boost the provision of independent advocacy designed to help victims access services and support to help them cope and recover from the trauma they have experienced. In addition, advocates supported victims through the criminal justice system processes.

Objective 9: To work with the Safer Roads Partnership to reduce the number of casualties on our roads

Achievements

- ✓ Meetings with community groups
- ✓ Speed Watch programme expanded

Performance

Sadly during 2014/15, 50 people were killed on West Mercia roads and a further 386 received serious life changing injuries. In particular there was a noticeable increase in the number of pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured. In this category of road users the number of deaths rose from three to six, whilst serious injury casualties rose from 34 to 48. I am pleased that the Safer Roads Partnership in conjunction with local policing teams has carried out a number of initiatives across West Mercia to raise awareness of this problem, but I would urge all road users to be responsible in their actions on our roads.

Listening to community concerns

Speeding traffic, road safety and safe parking are issues which remain a concern to many communities across West Mercia. Feedback from my annual Town and Parish Council survey shows that speeding traffic is the issue considered to be the biggest problem by town and parish councils across the whole of West Mercia, with 86% of respondents considering it to be either a 'very big problem' or a 'fairly big' problem.

I have met with representatives from a number of communities over the last year, for example, Market Drayton in Shropshire and Wythall in Worcestershire to discuss their concerns and sought to address issues with the force.

In last years annual report I mentioned a pilot project in Telford and Wrekin which would utilise two PCSOs to tackle parking issues in the towns of Newport and Wellington. The project, which runs until the end of June 2015 has yet to be formally evaluated but has received positive feedback about its impact both in terms of reducing anti social parking and improving public perceptions.

Community Speed Watch

I am pleased to report that the pilot Community Speed Watch Scheme that was launched during June 2014 in Crowle, Worcestershire has been a success. The scheme has since been expanded to include other sites in Worcestershire and Herefordshire and when fully implemented will provide for 12 groups across West Mercia to operate at any one time

Community Speed Watch schemes involve trained volunteers from the community monitoring the speeds of vehicles with approved, hand-held speed measurement devices. Where vehicle speeds are found to be inappropriate, a letter is sent to the registered keeper by the police with the aim of encouraging them to reduce their speed when driving in the future.

Objective 10: To meet the requirements of the Strategic Policing Requirement

Achievements

- ✓ Cyber crime funding
- ✓ Contribution to cross border operations
- ✓ Regional collaboration
- ✓ Joint Policing Panel pilot for serious and organised crime underway

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) recognises that police forces need to work cooperatively across force boundaries to plan for, and deliver, effective capabilities to tackle national threats at a local, regional and national level. In March 2015 the Home Secretary published a revised SPR and for the first time made Child Sexual Abuse an additional threat.

Joint Policing Panel

Work has begun in South Worcestershire to pilot a partnership approach to develop a local threat profile of serious and organised crime, with the aim of targeting those that cause most harm in our communities. This work supports the government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy and it is my responsibility to ensure there is a suitable partnership arrangement in place to agree, own and monitor delivery of the profile and the actions.

Regional collaboration

On a quarterly basis I meet with the three other regional PCCs, Chief Constables and Deputy Chief Constables to discuss, monitor and oversee the regional collaboration programme which includes the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit, Central Motorway Patrol Group (CMPG) and the National Police Air Service (NPAS). During the last year the collaboration agreements for these different activities have been redrafted and are due to be agreed and signed in 2015. These agreements set out what the PCCs expect the Chief Constables to undertake to fulfil the SPR requirements.

Operation Pompeii is an example of how effective cross border working can be. As a result of a West Mercia led regional operation involving seven police forces, in December 2014 nine men received collective sentences of just under 29 years for car thefts carried out across the Midlands over a 13 month period.

Cyber crime

During 2014 a Cyber Crime Governance Board was established to set the strategic direction for the Alliance response to cyber crime, in support of the National Cyber Strategic Assessment.



My Deputy, Barrie Sheldon represents me on this Board. Action supporting the four pillars of Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare is coordinated by this Board specifically to enhance intelligence, enforcement and prevention activity in relation to Cyber Crime. Activities have included promoting 'Cyber Essentials' amongst businesses, running a series of awareness campaigns and holding a major cyber crime conference at the University of Worcester in September 2014.

One issue cutting across both cyber crime and business crime is the increase in fraudulent activity such as credit/debit card cloning. Local police forces no longer manage the recording and assessment of fraud incidents; instead this process is managed on a national basis by Action Fraud. Over the last year I have become increasingly frustrated by the unwillingness of Action Fraud to provide accurate data on West Mercia and concerned by some of the feedback I have received by residents who have reported incidents to Action Fraud. I intend to address these issues with Action Fraud in the coming year.

Engaging with communities

My Community Engagement Strategy sets out my commitment to listening, consulting and engaging with communities in support of my aim to be a strong and powerful voice for the people of West Mercia. As part of this commitment my Deputy, Barrie Sheldon and I have continued to meet with hundreds of people at events throughout the year. For example over the summer of 2014 we attended a series of police open days held at locations across West Mercia. These events, funded by me were attended by thousands of people and provided an opportunity to showcase the valuable work, which goes on behind the scenes to protect people from harm.



Progress on the Police and Crime Plan

To provide a strong and powerful voice for the people and victims of crime

Objective 11: To develop and implement a community engagement strategy

Achievements

- ✓ Programme of engagements throughout the year
- ✓ Supporting volunteers
- ✓ Community Ambassador scheme expanded
- ✓ Weekly e-bulletin launched
- ✓ Showcase event planned

Meetings Barrie and I have attended through the year include town and parish council meetings, meetings with the three local parish council associations, senior citizen forums, Quaker meetings and one to one meetings with individuals with specific concerns or issues which have merited my intervention. In addition with the staff of my office I have responded to hundreds of letters and emails to the many and varied concerns raised by individuals and communities from across West Mercia. All the insight and knowledge these engagement opportunities provide is invaluable. Not only does it provide me with real insight into the issues affecting people it steers and informs my scrutiny and oversight of the force.



Volunteers

One of the activity areas within my engagement plan is my commitment to actively promote and support volunteering with a view to extending the use of volunteers in supporting policing and reducing crime and disorder, including with partner agencies and the business community. One example of this is the Citizen's Academy scheme that was piloted in Shrewsbury and saw 25 people attend a 10-12 week course. The aim being to build a more focused and detailed understanding of the work of the police. It is hoped that those attending pass on their experience and increased knowledge to others in their community and or take up opportunities to become Special Constables or volunteers with the police or other agencies.

Community ambassador scheme

My Community Ambassador scheme has gone from strength to strength in the last year. In particular the six ambassadors have supported me at open days, policing areas visits, community events and have taken a keen and active role in visiting many of the projects and initiatives I have provided funding for with my grant scheme. The purpose of the ambassadors' visit is to ensure the projects are doing what they set out to achieve and to provide 'hands on' feedback on projects. In particular I asked the ambassadors to focus on rehabilitation of offenders, keeping young people out of the justice system and diversity issues.

Examples of visits the five area based Community Ambassadors have undertaken include:

Gwyneth Gill (Herefordshire) – visited a training and mentoring programme among the gypsy and traveller community in Herefordshire, which received a £10,000 grant. Gwyneth learnt that more than 80 accredited certificate had been awarded with 14 teenagers of the 61 taking courses run by the Prince's Trust, the Cart Shed, Hope Family Centre or Gloucester College.

Graham Oliver (Shropshire) – met with Kate Beech who set up Chance 2013 to help ex-offenders get a new start. Graham learnt that the £39,000 grant I gave has helped support this specialised recruitment agency to provide training with advice on CVs and supplements prison-based educational and vocational training schemes. This has resulted in work and training with railway companies and an association linked to motorway construction and maintenance is being developed.



Sajid Younis (Telford and Wrekin) – met with Paul Fenn from Telford and Wrekin Council to learn how a £7,000 grant has helped Paul establish the nationally recognised ‘Freedom’ programme which provides support for women victims of domestic abuse. Sajid heard that the crèche facilities were a key factor in enabling the 30-40 women to be able to attend on a weekly basis to complete the 12 week programme underpinned by a team of trained facilitators.



Michael Layton (North Worcestershire) – visited Gloverspiece Minifarm near Droitwich. Launched some five years ago the 11 acre farm received a £5,000 grant last year as a contribution to support children and teenagers in danger of being excluded from school and has part funded a purpose-built area for people with a disability, a cooking area, classroom for training, tack room, feed store and offices. Michael learnt that Lynne Duffy, the farm manager is currently working with a Droitwich middle school and nine and ten year old children providing, a 12 week programme on animal care for ‘challenging’ students.



Richard Morris (South Worcestershire) – met with Phil Street, manager for Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services to learn how £16,000 of grant money will be used to support their Youth PACT (Police and Communities Together). Their ‘youth action’ programmes are aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour through diverting young people into positive community involvement. Richard will pay a further visit later in the year to find out how the project has progressed.



Chris Mair – In addition to the five policing area based ambassadors, Chris is my sixth ambassador working specifically on ambassador communications. He actively liaises with all the ambassadors to provide reports on their work.

Weekly newsletter

During the last year I have supplemented my quarterly e-newsletter which is published on my website with a less formal weekly newsletter. This is emailed to over 1000 contacts each week, with a much greater potential reach on social media. The weekly newsletter provides a round up of the week's activities, current issues and key messages. In particular the weekly newsletter records the work of my ambassadors using the reports provided by Chris Mair as a basis for many of the news items. To sign up to my weekly newsletter please visit my website or email my office. My website www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk is updated regularly with news articles, details of upcoming meetings, social media and all more engagement activity.

Policing heritage

West Mercia police, formerly known as West Mercia Constabulary, was formed in 1967 by the merger of a number of local constabularies. Over many decades a great deal of policing memorabilia and items of historical interest relating to the force and its history have been collected and are kept in storage. Two volunteers have approached the Chief Constable and I offering to sort and catalogue all the artefacts. I have agreed with the Chief Constable that once catalogued, we will try and find a suitable place for the items to be exhibited to give people across West Mercia the opportunity to share our policing heritage.

Forward Together Showcase event

Over the last few months with assistance from my staff I have been planning the Forward Together showcase event to be held on the 5th July 2015 in Shrewsbury. The event aims to illustrate the huge amount of work that goes on around policing and crime locally, promote a sense of community and healthy living, and ultimately inspire people to do something positive for themselves and where they live.

This event is very important to me as there is so much inspirational work being done by so many people in West Mercia, and it's important that the public get to see it, and the good it is doing. The police open days were a big success last year, and I wanted to build on that and put together something really special for this summer.

Dozens of partner agencies and organisations will be involved showcasing the work going on with prisons to rehabilitate offenders, victim support services, public health, and projects to divert young people away from crime, amongst many other things.

The Street Games charity will also host its annual West Midlands tournament at the event, with hundreds of young people involved in different sports. Their event has previously been held in the Birmingham area, but the chance to work in partnership with me means the event will be coming to Shropshire for the first time.

Holding the force to account

I have systems in place to hold the chief constable to account for the effective and efficient delivery of police services across West Mercia. On a weekly basis I meet with the Chief Constable to hold challenging discussions on a wide range of issues including, performance, human resources, operational issues and finance.

I hold regular meetings with senior officers and heads of service. For example I have a bi monthly meeting with the Director of Enabling Services where I look in more detail at issues such as recruitment. I also receive regular oral and written updates and briefings on different areas of force business.

In conjunction with the local policing areas I now have a programme of quarterly visits to each policing area. These visits provide me with a real 'on the ground' insight into the different challenges each policing area faces, both in terms of operational activity and management issues such as staffing levels, fleet and estates. The knowledge I take from these visits informs my scrutiny and challenge at a more strategic level.

On a monthly basis I jointly chair with the Warwickshire PCC the Alliance Governance Group. This is an internal meeting which provides governance and oversight of the alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police. The membership of this group comprises senior representatives from each force and the respective commissioners' offices.

My staff or I also attend other internal meetings on issues such as diversity, professional standards and the Athena programme board.

Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee

In the last 12 months, with my counterpart in Warwickshire, I have established an Independent Trust, Integrity and Ethics committee which met for the first time in September 2014. This is an independent committee set up to examine the ethical governance and actions of both Warwickshire and West Mercia Police. It follows the recent introduction of the Code of Ethics, developed by the College of Policing. This Code sets out what the standards of behaviour within policing should be and includes practical examples for officers and staff to use in their everyday jobs.

Some of the Committee's key work completed to date has included conducting spot checks on the way complaints have been dealt with by both forces to ensure the Code of Ethics is being applied consistently.

Due to the findings of the HMIC Crime Data Integrity report the first important job that the committee were tasked with was to scrutinise the force's crime recording practices particularly the recording of serious sexual offences. Their findings will be reported back in September 2015 and I look forward to receiving that report.

Independent Joint Audit Committee

This committee covers both West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and provides independent scrutiny of the forces' and the commissioners' financial performance; treasury management, financial reporting processes and risk management. During 2014/15 the committee has scrutinised a number of specific functions including firearms licensing and external inspection reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Both the Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee and the Independent Joint Audit Committee are public meetings. Details of forthcoming meetings including the agenda and papers are available to view in the 'Transparency' section of my website.

Independent Custody Visitors Scheme

Police and Crime Commissioners have a statutory duty to operate an Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme. The ICVs are members of the public who live or work in West Mercia. Their role is to make unannounced visits in pairs to police station custody suites to evaluate the welfare of detainees and the conditions in which they are detained. Any concerns identified are formally recorded and resolved via Custody Officers or through the Panel meeting.

I receive regular briefings on the work of the four West Mercia ICV Panels. This enables me to consider any strategic issues and recurring themes emerging and ensure that these are addressed by the police. My office is currently working with the Warwickshire PCC's office to review and streamline processes and identify opportunities to share resources. For example in the Autumn we will be holding a joint training day for ICVs from across both schemes.


For the 2014/15 period a total of 278 visits were undertaken across West Mercia. There were 983 in detention at the time of the visits. Of the 550 detainees that were available to be seen at the time of the visit 82% were willing to meet with the ICVs.

My Independent Custody Visitor Scheme would not function without the dedication and enthusiasm of the panel members and I am proud of all the work that they do.

Policing Performance

Last year I took the decision to remove all targets and measures from my police and crime plan and issued an updated plan reflecting those changes at the end of March 2014. Since that time I have continued to monitor force performance, receiving regular reports and updates as well as attending the alliance Performance Management Group.

My office is currently working with the force on the development of a new performance framework. As part of this work a regular public facing performance report is being developed that will be available to view on my website.



I have provided a summary of key crime and incident types for 2014/15 and a comparison with 2013/14 at appendix A. In addition you will find a more detailed performance commentary from me where I have reported progress against the objectives in the earlier part of this report.

HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and policing activity in the public interest. During the last year I have worked with the Chief Constable to develop better management processes around this inspection regime. This has greatly improved my oversight of the whole process and enables me to be better informed at every stage of each inspection. In addition, with my Warwickshire counterpart, we have successfully pressed HMIC to rationalise their inspection requirements around the alliance, to reduce resource requirements for all.

During 2014/15 HMIC published a number of joint, national and force inspections, 14 of which had police or West Mercia specific recommendations. The following force reports were published in relation to West Mercia police.

Policing in austerity: Meeting the challenge (published July 2014)

The force received an overall judgement of 'Good'. The report is split into 3 sections examining the steps the force is taking to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term (HMIC judgement was 'Outstanding'); the extent to which the force is delivering an affordable way of policing (HMIC verdict was 'Good') and; the extent to which the force is efficient (HMIC verdict was 'Good').

Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time (published September 2014)

This was a national thematic inspection, however in addition to the published report HMIC wrote to each chief constable detailing findings for their force.

Crime data integrity (published November 2014)

This report made 8 recommendations.

Police integrity and corruption (published November 2014)

This report made 5 recommendations.

Crime inspection 2014 (published November 2014)

This was the first annual PEEL assessment which compares all forces in the areas of Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy. The report is split into 3 sections examining how effective the force is at reducing crime and preventing reoffending (HMIC judgement was 'Good'); how effective the force is at investigating reoffending (HMIC verdict was 'Good') and; how effective the force is at tackling anti social behaviour (HMIC verdict was 'Good').

National child protection inspection (published February 2015)

This report made 9 recommendations

For each inspection report containing recommendations the force has developed action plans to implement those recommendations and I monitor progress in relation to those actions.

Financial Position and Future Financial Prospects

At the end of 2014/15 the financial reserves I hold will be £63.9m, compared to £53.1m at the start of the financial year. The change in the level of reserves of £10.8m is a result of under spending the net revenue budget; this is expenditure on the provision of day to day services.

The under spending occurred in the following areas.

	Under (over) spending £m
Policing	13.245
Office of the PCC	0.126
Grants to other organisations	0.148
Budgeted Contribution from reserves	(2.762)
Total	10.757

Capital expenditure on the creation and acquisition of buildings, IT systems and vehicles across the Alliance was £8.5m. This was significantly below the budgeted level of £20.3m.

The under spending resulted primarily from significant delays to getting projects underway within the police force. Much of this delay occurred because of the comprehensive restructuring of the force that has been taking place throughout 2014/15. To address this issue, a new capital planning and management process has been introduced in 2015/16, which I am assured will reduce slippage in future years significantly.

The reserves I hold are currently very healthy. This will afford me the opportunity to minimise the impact of future budget reductions by phasing their use over the life of the current five year medium term financial plan. This plan, which I agreed in February, following consultation with the Police and Crime Panel, provides for significant use of reserves over its life.

It is necessary for me to hold reserves for a variety of purposes:-

- To protect against the financial and operational risks which exist for the Police and the OPCC, for example major incidents. This reserve is known as the general reserve.
- To support the budget over the life of the medium term financial plan and allow the sensible phasing in of reductions in government grants. This reserve is known as the budget reserve.
- To provide for specific known future expenditure commitments, for example, equipment renewal and organisational changes. These reserves are called earmarked reserves.

Measure	General Reserve £m	Budget Reserves £m	Earmarked Reserves £m
Balance at 1/4/2015	13.500	41.498	8.900
Use in 2015/16	0.000	10.440	3.000
Use in 2016/17	0.000	10.278	3.000
Use in 2017/18	0.000	7.442	3.000
Use in 2018/19	0.000	4.332	1.000
Use in 2019/20	0.000	0.001	0.000
Balance at 31/3/2020	13.500	9.005	1.900

The expected reserve use in the current medium term financial plan is shown in the following table.

Over the course of the next five years our current plan anticipates annual reductions in government grant of 3.2%, offset in part by council tax increases of 2%. 60% of our budgeted expenditure of £204.079m in 2015/16 will be met from government grants, with the balance being met from council tax income and the use of reserves. Over the five year period we are also expecting to deliver permanent savings of £29.634m to assure the continued financial health of the services funded by the PCC.

Openness and transparency

Governance

Good governance is the means by which the Chief Constable and I take decisions in a timely, open, honest and accountable way for the good of all our communities. To achieve this I have a robust Scheme of Governance in place which is kept under review. I am required to publish details of all the key decisions I make. Both the scheme of governance and decisions I have made are available to view on my website.

Other transparency information available on my website includes details on my office including my expenses, senior staff salaries and staffing structures as well as information of all freedom of information requests made to me.

To learn more please visit my website: www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

The West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) scrutinises my work as a Police and Crime Commissioner including all aspects of my activities and responsibilities. I have a legal duty to consult the PCP over important decisions and must take their views into account when doing so. Since my election I have developed a fair but challenging working relationship with the PCP and look forward to working with them in the coming year.

The PCP is administered by Worcestershire County Council. To find out more about your PCP including, membership, meeting papers and their work programme please visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk

West Mercia Commissioners Grant Scheme

I introduced my grant scheme in 2013 and I firmly believe that the money we've given out in grants has done some incredible work in the last couple of years, and the good it does in terms of preventing crime and reducing reoffending saves the public a huge amount of money in the long term. For example, an independent audit of one of the initiatives we funded to reduce reoffending found that for every £1 invested from my office, it had saved the public £16. That's a sound investment, and a fantastic result, which voluntary & community groups are helping us achieve.

During 2014/15 I issued 122 grants totalling £2,930,518. This includes 18 grants made, totalling £726,050, for services supporting victims of crime.

Earlier this year I asked my Head of Commissioning to review the grant scheme so that moving forward my funding targets key outcomes to reduce crime levels further and enhance support to vulnerable communities to reduce their risk of becoming victims in the future. The revised scheme was launched in March 2015.

Bill's Private Fund

In addition to the main grant fund I pledged £20,000 of my own money for charities and other groups to bid for up to a maximum of £500. Since starting this funding I have given 89 grants in total, 44 of which were made during 2014/15. I have now given over £19,000 in donations.

Further details on both schemes including all the grants I have made can be found in the 'Transparency' section of my website.

Conclusion

Last year in my conclusion I highlighted four areas of focus for the coming year all of which I have addressed in this report. Overall I feel confident that despite an increase in crime, the focus for the alliance to protect people from harm, along with the support from partners and communities will continue to ensure West Mercia remains a safe place to live.



Appendix A

Crime and incident data

Category	2014/15 Volume	Percentage change compared to 2013/14
Overall recorded crime	60,762	+4.8%
Violence with injury	7,466	+28%
Rape	697	+75.6%
Other sexual offences	1295	+44.4%
Domestic burglary	2705	+6.1%
Robbery	403	+16.8%
Anti social behaviour	47,192	-4.2%
Killed or seriously injured	436	+6%

Outcomes

A new outcomes framework was introduced by the Home Office in April 2014 to replace detection rates. There are now 19 categories of outcome which provide a greater picture of police activity. Of the 60,762 crimes recorded during 2014/15, 55,604 had an outcome within the year. In 5% of crimes the outcome was a community resolution.