



West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Engagement Strategy 2014-16



**Police and Crime
Commissioner**
West Mercia

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Front cover pic - Bill Longmore and Barrie Sheldon met with members of the community in Hereford who were taking part in street clean, as part of the T4C project on Sunday 4 February 2014. Barrie formed part of the painting team.

Back cover pic - Community Ambassadors induction meeting, December 2014. Back row, from left to right: Barrie Sheldon - Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Richard Morris - Community Ambassador South Worcestershire, Sajid Younis - Community Ambassador Telford & Wrekin, David Shaw - Chief Constable, Bill Longmore - Police and Crime Commissioner, Michael Layton - Community Ambassador - North Worcestershire. Front row: Chris Mair, Community Ambassador - Communications, Graham Oliver - Community Ambassador Shropshire, Gwyneth Gill - Community Ambassador Herefordshire.

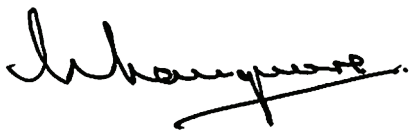
Foreword by Bill Longmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia

It is important that I engage with communities and interest groups such as victims, adult and children safeguarding boards, watch schemes, unitary, county, district, city, town and parish councils, Police Independent Advisory Groups, voluntary and community sector and speak with people to find out their true views about how we can together effectively prevent crime and disorder. However, I wish to go further. My vision is for a new community spirit with people working together in partnership to improve society and to reduce crime and disorder with West Mercia Police and their safer neighbourhood teams, statutory community safety partnerships, other agencies and groups within the public and private sector.

Bringing communities together to tackle crime and improve community safety is important. The current economic climate and the wide scale reductions in resources available to the public sector means involving the community in helping to make their community safer is even more important. Local communities can help in the fight against crime and disorder and work together to protect themselves and their property, which in turn helps reduce the fear of crime. Engagement with communities and interest groups such as victims, watch schemes, all councils and the voluntary and community sector can contribute significantly to creating safer neighbourhoods.

I aim to be a strong and powerful voice for the people and victims of crime and inspire others to be leaders in their communities to prevent crime and disorder, and build a better and safer society. I appreciate that this will not be an easy task. Since my election my deputy, Barrie Sheldon, and I have travelled widely through the force area, which covers an extensive geographic area of over 2,860 square miles and has a population of over 1.2 million. We have made contact with a wide variety of partner organisations, communities and interest groups. Implementing this strategy, which will be underpinned by an action plan, will develop those links and help fulfil my ambition. It will also assist me in holding the Chief Constable to account with regard to the arrangements West Mercia Police make for engagement with local people.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this document.



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia



Context

This strategy and accompanying delivery plan set out how I, as the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, intend to engage with communities across West Mercia. It is separate from the Community Engagement Strategy for West Mercia Police. This strategy supports delivery of the following strategic aims, set out in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017*, and in particular the fourth aim:

Aim 1. To ensure an efficient and effective police service is delivered.

Aim 2. To reduce crime and disorder.

Aim 3. To protect communities from harm.

Aim 4. To provide a strong and powerful voice for the people and victims of crime.

This strategy has been developed taking into account:

- my statutory responsibilities as set out in the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and future responsibilities with regard to commissioning local victims' services;
- the commitments I made to young people as set out in the national Youth Advisory Group's Youth Charter (February 2013) and to victims the five promises to victims and witnesses produced by Victim Support (2012);
- a workshop with officers from local authorities across West Mercia (February 2013), which included representatives of youth services, community safety partnerships and youth offending services;
- West Mercia Police Cadet Scheme;
- comments from the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police;
- consultation on the draft strategy during September and October 2013;
- West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police draft hate crime strategy

* The West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 can be downloaded from my website www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk

Community Engagement Charter

As the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia I aim to provide a strong and powerful voice for local people and victims. This Charter sets out how I intend to do that, guided by these principles:

“I will be clear about why I am engaging ”

I will endeavour to make sure that everyone involved in any of my community engagement activities knows what the aims and hopes of the engagement exercise are. I will be open and honest about what can and cannot be influenced, with reasons for this.

“I will engage cost effectively ”

Consultation can take different forms. In order to ensure the best value for money and reach as many people as possible in a timely manner I will be using electronic methods of communication by default e.g. website and email. I will also use existing networks such as town and parish council associations. This approach will be varied for vulnerable or other groups whose access to information technology is limited.

“I will use clear language ”

I will use clear language, without jargon, and explain any technical terms

so people can understand what they are being engaged about and they can make informed contributions.

“ I will work with partners to avoid duplication ”

People do not like being asked about the same thing over and over again. In order to be more efficient and increase the likelihood of people taking part I will seek to work with partners on consultations and other activities in a joined-up approach, building on existing relationships that organisations have.

“ I will aim to enable all groups within our communities to take part ”

I will aim to make sure that groups of people who could be affected by the topics under discussion are well represented. I and my team will be inclusive and reach out across Herefordshire, North and South Worcestershire, Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire to involve people from all communities and settings.

“ I will provide people with regular feedback when engaging with them ”

People will be informed of what happens as a result of my engagement with them, what decisions are made and why, which includes publishing feedback on my website.

Methods of Engagement

In implementing this Strategy, I will be supported by my Deputy, Barrie Sheldon, Community Ambassador Co-ordinator, Paul Deneen, a team of six Community Ambassadors, one for each of the Territorial Policing Areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire and a sixth to focus on communications and members of my support team.

The methods I will use to engage, include:

The Community Ambassador Scheme

The Community Ambassadors will develop local networks of groups, organisations and volunteers so that I can reach out and connect to all areas of West Mercia. They will link with the West Mercia Police patrol bases and Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Community Contact Volunteer Scheme

I will be supporting and developing volunteering within our communities of West Mercia. I will be developing a Community Contact Volunteer Scheme whereby selected local individuals can act as my eyes and ears and engage directly with their local Ambassador.

Commissioner's Grant Scheme

I will encourage people to find their own solutions to local crime or anti-social behaviour issues. Where appropriate I will provide time limited support through the Commissioner's Grant Scheme. Full details of the scheme and how to apply can be found on my website (www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Grants/Grants.aspx).

Bill's Private Fund

I will acknowledge and encourage those organisations in West Mercia that help fight crime and support victims of crime. I will continue to invite charities and other groups to bid for a share of £20,000 of my own money. The money can be used for anything from setting up diversionary schemes for young people to helping established organisations to expand their activities to improve community life. Details of how to apply and donations made can be found on my website (www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Grants/Grants.aspx).

Existing Networks

I will work with partners to make best use of existing networks such as: Police Independent Advisory Groups, Independent Custody Visitors, Town and Parish Council Associations, Business Groups, Voluntary and Community Sector networks and the Local Criminal Justice Board.

How I Will Engage on Policing, Crime and Disorder Issues

This diagram below summaries the methods I may use to engage with communities, dependent on what I aim to achieve.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Forward Together
Community engagement aim	To provide communities with balanced and objective information	To obtain feedback on ideas, options or decisions	To work directly with communities and partners to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered	To encourage and support local communities to develop their own solutions to local crime and disorder issues
Commitment to communities	I will provide information to the public	I will provide inform to the public, listen and provide feedback on how public input has influenced decisions	I will work with communities and partners to ensure their concerns and aspirations are included in options and provide feedback on how this has influenced decisions	I will look to communities and partner agencies for ideas for developing solutions and incorporate their recommendations into decisions as much as possible
Ways to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Email • Social media • Press releases • Reports • Presentations • Newsletters • Personal visits and contacts • Existing networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, partnership, public meetings • Focus groups • Surveys • Website • Email • Social media • Personal visits and contacts • Existing networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events and Conferences • Workshops • Research • Developing and implementation of strategies • Community, partnership, and public meetings • Community Contact Volunteer Scheme • Community Ambassadors Scheme • Personal visits and contact • Existing networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and Finish Groups • Commissioner's Grant Scheme • Bill's Private Fund • Community, partnership, and public meetings • Community Contact Volunteer Scheme • Community Ambassadors Scheme • Personal visits and contact • Existing networks

Table adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation spectrum, see <http://www.iap2.org>

Activity Areas for Community Engagement



- Strong Voice
- Community Participation and Involvement
- Victims, witnesses and vulnerable people
- Children and young people
- Businesses and rural communities

Strong Voice

My commitment to provide people in West Mercia with a strong voice on policing, crime and disorder issues, including the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing. Whilst I cannot commit to being an advocate of the views of any particular individual or lobby group I shall take such views into account when discharging my statutory responsibilities.

I will seek to sustain and improve ways to fulfil my statutory responsibilities² to consult on policing and proposals for the policing precept and to obtain people's co-operation in reducing crime and disorder.

I will fulfil my statutory responsibilities³ to publish specified information including producing an Annual Report on progress against the Police and Crime Plan and the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in West Mercia.

I will endeavour to keep people informed about my activities utilising existing networks where possible, for example through local authorities and respective town and parish council associations. This will include opportunities to take part in engagement activities, feedback on consultations and providing up-to-date news on a regular basis.

I will hold the Chief Constable to

account for the effectiveness of the arrangements made to fulfil his statutory responsibilities⁴ with regard to:

- obtaining the views of people within each neighbourhood about crime and disorder issues;
- providing information about policing to people within each neighbourhood;
- holding regular meetings within each neighbourhood. (Between people within each neighbourhood and policing officers responsible for supervising or carrying out policing in that neighbourhood).

This will include undertaking a review of the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) scheme in conjunction with the Chief Constable.

Delivery of the above activities contributes to delivery of the following objectives and associated measures of success in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11

² s14 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

³ s11 & s12 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

⁴ in accordance with s34 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 a neighbourhood will be defined by the Chief Constable

Community Participation and Involvement

My commitment to support more community participation and involvement in reducing crime and disorder in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and North and South Worcestershire

I will 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. This will include:-

- the provision of diversionary activities for young people, particularly those vulnerable to crime⁵;
- strengthening neighbourhood and rural watch schemes;
- an annual conference to share best practice and present awards to communities and volunteers who have made a significant contribution to reducing crime and disorder;
- seeking to work with partnership agencies e.g. All local councils to create opportunities for the rehabilitation of offenders thus reducing reoffending rates and enabling offenders to work on worthwhile projects within our communities.

I will provide a grant scheme and offer time limited financial support, where appropriate, to encourage and support communities to develop their own solutions to local crime and disorder issues that contribute to safer communities.

My Community Ambassadors will work within the five policing areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, North Worcestershire, South Worcestershire and Telford and Wrekin. They will each provide a direct local point of contact to me and will work to build strong relationships with the communities in their area, with local policing teams, existing networks and representative bodies. In addition, I will develop a Community Contact Volunteer Scheme whereby selected local individuals can act as my eyes and ears and engage directly with their local Ambassador.

Through activities 1, 2 and 3 above I will work with West Mercia Police and partners to empower people to lead and take responsibility for a range of issues that contribute to safer communities in conjunction with West Mercia Police. This will include actively identifying and supporting individuals who can provide leadership within our communities and can help to develop cultural, sporting and other activities which will help to reduce crime and disorder and promote health and well being within our communities.

Delivery of the above activities contributes to delivery of the following objectives and associated measures of success in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 11

⁵ For definition of vulnerable to crime see Appendix A

Victims, witnesses and vulnerable people

My commitment to provide victims of crime, victims of road collisions, victims of administrative procedures, witnesses to crime and vulnerable people within West Mercia with an effective voice on policing, crime and disorder issues. To support this work I will utilise existing networks as appropriate.

I will seek to sustain and improve ways to fulfil my statutory responsibilities⁷ to obtain the views of victims of crime about matters concerning the policing of the area. This will enable me to be an effective voice informing and influencing policing, criminal justice, safeguarding and commissioning across West Mercia.

I will encourage openness and accountability towards victims, witnesses and vulnerable people, with the aim of improving the provision of help and support they need.

I will encourage West Mercia Police to become more victim-focused and more effective at meeting the needs of victims, when they need it and those who are most vulnerable within our communities.

I will encourage West Mercia Police and the criminal justice agencies to give victims and witnesses an effective voice in the wider criminal justice system and to develop new ways of delivering justice for victims which will have the confidence of local communities.

Delivery of the above activities contributes to delivery of the following objectives and associated measures of success in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Objectives 1, 7, 8 and 11

⁶ For definition of vulnerable to crime see Appendix A

⁷ s14, Police Reform and Social Responsibilities Act 2011

Children and young people

My commitment to improve engagement with children and young people on policing, crime and disorder issues. To support this work I will utilise existing networks as appropriate.

I recognise that young people are citizens and I will value their interests and opinions. I will listen and make myself accessible to young people by providing appropriate ways for them to express their issues and concerns about policing, crime and disorder issues. I will be inclusive and link to already established youth representative groups within each of the five policing areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, North Worcestershire, South Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin. Where such groups do not exist, I will seek to set up young people's advisory groups supported through my Community Ambassador Scheme.

I will encourage communities in the development of diversionary activities for young people to address crime and disorder issues. Where appropriate I will provide time limited support through the Commissioner's grant scheme

I will provide funding, through the Commissioner's grant scheme, for a new force wide West Mercia Police Cadet Scheme offering young people the opportunity to gain a practical

understanding of policing, promote good citizenship and provide opportunities for volunteering.

I will support West Mercia Police in working in partnership, for example with schools, colleges, universities and youth service providers, to:

- build positive relationships with young people from all communities;
- improve the Police response to children and young people;
- work to prevent and reduce crime and disorder relating to children and young people, both as victims of crime and as perpetrators of crime;
- to promote active citizenship and leadership skills within school and college environments and to develop role models as active citizens.

Delivery of the above activities contributes to delivery of the following objectives and associated measures of success in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 11

Businesses and rural communities

My commitment to improve the links with the business community and our rural communities on policing, crime and disorder issues.

I will work with business and rural communities, West Mercia Police and partners to develop and implement business and rural crime strategies. Through this work I intend that business and rural crime will be better understood, have a higher profile in relation to policing, crime and disorder issues and we will work together to reduce crime and disorder and promote the safety and security of staff, customers and the public.

My Community Ambassadors will actively promote links with the business and rural communities across West Mercia and support the development of stronger relationships between business and rural interests, the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Mercia Police. My Ambassadors will seek training, development and job opportunities for all in order to help reduce crime, disorder and reoffending within our communities.

I will seek to sustain and improve ways to fulfil my statutory responsibilities to consult on policing and representatives⁸ of non-domestic ratepayers on proposals for the policing precept.

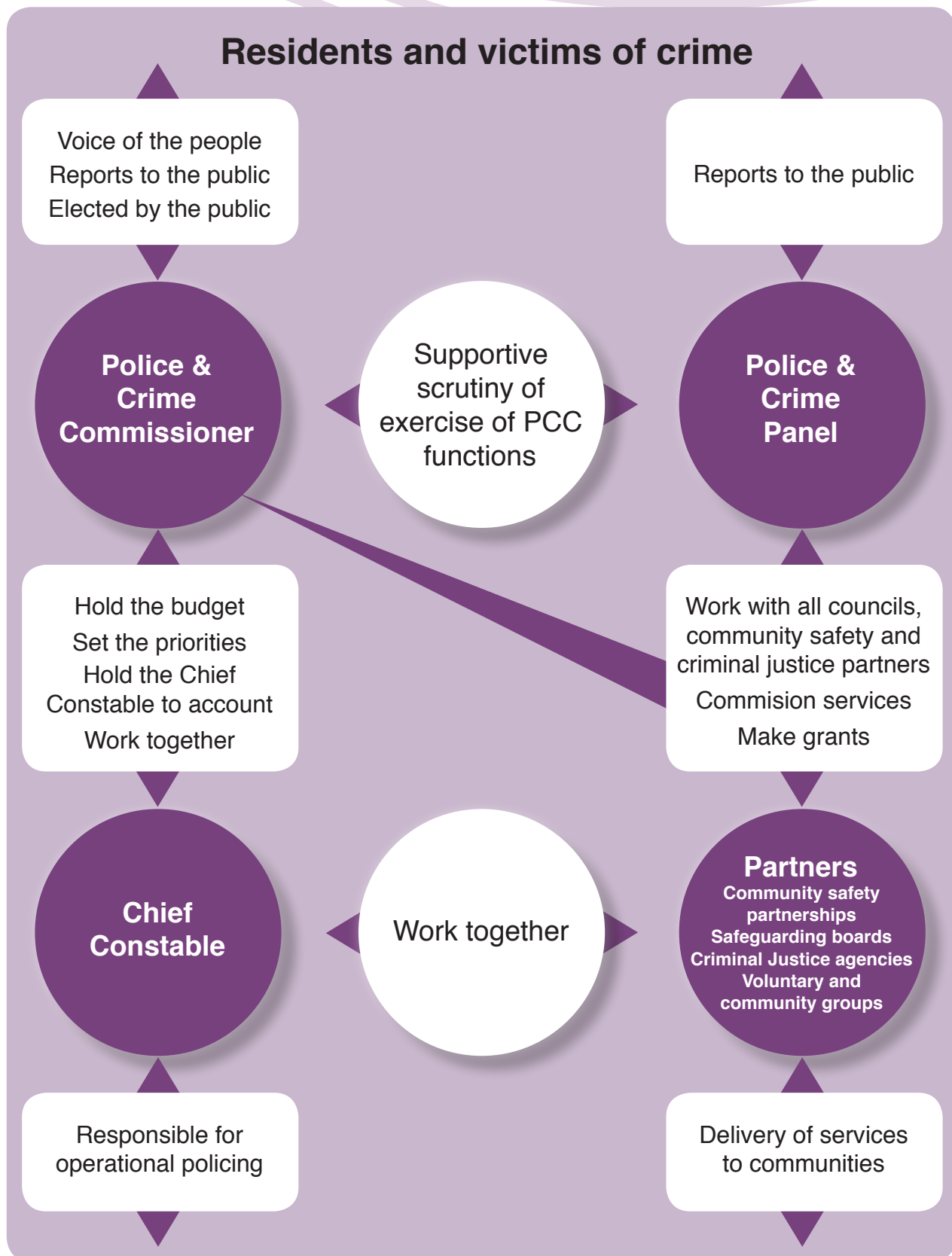
I will actively promote and support volunteering with a view to extending the use of volunteers in supporting policing and reducing crime and disorder, including with the business community. This will include the provision of diversionary activities for vulnerable young people and strengthening watch schemes.

Delivery of the above activities contributes to delivery of the following objectives and associated measures of success in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Objective 1, 4, 5 and 6)

⁸ *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*

Appendix A

The West Mercia Policing Landscape



Outcomes

Communities and victims of crime have a strong voice on policing and crime issues

Adapted from Lancashire PCC

Appendix B

Definition of Vulnerable People

In defining vulnerable people in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Engagement Strategy the following is included:

Vulnerable to Crime

- Vulnerable to committing crime - due to domestic influences, due to social influences, due to peer pressure.
- Vulnerable to re-offending
- Vulnerable to being a victim of crime
- Vulnerable to the effects of fear of crime

Vulnerable to Exclusion

- Vulnerable to social exclusion
 - Through disability
 - Through language barriers (inc. dyslexia etc)
 - Through cultural barriers
- Through isolation or commitment (young carers etc)
- Vulnerable to financial exclusion
- Vulnerable to educational exclusion

Vulnerable to Abuse including Hate Crime*

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Gender
- Psychological
- Racial

***Definition of Hate Crime⁹** : Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's:

- race or perceived race
- religion or perceived religion
- sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation
- disability or perceived disability
- transgender or perceived transgender

Or

- individual characteristic that makes someone appear different, e.g. alternative lifestyle, culture, physical appearance and style of dress

⁹ West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police Hate Crime Strategy



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