



Promoting improvements  
in policing to make  
everyone safer

# PEEL: Police efficiency 2016

An inspection of West Mercia Police



November 2016

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## Introduction

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HMIC assesses the efficiency of police forces across England and Wales.

As with all public services, it is vital that the police service operates in a way that makes the most of all its available resources. Police forces need to make sure they understand the current demand for their services. This is to make sure that they use all the resources available to them to fight all types of crime and to protect communities. Also, forces need to be looking to the future to understand how that demand may change and to plan where they need to invest extra resources or change the ways they operate so that the public can continue to receive the policing it expects and deserves.

As part of the government's objectives to cut public spending, central funding to the police service in England and Wales has been reduced by around 20 percent since 2011. Police forces across England and Wales have faced a difficult challenge to sustain effective levels of policing in the face of significant budget cuts. Forces need to continue to make efficiencies and invest resources wisely in order to maintain a focus on reducing crime and keeping their communities safe. HMIC considers that a police force is efficient if it is making the best use of its resources to provide policing services that meet expectation and follow public priorities, and if it is planning and investing wisely for the future.

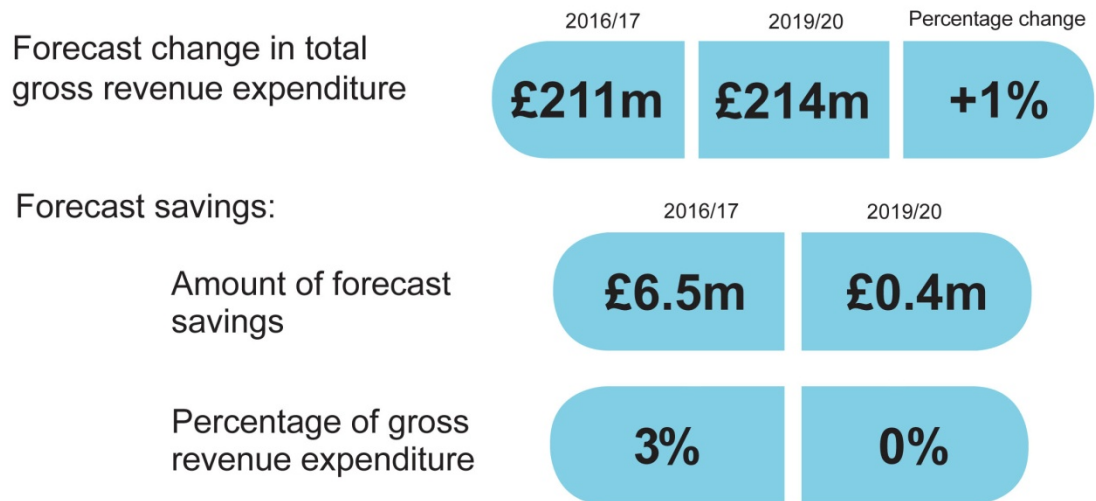
HMIC's efficiency inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/)). This report sets out our findings for West Mercia Police.

Reports on West Mercia Police's legitimacy and leadership inspections will be available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016)) in December 2016. Our reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2017.

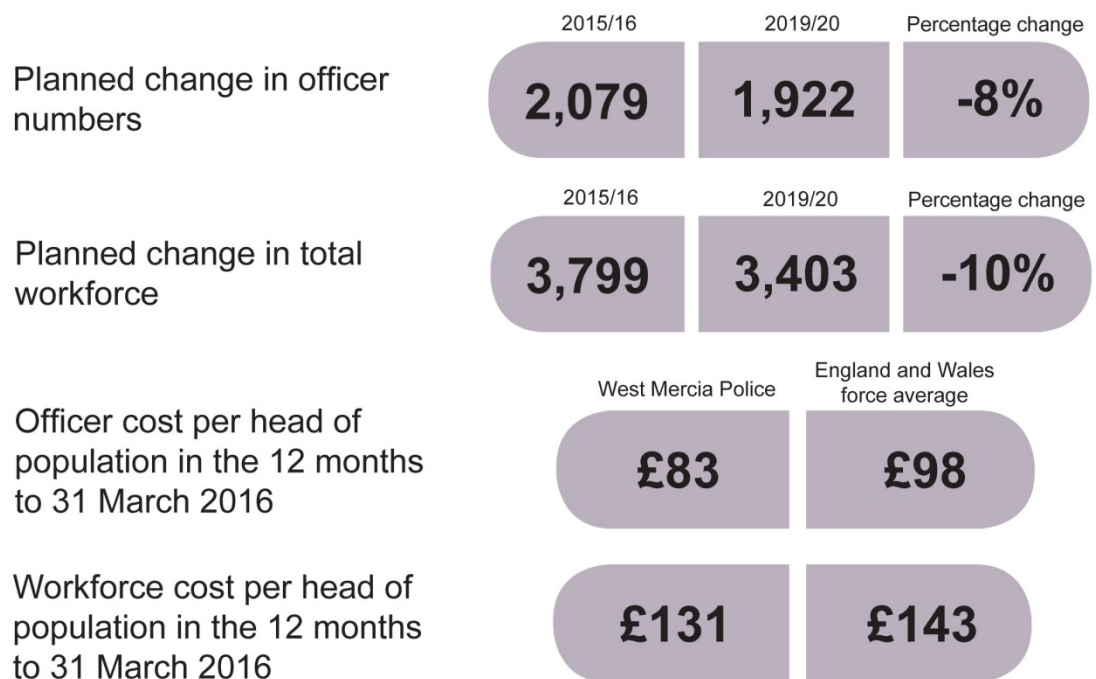
## Force in numbers



### Financial position



### Workforce





## Calls for assistance

999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

West Mercia Police

**49**

England and Wales force average

**124**



## Recorded crime

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

2014/15

**49**

2015/16

**58**

Percentage change in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

West Mercia Police

**+20%**

England and Wales force average

**+9%**



## Victim satisfaction

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 31 March 2016

West Mercia Police

**84%**

England and Wales force average

**84%**

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

## Overview – How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

### Overall judgment<sup>1</sup>



**Good**

West Mercia Police is good in how efficient it is at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force has a comprehensive understanding of its current and likely future demand and makes use of a range of demand tools; there are also plans to introduce predictive analytics. The force uses its resources to manage demand well and is changing the composition of the workforce to meet the challenges of the future. The force is working towards establishing a new operating model which is part of its Vision 2020 plan for the future. The force's change programme is robust and subject to external oversight, and the force is making good use of commercial partners to bring specialist skills and expertise to deliver Vision 2020.

### Overall summary

The force has a strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police (the alliance), whereby all posts below deputy chief constable are shared. Both forces share a single vision and set of values and work to a harmonised set of policies. As a result, practice and procedures should be the same in both forces, and, in this inspection, HMIC found that to be the case. Therefore, save for specific localised examples, all references to the force can be read as applying equally to the alliance.

The force is good at understanding the current and likely future demand for its services. Its intelligence analysis supports the daily management meeting and extensive demand analysis has led to changes to the composition of the workforce. This ensures that resources are aligned to the areas of greatest need. The force intends to refine this understanding by recruiting an analyst to record real-time demand data from all of the force's ICT systems. It has also carried out further research to deepen its understanding of secondary demand, for example the time invested in the investigation of offences.

The force is good at using its resources to manage current demand. The force's priorities are identified in a forward-looking strategic assessment, and an accompanying control strategy ensures that they are properly resourced.

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<sup>1</sup> HMIC judgments are: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

The force's people strategy outlines how it plans to establish and maintain the correct blend of skills and experience in the workforce; this is managed through the monthly workforce management group (WVG). The WVG has recently undertaken a comprehensive skills assessment as part of this programme.

The alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police is more extensive than any other that is unique in the police service. The force also collaborates with five partner organisations in the unique Place Partnership Limited (PPL). PPL is an ambitious joint venture involving the sharing of estates and facilities management. This collaboration aims to save £58m over ten years through the sharing of services and realise disposal receipts of around £100m through the sale of obsolete buildings.

The force has a well-established change programme which uses a dashboard to track project benefits and is clearly linked to the force's medium-term financial plan (MTFP).

The force is good at planning for demand in the future. It has used extensive demand analysis to inform Vision 2020, which includes technological advances, notably a significant upgrade of the ICT operating platform. The force is seeking to appoint external partner organisations with expertise in transformational change to lead change and has commissioned consultants to advise on the ICT developments.

The MTFP is prudent and includes a credible programme to balance the budget, including some use of reserves. The force is investing in capital projects, such as the redesign of control rooms, to make savings. The exact scale of the anticipated savings has yet to be determined.

## **Recommendations**

West Mercia Police is a good force. HMIC has not identified any causes of concern and therefore has made no specific recommendations.

## **How well does the force understand its current and likely future demand?**

A good understanding of the demand for police services is vital in ensuring that forces have the right resources in the right place to provide the right level of policing now and in the future. This means not just an understanding of reported incidents but also how well a force proactively looks for demand that is less likely to be reported (e.g. incidents relating to modern slavery or child sexual exploitation) so that it can ensure that it protects the most vulnerable victims. Forces also need to understand how much resource to put into work that prevents crime and anti-social behaviour from occurring in the first place. It is important that forces continually review how they operate to ensure that they are not wasting police resources by operating inefficiently or responding to unnecessary demands.

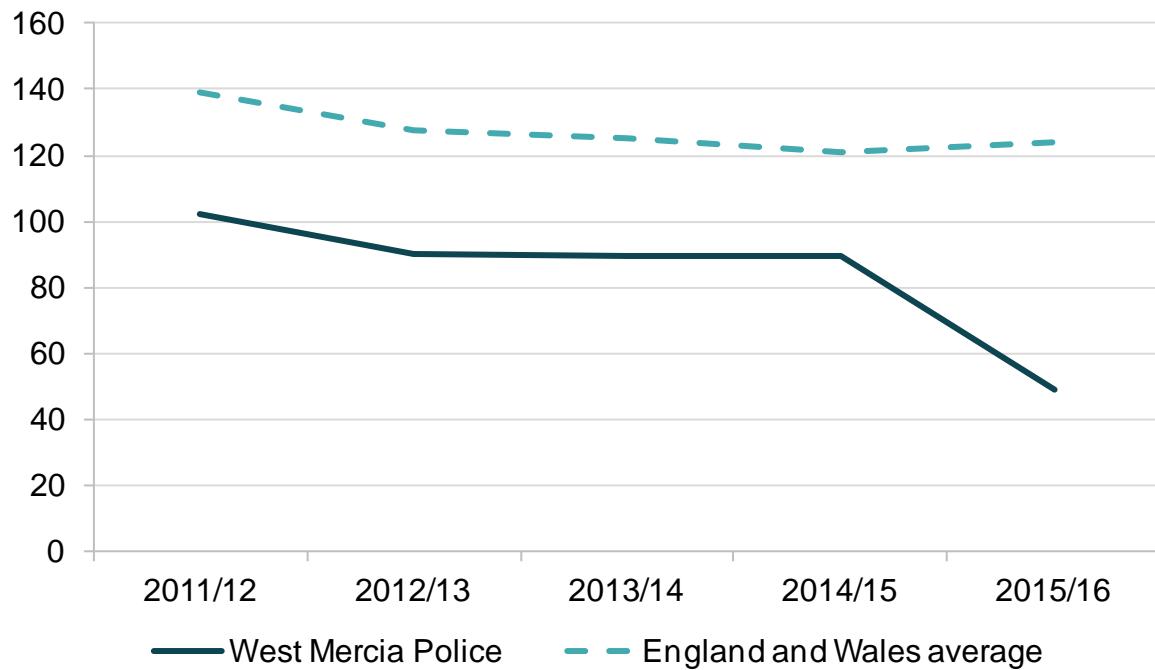
Forces must understand how demand is changing and how they need to change in order to adapt to ensure that they can plan for the future and continue to respond effectively. As well as assessing likely future threats and risks from crime, this also means understanding and assessing the potential impact of wider societal and environmental changes on the demands they will face.

## **How well does the force understand the current demand for its services?**

Police services cover a wide spectrum of activities and go far beyond the most obvious demands for providing a response to 999 calls, protecting victims of crime and pursuing offenders. It is important that forces have a comprehensive understanding across the whole range of different demands they face, including early intervention work with other organisations to prevent crime and proactively seeking out 'hidden' crimes (e.g. domestic abuse, internet crime, fraud, modern slavery and crime in communities who are more reluctant to trust or engage with the police). Police forces also need to understand how efficiently they run their own operations in order to avoid wasted effort and to ensure that they make the best use possible of all available resources.



**Figure 1: Volume of 999 calls per 1,000 population received by West Mercia Police compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016**

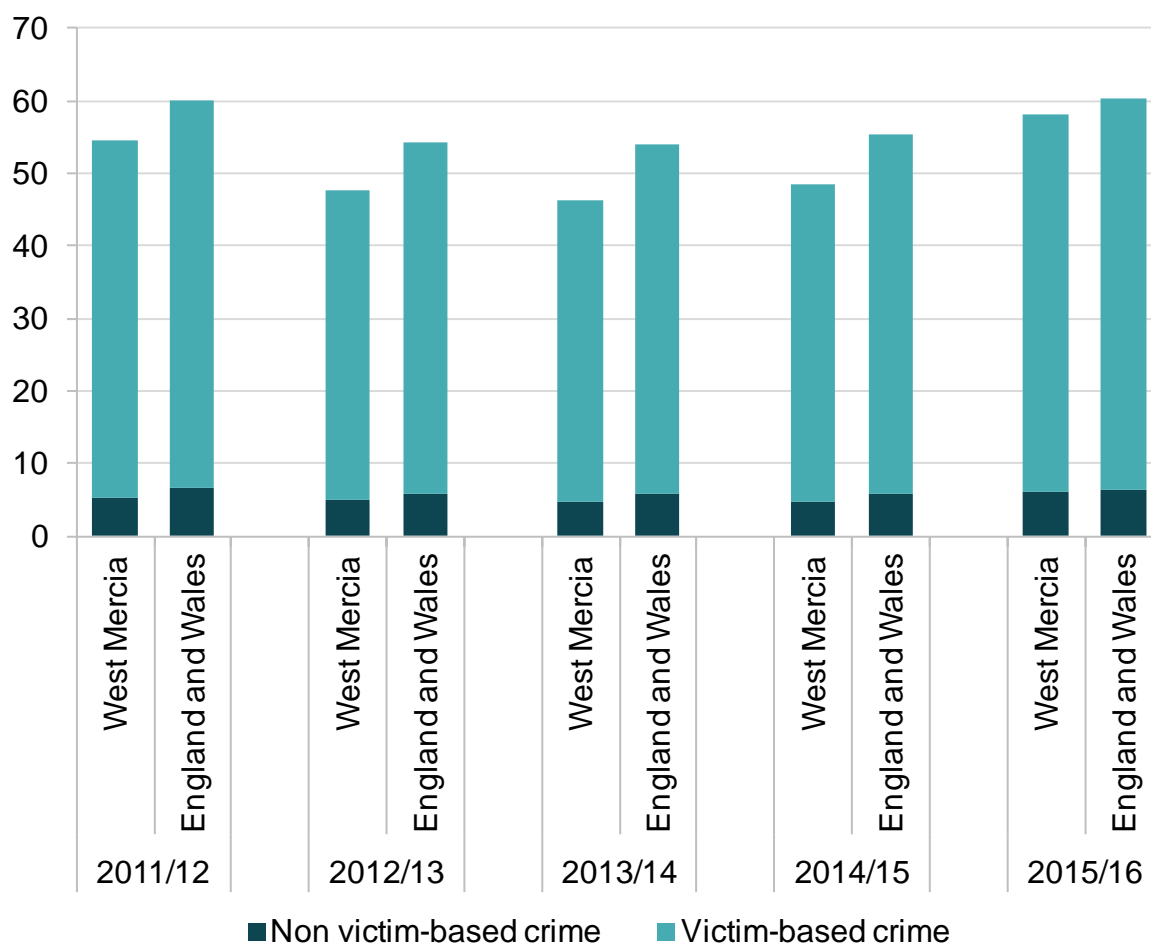


**Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement**

**For further information about the data in figure 1, please see annex A**

West Mercia Police received 49 '999' calls per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016. This was lower than the England and Wales average of 124 calls per 1,000 population. In the 12 months to 31 March 2012, the force received 102 '999' calls per 1,000 population, lower than the England and Wales average of 139 calls per 1,000 population.

**Figure 2: Police recorded crimes per 1,000 population in West Mercia Police compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016**



**Source: Home Office Police recorded crime data**  
**For further information about the data in figure 2, please see annex A**

With regard to police recorded crime for the 12 months to 31 March 2016, West Mercia Police recorded 52.0 victim-based crimes per 1,000 population, broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 53.8 victim-based crimes per 1,000 population. Over the same period, West Mercia Police recorded 6.1 non victim-based crimes per 1,000 population, broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 6.5 non victim-based crimes per 1,000 population. There has been an increase in the victim-based crime rate of 6 percent and an increase in the non victim-based crime rate of 14 percent since the 12 months to 31 March 2012.

There is a comprehensive understanding of demand in West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police; the foundation of the alliance was based upon extensive research to ensure that resources were aligned to the areas of most need. The impetus for the understanding of, and alignment of resources to, demand is an action plan which is overseen by a chief officer. The action plan tracks both short-term and long-term improvements. Short-term improvements include such things as the implementation of single-crewed vehicles and what are known as ‘diary’ cars. The force recognised that not all geographical areas require all vehicles to be crewed by

two officers at all times of the day. In areas where risks to the safety of the workforce are deemed to be lower, single-crewed vehicles have been introduced and are making better use of officer time. Similarly, recognising that much of the force's deployments are to incidents that do not necessarily require an immediate response, appointments are now diarised in advance. This ensures that the expectation of individuals who need a police service are met, at the same time as knowing that resources will be available.

These simple but effective adjustments mean that resources are now more effectively deployed. Longer-term plans to address demand form part of the force's Vision 2020 change programme. The force is working with a commercial partner, an established market leader in the field of agile working, to bring about transformational change. This will include customer services management tools to facilitate online 'self-service', remote working for the entire workforce and the automated allocation of available resources to tasks and deployments that need to be completed.

The force understands that demand is wider than calls for service; for example, in the new investigative (pathfinder) model, it has developed a profile of the demand placed on its services by partner organisations. This is important because a significant part of criminal investigation involves activity which is difficult to quantify in terms of time taken or resources needed. The force has undertaken research to identify such activity; it includes such activities as attending meetings with social services to discuss the wellbeing of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect and contributing to care programmes to support domestic abuse victims.

This type of activity is often referred to as hidden demand: less obvious in its nature but no less onerous in terms of the required obligations it places on the force. A comprehensive understanding of the range of demand associated with investigation presents a number of advantages for the force. First, it provides more clarity about which tasks require police officer skills and which can be completed by police staff; it highlights the additional resources that will be required to investigate types of crime which are increasing in volume (for example domestic abuse and sexual offences); and it indicates the skills and experiences that will be needed in the future. Most importantly, it is vital to inform workforce planning as the force moves towards the new operating model set out in Vision 2020.

There is a significant focus on demand in the force's approach to performance management. Service levels in terms of the time taken to answer 999 and 101 calls, the attendance at crime scenes and other incidents, and the service provided to victims are prominent in assessing how the force manages performance.

The force has a detailed understanding of a wide range of demand for its services, based on a detailed examination of management information. Intelligence analysis supports the daily management meeting which effectively prioritises the allocation of resources.

## **How well does the force understand potential future demand for its services?**

Demands for police services are continually evolving. Forces need to anticipate and understand likely future changes so that their plans keep pace with the public's needs and expectations. Potential future demand includes new and emerging types of crime, such as cyber-crime, modern-day slavery and human trafficking. Also, it includes changes to the communities that forces serve, developments in technology and environmental events, such as flooding.

The force understands and anticipates future demands in a number of ways. Statistical trend analysis is used to identify crimes that are likely to increase in volume in future years. The force has also recently appointed a specialist business analyst to assist with predictive analysis. Current trends include increases in domestic abuse and sexual offences. This research has been important for workforce planning; it will enable the force to increase resources in areas of pressure, as it moves towards the operating model set out in Vision 2020.

The force understands new and emerging crimes by conducting detailed research. In particular, research documents, known as 'problem profiles', have been completed for modern-day slavery, human trafficking and so-called honour-based violence. As well as highlighting the current and future prevalence of these types of crime, the profiles also set out how the force would respond should there be a surge in that type of offending. For example, should the force become aware of intelligence in relation to human trafficking, the profile details all the lorry parks where concealed migrants might make their escape. Additional information includes plans to search for migrants and the resources required to undertake such activity.

Frontline staff we spoke to showed an understanding of these types of crime; they know how they might come across them in their day-to-day activity and how to contact specialist officers should they have suspicions or concerns.

The force is also aware that new ways of working, if not properly managed, may bring with them additional burdens which can be resource intensive and costly. For example, a key element of Vision 2020 is to maximise the opportunities from technological developments. Part of this programme is to issue body-worn video cameras to frontline officers to secure better evidence for prosecutions. However, progress in the rest of the country in body-worn video cameras has been hampered by the capacity needed for digital storage and retrieval of photographic data. The alliance is about to introduce a new computer-operating platform and is taking

advantage of this to develop a digital repository hub. This will be compatible with the force's future ICT architecture and will also address all of the force's digital storage needs. The hub involves more than images from body-worn video cameras and includes footage recorded on in-car cameras, CCTV images, recordings of police interviews and 999 calls. This leaves the force well placed to maximise the benefits of policing in a digital age in an efficient, manageable way.

The force understands the potential impact that the budgetary restraints faced by its operational partners may have on police services. The force has assessed how it will adjust its operational practice should its partners decide to revise their services because of budget cuts. This includes from the potential reconfiguration of local authorities.

As a consequence of this uncertainty, West Mercia Police adopts a flexible approach to current and future joint working arrangements. For example, the collaborative arrangements that exist between the force and councils to support vulnerable victims of crime are kept under regular review.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

HMIC found that the force is good at understanding its current and likely future demand. This understanding is based on extensive research at the time when West Mercia and Warwickshire Police first formed the alliance. The force has developed this by analysing less obvious areas of demand, such as work with social services and other organisations to support children at risk and victims of domestic abuse. This now forms the basis of the new operating model to be introduced as part of Vision 2020. The force has agile processes in place to identify changing crime patterns and other areas of demands on its resources, which means that resources are aligned to the areas of most pressing need.

A clear governance structure, supported by regular forward planning, ensures the force can address longer-term demand pressures. This is informed by historic statistical trend analysis and also predictive analytics to strengthen the alliance's capability in this regard.

The force has produced detailed profiles of new and emerging crimes such as modern slavery, human trafficking and so-called honour-based violence. These profiles have associated plans to escalate and prioritise activity should there be intelligence of this type of crime being committed. The force has also developed a network of subject-matter experts should large-scale investigations of this nature be necessary.

The force will very soon be introducing a new ICT operating platform; it is using this opportunity to be at the leading edge of technological advances in digital policing. This includes the introduction of a digital repository hub which will allow the force to obtain maximum benefit from the use of body-worn video cameras, CCTV evidence and the digital presentation of evidence in prosecutions. Additionally, the blueprint for new control rooms will transform customer access to the force through on-line services; it will also automate the allocation of resources to incidents and tasks that need to be completed.

## How well does the force use its resources to manage current demand?

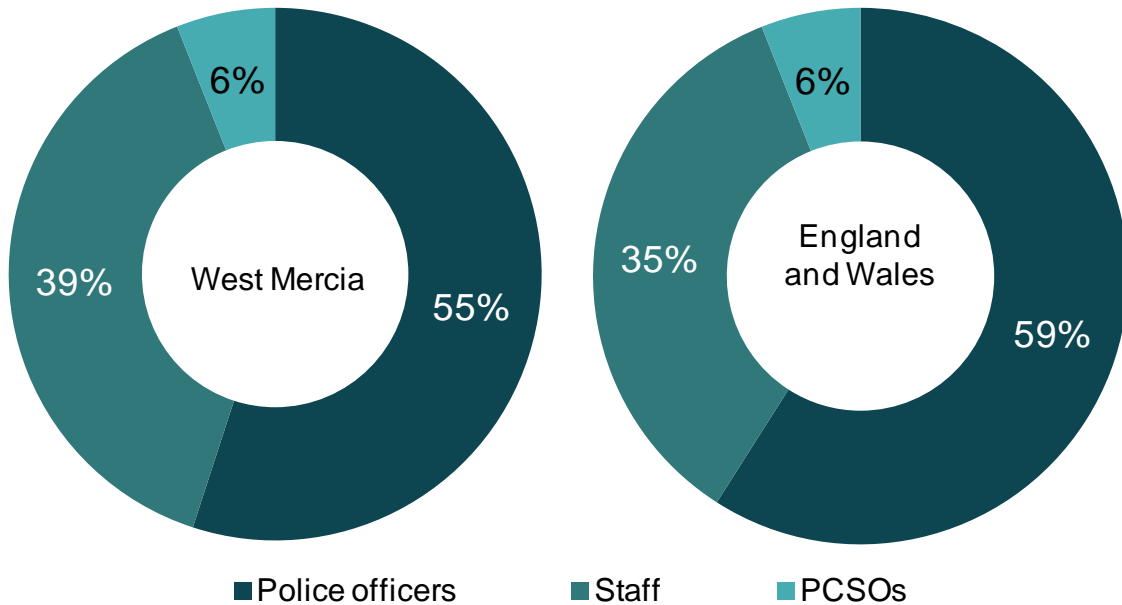
Police forces need to operate in a way that makes the best use of all available resources so that demand is met and public expectations are satisfied. We looked at the extent to which West Mercia Police has the right people with the right skills in the right place to protect the public and to fight crime. Police resources have been reducing continually over recent years. It is increasingly important that resources are aligned to priorities to provide value-for-money services that tackle priorities, manage demand and meet financial requirements. This not only involves a force using its own workforce as efficiently as possible; it also involves the police working in new ways with others to ensure the best possible service to the public, and using all available resources to improve efficiency.

For a number of years, police forces have been focused on changing the way they operate and finding ways to save money in order to manage reducing budgets. It is important that these savings are sustainable and forces can demonstrate that they have achieved efficiencies while continuing to have the capacity and capability to meet demand.

## How well does the force's current allocation of resources match demand, organisational and financial requirements?

Police forces need to consider many factors when deciding how to allocate their resources, including all elements of demand, local risks and priorities, and their national responsibilities. We look at how well West Mercia Police assesses these factors in making decisions about the level of service to provide and how to use its resources to best effect.

**Figure 3: Police officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs) as a proportion of total workforce in West Mercia Police compared with England and Wales as at 31 March 2016**



**Source: Home Office Police workforce statistics**

**Note: figures may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding of numbers. For further information about the data in figure 3, please see annex A**

As at 31 March 2016, police officers make up 55 percent of West Mercia Police’s workforce. This was lower than the England and Wales average of 59 percent. The proportion of staff in West Mercia Police was 39 percent, higher than the England and Wales average of 35 percent. The proportion of police community support officers in West Mercia Police was 6 percent, in line with the England and Wales average of 6 percent.



**Figure 4: Planned changes in full-time equivalent workforce (FTE) from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020 for West Mercia Police compared with England and Wales**

	March 2010	Change from 2010 to 2016		March 2016	Change from 2016 to 2020		March 2020
		Force	England and Wales		Force	England and Wales	
Officers	2,391	-13%	-14%	2,079	-8%	-2%	1,922
Staff	1,715	-13%	-21%	1,499	-18%	-5%	1,231
PCSOs	279	-21%	-35%	221	13%	-6%	250
<b>Workforce total</b>	<b>4,386</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>-18%</b>	<b>3,799</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>3,403</b>

Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

For further information about the data in figure 4, please see annex A

### Managing demands for police services

The 2016/17 strategic assessment builds on demand analysis completed by the StraDA programme,<sup>2</sup> and identifies priorities using the MoRiLE methodology.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, the force recognised it had gaps in service provision in relation to cyber-crime and modern slavery and took action to address these. For example, the force has issued operational guidance on how to respond to intelligence concerning the introduction of illegal migrant workers into the labour market. Plans are in place to draw in resources to detect, interrupt or prevent this activity, should the need arise. The strategic assessment enables the force to align its resources to priorities and understand where further intelligence may be required to enable it to identify new and emerging threats.

The force has a clear vision of the quality of service it provides and how it intends to manage demands upon its services, which is evident in the new investigative model (pathfinder). The force recognised that its investigative capability for protecting vulnerable people did not meet the demand profile for this type of work. As an alternative, it has developed a new model which provides more resilience. This has been achieved in a number of ways: the responsibility for investigating this type of crime has been extended to more officers; greater use is made of civilian

<sup>2</sup> StraDA is the acronym for the programme responsible for Strengthening and Deepening the Alliance with Warwickshire Police.

<sup>3</sup> Management of Risk in Law Enforcement – a structured methodology, to identify threats and risks from crime as well as to evaluate a force’s capability to respond effectively.

investigators for tasks that do not need to be completed by police officers; and commitments to local councils to develop care programmes for vulnerable victims are better managed.

As the model has developed, the emphasis of operational policing has shifted from simply meeting demand to improving the quality of service. Primarily this relates to the treatment of and outcomes for victims, but also includes service levels with partners. By way of example, the force has given a guarantee to all councils in West Mercia that it will be represented at case conferences held by social services to discuss plans for children who are at risk of abuse.

The force has used the model to make risk-based decisions about which resources will attend calls for service. The model also determines which officers will be responsible for investigations. These decisions are now made with the needs of the victim as the paramount consideration. This is in line with the wider approach to resource allocation known as THRIVE.<sup>4</sup> This has led to a break with tradition whereby it is no longer the type of crime committed which determines the level of investigation and has meant that some neighbourhood officers are now responsible for the investigation of burglaries, whereas more highly trained detectives investigate lesser offences if the victim is vulnerable.

### **Increasing efficiency**

The force is increasingly focusing on service improvement, a priority which is being made clear to frontline staff in a series of workshops called 'Shaping the future'. The strategic service improvement board uses evidence-based studies and evaluation to reinforce opportunities for improvement, with a focus on outcomes for the public. A good example of this is the evaluation of the pathfinder investigative model. The evaluation, which has been academically validated, showed there has been an increase in investigations being completed within the force's target of 30 days and increased levels of satisfaction among victims. Other improvements have included more manageable workloads and better case file preparation.

This focus on continuous improvement and benefits realisation is also an important element of the force's well-established change management programme. A recent review of this programme recommended further improvements, including consolidating a number of minor projects into the mainstream change programme.

The change programme includes several projects with a significant ICT component, such as the development of new high-tech control rooms. The upgrade of the ICT platforms across both forces in the alliance will mean that, for the first time, call handlers will have immediate access to all historical information relating to the caller,

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<sup>4</sup> The decision model known as THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigative opportunities, vulnerability, and engagement opportunity) helps staff to assess the threat and risk posed by each individual call and decide how best to resource calls for service or the investigation of crime.

the address they are calling from and the type of service they have previously required. This will ensure that their needs are more readily understood by call handlers and that the service provided is in line with their current circumstances.

Improvements will also include an online self-service facility for the public to report crime and receive automated updates on the progress of investigations and notifications on how cases are concluded. The allocation of frontline resources to demand will also become automated. An example of this is the use of geo-fencing to optimise efficiency. Geo-fencing automatically alerts patrols entering a geographical area where there are tasks awaiting completion and where there are high levels of crime or anti-social behaviour.

## **How well does the force improve the productivity of its workforce?**

Finding ways to make police officers and staff more efficient when they are out in their communities and reducing time spent doing back-office functions is essential to ensuring that police officers remain visible, on the beat and engaged in activities to reduce and fight crime. Police forces spend around 80 percent of their budget on staffing, so it is vital that the workforce is as productive as possible. This means forces need to ensure that all their staff have the skills and capabilities to provide the required level of service. We assessed how well West Mercia Police understands the skills its staff need, both now and in the future; where there are gaps in either capacity or capability, we looked at whether the steps it is taking are appropriate to ensure that its staff work as efficiently and effectively as possible. We looked in particular at whether the workforce has the right level of digital skills, both to make the most of current ICT systems and to investigate crime digitally.

### **Understanding current workforce capabilities and gaps**

The force's people strategy underpins its strategic and operational priorities; it also focuses on how the force will establish and maintain the best combination of skills and experience in the work place. The monthly workforce management group (WMG) provides the governance to achieve this. This meeting considers current workforce capabilities and gaps and where necessary directs action to address them. The WMG addresses areas where the force faces, or is likely to face, operational pressures. These can be in the short term where retirements, sickness absence or the secondment of staff to the change programme have led to an imbalance of skills and resources. In the longer term, the WMG is building a workforce to support the operating model set out in Vision 2020. Vision 2020 sets out the operating model and the workforce configuration that will be necessary to support it. These include areas of growth from new and emerging crimes and those areas where it is anticipated that there will be higher demand, such as cyber-crime, domestic abuse and the investigation of sexual offences.

## **Tackling workforce gaps**

The force has recently completed a comprehensive skills assessment which is now used as a baseline to enable development towards the Vision 2020 operating model. The new head of learning and development has given this aspect renewed impetus; a different approach is being taken to how the force commissions and provides training and a newly appointed recruitment manager with extensive commercial sector experience has been successful in attracting talented individuals into specialist posts.

## **How well does the force work with others to improve how it manages demand for its services?**

We assessed how well West Mercia Police has explored all opportunities to work in collaboration with others to increase efficiency and provide better, more resilient services. This can include work with other police forces, local public sector organisations, the private sector and the voluntary sector. We looked at whether the force has a clear rationale for the decisions it has taken about how it works with others and whether it has a good understanding of how successful its joint working has been in helping it to meet demand for its services better.

### **Collaboration benefits**

The alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police is the most extensive and unique in the police service. All roles below deputy chief constables are shared by both forces, working to shared policies and processes. The initial savings accrued were considerable and the alliance also offers an increased capability and capacity which it is considered that neither force could have attained individually.

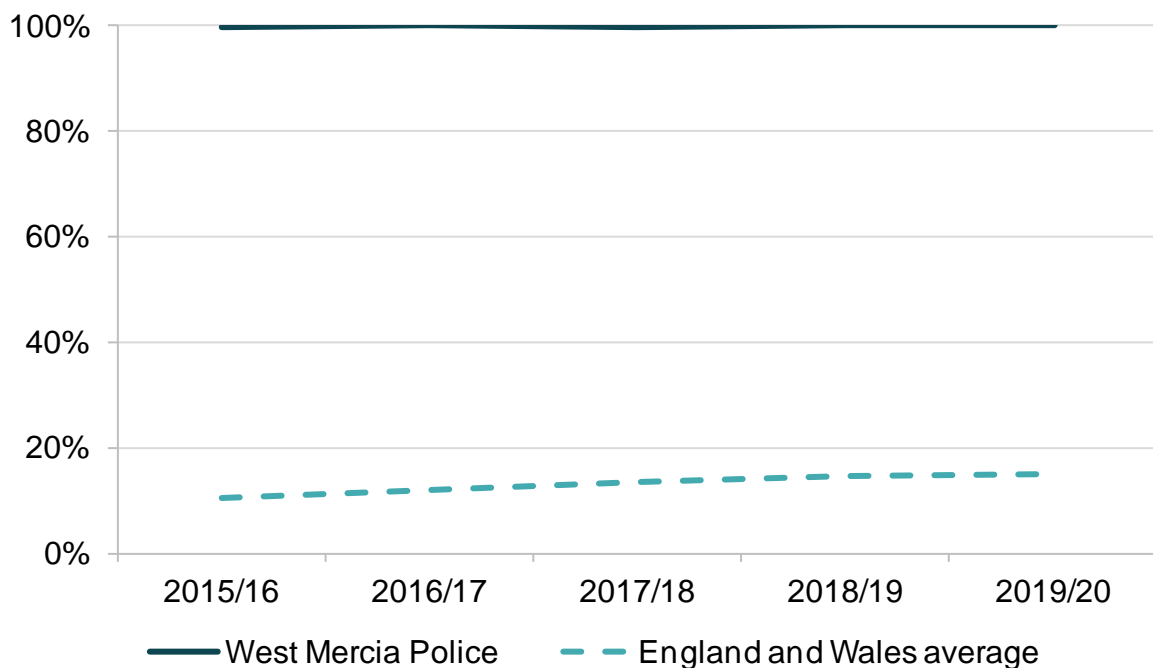
In 2014 the force moved into newly built premises in Bromsgrove, which it shares with the fire and rescue service. It also has plans to share the control room at the force headquarters with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

The force is part of a unique collaboration of six public sector partner organisations, known as the Place Partnership Limited (PPL). This is a new private company wholly owned by the public sector. PPL provides a cross-agency use of estates and facilities management, as well as the management of outsourced services to several public sector organisations. It aims to make £58m savings over ten years through the sharing of services and realise disposal receipts of around £100m through the sale of obsolete buildings. It has already identified savings of approximately £400,000 for the alliance. The Government Property Unit supported the partnership as a pathfinder for the Government's One Public Estate programme. PPL has attracted funding and support from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association, the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and the Worcestershire

Partnership. PPL aims to provide wider benefits for communities, providing the foundation for ‘one town’ reviews which make public land available for local employment opportunities and regeneration. The breadth of agencies involved in the partnership mean that local health, social care, education and law enforcement provision will be better aligned with the requirements of the community.

The force is currently working with partners to ensure that demand which has an impact on a number of public sector organisations is managed efficiently. There is a multi-agency safeguarding hub to protect vulnerable victims in each of the county areas.

**Figure 5: Projected percentage of net revenue expenditure in West Mercia Police, compared with England and Wales, on collaboration with other forces in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020**



**Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection**

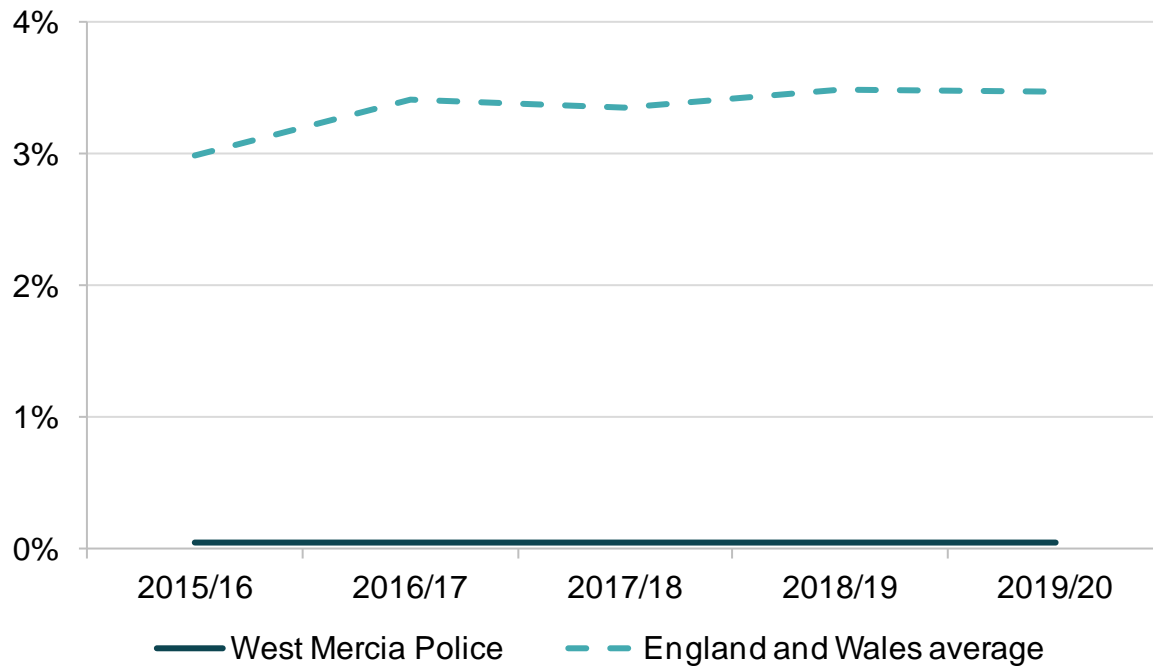
**Note: some forces could not provide data for all years. These forces have been excluded from the England and Wales average in those years only. For further information about the data in figure 5, please see annex A**

West Mercia Police has forecast that it will spend £203.6m in 2016/17 on collaboration with other police forces, specifically Warwickshire Police. This is 100.0 percent of its net revenue expenditure (NRE). The England and Wales average for NRE on collaboration with other police forces is 11.9 percent, but this average does not include Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police, as they are outliers.

For 2019/20, the force has forecast that it will spend £206.3m (100.0 percent of NRE) on collaboration with other police forces. The England and Wales average for percentage of NRE on collaboration with other police forces during this period is 14.8 percent; this average does not include Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police, as they are outliers.

HMIC recognises that the chief constable and deputy chief constable roles are separate for each force and specific expenditure on these roles is not identified separately from the figures on collaboration. However, this is a very small percentage of overall net revenue expenditure.

**Figure 6: Projected percentage of NRE (net revenue expenditure) in West Mercia Police, compared with England and Wales, on collaboration with non-police organisations in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020**



**Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection**

**Note: some forces could not provide data for all years. These forces have been excluded from the England and Wales average in those years only. For further information about the data in figure 6, please see annex A**

West Mercia Police has forecast that it will spend £0.1m in 2016/17 on collaboration with non-police organisations. This is 0.05 percent of its net revenue expenditure (NRE), which is lower than the England and Wales average of 3.4 percent. For 2019/20, the force has forecast that it will spend £0.1m (0.05 percent of NRE) on collaboration with non-police organisations. This is lower than the England and Wales average of 3.5 percent.

## How well does the force understand how any changes made to improve efficiency have affected its ability to manage demand?

As resources reduce and demands on police services become ever more complex, it is increasingly important that forces understand fully the benefits that are realised from any investment and the impact of any new ways of working. This understanding enables them to learn from what works and to take swift action to mitigate any negative results.

West Mercia Police has a well-established change programme that uses a dashboard to monitor progress of projects and track benefits realised from investment; this is clearly linked to the force's financial plan. The force is able to assess quickly the impact of changes made across different areas of the organisation. A substantial change hub of over 50 staff develops and tests changes, including ICT interdependencies in the development of new control rooms.

The force understands the consequences of change on its service provision; it appointed an external programme director to develop and review the change programme. The force is seeking to appoint external partners with expertise in transformational change to provide independent advice, challenge and support.

### Summary of findings



**Good**

The force is good at using its resources to manage current demand. It has changed how it provides resources to 999 and 101 calls and the investigation of crime by making assessments based on the needs of victims. This has produced advantages in ensuring that the service provided is in line with individual need and that the overall capacity of the force to manage demand can keep pace with anticipated increases in demand for its services.

The force has a clear vision of the level and quality of service it provides; this is evident in the new investigative model. Evaluations of the model have shown that it is providing a better service to victims at the same time as ensuring that workloads are manageable.

The people strategy outlines how the force will establish and maintain a workforce with the right blend of skills and experience to support Vision 2020. Governance of the people strategy is provided through the monthly workforce management group. The force has recently completed a comprehensive skills assessment which forms the baseline to develop the workforce requirements of Vision 2020.

The unique status of the alliance has formed a solid base to ensure that policing services are equipped to deal with increasing demand and budgetary constraints. Building on this success, the force is also collaborating with other public sector services in the Place Partnership Limited. This is designed to increase the joint occupation of premises and the sharing of services with other organisations in the interests of efficiency.

The force has a well-established change programme and tracks project benefits linked to the force's financial plan. It can swiftly assess the impact of changes made across different areas of the organisation through a well-resourced change hub. The force plans to appoint an external commercial partner to support change over the coming years.



## How well is the force planning for demand in the future?

HMIC examined how well forces are using their understanding of current and future demand on their services to develop more efficient ways of operating that balance ambition, realism, innovation and risk. Our assessment examined the extent to which West Mercia Police's plans are credible and achievable while at the same time are creative and ambitious. This included how far it is aiming to improve efficiency through its workforce plans, collaboration plans, financial plans, ICT plans and approaches to risk.

## How well does the force identify and prioritise areas to invest in for the future?

It is important that forces have good plans in place which take account of future demands for their services as well as the likely future funding available to them. They need to invest wisely for the future in order to ensure that they have the right capabilities to meet future demand. HMIC examined the force's financial plans and workforce plans to assess how far it is set to meet future changes in demand and local priorities. We looked in particular at how well West Mercia Police has considered its future ICT capabilities as well as any wider changes to the communities it serves.

### **Matching resources to demand, organisational priorities and financial requirements**

The force's projected workforce model for Vision 2020 corresponds well with its demand, organisational priorities and financial requirements. Extensive demand analysis has informed recent changes in the composition of the workforce, which includes an increase in investigative capability. It has also been used to support the development of the policing model for 2020, taking account of a range of factors, including growth in neighbouring urban areas such as Birmingham. There is a clear link between the strategy to establish the future workforce and the training curriculum.

HMIC found the force uses innovative recruitment techniques, in line with good practice in the commercial sector. The force has appointed a recruitment manager with extensive experience of specialist recruitment in the private sector. He has worked closely with universities, further education establishments and places of worship to increase the diversity of the workforce. This means that nearly half of all recruits joining the service will be women and a significant proportion will be from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. He has also developed a database of talented individuals who have expressed an interest in applying for specialist posts within the force. The force is therefore able to contact these individuals should

positions subsequently become available. His department has also reduced the time spent on pre-employment checks in line with benchmarked best practice. Other improvements include the development of flexible contracts for ICT experts and change managers to support Vision 2020.

### **Investing in ICT**

The force's plans take account of digitisation to improve the efficiency of its service provision. The ICT modernisation strategy sets out potential benefits to the public, the organisation and the workforce from advances in technology. This is based on the force's future plans to change its mainstream systems for crime management, custody centres, intelligence, case file preparation and call handling. This will revolutionise the force's use of information and provide a single point of access to all databases in the workplace. It will also remove the inefficiencies brought about by double keying, improve decision-making by virtue of intelligence and historical information being instantly available and automate the allocation of resources to areas of demand.

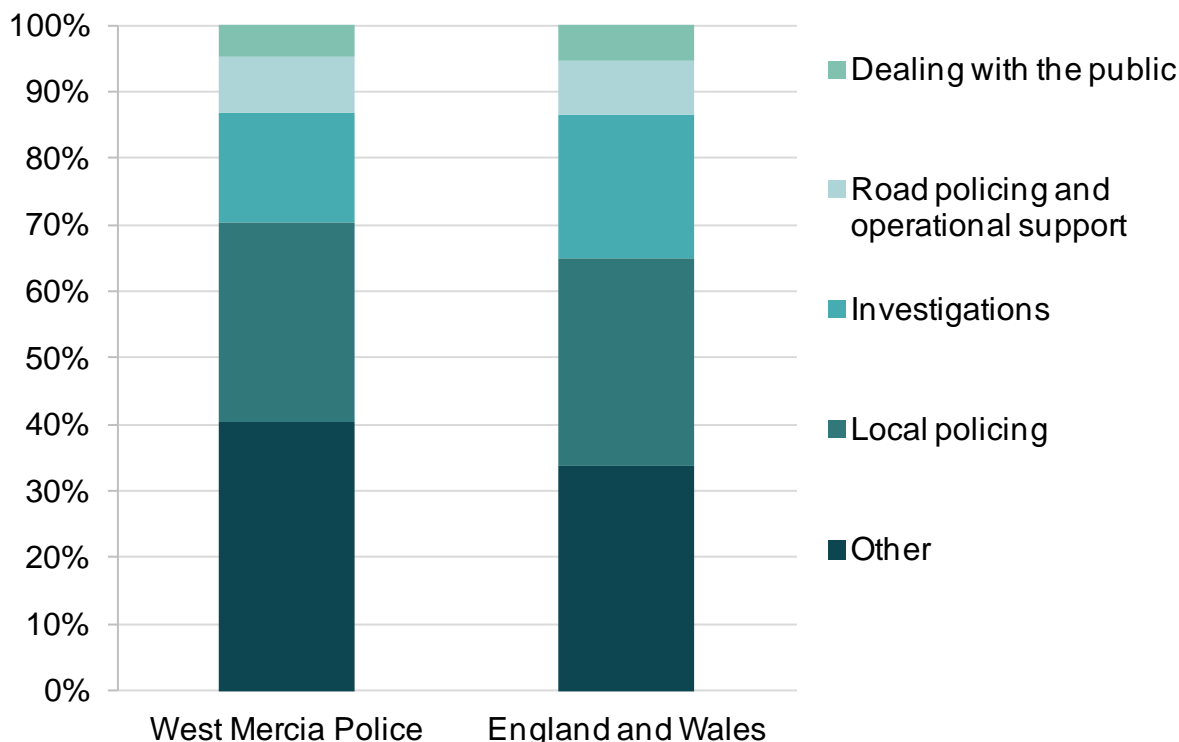
All of these improvements will be significant contributors to Vision 2020, and improvements that can be made in the short term are also included in the strategy. A good example is a technological solution to assist investigators who need access to digital information stored in smartphones, tablets and other devices.

Many investigations are becoming increasingly reliant on securing digital evidence. Historically, forensic examination of these items has been time consuming and led to investigations being unnecessarily protracted. The force has invested in new software which allows investigators to download digital evidence. This has reduced delays in investigations and provides a better service to victims.

### **How well does the force plan its investments?**

A force's plans for investment and savings need to be credible, realistic and informed by a full understanding of the future challenges (both financial and operational) that it is likely to face. HMIC assessed the extent to which West Mercia Police's future plans are prudent, robust and based on sound assumptions about future demands and costs, while at the same time being ambitious enough to meet public expectations, including identifying new ways of working and providing services in the future.

**Figure 7: Estimated percentage of gross revenue expenditure allocated across different policing functions in West Mercia Police compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2016**



Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

For further information about the data in figure 7, please see annex A

The force demonstrates it can develop credible plans for the future built on sound planning assumptions; these include Vision 2020 which takes account of changes that will be made in local authority jurisdictions.

Vision 2020, in common with previous change programmes, has been based on extensive demand analysis and changes that are likely to be made by principal partner organisations. The force also seeks expert challenge of its plans, both internally and externally. The alliance’s joint audit committee has completed an independent review of the change programme, and the force commissioned a commercial organisation to advise on its ICT capability, the results of which have been a key feature of the ICT modernisation strategy.

### Planning for the future

The force’s financial and organisational plans are practical and credible. The director of finance produces a comprehensive monthly report Money Matters, which includes updates on the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) and saving targets. Money Matters is considered at all strategic governance forums. The MTFP is prudent and considers a reduced budget settlement, together with a range of other factors that could widen the gap between income and expenditure. The force has a savings plan to address this potential shortfall, but some of these projected savings, for instance

those ascribed to the introduction of the new ICT operating platform, cannot yet be entered in the MTFP. To date the force has not widely used value-for-money profiles and benchmarking to inform its financial plans; it now intends to make use of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's benchmarking programme.

The force's plans will change how it will operate and provide services. The vision of the policing model for 2020 is ambitious, with a specific focus on how developments in technology will enable it to provide services more efficiently. The force is also pursuing more progressive innovations which may be of benefit to the force. A senior officer has specific responsibility to co-ordinate activity to identify and promulgate new ways of working.

## **To what extent does the force fund its investments sustainably?**

Police forces have made significant financial savings over recent years which has enabled them to reduce their costs and protect frontline policing. They continue to face financial challenges and it is vital to their ability to sustain effective policing that they continue to seek improved efficiencies and drive down costs so that they can not only balance their budgets but also invest in improving their capability in the future. Forces need to consider different ways of transforming the way they work in order to secure effective policing in the longer term. This may include plans to establish different joint working arrangements with other organisations or investing in ICT to improve operational efficiency.

### **Saving to invest for the future**

The force is seeking to improve efficiency and cut costs to enable it to balance its budget and make future investments. The force achieved its £6m savings target for its 2015/16 budget early, largely due to the harmonisation of criminal justice system processes with Warwickshire Police. The force has plans to invest in capital projects, such as the redesign of control rooms, in order to make further savings over the spending review period. The force recognises that any such plans have an element of risk that the desired savings may not be realised; it has mitigated this risk by making financial reserves available.

### **Working together to improve future efficiency**

The force is considering different workforce structures and lines of accountability within joint working arrangements. These include the Place Partnership Limited and the proposals for a shared control room with the fire and rescue service. The force already has an established track record of sharing facilities and services with other organisations. Examples include joint teams which have co-located to manage the most prolific offenders and provide support to vulnerable victims.

The force ICT modernisation strategy has been developed to support national requirements and guidance, such as the Public Service Network Code of Interconnection.<sup>5</sup> The ICT manager attends regional and national forums to ensure the force is well placed to take advantage of collaborative opportunities and other developments.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

The force is good at planning for demand in the future. It has used extensive demand analysis to inform its future workforce model and the workforce management group is steadily developing a workforce to support it. The plan for the Vision 2020 operating model in the alliance is credible and built on sound planning assumptions, and the change programme which is in place to achieve the vision is subject to firm governance and independent scrutiny arrangements. The force is to appoint an external commercial partner to lead the change programme and has commissioned specialist commercial advice on the required ICT architecture.

The medium-term financial plan is prudent and includes a number of measures to balance the budget, including the use of some reserves. The force is investing in capital projects such as the redesign of control rooms to make savings; the anticipated amount of these savings has yet to be calculated. The force benefits from joint-working arrangements, such as the innovative Place Partnership Limited. It also has plans to share more facilities and develop closer joint operational working with the fire and rescue service.

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<sup>5</sup> *Public Sector Network Code of Interconnection (Co/Co)*, Cabinet Office, London, March 2015. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/psn-code-of-interconnection-coico](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/psn-code-of-interconnection-coico)

## Next steps

HMIC will assess progress on any recommendations and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We may re-visit those forces where we have identified a serious cause of concern, go back to assess as part of our annual PEEL inspection programme or receive updates through regular conversations with forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy, and also leadership. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across the country and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements need to be made at a national level.

## Annex A – About the data

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

### Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data.

#### Comparisons with England and Wales average figures

For some data sets, the report states whether the force's value is 'lower' than, 'higher' than or 'broadly in line with' the England and Wales average. This is calculated by using the difference from the mean average, as a proportion, for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than 0.675 standard deviations from the mean average are determined to be above or below the average, with all other forces being broadly in line.

In practice this means that approximately a quarter of forces are lower, a quarter are higher, and the remaining half are in line with the England and Wales average for each measure. For this reason, the distance from the average required to make a force's value above or below the average is different for each measure so may not appear to be consistent.

#### Statistical significance

When commenting on statistical differences, a significance level of 5 percent is used.

For some forces, numbers described in the text may be identical to the England and Wales average due to decimal place rounding, but the bars in the chart will appear different as they use the full unrounded value.

#### Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates.

### Force in numbers

#### Forecast change in expenditure

These data show estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for the force in 2016/17 and 2019/20, calculated using total GRE pay and total GRE non-pay budgets provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), excluding expenditure on the office of police and crime commissioner.

## Forecast savings

These data show planned savings (including use of reserves to bridge an in-year funding gap) in future years, calculated using the planned savings for pay and non-pay budgets provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Some forces only provided figures for savings that they had formally signed off at that point, while others provided estimates for the whole period. Therefore a force with only a small savings requirement is not necessarily faced with only a small savings challenge for the future.

## Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) for 31 March 2016 and 31 March 2020

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data are available from the Home Office's published Police workforce England and Wales statistics (available from [www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales)), or the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables)). Figures may have been updated since the publication. Workforce includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort), but does not include section 39 staff.

Projections for March 2020 are budget-based projections and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances therefore an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Workforce costs per head of population are obtained from calculations in HMIC Value for Money Profiles 2015, which use the ONS mid-2014 population estimates. The England and Wales averages will differ slightly from the Value for Money Profiles because we have included City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service.

## Figures throughout the report

### Figure 1: Volume of 999 calls from the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to 12 months to 31 March 2016

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441.

### Figure 2: Police recorded crime in 12 months to 31 March 2015 to 12 months to 31 March 2016

These data are obtained from Home Office Police recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables)). Total police recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud



offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMIC inspection. Therefore England and Wales averages in this report will differ slightly from those published by the Home Office.

### **Figure 3: Percentage of officers, staff and PCSOs in force workforce on 31 March 2016 compared to England and Wales**

Data as at 31 March 2016 are obtained from the Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' full-time equivalents (FTE). The percentages used in figure 3 are derived from the total FTEs within forces, and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report.

### **Figure 4: Planned changes in workforce FTE from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020 for the force compared to England and Wales**

The figures in figure 4 are rounded to the nearest whole person, full-time equivalents (FTEs), and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report. Police staff includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort).

Data as at 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2016 are obtained from Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' FTE. These data include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence, and those seconded to forces. Projections for March 2020 are budget-based projections and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy, but may not include a projection for absences. In some instances therefore an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Due to the complex and continually evolving picture of workforce collaboration between neighbouring forces, not all changes in workforce figures reflect the workforce that is available to forces. Involvement in strategic alliances and/or regional organised crime units would be an example of where changes over time are likely to be skewed. Therefore sharp increases or decreases over time need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated to forces, not real changes in staffing levels.

At the time of the inspection, the future financial climate was uncertain. Several forces did not have confirmed plans for workforce projections. It is important to note that figures provided are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMIC in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce landscape of policing.

**Figure 5: Projected net revenue expenditure on collaboration with other police forces for the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020**

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection.

These data cover the level of expenditure by forces on collaboration-related activity. Collaboration can include a variety of different types of activity, some of which may not incur specific expenditure, but may still generate benefits such as savings or improved services the public. Therefore these data should be seen as only one aspect of potential collaboration activity.

West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police have a highly-developed integrated relationship and have stated that all of their net revenue expenditure is through collaboration. To avoid distorting the distribution of forces around the average, West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police have been removed from the England and Wales average for this figure.

**Figure 6: Projected net revenue expenditure on collaboration with non-police organisations for the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020**

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection. As suggested above, these data should be seen as only one aspect of potential collaboration activity.

**Figure 7: The percentage of gross revenue expenditure allocated to different policing functions in the 12 months to March 2016**

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection. These data define policing functions using the Policing Objective Analysis categories which we have grouped. The grouping is illustrated in the table below.

Figure 7 policing functions	POA categories
Local policing	Local policing
Investigations	Specialist Investigations Investigative Support Public Protection
Road policing and operational support	Roads Policing Operations Support
Dealing with the public	Dealing with the Public
Other	Intelligence Criminal Justice Arrangements Support Functions National policing Office of PCC Central Costs