



ANNUAL REPORT 2015 -2016

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1 FOREWORD

Since taking up office in November 2012 it seems that every year has thrown up new challenges and opportunities that I have had to address and 2015/16, my final full year in office has not proved any different. From agreeing the implementation of the Athena programme through to the commissioning of local victims' services the last year has been another busy, but rewarding year.

In particular the uncertainty around future police funding and the Comprehensive Spending Review was of great concern leading up to the Chancellor's announcement in November. The outcome was that West Mercia is subject to a £0.6 million reduction in funding formula. This is much less than feared and I am confident that our strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police is just one example of how we have and will work to provide an effective and efficient police force, well placed to protect people from harm.

I have worked with, and met some outstanding and dedicated people, in communities, voluntary organisations, partnerships and of course in the police during my time in office. I cannot mention them all individually, but would like to highlight a small number.

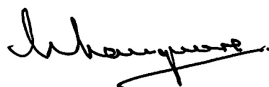
Firstly my Deputy Barrie Sheldon, who has been a hardworking and dedicated stalwart, especially during my cancer treatment along with the team within my office who have supported me in my work.

Equally important have been the chief officer teams of both forces, with whom I have enjoyed an excellent and constructive relationship. In particular I would single out Chief Constable David Shaw who will be retiring later this year. His professionalism, integrity and open approach have been incredibly important and I wish him well for the future.

Key partners to us have been Warwickshire's PCC, Ron Ball and his Deputy Dr Eric Wood. It would be true to say that we have not always seen eye to eye on the Alliance, but together we have approached issues in a committed, constructive and dedicated way for the better of the residents of our four counties.

Finally, but certainly not least I must thank all the officers, staff and volunteers across the Alliance of West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police and people working in our partner agencies. Throughout a period of upheaval and change they have remained consistently dedicated to the task of serving their communities.

I will always be grateful to the people of West Mercia for giving me the privilege of holding this role and wish my successor every continued success as the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia

2 INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report

Welcome to my annual report for 2015/16. This report outlines progress I have made in achieving the aims and objectives set out in my Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2017 (varied July 2015) and fulfils my statutory obligation to produce an annual report. In March 2016 I separately published my 'End of Term Report' to provide a comprehensive overview of my term in office.

Role of the Police and Crime Commissioner

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. 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.
- 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.

3 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 in 2015/16

Alliance with Warwickshire

The alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police has continued to strengthen. In November 2015 I formally agreed to the proposal principles that will enable the two organisations to take their next step of transformational change; however it will be for the next PCC to work with the Alliance in the procurement of a strategic partner to begin this process.

People - numbers

When I was elected as PCC I set out a vision for what I wanted to achieve. This included better resilience for the force in terms of officer numbers and ensuring the force had the resources to sustain community policing and to achieve a minimum number of PCSO posts of 235 during my time in office. I always saw this as a challenge and yet during a period of austerity the force has sustained officer numbers, actively recruited student officers and maintained PCSO strength. The end year figures are shown below.

	April 2013	31 March 2016
Police Officers	2251	2094
Police staff	1620	1605
PCSOs	283	249

Not included in the police officer numbers above are the 246 student officers, who are deployed but within their probation period. The force also has 334 special constables. Earlier this year the Home Office published new statistics which showed over a 12 month period to September 2015 West Mercia had the highest increase in police officer numbers nationwide, with an 8.5% increase.

A lot of hard work has gone into improving the way the force attracts and recruits its personnel, including setting up a dedicated specials recruitment team, running a positive action campaign which has received national recognition and the provision of electronic streamlined application processes to speed up recruitment.

People – health and wellbeing

Through scrutiny of force performance figures I was aware that there were high levels of sickness with the force and across the alliance as a whole for both police officers and staff. My concerns were shared by chief officers. In response to this and other related staffing issues, the two Chief Constables for the Alliance took the decision to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board to have a specific, Chief Constable-led focus

on how the forces look after their workforce. I am pleased to note that the figures are already improving.

In December 2015 Warwickshire PCC Ron Ball and I along with both Chief Constables made a new pledge to take action on mental health discrimination by signing up to the charity Mind's 'Blue Light Time To Change' programme. Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police are among the first 12 police forces across the country to make the pledge and an action plan is now being drawn up to embed the commitment as a firm part of business across the two forces.

Place Partnership

Since September 2015 the police estate has been managed by Place Partnership. This is a new commercial company that manages the property portfolios of six public sector organisations, including West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police. It is a truly groundbreaking initiative that is attracting a lot of interest from across the public sector.

Investing for the future

One of the partners in the Place Partnership is Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service who will soon be sharing a new Operations and Communications Centre (OCC) with the police at Hindlip Park. This follows a successful bid of £2.4m from the Government's Police Innovation Fund 2015/16 for the project which will see a new OCC across two sites at Hindlip Park and in Warwick.

The joint OCC will operate on single telephony and IT systems to enhance and deal with calls in an efficient and effective way as well as offering additional flexibility as the police and fire service will be able to support each other during peak periods or critical incidents. I welcome this project and I am confident the new OCC will improve services to the public and is a positive example of blue light services working closer together

Other significant decisions I have made within the Alliance over the last twelve months include investment in ICT infrastructure, which will see the implementation of a new telephony system alongside the implementation of the Athena system. Athena is 'lean thinking' management system which should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes for intelligence, investigation, custody and case preparation.

3 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

Performance

The level of violent crime has continued to increase during 2015/16 with 9666 reported offences of violence with injury¹ compared to 7469 offences in 2014/15, a 29% increase. There is no doubt that some of this continued increase can be attributed to better recording standards introduced as a result of the HMIC Crime Data Integrity Inspection and the inclusion of DASH (Domestic Abuse and Stalking and Harassment risk indicator) assessments onto the force's recording systems resulting in previously undisclosed offences being included. This led to a significant increase in volume at the beginning of 2015/16, followed by more stable, albeit higher average levels since then.

As part of my holding to account sessions with the chief constable I asked for further assurance on the increasing levels of violent crime in the Autumn. As a consequence I am satisfied that the force understands the crime patterns and has responded appropriately. The more recent stability in violent crime figures supports this.

Achievements in 2015/16:

Partnership working

My office has worked with each of the Community Safety Partnerships across the force area to ensure there is a clear focus on reducing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs. In addition we have standing groups in place across West Mercia set up to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol. I have also continued to work in partnership with local authorities to support drug and alcohol referral services.

Funding support

During 2015/16 I have used resources from different budgets to support activities and initiatives that seek to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. Monies have been allocated from my grant scheme, community safety partnerships funding, commissioning and the rural, business and cyber fund. Examples of support include:

- £20,000 towards a taxi marshal scheme in Telford and Wrekin. The marshals assist in reducing illegal 'pick ups', controlling taxi queues, improving the safety of vulnerable persons and dealing with confrontational situations.
- £25,000 towards the Street Pastors and Emilia's Place in Hereford. Hereford Street Pastors are now a well-established part of Hereford's night time economy helping around 3,000 people per year. The funding has been used to provide training in street triage, recruit and train more pastors, training for door staff.

¹ Violence against the person with injury includes a wide range of offences where violence is used ranging from murder to assault.

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

Achievements in 2015/16:

Policing focus

Drugs form an integral part of the Alliance Control Strategy issued in 2015. In particular, targeting organised crime groups who cause the most harm to our communities has been identified as one of the main priorities for the Alliance. Often such groups can be involved in drug offences. For example following a successful investigation by the Serious Organised Crime Unit in 2015, six men from a Birmingham based gang were sentenced to a total of 47 years in prison for conspiracy to supply heroin and MCAT in Worcestershire and Humberside.

Partnership working

Much of the work to lower demand and reduce harm is dependent upon partnership working between agencies. In 2015/16 I provided £258,000 to community safety partnerships (CSPs) in support of their Drug Intervention Programmes (DiP). Offenders testing positive for drugs on arrest are referred into the DiP programme and onto substance misuse services.

One example reported to me by Telford and Wrekin CSP of how this programme makes a difference is 'X' who was released from prison in January 2015. At the time of release he was categorised as high risk due to his prolific offending and longstanding substance misuse history. Following his release X successfully worked with substance misuse services, probation and the police's integrated offender management (IOM) team and by the end of February was able to be moved into '*A Better Tomorrow Property*' to begin a recovery programme, by which time his risk of offending had been reduced to low risk. By October 2015 his continued progress meant that he was removed from the IOM cohort. This is a great achievement by X and all those agencies working with him.

Monies from my grant scheme have also been used to support initiatives providing educational awareness, diversionary activities and training opportunities. For example, I gave £11,416 to the Life Education Centre in Worcester to provide a drug and alcohol education programme to children aged 8 – 12 across South Worcestershire and £4,950 to RITE Social Enterprise Ltd to convert an ex police vehicle into a Skills Training Bus to provide offenders on unpaid work and those in the community with substance misuse/alcohol issues, with an opportunity to access skills training that leads to nationally recognised qualifications.

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

Performance

Last year saw a further 8% reduction in the level of anti social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to the police, with 43,618 such reports. Although for a number of years there has been a downward trend in reported ASB the force has maintained an effective approach in the identification of vulnerable victims and continued with a strong partnership approach to tackling ASB. This has been recognised by HMIC who stated in its PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 report, *“The force is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, most notably by working effectively with partner agencies”*.

Achievements in 2015/16:

Grant funding

I set out in my Police and Crime Plan my commitment to provide grant funding in support of the police, community safety partners and others to identify and address local ASB issues. All five of the CSPs within West Mercia receive ‘core’ funding from me, some of which is specifically used for projects relating to ASB. For example, in South Worcestershire the Wychavon Youth Bus provides diversionary activities for young people at risk or offending or engaging in young people. This is one of a series of initiatives which have contributed in a 16% reduction in youth ASB within South Worcestershire.

Examples of other organisations that have benefited from grant funding include:

- Evesham Street Pastor Scheme (£3,600). This scheme provides assistance and advice to people in difficulty or at risk during evenings out in Evesham and as a consequence helps maintain order within the town.
- Worcester Volunteer Centre (£18,950). The ‘YES initiative’ aims to influence the behaviour of young people and get them involved in their community in a positive way. The project has enabled the youth team to undertake outreach in the community to promote volunteering as a positive activity for young people. The project was able to recruit 37 young people into volunteering in the first six months and expects to increase numbers moving forward.
- South Shropshire Youth Forum (£17,639) – The REACH programme offers a supportive framework for ‘at risk’ pupils or learners. By December they had identified 8 pupils with a range of needs and behavioural problems who have all agreed to personal targets and action plans. The funding also supports diversionary activities in the South Shropshire area. For example 22 sessions have been run as part of the Cleobury Mortimer football project and between June and December 37 young people aged 13 to 17 have participated in the project.

Objective 5: To reduce reoffending and bring offenders to account

Performance

There were 72,746 recorded crimes across West Mercia in 2015/16; this represents a 20% increase on the previous year. The most significant increases took place in April and May 2015, predominantly due to increased scrutiny and governance around crime recording practices and an increase in reporting of certain crime types, particularly sexual offences. This has resulted in force across the country reporting increases in recorded crime. I am pleased to report however that more recently the levels of total recorded crime have begun to stabilise in West Mercia.

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

Achievements in 2015/16:

Criminal justice

My Deputy, Barrie Sheldon has been actively involved in the work of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board and was the Deputy Chair of the Board. With agreement from the Board my office is carrying out a review of the Board and its working groups. This review will be finalised later this year.

In addition to the work of the work of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, I asked my office to set up a new Crime Reduction Board (CRB), which has been chaired by my Deputy. The CRB brings together all five CSPs and strategic leads for reducing reoffending and Integrated Offender Management with the aim of streamlining and improving governance and accountability.

Integrated offender management (IOM) review

HMIC's PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 report states that "*The force works well with others to divert offenders away from crime, and is effective at identifying, investigating and bringing to justice repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending*".

During my time in office I have invested considerable political and financial support in our local Integrated Offender Management teams and in that time have become aware that whilst on an individual basis the teams have contributed towards reducing reoffending there is no joined up approach towards IOM. As a consequence I commissioned a review into IOM. The review findings identified 3 key recommendations along with a revised model for delivering better outcomes. I have agreed to support the new way of working identified in the review and have released £443,000 to enable this to happen, using some of the additional £1.5 million raised through the precept for 2015/16.

Grant funding

During 2015/16 I have maintained my commitment to invest in partnership work to prevent and reduce crime through community based programmes, projects and initiatives designed to support the 7 recognised pathways of reducing reoffending and IOM projects. Examples of projects I have supported include:

- A grant of £20,000 to Asha Womens Centre in South Worcestershire to run a two year pilot to work with the young female offending population through early intervention to prevent offending or escalation of offending.
- Hereford Voluntary Organisations Support Scheme (HVOSS) were granted £14,357 to run an offender volunteering scheme. The renamed 'On your Bike' project started in September 2015 and is offered to all offenders going through probation. Working with 13 local organisations the scheme is able to offer offenders 6 days of volunteering over a six week period. If completed the volunteers qualify to take part in an 'Earn a bike day' with the Hereford Cycle Hub. The number of referrals from probation has increased steadily and there are 13 offenders in the scheme.
- In Telford the CSP have used some of their core funding to support a community payback scheme, which works across six priority areas to enhance the environmental maintenance programme. In the 12 months to December 2015, 6652 offender hours have been given and 3980 bags of rubbish have been removed. 20% of the time is being used to support offenders undertaking short courses.

Offender Plant Operating Training Pilot

As a result of the strong relationships I have developed with local prisons I have been able to arrange a partnership project between HMP Stoke Heath and Hawk Group Ltd, to train offenders to operate plant machinery. The pilot project provides an offender with a bespoke vocational learning programme that meets the employer qualification requirements. As well as increasing an offender's employability it has the potential to support an industry where there is currently a shortage of suitably skilled workers. The arrangement is now being supported by other PCCs and so far 100% of those involved have had an offer of employment.

Youth Offending Service

On the 1 April 2016 the area's Youth Offending Service (YOS) transferred under my Office. This follows agreement from local authorities in Worcestershire, Shropshire, Telford and the Wrekin and Herefordshire to approve the plans. This is the first arrangement of this kind in the UK, and other areas are set to follow. The decision should help provide a better, more responsive service to the public across West Mercia, as the YOS will have a more solid platform for future development, and closer ties to the relevant parts of the Police and Crime Commissioner's portfolio. The YOS will continue to be funded by a combination of central government grant and local authorities, who have the responsibility to make sure the service is delivered.

Objective 6: To develop and implement a business crime strategy

Achievements in 2015/16:

Strategy implementation

From the very start of my election campaign back in 2012 through to today communities from across West Mercia have made it very clear to me that rural crime and business crime are two issues that need to be a priority in West Mercia. Similar concerns were expressed to my counterpart in Warwickshire, Ron Ball, which led to the creation of a joint rural crime strategy and a joint business crime strategy for the Alliance.

To support both strategies I have pledged a financial commitment of £1 million over five years for rural, business and cyber crime. Since making that commitment I have allocated over £1.6 million pounds (excluding core CCTV) towards rural, business and cyber projects to the end of 2016/17.

The Rural and Business Crime Governance Board has continued to provide invaluable advice and guidance to me assist me in determining funding applications. This Board meets quarterly and comprises a range of representatives from the business and rural communities. As well as funding, the Board has oversight of policing activity and receives a regular report on rural and business crime data.

Policing focus

Within the police, the Superintendent for Herefordshire has been given an overall alliance-wide lead on rural and business and within each local policing area there are now identified officers for both rural and business crime. A sergeant working to the Superintendent coordinates the work across the alliance and there is a communications officer allocated for each priority area. This approach has provided a real opportunity to drive the priorities forward and I am grateful for all the work that has been undertaken.

The Alliance approach to rural crime has been branded 'Rural Matters' with six key work areas in support of the rural crime strategy. The six areas are: 'Operational Leviathan'; 'Project Poacher'; 'Watches and Crime Reduction'; 'Cross Border Operations'; 'Wildlife Crime' and 'Other types of rural crime'.

The first initiative of the rural matters campaign was a '50 days of focus' aiming to raise awareness of the policing activities happening every day in rural communities to help reduce crime. Further details are available at:

www.westmerciapolice/ruralmatters.

Examples of rural crime initiatives include:

- Operation Leviathan – this is a fisheries enforcement campaign involving fifteen police forces, and West Mercia is the lead force. The operation tackles illegal fishing and conducts anti poaching patrols. Feedback from the angling community has been very positive.

- Operation Nightingale – this is a cross border initiative in Herefordshire to target rural crime and poaching. Approximately 20 officers made up from cross border police forces are involved. Officers in Herefordshire have been working with local gamekeepers, landowners and farmers to ensure any suspicious activity is dealt with.

Business Matters is the business equivalent to Rural Matters. Seven key work areas have been identified in support of the business crime strategy. These are: 'Crime Reduction'; 'Licensing'; 'Retail theft'; 'Watches'; 'Fraud'; 'Cyber crime' and 'Other business crime'. Examples of business crime initiatives include:

- Facewatch - a community led web based initiative that allows businesses to share information on possible troublemakers and low level crime with other businesses and the police in real time. Facewatch has been successfully launched in a number of locations including Malvern and Hereford. The first success in Malvern was a shoplifter who recently pleaded guilty to twenty offences.
- We don't buy crime – an initiative has been launched to reduce the market for stolen goods by working with local businesses to tackle the illicit trade of stolen property. A second strand of the initiative is to support towns and villages through the marking of valuables to deter criminal activity. I have provided funding towards this project that will be independently evaluated by the University of Warwick.

Grant funding

Examples of how I have used my funding in support of rural and business crime initiatives include:

- I have funded the purchase of two Mobile Police and Partner Contact Centres (approximately £39,000 each) for Herefordshire and North Worcestershire for use by Safer Neighbourhood Teams and a wide range of partner agencies to provide a visible presence in local communities and deliver engagement activities in relation to rural and/or business crime depending on the target audience.
- I have awarded the Worcester Business Improvement District (BID) £18,145 towards the purchase of 21 digital radios to improve the connectivity of businesses within the BID with the local police to improve response times.
- I awarded £12,000 to Herefordshire Council to run an out of hours noise service over 10 summer weekends. The service responded to forty five service requests and made 338 routine visits. A total of 22 licensed premises were sent warning letters and 6 received statutory notices as a result.

Details of all the grants I have awarded are available to view on my website.

3 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

Performance

The number of rapes and sexual offences reported in West Mercia have increased significantly in recent years. In 2015/16 928 rapes were reported to the police, a 33% increase on 2014/15. On average over the year there has been a 40%/60% split between current rape offences (recorded within 28 days of being committed) and non-recent offences. Other sexual offences have seen a 45% increase in 2015/16, with 1862 offences reported.

The increase in this type of offences is a nationally reflected trend. As well as tighter crime recording rules, other factors believed to be responsible for this increase include: greater victim confidence in reporting to the police following a number of high profile cases; availability of support services and; the reporting of historic abuse.

Achievements in 2015/16:

Scrutiny

The increasing levels of rape and sexual offences have been a specific focus at my holding to account sessions with the chief constable. In addition to provide further reassurance of the police's response to reported rape the Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee have carried out a review of historic cases of rape which were classed as 'no-crimes' between October 2013 and October 2014 to ensure the victims in those cases have received the service and support they are entitled to. The Committee reported their finding in November 2015 and a copy of their report is available to view on my website.

Service Provision

The recent increases in reported levels of both sexual and domestic violence have impacted on the demand to support services. For example Axis Counselling, the service provider for the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin reported to me that in the first three quarters of 2015/16 they received 289 new referrals. This represents an increase of 49% based on the same period in the previous financial year.

Given the increases in reporting I released an additional £80,000 per annum to Women's Aid to help them meet the increase in demand against their services. The funds will provide two additional independent domestic advisors and increase their capacity / capability to process referrals.

In addition my office has supported the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Centre who have submitted a bid to the National Lottery for additional funds, and is also

working closely with NHS England as they develop a new service specification for Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and Sexual Assault Services.

I provide more detail in the next section of this report of how I have supported provision of services for victims' services including specialist services.

Safeguarding

During my time in office I have ensured that there is strong core police funding in place to enable West Mercia Police to do its utmost to protect people from harm and to safeguard the most vulnerable in our society. In addition I have allocated additional funds to strengthen police resources in the 'protecting vulnerable people' teams. In January the 2016 a 'pathfinder' project to implement a new investigative model in Worcestershire went live. This new model brings together multi skilled policing resources from different functions to provide an enhanced policing approach to protecting people from harm. This new way of working will be rolled out across all whole Alliance in the coming months.

I can also report that the roll out of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) has been completed within West Mercia. There are now four 4 MASH in operation aligned to top tier local authority boundaries, providing a first point of contact for safeguarding referrals.

Education

I strongly believe it is important for children and young people to be given an appropriate level of education and information on issues related to child abuse, including 'sexting' and being safe online. My school project, featured later in this report is an example of how a large number of schools have been able to provide a safe and educational environment for children to explore a range of issues in relation to staying safe.

The 'Feeling Safe Project' run by Mentor Link in North Worcestershire is an example of how I have been able to provide grant support to provide training to vulnerable children aged 5-10 years about their right to feel safe and recognising, understanding and informing others about possible ill treatment, abuse or neglect. At one school 50 primary aged children were trained in protective behaviours over a period of 5 weeks, with positive feedback from the children taking part.

Mental health

As a signatory to the West Mercia mental health concordat I fully endorse the work being undertaken to improve outcomes for people experiencing mental health crises. One example of this is a mental health triage scheme pilot. This uses a control room model which means that there is a mental health professional working alongside police staff in the control room. The mental health worker is able to access health systems and share relevant information with the officer dealing with the concerns. A full evaluation of the pilot will take place later in the year.

Hate Crime

In August I was pleased to attend the launch of new major campaign aimed at increasing the reporting of hate crime and to see so many organisations that I have supported with grant funding to attend the event. Obviously we want to prevent hate crime happening in the first time but when it does occur I hope people are more aware of the impact it has and the help that exists for victims. During 2015/16 there was a 20% increase in the number of hate crimes reported to the police, with 1087 recorded offences. I welcome this uplift in reporting.

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

Achievements in 2015/16:

Victim Support

In October 2014 Police and Crime Commissioners became responsible for local victims' service and on 1 April 2015 Victim Support became the service provider in West Mercia as part of a newly commissioned victim support framework contract. The contract provides specialist support for up to 33,000 victims of crime each year. The latest data for the service indicates that 97% of victims who received support were 'satisfied or very satisfied' with the service and 85% of victims who felt crime had impacted their confidence said Victim Support had help increase their confidence.

Specialist services

As mentioned elsewhere in this report the increase in violent crime and sexual crime has resulted in an increase in demand for support services. The internal 'marker' system in place within the force to identify the prevalence of domestic abuse within reported crime and incidents shows that around 15% of all recorded crime is domestic abuse related and 81% of those offences are violent crime. Such concerning statistics endorse my commitment to supporting and where possible enhancing service provision.

In addition to my continued support of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) framework agreement, I also extended the grant agreements in place with both Axis Counselling and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRASAC) to help secure an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service for a further year. My financial commitment for the 2015/16 ISVA service is just over £461,000. I have granted WMRASAC an additional £40,000 over two years to provide a Family Independent Sexual Advisor to start to address the identified gap in support for children under the age of 11. Between January and December 2015, WMRASAC received 555 referrals for their range of ISVA services, 98 of which were for specialist support for parents, families and supporters of sexual violence victims, and in particular for those with children under 11. Axis Counselling are running a similar pilot in the north of the force area.

Part of my core funding to CSPs and grants via the grant scheme have been used to tackle violent and sexual crime. Examples include:

- Home-Start Herefordshire have received a grant for £18,988 for the 'New Beginnings' domestic abuse project. Starting in September 2015 the project has provided outreach volunteer befriending support to 29 parents (and 49 children) who were struggling with the impact of domestic abuse.
- North Worcestershire CSP has spent £10,000 on a black and minority ethnic (BME) women's domestic abuse project. The project has improved access to domestic abuse services for vulnerable women in BME communities through an intensive programme leading to the formation of peer support networks.

- Telford CSP have used £5,000 to run a 'Look out life' project in schools to promote positive and healthy relationships in both young people and families. Five schools took part and approximately 700 year 9 students participated in the project.

Restorative justice

During 2015/16 I have allocated £94, 891 of the funding provided to me by the Ministry of Justice, towards a six-month pilot project to develop and deliver a new approach to restorative justice (RJ) interventions. The pilot commenced in November and is due to end shortly. Outcomes of the new approach include an enhanced RJ capacity in all geographical areas of the alliance, a victim focused service and a higher profile of RJ and its effectiveness. In addition my office has drafted a new Alliance strategy for RJ.

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

Performance

The latest data available shows that there were 36 fatalities during 2015/16 on West Mercia's roads, compared to 50 in 2014/15. Although the year on year reduction is pleasing there is no room for complacency. There continues to be an increase in the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured which is a developing trend over the last 4 to 5 years, along with pedestrians using mobile technology making them more vulnerable when out and about. The Safer Roads Partnership has identified 6 'high harm' routes across West Mercia, requiring focussed police activity and visibility to reduce casualties.

Achievements in 2015/16:

Drug testing drivers

In March 2015 the Government introduced new drug driver legislation and West Mercia Police secured the first drug driving conviction in the UK when a man from Shropshire was found to be driving under the influence of Class A drugs. Since that time the summer drink/drugs campaign saw 220 arrests, 60 of which were for drug driving and in March this year the Alliance supported the THINK drug-drive campaign resulting in 144 people being tested and 45% of these testing positive.

New governance arrangements for the Safer Roads Partnership

Keeping our roads safe for all users is vitally important and the Safer Roads Partnership (SRP) is key to implementing a strategic approach to reducing the number of casualties on our roads. The work the SRP undertakes is often unfairly criticised, particularly their enforcement activity, however I can assure you that with the resources available to them they operate as efficiently, effectively and fairly as possible.

I do however feel strongly that the activities the SRP undertakes should be both accountable and attuned to local community concerns. As a consequence I agreed with the chief constable to undertake a review of the governance arrangements of the SRP, led by my office. As a result, a governance and oversight Board underpinned by a simplified partnership agreement has been established. Membership includes the council highway authorities, Highways England, the Institute of Advanced Motorists and the fire and rescue services. The new governance arrangements will make the SRP more transparent and accountable.

Community speed watch

I am pleased that the Community Speed Watch scheme has continued to go from strength to strength to the extent that a part time community speed watch co-ordinator role has been created for the Alliance. In West Mercia schemes are active across the three counties for example in Eckington Worcestershire, Peterstow Herefordshire and Baschurch Shropshire. The success of schemes does however depend upon local volunteers which has meant at least one scheme has folded in Herefordshire due to a

lack of volunteers, but there are other communities keen to have the scheme in their area and I hope that the scheme continues to grow in future.

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

Achievements in 2015/16:

Child sexual exploitation

In March 2015 the Home Secretary published a revised Strategic Policing Requirement, and for the first time recognised Child Sexual Abuse (CSE) as an additional national threat. My Police and Crime Plan was revised in July 2015 to reflect the change in the SPR. I have continued to meet and discuss related issues on a regular basis with force personnel and at my weekly meeting with the Chief Constable. More recently I have agreed to fund new two support workers as part of a pilot with Barnardo's, to work with CSE teams and provide additional support to victims.

The force has recently reviewed and refreshed its strategic assessment of child sexual exploitation and has shared the findings from this intelligence assessment with partner agencies. I firmly believe tackling child sexual abuse in all its forms is the responsibility of us all, but it is also critically important that the police and other organisations work as effectively as possible together, sharing intelligence and being open and transparent with each other. Last year I was invited to contribute to the *Scrutiny Review of Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation* carried out by Telford and Wrekin Council's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee. Many agencies and organisation took part in this detailed piece of work, which is seeking to improve multi agency working in Telford and Wrekin and I look forward to reading the Committees final report when is published in May 2016.

Regional collaboration

A programme of collaboration between the regional forces in the Midlands has long been established and continues to operate following the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners. To formalise this arrangement, over the last twelve months a number of collaboration agreements have been drafted and are due to be agreed and signed in 2016.

The Commissioners, Chief Constables and Chief Executives meet on a quarterly basis to provide strategic governance and oversight of ongoing projects and identify opportunities for further collaboration. Most recently, we have held significant discussions around the HMIC Regional Organised Crime (ROCU) inspection report which makes a number of recommendations for the region.

Cyber crime

My Deputy PCC has continued to take an active role in the development of the Alliance approach to cyber crime and has represented me on the Alliance Cyber Crime Governance Board. One of the key pieces of work in support of the Alliance response to cyber crime is a cyber crime strategy which will launched later this year.

In February, the regional Cyber Crime Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP) was launched in Birmingham. The event included the screening of a cyber crime awareness film for SMEs. Produced in conjunction with the West Midlands Regional

Organised Crime Unit and funded by the West Mercia and Warwickshire PCCs, the film explains in depth the threats businesses face from cyber criminals, what to do if they suffer an attack and top tips to avoid becoming a victim. Over 100 representatives of the SMEs were given copies of the film, which is also available on YouTube.

Serious and Organised Crime

My office have remained actively involved in a pilot known as the 'South Worcestershire Joint Policing Panel' for a partnership approach to develop a local threat profile of serious and organised crime in support of the government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. HMIC's recent PEEL Effectiveness report criticised the force for not having a local threat profile in place for each of the policing areas. I do not agree with this criticism as fortunately West Mercia does not have a large number of organised crime groups (OCGs) operating in its area. A similar pilot is now running in North Warwickshire and an evaluation of the pilots is due early in the summer before the approach is implemented elsewhere.

3 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 in 2015/16:

Community engagement strategy

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. Formal monitoring and evaluation against the engagement strategy was carried out in December 2015 and the results have been posted on my website.

For me one of the highlights of my engagement strategy was the Forward Together Showcase Event staged last summer in Shrewsbury. This major public event was aimed at bringing partners together from across different sectors and inspiring people to make positive changes for themselves and their communities. Over 60 partner organisations took part and was well attended by the public.

I see listening to the concerns of individuals and communities, as one of my key responsibilities. I have continued to receive many letters and emails from people raising a wide variety of issues and concerns and throughout the year, and my Deputy, Barrie Sheldon and I have continued to meet with hundreds of people at events and meetings to listen to your views. In addition my Community Ambassadors have been actively working in the local policing areas and continued to be my 'eyes and ears in the community'. The work of the Community Ambassadors features strongly in my weekly e-newsletter and available to view on my website.

I have always endeavoured to respond proactively to concerns raised in a proportionate and appropriate manner. For example following ongoing community concerns in Ludlow on police resilience I asked the Chief Constable to look at again at the local policing structure in the area. As a result of my intervention a patrol base was reinstated in Ludlow in January.

Consultation is also an important part of my role and during 2015/16 I have undertaken consultation on 20 mph speed zones, the policing precept (council tax) and for the third year running have carried out a consultation exercise with town and parish councils. For further details on the consultations and the results please visit my website.

Schools Project

This year I have undertaken a major engagement project involving young people. The first phase was a 'Stay Safe, Be Aware' safety competition in conjunction with local schools, the aim of which was to engage young people, and get across key messages around crime, anti-social behaviour and crime prevention. Thousands of children were involved from schools across West Mercia, which involved asking primary age children to design safety posters.

The second half of the campaign has seen secondary school pupils design safety apps. A 'Dragons Den' style event was held in February with the four shortlisted schools presenting their ideas to a panel of judges. including police, entrepreneurs, inventors, and the PCC. The overall winner was St John's CE Foundation Middle School with their app design called "Choice". We have teamed up with Worcester University who will now develop and build the winning app with the intention of rolling it out for public use.

Volunteers

In my Police and Crime Plan I state my support for the use of volunteers to support the police service and I am pleased to see that the force has done much to strengthen its use of volunteers. I have been able to give financial support through the Rural, Business and Cyber Crime fund to enable a Horse Watch Scheme to be established in West Mercia and I have provided funding over my term in office for the Police Cadet Scheme. My funding enabled the Cadet Scheme to expand from Telford into the other four policing areas within West Mercia. This volunteer youth engagement initiative for 16 to 18 year olds now has 7 detachments and spaces for 196 cadets across the alliance areas

To find out more about my engagement activity during my time in office please refer to my End of Term Report published in March 2016.

4. HOLDING THE FORCE TO ACCOUNT

Monitoring Performance

Since removing targets and measures from the police and crime plan in 2014 I have continued to monitor force performance, receiving regular reports and updates as well as attending the alliance Performance Management Group. My office has worked closely with the force performance team to develop a performance framework along with a monthly and quarterly performance report based on the framework. I use these reports to inform my discussions with the force on performance and in turn the quarterly report is submitted to the Police and Crime Panel to inform their meetings with me. The quarterly report is also published on my website.

I have provided a summary of key crime and incident types for 2015/16 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.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (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 2015/16 HMIC published a number of joint, national and force inspections. The following force reports were published in relation to West Mercia police.

'Warwickshire and West Mercia – Joint inspection of police custody' (published May 15)

This report made 5 main recommendations.

'PEEL: Police efficiency 2015' (published October 2015)

HMIC's overall judgement of *how efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?* was 'Good'.

'Witness for the prosecution: Identifying victim and witness vulnerability in criminal case files' (published November 2015)

This report sets out the findings of a review of 10 case files.

'PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability)' (published December 2015)

HMIC's overall judgement of *how effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims* was 'Requires improvement'.

'National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review' (published January 2016)

This was a follow up to a 2015 inspection report and makes one recommendation.

'PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015' (published February 2016)

HMIC's overall judgement of *how legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?* was 'Requires improvement'.

'PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015' (published February 2016)

HMIC's overall judgement of '*how effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?*' was 'Requires improvement'.

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. In many cases the inspections which actually informed the reports took place many months ago and much work has since gone on to address the concerns raised.

All of HMIC's reports highlight areas of good practice and performance within West Mercia Police. HMIC reports that West Mercia is efficiently run, is good at investigating crime and has a strong commitment to protecting people from harm. Whilst the judgement of 'requires improvement' in two of the PEEL reports relating to effectiveness and legitimacy is of course disappointing, the force has taken steps to address the weaknesses.

I am reassured that when I have asked for certain issues to be looked at in more detail this has happened. For example, I asked the Chief Constable to take action on the way the force assesses the risks to children and young people who go missing, especially children in care. As a result a comprehensive review was undertaken by the force which pinpointed levels of high demand on police time in some parts of our area, especially in Shropshire where there are a relatively high number of care homes for children. The outcome of that review has enabled resources to be allocated more appropriately and I believe that future HMIC inspections will find that there have been improvements in the way cases of missing children are handled.

5. TRANSPARENCY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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 there is a robust Scheme of Governance in place which is kept under review and I am required to publish details of all the key decisions I make.

Both the scheme of governance and decisions made are available to view on my website along with other transparency information including my expenses, senior staff salaries and staffing structures as well as information of all freedom of information requests made to me. Our approach to transparency was nationally recognised when in November 2015 we were awarded the CoPaCC² Transparency Quality Mark 2015.

One example of how decisions and governance are implemented is the six-month trial for the use of small, unmanned aerial vehicles, better known as drones, which started in January. Drones could help the police gather evidence to support a prosecution or assist officers in searching for a vulnerable missing person. However if, how and when drones are to be used in policing is not purely an operation decision. It is important that drones are used in clearly defined ways and that the public is reassured they will not be used inappropriately. The governance input of the Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee has been extremely helpful in establishing the parameters of the trial and will play a part in the development of robust policies for their use and it is for the PCC to ensure officers work within the policies.

Accountability

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. This has included my proposed increase in the police element of the council tax bill and confirming the appointment of my interim treasurer. This is a statutory post, jointly shared with the Warwickshire PCC.

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

Holding the force to account

I have continued to hold the chief constable to account for the effective and efficient delivery of police services across West Mercia through a regular programme of meetings, visits and briefings. I have developed this approach further and on a monthly basis my weekly meetings with the chief constable have included a more detailed 'challenge' session on issues specifically relating to the police and crime plan objectives, performance and outcomes arising from HMIC inspections.

² CoPaCC is an independent national body which monitors police governance by comparing Police and Crime Commissioners.

Also in place are two independent committees, working across both West Mercia and Warwickshire providing additional scrutiny and challenge.

- The Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee examines the ethical governance and actions of the forces'. In the last twelve months, the committee has met seven times and undertaken a significant work programme. Their work has included dip-sampling force complaint files on a monthly, a review of rape no crime case files and the use of drones. They have also received a demonstration from the Alliance on the use of force by officers and scrutinised the work of the Alliance Professional Standards Department, in particular how covert policing is undertaken.
- The Independent Audit Committee provides independent scrutiny of the forces' and the commissioners' financial performance; treasury management, financial reporting processes and risk management. During 2015/16 this Joint Audit Committee received and commented upon the plans and monitoring reports for both the internal and external audit function; scrutinised statements of accounts for the Alliance and provided an independent challenge to the Force and OPCCs on risk management and treasury management

Both committees meet on a quarterly basis and 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

I have a statutory duty to operate an Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) scheme to evaluate the welfare and conditions of detainees in police custody. Following a successful recruitment campaign an additional 10 ICV volunteers have recently been appointed and more recruitment is planned. Where possible processes and resources are now shared with the Warwickshire OPCC office, including joint training and the ongoing development of a new ICV handbook and an electronic inspection form.

Following national guidance and recommendations from HMIC, I have begun to make custody data available on my website. This is available to view on my website along with further details on the ICV scheme and the ICV scheme annual report.

Budgetary and Financial Management

At the beginning of 2015/16 I issued a challenge to the Chief Constable to improve the financial performance of the Force particularly in relation to some of the underlying reasons behind the under spending of the budget in previous years. Although it is too early to report the final figures the monitoring undertaken during the year and the latest forecast for the end of 2015/16 are encouraging.

The reserves I hold are currently very healthy. This gives 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 and invest in the infrastructure of the Force minimising the future costs of borrowing. This plan, which I agreed in February, following consultation with the Police and Crime Panel, provides for significant use of reserves over its life.

The following table shows the expected deployment of reserves over the life of the plan.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget reserve	35.103	9.033	6.405	0.00	0.000
Rural, business and cyber crime	4.000	3.000	2.000	0.00	0.000
Invest to save and Innovation fund	4.900	2.900	0.900	0.00	0.000
Investment in infrastructure reserve	0.000	20.000	15.000	10.000	5.000
General Reserves	13.500	13.500	13.500	21.794	22.563
Total Reserves	57.503	48.433	37.805	31.794	27.563

I have undertaken a comprehensive review of the capital programme and the capital planning and monitoring process. The revised programme now fully reflects my priorities and that of my counterpart in Warwickshire to achieve full integration of services and systems of operation across the Alliance as quickly as possible. It also recognises the need to modernise ICT systems and further develop the estate to ensure that policing responds to changes in demand and the nature of crime as efficiently and effectively as possible. Consequently I am planning significant capital investment of £87.6m across the Alliance over the next four years.

Looking ahead, the financial settlement announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was not nearly as bad as feared. That is not to say the challenging environment has gone away. The CSR only provided a settlement for 2016/17 with the settlements for future years still unknown. This coupled with the postponement of the Formula Grant review until 2016/17 means we still face a period of uncertainty over our future funding levels. In light of this the MTFP was reviewed as part of the 2016/17 budget including an increase in the precept of 1.99%, which will help maintain the level of police officers keeping the citizens of West Mercia safe and leaves a strong financial position for my successor.

West Mercia Commissioners Grant Scheme

During 2015/16 I introduced changes to my grant scheme to gain the most value for money by ensuring key outcomes are targeted at reducing crime levels and through enhancing support to vulnerable communities in order to reduce their risk of becoming victims in the future. The new process seeks to embrace a culture of diverse projects and initiatives, whilst at the same time focusing on key priorities.

The new scheme is split into tier 1 grants which are grants under £20,000 with outcomes achieving Police and Crime Plan objectives, and tier 2 grants which are those exceeding £20,000 focused on specific outcomes and delivery, often where it is known that demand is such that additional investment is required. The tier 1 scheme was opened during March and closed in mid April. The tier 2 scheme opened in the summer and closed at the end of August. In addition I also granted funding to community safety partnerships (CSPs). In total I awarded 65 grants totalling £2.58 million.

My office has been working closely with the CSPs to develop an outcomes focussed commissioning framework. One of the opportunities we will seek to achieve within this framework is the potential to joint commission with the upper authority in each area, and use the CSP as the gateway for this where feasible. The projects to be (re)invested in will be aligned to PCC and Alliance priorities and will be shaped around a body of local evidence that enables outcomes to be achieved at the point of greatest need.

My 'End of Term Report' contains many examples of how the funding I have allocated has benefited communities across West Mercia and contributed towards protecting people from harm. The End of Term Report, along with details of all the grants I have made during 2015/16 are available to view on my website.

6. CONCLUSION

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

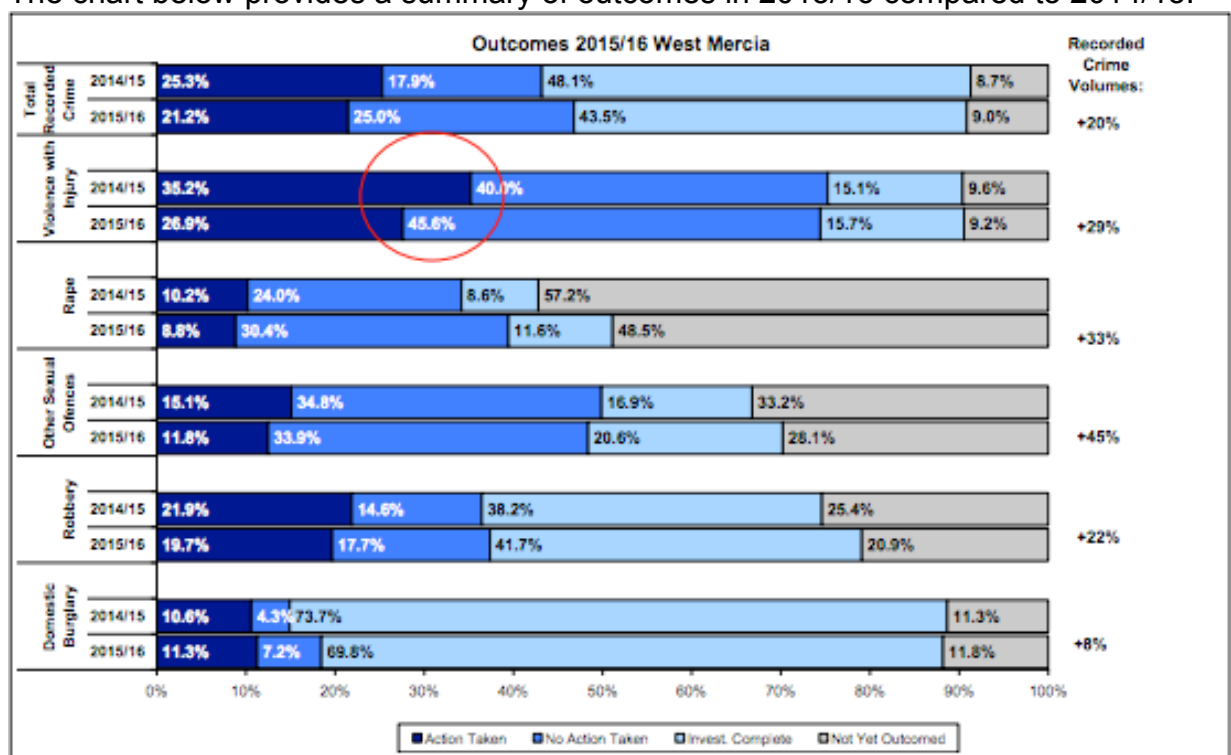
Crime and incident data

Category	2015/16 Volume	Percentage change compared to 2014/15
Overall recorded crime	72,746	+20%
Violence with injury	9,666	+29%
Rape	928	+33%
Other sexual offences	1,862	+45%
Domestic burglary	2,915	+8%
Robbery	486	+22%
Anti social behaviour	43,618	-8%
Killed or seriously injured	36	-28%

Outcomes

An 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 how a crime has been investigated and finalised.

The chart below provides a summary of outcomes in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15.



Confidence in the police

Public confidence in the police is measured through the national crime survey for England and Wales. The latest data (to December 2015) shows that 79% of people surveyed in West Mercia have confidence in their local police compared with a national average of 76.9%.