



John Campion Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



End of Term Report

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Foreword

Before my election in 2016 I set out the cornerstones of my plan to build a safer West Mercia. In my term as Commissioner, I have remained true to this vision and worked hard to deliver on the commitments I made to our communities.

This has not been straight forward. It has taken strong leadership and difficult decisions which were inevitably never going to be simple or universally popular. Without question, it would have been easier to just ignore some of the issues I have unearthed through my term in office, but I believe strongly that being PCC is about doing what is right for our communities, not whatever is most convenient for me.

I made a promise to act in the best interests of our communities. I have taken that commitment very seriously and it has always been my guiding principle as Commissioner. Where I have found problems I have worked hard to tackle them not turn a blind eye, because the need to keep people safe, deliver the best possible policing services, ensure the best possible use of public money, and make sure victims are properly supported must always be the priorities. Maximising how effective and efficient we are in these principles, and ultimately delivering a safer West Mercia, was never going to happen overnight but I have started that journey. Significant progress has been made and that needs to be sustained going forward.

I have worked to build on the foundations we had in West Mercia. It has always been the case that the force has benefitted from the skills and professionalism of our hard working police officers, staff and volunteers.

These people do vital work and I have sought to enable them to be even more effective in the services they provide to our communities, by supporting them with the right resources and unearthing/resolving problems both inside and outside the force.



Cohort of new West Mercia officers with their families and friends having finished their basic training

I pledged to put victims first. To that end, I have delivered enhanced new services that improve victims' journeys and get them faster access to the help they need. I have increased provision of specialist support services for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and child sexual exploitation. I also delivered on my pledge to produce a new Victims' Charter for West Mercia, within 100 days of taking office.

With demand on police forces remaining high nationwide, it has been even more vital to reform and modernise the force and make sure our hard working officers and staff have the right tools and resources to do their vital work.



The PCC and Deputy meet with Rural and Business Crime Officers, whose posts are funded by the PCC

I have delivered on my promise through significant investments in technology such as body worn video (BWV) and equipping frontline officers and special constables with laptops and smartphones. Improved efficiency in back-office support functions means that 51% of our police budget is now spent on officer pay and overtime, versus just 37% when I was elected. This is a good start but there is more to build on here and more that can be achieved with sustained focus and effort. I have taken significant steps to modernise police estates, reversing the previous policies of simply closing police stations, to ensure that police maintain visible community bases, but working in conjunction with partners to deliver better efficiency to the public.

These reforms and increased efficiency have made it possible to significantly increase our police officer numbers within the force. My decision to add 215 officers has been at the heart of my commitment to deliver a more secure West Mercia. The new, increased establishment of 2,145 officers is the highest seen since 2012.

Along with these additional officers I secured a commitment from the Chief Constable to improve police access, visibility and response times, along with increases for both public confidence and victim satisfaction. I look forward to these improvements being delivered, with the full officer uplift now in place and it is encouraging that we are already seeing reductions in crimes such as burglaries and anti-social behaviour.

Officer numbers are expected to grow even further in the near future with the Government's commitment to add 20,000 officers nationwide. The joint decision by myself and the Chief Constable to end the Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire is also central to delivering a more secure West Mercia. It will ensure that in the future, all of our policing plans and resources are focused where they should be – squarely on the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire.

I pledged to reassure our communities, ensuring they not only are safe, but feel safe as well. I have worked to enhance relationships between our communities and their police force through greater accessibility, visibility and transparency. The results of an independent study show 85% of people have confidence in the force and 87% trust West Mercia Police. I have equally sought to reassure communities around my role as Commissioner, from how I have made key appointments in my office through to increasing transparency around how I hold the Chief Constable to account. I have been pleased to note that this has all led to a major increase in engagement with my office during my term from both the public and partners.

All of this has been achieved alongside a financial strategy that has seen significant increases to policing budgets, prudent use of reserves and the lowest tax increases of any Commissioner in England in each year of my term.

There is more work to be done in ensuring the best possible services for our communities. While I have delivered hundreds more police officers for our communities, we need to ensure that extra resource is now delivering the best possible benefit and impact for our communities in reducing crime and tackling emerging threats. However, significant progress has been made, and is still being made, towards delivering more effective, efficient policing, along with stronger, more cohesive communities. Ultimately, this will deliver a safer West Mercia, and this will always be my guiding principle as Commissioner.



John Campion
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Building a Safer West Mercia

Putting victims and survivors first



78% of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Mercia Police⁴



75% rape conviction rate³



83% domestic abuse conviction rate³



84% hate crime conviction rate



91% witness attendance rate³

Reforming West Mercia



464,597 999 calls received
(1 April 2016 to 31 October 2019)



90% of 999 calls answered
within 10 seconds²



80% of residents are confident they could
access the police in an emergency¹

62%

62% of 101 calls answered
within 30 seconds²

Building a more secure West Mercia⁶

304,621 offences were recorded, which included:



69,304 violence without injury offences



12,251 rape and other sexual offences



149 people killed on West Mercia's roads



5,110 hate crimes



28,000 homes protected against burglary via
We Don't Buy Crime initiative

Reassuring West Mercia's communities



+165 police officers vs May 2016



2,359 community engagement events



74,000 BWV clips



1,100 correspondence cases per year⁷



8,000 engagements with 'public H2A' meetings



85% public confidence¹



700+ public articles/comments highlighting PCC work



464 Neighbourhood Watch groups⁵



77,000 hours of volunteer service in West Mercia Police

¹ West Mercia Public Perception Survey 2018/19

² April to October 2019/20

³ October 2019

⁴ April 2016 to March 2019

⁵ Reaching 600,000 on new NHW social media platforms

⁶ Recorded crime statistics 1 April 2016 - 31 October 2019

⁷ vs 350 in 2016

Putting victims and survivors first

I pledged to ensure victims of crime had access to the best possible services to support them to cope and recover after being affected by crime. I have worked hard to deliver on that promise through increased investment in effective services, getting victims faster access to the help they need and a greater focus on preventing people from becoming victims multiple times.

I pledged to deliver a new Victims' Charter within my first 100 days in office. I fulfilled this promise and have worked to ensure the contents of that Charter have been adhered to throughout my term of office. The Charter clarifies for all parties the levels of service and access to help that's required in West Mercia, giving clear commitments to victims and setting clear expectations to service providers. My Victims Board has then provided a regular mechanism of monitoring delivery and outcomes, identifying and making continuous improvements, and where necessary holding partners and service providers to account.



Former Victims' Commissioner Baroness Newlove meeting the PCC



Speaking at the launch of the new Victim Advice Line

April 2019 saw the launch of a new support service for victims of crime in West Mercia. Previous arrangements had delivered a good service, but by engaging with victims through the early stages of my term opportunities for significant improvements were identified. Feedback from victims consistently showed that they felt they had to tell their story too many times before getting to the person or organisation that they really needed.

The new Victim Advice Line (VAL) is designed to get victims faster access to the right help, by ensuring they only have to tell their story once. It provides a single point of entry into support services and a clear pathway for victims, who were also clear that they wanted to regain a sense of choice and control over their lives.

These principles have shaped all that VAL has now started delivering, including victims of crime having increased confidence to seek support, whether or not the crime has been reported to the police.

The service is made up of a team of expert and fully trained Victim Care Coordinators who help victims when they come through to the service, be it through police, third party or self-referral. Victims may then be referred onto other specialist services, dependent on the level of support they need. VAL looks after an individual to make sure they get the level and type of support they need. They are not given a pre-determined package. Support is completely tailored to them.



Some of the team from West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre who are delivering key PCC commissioned services to support victims of crime locally

The service also enables better multi-agency working, which ensures victims are supported throughout the entire criminal justice system from the very beginning of their journey through to the end. This is in line with national best practice models. In its first nine months, more than 52,000 crimes have been transferred to the Victim Advice Line. More than 40,000 offers of support have been offered, and more than 5,000 tailored packages of support have been delivered to victims.

I have also continued to commission services from Victim Support around an effective restorative justice service for West Mercia. This supports my commitment to achieving the right outcome for victims by enabling and supporting them to have their say and move on with their life. In the right circumstances, Restorative Justice has been shown to be an effective outcome for both victims and perpetrators and I have been pleased to see its use develop in West Mercia.

In each year of my term I have committed additional funding from my grant budget to services for victims of crime. This funding has effectively doubled the financial resources available in West Mercia to over £2m a year. This additional investment has served to complement funding received from the Ministry of Justice grant and has supported additional, specialist, outcome focussed services for Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Overall, I have increased budgets for victim services by 31% during my term of office. Within this, there have been specific increases for specialised services, such as a 66% increase in funding for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), a 294% increase in the budget for victims of child sexual exploitation, and a 29% budget increase for supporting victims of sexual abuse and assault.

My Commissioning team have a clear directive to invest in outcomes which are victim driven and deliver the best possible outcomes. They are also focused on tackling root causes of crime and victimisation to deliver the best possible results for our wider communities as well. I have seen some compelling case stories over my term of office where my funding has made some life changing (and in many cases lifesaving) interventions.

Tackling domestic abuse has been a key priority for me. Inflicting any kind of harm, be it emotional, physical or psychological, is not acceptable. I have funded Women's Aid to provide an IDVA Service across West Mercia. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk and to develop tailored options and safety plans. This service has seen a very high level of outcomes delivered for service users, which were identified when they entered the IDVA service. These have included reduced or managed risks being reported and service users having access to immediate support or advice. In each case the outcome has been significant improvements to safety for the individuals concerned.

"The IDVA helped me to hold it all together. I couldn't have managed without her."

Shropshire service user

"I'm so grateful for your support because there's no way I could have got through it without you."

Worcestershire ISVA service user

I have also increased my financial support to Women's Aid to enable them to provide a hospital based IDVA provision across West Mercia. This approach is nationally recognised best practice and improves the early identification of domestic abuse victims. Part of my financial support towards VAL has also included a specialist domestic abuse provision.

Recognising the complex nature of crime, and a need to prevent both repeat offending and victimisation, I have worked in partnership with Worcestershire Public Health on an innovative new programme focused towards high risk or serial perpetrators. The Drive Project is a response to domestic abuse that aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse by deterring perpetrator behaviour. In place since October 2018, perpetrators have been referred onto the Drive Project and results have been encouraging. In addition I have awarded a grant to West Mercia Women's Aid to provide a Children and Young People's service to work with young people whose parents are going through the Drive programme and who are being supported by IDVAs. This is to create a "whole family approach" to tackling domestic abuse behaviour. This service aims to work with 105 children across a year.

I have provided new or increased funding for certain areas where I have identified additional needs. For example, male victims of sexual violence now have access to dedicated male Independent Sexual Violence Advisors for the first time. In addition to this, I continue to provide significant financial support to AXIS and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) to provide Independent Sexual Advisor services across West Mercia. This grant maintains the current key frontline Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), Family ISVA and Children & Young Peoples (CHISVA) service provision within WMRSASC and to support continued delivery of the SELFIE training and awareness raising programme.

In addition I have provided funding to the West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service (SARC) which is a region-wide service providing expert care for children and young people who have disclosed sexual assault, or who may have been subject to sexual abuse. Clients are seen by an experienced paediatrician with specialist training in forensic examination and are supported by a crisis worker.

My approach to commissioning, and specifically designing of services, has received national praise and recognition and I am proud of the developments commissioned to help meet my vision of providing the highest care and support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, regardless of age of gender.



PCC John Campion joined by Herefordshire Ambassador Dan Guerche on a visit to West Mercia Women's Aid

I remain passionate about working with other commissioners to support and strengthen the provision for victims across our four Local Authority areas, whilst also strengthening the partnership with the third sector. I am committed to improving the victim journey wherever possible to deliver the best possible outcomes and prevent scenarios where individuals may be let down by agencies failing to work together. It is only through true partnership working that we can maximise performance in this respect.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Throughout my term I have been committed to ensuring West Mercia Police is delivering the best possible service, in order to make our communities safer and protect people from harm.

While partner organisations and indeed the public can play key roles in making our communities safer, the need for an effective, efficient police force is clearly central to building a more secure West Mercia. As Commissioner I have worked on behalf of our communities to support, and where necessary, challenge our police force, by highlighting good practice, unearthing issues and then ensuring they are addressed and improved.

I set out in my Safer West Mercia Plan my desire for the force to achieve and maintain a good grading in HMICFRS PEEL inspections. I am disappointed that the force has not been able to attain this standard across the board. It is important to acknowledge however that there have been noticeable improvements in some areas and the force has embarked on a significant journey of reform.

This has involved difficult decisions and has significantly challenged the force. However, much of this agenda has been about clearing out some of the issues that have limited force performance in the past and giving our police the best possible platform from which to succeed in the future. I trust that the force, and ultimately our communities, will reap the benefits of this work in terms of improved performance, that is both more controlled and more sustainable, in the months and years ahead.

Policing demand

I listened when the public said they wanted more police, visible and accessible in their communities. Over the last two years I have provided funding for an additional 215 extra officers, bringing officer numbers to the highest level since 2012. This new cohort of officers, along with an additional uplift of 93 officers from the Government's national recruitment programme, will help to make our communities safer and more secure. I have secured commitments from the Chief Constable around performance improvements to be delivered in conjunction with the uplift in police officers. With the officer uplift delivered at a record pace and ahead of schedule, these improvements can and should now be delivered for our communities.

For the additional resources I have delivered to be truly effective, it is important that the force fully understands and manages the demand it faces. The level of demand continues to increase and the force has seen a 15% increase in 999 calls comparing 2018/19 to 2016/17.



New West Mercia officers are joined by family and friends for their intake ceremonies at Police HQ

However, analysis shows that around half of calls coming into the force do not relate to policing matters, demonstrating the need to better manage demand, including with communities and partners.

The latest PEEL inspection report from HMICFRS recognises that the force has a **good understanding** of the demands on its services but also that **there are times when demand is placing a strain on the force**. Over time changes have been made to meet demand including amending the policing model, withdrawing from the Central Motorway Patrol Group (CMPG) which has delivered an improved service to our local communities and changing Harm Reduction Hubs into Problem Solving Hubs with staff based in all local policing areas dedicated to working with partners to identify, manage and reduce risk to our most vulnerable people, and playing a crucial role in helping to reduce harm and reduce demand across West Mercia.

More recently a Chief Superintendent has led on a force wide demand reduction programme which is having a real impact on demand. One example of this is a significant reduction in the number of unresourced incidents that are being managed on a daily basis. This is an issue that I have challenged the Chief Constable on at a number of holding to account meetings and it is pleasing to see the improvements made in the service to the public and the positive impact on officer and staff wellbeing.

Holding to account: Monitoring and oversight

I want the public to have confidence and trust in my work, along with that of the force. To achieve this I have implemented new processes and structures to ensure I can effectively scrutinise force performance on behalf of our communities and push for change and improvements where needed.



PCC joined by former Home Secretary and current Chancellor Sajid Javid at the local relaunch of Neighbourhood Watch in his Bromsgrove constituency

This has included the introduction a weekly performance dashboard which is circulated internally to key stakeholders and allows me to closely monitor weekly performance in key areas. I have also introduced a regular programme of local policing area visits enabling me to discuss performance and community issues with the local commands teams and to engage with officers and staff on an informal basis. This increased oversight, along with my scrutiny of other performance data and attendance at a range of internal organisational meetings, has provided me with effective oversight of wider force activity.



Public holding to account June 2018

In May 2016 I introduced a monthly assurance meeting to hold the Chief Constable to account on force performance, the HMICFRS inspection programme and strategic organisational initiatives. I took this approach as it provides a clear and robust way for me to closely scrutinise key areas of the force and to hold the Chief Constable to account for ensuring the force's efficiency and effectiveness.

Since its inception my holding to account programme has been subject to review to ensure it is continuing to be effective in exerting the appropriate influence upon the force on behalf of the public, raising matters of community concern and addressing force performance issues. As part of these changes I have introduced biannual Facebook Live meetings, which have enabled people to submit questions and view the meeting either live or later. These events will be discussed further later in this report, but they have served an important purpose in significantly increasing public transparency of my scrutiny process and ensuring communities have a clear, direct voice in policing.

It is important to me that my holding to account programme provides an opportunity to highlight community concerns; for example, public complaints to me on falling call handling service standards led me to hold a specific holding to account meeting on this area. Following my meeting with the Chief Constable a number of immediate improvements were implemented and it is one area of performance that I continue to review on a weekly basis.

Over time there have been noticeable improvements in performance including the response time to 999 calls which is now sees 90% of all 999 calls responded to within 10 seconds, compared to 85% in 2016/17, despite a 15% increase in call volume demand over the same time period. I have also challenged the Chief Constable around the quality of case files submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service and in 2018/19 the force saw a 63% reduction in the number of files requiring additional work, leading to improvements in timeliness and quality.

Tackling crime and reducing harm

Levels of recorded crime have continued to increase nationally. West Mercia has not been immune to these increases, which have happened almost across the board. However, increases in recorded crime in West Mercia have been significantly lower than in other areas of England and Wales. These increases have undoubtedly been challenging, but more recently the rate of increase has slowed, and in 2018/19 there was only a 2% increase compared with the previous year. This is a smaller increase than the national picture, which saw a 7% increase over the same time period.

There have also been some notable reductions in some crime areas during my term of office. For example, levels of residential burglaries are now 6% lower than they were before my election. Anti-social behaviour has also reduced by 12% compared to 2015 levels.

It is important to recognise that some of this increase is as a result of the introduction of new offence categories, such as malicious communications, which results in a high volume of alleged offences and changes to crime recording rules. The force has recently been subject to an HMICFRS inspection of its crime recording processes. The resulting Crime Data Integrity report shows that since the last inspection in 2014, the force has improved its crime recording processes and the force is now rated as **good**, ahead of other similar forces. The report is encouraging news for victims of crime, confirming that in the vast majority of cases West Mercia is performing well, crimes are being accurately recorded and at the point of initial reporting, victims are getting the right service.

I am aware that acquisitive crime, including burglary, robbery and theft, harms our communities. A person's home and possessions often carry an emotional attachment and when crime interferes with this it can have a long lasting impact on its victims. West Mercia Police is committed to protecting people from these crimes. **We Don't Buy Crime** demonstrates this commitment, by taking an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods and protecting homes and possessions by making them less attractive to the **would-be criminal**.



Deputy PCC Tracey Onslow joined by officers from We Don't Buy Crime initiative to mark the first SmartWater industrial estate in Telford

We Don't Buy Crime is being rolled out to more than 125 communities across West Mercia. This rollout is now complete in around 70 towns and villages who have signed up to the programme since 2015, with more communities applying to join constantly. In total, more than 28,500 homes across West Mercia are now protected and offer a real deterrent to would-be criminals.

Areas that have become designated SmartWater towns or villages have in many cases seen significant reductions in crime. For example, the very first SmartWater area, Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire, saw its burglary rate drop to zero in the year after adopting the scheme. The overall reduction in burglaries seen across the force area in recent years is significantly higher than the national average, illustrating the success of the initiative.

The scheme provides households with SmartWater forensic technology, along with signs displayed throughout the area warning thieves crime prevention measures have been taken.

My **Leading from the Front** project offers to fund 25% of the roll-out costs to councillors interested in helping to protect their wards with SmartWater. Now Stafford Park in Telford has become the first industrial estate to get involved with business units protected with SmartWater.

West Mercia remains a comparatively safe place, but we are not immune to serious and organised crime (SOC). The impact of crimes such as child sexual abuse, county lines drug trades, modern slavery and human trafficking can be devastating. They can destroy individuals and damage entire communities.



Joining officers executing warrants as part of Operation Protect

It became apparent from inspections by HMICFRS that performance in this area within West Mercia was not acceptable as the force was graded as inadequate in its response to SOC in March 2018.

Since that time, SOC has seen an even greater focus and become a more regularly recurring theme of my holding to account agenda.

I am pleased that this scrutiny has led to major improvements for our communities in West Mercia, with the force now rated as good by inspectors, meaning more of our communities are protected from harm and more crime is being prevented or actively disrupted by our police

The force has developed a clear understanding of its SOC threats and has in place a SOC Strategy and delivery plan to strengthen its approach to SOC. I have recently launched my own SOC Strategy which outlines how I will play my part and work with others to ensure our communities are safer and feel safer. I am currently in the process of developing a SOC delivery plan to monitor progress against the recommendations set out in my strategy.

A key element of the progress the force has made in its approach to SOC is as a result of building and strengthening its work with partners. Each policing areas now has in place a SOC Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) which brings together partners to identify and manage organised crime groups in partnership. The SOCJAGs are run and managed locally, however central governance is provided by my Crime Reduction Board.

“The Shropshire SOCJAG is a shining example of how key agencies within our communities can come together to bring about change.”

YP Team Manager and Safeguarding and Working with Families Lead for the Young Addaction charity in Shropshire

Organised crime groups (OCGs) operating across West Mercia routinely target and exploit the most vulnerable children and adults within our society.

This has given rise to an emerging threat in the form of 'County Lines' whereby criminal gangs target the sale of drugs, often in smaller towns, exploiting vulnerable adults and young people through coercion, intimidation and violence.

With its partners the force has had a number of notable successes in tackling this crime, but it remains a continuing challenge. For example, during the National Crime Agency's (NCA) co-ordinated week of activity targeting county lines gangs in October 2019, weapons and phones as well as more than £13,500 cash was recovered, thousands of pounds worth of drugs were seized including crack, cocaine, heroin and cannabis and over 30 arrests were made.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) are emerging and developing areas of crime, commonly associated with SOC, which I am committed to tackling in West Mercia. To support this commitment I have allocated some of my grant funding to provide victims of modern slavery, human trafficking and forced marriage that are in crisis with immediate support by enabling West Mercia Police to provide individuals with immediate access to food, drink and secure accommodation for up to seven nights.

I hope that the funding I have allocated to be used, when victims need temporary accommodation, will help bring them comfort and support before more permanent living arrangements can be made.

Earlier this year using funding secured from the Police Transformation Fund, I brought together authorities and community groups to raise awareness and identify how everyone can work together to tackle modern slavery within West Mercia. I recently made MSHT a focus for my holding to account scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable and as a result I am reassured that the learning from this event is being used by the force to improve its approach to this issue and better protect vulnerable people.

Drug trafficking and supply is the primary crime type for just over 60% of all active OCGs in West Mercia. Drug misuse is an inherently complex issue and there is no single solution. I have recently published a draft version of my own drugs strategy. This new strategy sets out how I am committed to playing my part, both in terms of my own role, and working with others to deliver the best possible results.



Assistant Chief Constable Martin Evans at the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking event funded and organised by the PCC

Serious violence, often associated with SOC, has been in the spotlight over the last year following the publication of the national Serious Violence Strategy and a national rise in knife crime. Recognising these threats, I have incorporated into both my drugs strategy and my SOC strategy commitments to prevent children becoming victims of criminal exploitation (CCE) and to support them where it does occur. Both strategies set out my aspirations to prevent the problem at source through early intervention and have been used to help shape my current and future commissioning approach.

I have reviewed my existing diversionary initiatives and have ring-fenced over £500,000 into an early intervention fund to implement a West Mercia Diversionary Network (WMDN), assisting partners to reduce youth crime and exploitation. Following a successful provider and stakeholder market event in the summer an invitation to tender went out in the autumn. The procurement process will conclude in early 2020 and the new contract will go live on 1 April 2020. The successful provider will adopt a 1:1 trusted adult, trauma informed, child-centred approach. They will be working with children and young people (11-17) evidencing early indicators of being at risk of CCE/entering the Criminal Justice Service. All referrals will be assessed via a triage process on their level of risk.

My current funding to diversionary projects includes £280,000 per annum to YSS for a West Mercia-wide 1:1 mentoring service supporting 13-24 year olds, in, or at risk of being involved in, the CJS to access support services and community based activities and the ARC project providing one to one support to young adults aged between 16 and 24.

A study of the social return on investment (SROI) of these projects over a 12 month period has shown that based on actual costs and outcomes achieved by the project for the period is £6.11 for every £1 of investment. Over this time the projects supported 225 young people.

“I have calmed down a lot. I now listen to people. I get to classes on time. Before, I didn’t have anyone to talk to and I would let things build up and then scream and shout and punch doors. That rarely happens now.”

14 year old male service user at risk of exclusion from school

This year I have worked with the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and the Youth Offending Service (YOS) to collectively grant £135k to recruit a ‘CCE link worker’ in every local policing area. The ‘trusted adult’ works with children and young people who are being criminally exploited (high risk of harm/risk assessed as ‘red’). The funded posts are embedded within partnership panels and Children’s Services dependant on local area requirements. This directed initiative works in partnership with the Branch project, which is funded by me to support children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) continues to be a key priority both at a force, regional and national level. I awarded £305,735 to West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) to run the Branch Project, which provides educational interventions and support to young people who are at risk of or have been a victim of CSE in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire.

In the first two quarters of 2019/20, 85 young people have been referred into the project, receiving tailored education, intervention or support to children and young people (CYP) who are at risk of or have been a victim of CSE in Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire.

The young person's family are already known to Children's Services following a referral regarding concerns raised about young person's behaviour out in the community. Children's Services deemed the young person as high risk of child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation. The young person has had several missing episodes from the family home. A CSE risk assessment was undertaken due to the client going missing from home. The CSE risk assessment scored as medium risk. The CSE assessment highlighted immediate concerns in respect to the young person's unsafe use of the internet and the exchange of recent inappropriate images/videos of a sexual nature. The young person has also disclosed that during missing periods from home he has been sexually abused. The young person has some additional vulnerabilities as he has historically experienced bullying and he has been required to be a young carer.

Following the initial referral into Branch the young person was removed, for his safety, from his home address and placed with his paternal grandparent out of county. During this period it was emphasised that the Branch worker will need to be in place prior to his return to the family home and available for intensive weekly support.

The client has returned back home to reside with his family and has a full support package around him, including; a Divert Worker to engage him with positive activities, a family support worker to support family mediation and the Branch worker.

Branch are currently seeing the client on a weekly basis and client is aware that the support is around building appropriate healthy relationships and the sexual exploitation that he has experienced.

Branch case study – 14 year old male

Too many people are losing their lives on our roads, 52 in the last year alone and it's time more was done. Safer Roads is one of the key policing priorities for West Mercia Police and I welcome this clear strategic focus. As part of my own commitment, I hope to raise more awareness of road safety and reduce the amount of those being killed or injured, as well as the number of those committed road traffic offences, through further projects and initiatives.

To support this I am developing a Roads Safety Strategy and in 2018 I chose to use a proportion of the reserves built up by the Safer Roads Partnership to provide both targeted and strategic funding opportunity to address the rising number of people killed and seriously injured on West Mercia's roads.



John Campion and officers from Operation Tramline which focused on improving road safety, particularly among HGV drivers

I have made a £350,000 provision for larger projects and a further £150,000 to be invested in the Local Policing and Community Ambassadors Fund (LPCAF) for safer roads.

These pots of money will allow more focus to be placed on something that is a priority, and concern, for everyone. I hope that people will be encouraged to apply for funding knowing that they could be making a real difference on the roads of West Mercia.



Police open days such as this in Bromsgrove have been supported by the PCC as a means of ensuring the force is well connected to the community it serves

I have extended my grant support to the Pathfinder Project, to run a volunteer led project which is designed to reduce the number of road traffic collisions, casualties (KSIs) and convictions amongst vulnerable novice drivers, i.e. 17-24 year olds. I have also developed and implemented a Roads Focus Campaign with Worcestershire and Shropshire councils. Further details can be found in the Reassure part of this report.

“The young people we support come from a variety of disadvantaged backgrounds and the eight young people that participated on the course had a variety of needs and issues. As professionals working with these young people we saw our young people grow throughout the week as they participated on your course. The young people engaged with the instructors, developed their skills and mastered the art of driving. All the young people that participated in your course gained something back from it.”

Care worker accompanying young people on Pathfinder

Reducing reoffending

To begin to break the cycle of crime and reoffending of individuals and lessen the impact this behaviour has on our wider community, it is important that partners work together to provide the right interventions at the right time. Through my Crime Reduction Board I am able to bring together representatives from key agencies to ensure this approach is happening in West Mercia.

The Drive Project, a new response to domestic abuse focusing on priority (high-risk or serial) perpetrators is an innovative project attempting to break this cycle and reduce the number of child and adult victims. I have jointly funded this with Worcestershire County Council Public Health, with additional monies from the Police Transformation Fund. In the latest quarter 125 referrals were made to Drive and of the 28 cases closed to date, 29% reported that abusive behaviour had improved with 41% of the cases receiving an increase in victim safety.

I have also supported Willowdene Farm for the LINC project (Local Initiatives Nurturing Change) with a three year grant for £130,000. The project is for women at risk of entering the criminal justice system, or are in it to reduce their risk of offending. During 2018/19 there were 155 referrals to the project, 39% coming from the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The project achieved an 81% engagement rate and an assessment of service users shows that 79% made progress on education and training, 55% on employment and 49% on substance misuse/ alcohol.

“I used to look forward to my time at Willowdene, so much so that when my 12-week programme was up I asked if I could keep attending. I continued to attend for some time after this. I began to feel like an adult, I was able to spend time at home and accept that I needed to take responsibility for my own actions.”

Woman completing the course, who is now in employment and no longer using illegal substances

I have provided approximately £250,000 per annum to drug interventions programmes across West Mercia. Working within the local criminal justice system the service supports the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme, providing arrest referral support in custody and the treatment element of community sentences with the aim of reducing offending and re-offending and making West Mercia more secure.

C was managed within the IOM Unit due to his prolific offending behaviour and chaotic use of heroin and illicit diazepam. Despite many previous community probation orders and many prison sentences, this pattern of behaviour and the consequences to others and the wider community continued. Family relationships were non-existent and C relied on acquaintances to let him sofa surf with him not having a home of his own and little opportunity to be able to do so.

Following his release from prison 10 months ago the IOM team case managed C closely. He had frequent appointments weekly and the support and help he was offered meant he finally accepted the treatment interventions from SRP. Over May and June he began to fully engage with the support offered to him. As his stability developed he worked with other agencies to help him with his housing need, access to benefits and there is now a clear plan for C to move forward and continue to reduce his levels of risk.

Case study - Shropshire DIP

Collaboration and partnership working

Building a safer West Mercia is not and cannot be the sole responsibility of any one person or organisation and I remain committed to developing strong collaboration and partnership arrangements to deliver shared outcomes, improve services for our communities and achieve efficiencies. This has also been a prominent feature of my push to reform West Mercia Police, in order to deliver increased effectiveness and efficiency.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) have moved their headquarters into Hindlip Hall to share with facilities with West Mercia Police and share a new state of the art OCC with the force, other buildings are also shared including Bromsgrove Police Station. Whilst I welcome the efficiencies this will bring, the changes are about more than just buildings, it's about growing skills, relationships, sharing experiences and working together to adopt a joint problem solving approach. The two organisations already work hand in hand, with a shared ultimate aim of keeping people safe.

An example of this is an initiative between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to support West Mercia Police (WMP) in the searches for high risk missing persons. The type of equipment the fire and rescue services can bring to this type of immediate search assists all those involved. Incidents may benefit from the use of thermal imaging cameras, lighting, trauma packs and mobile mapping data held on vehicle mounted IT systems.

There remains significant opportunities for further improvements in local police and fire collaboration. There is currently a distinct lack of scrutiny and analysis of potential benefits of collaboration across both services. It has been established and supported through independent business case, public consultation, successive governments, and the High Court, that a transition to joint and single governance of our police and fire services would best enable those benefits to be delivered for West Mercia's communities, including the chance to re-invest significant amounts of public money in vital frontline services through the abolition of the Fire Authorities.



PCC and former West Mercia DCC Amanda Blakeman are joined by Chair of the Fire Authority Roger Phillips and Chief Fire Officer Nathan Travis to mark HWFRS moving to Police HQ

Unfortunately, the delivery of these benefits has been needlessly delayed for almost two years now by our local Fire Authorities' desire to spend public money on challenging the Government's decision.

Throughout my term I have provided each of West Mercia's five Community Safety Partnerships with a ring-fenced budget, since 2016/17 this has amounted to £2.01m. This budget is spent on proactive community safety initiatives, addressing local needs and creating a safer and more secure West Mercia. During this time I developed a new policy for CCTV to ensure funding could be given to each of the CSPs to be used on new and improved CCTV equipment. The policy has required CSPs to work with their local policing teams and communities to ensure there is a more joined-up approach. My commitment means that up to £1.25m has been made available to make West Mercia's communities feel safer and more secure.

It has also ensured, for the first time, that this sort of funding is available fairly and equitably right across the force area, with a consistent, transparent approach for all parties. This had not previously been the case in West Mercia, resulting in some areas disproportionately benefitting compared to others.

As part of my drive to ensure the funding I provide is used as effectively as possible, I have worked with the CSPs and the force to bring the analytical support I was funding via the CSPs into the force intelligence team. The result is there are now three full time posts, who are able to provide analytical products under the direction of and for the CSPs with the professional guidance of force analysts. One of the early benefits of this is that the CSP analysts were able to develop and produce the new serious and organised crime profiles for the force and partners.

I have worked in partnership with Worcestershire County Council to develop a new approach to tackling domestic violence, known as the Drive project. This initiative aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims by deterring perpetrator behaviour. Drive provides a case manager who acts as a single point of contact for perpetrators and ensures close liaison between police and support agencies with an ultimate aim of changing behaviours in high risk or serial perpetrators, who carry the greatest risk of offending. The programme has been a success with plans for further rollout across the force area.

I have worked collaboratively with regional colleagues to ensure that the Strategic Policing Requirement is met and I maintain oversight of the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), National Air Police Service (NPAS), Roads Policing, Counter Terrorism (CT) and other national programmes. Two regional policy officers shared between the four Police and Crime Commissioners in the West Midlands region have been invaluable in strengthening our scrutiny and oversight of key national programmes which impact on our region.

Together with the other PCCs in the West Midlands region I jointly commissioned a six month study into criminality in prisons. The report has assisted in identifying an approach to collectively tackle organised crime gangs which are embedded in our prison system. These organised gangs are not only causing harm in the prisons but in our communities too, and I will continue to work with the government and other partners to ensure this harm is reduced.

Reforming West Mercia

Enhancing and improving West Mercia Police

When I was elected as Police and Crime Commissioner I inherited a force that spent just 38% of its resources each year on police officer pay and overtime. This gives a stark insight into why it has been quite so necessary to drive reform in our force and make it such a central pillar of my work as Commissioner. Our communities fund policing, with a legitimate expectation that their money will be used effectively and efficiently, and will be focused as much as possible on frontline policing.



With Chief Constable Anthony Bangham

Whilst I clearly accept that figure reaching 100% could never be realistic, it is clear that 38% was also not high enough. We are now in a position where more than 50% of West Mercia's annual resources are now used on police officer pay and overtime, while significant progress has also been made in making our police officers more visible and accessible to communities, and restoring control of our own resources.

These decisions and changes have not always been comfortable or convenient, but they have always been in the best interests of our police force and our communities. It is clear that there remains further potential for significant improvements in this area. Delivering this will need the same drive and focus in the years ahead.

To provide our communities with the most effective and efficient police service and after careful consideration, in October 2018, the Chief Constable and I jointly announce our intention to withdraw from the strategic alliance arrangement with Warwickshire Police. Intensive negotiations with Warwickshire Police followed. These negotiations did not reach resolution before the end of the original notice period leading the Home Secretary to mandate both forces to continue the existing collaboration agreement for a further six months, until April 2020.

A six month extension to the Alliance on its existing terms simply means our communities have to continue subsidising Warwickshire. This arrangement was terminated in the best interests of West Mercia's communities, yet 12 months on we find ourselves still tied to an Alliance that actively prohibits our police delivering the best possible services in West Mercia. Warwickshire have clearly and consistently stated their preference to transition to a standalone force, yet the public in West Mercia continue having to pay the bill for their failure to achieve that. However, we will continue working with Warwickshire, the Home Office and other partners towards a smooth transition of services.

Embracing technology



With PC Andy Worrall, one of the first officers to receive body worn video technology in Telford

The public want to see police officers on their streets and at the heart of their communities. The force I inherited did not have an efficient approach to officer visibility, as its outdated technology forced police officers to stay shut in police stations. I demonstrated my commitment to improving police visibility in our communities and ensuring our officers can provide an effective and efficient service by investing £4.2m to enable mobile technology to be rolled out across the force following a successful trial in Evesham. Officers across West Mercia are now equipped with smartphones and laptops, meaning they can work on the move and spend more time with the public. As officers no longer have to frequently return to police stations to do admin work, on average, an extra hour per officer per shift is being spent out and about in the community.

My £1m investment in body worn video (BWV) has seen a roll-out of this technology to all frontline officers and staff. This project was delivered ahead of time and on budget and since going live in July 2017 has resulted in 74,000 **active** BWV pieces of footage recorded and uploaded to the system, of which approximately 575 on average per month are shared with the CPS (Apr-Oct 2019). Body worn video is playing a significant part in my plans to reform and modernise West Mercia Police and I am pleased to see it having such a positive impact for victims, communities and the police. Not only does it provide a higher quality of service for victims with high quality evidence which increases the chance of conviction, but it makes the police service more accountable with the increased transparency helping to reassure the public and giving our communities greater confidence in the police service.

The proven benefits of mobile technology has enabled me to invest a further £250,000 in the same equipment to enable same technology to be rolled out to the 300 or so special constables in West Mercia who volunteered a combined total of almost 53,000 hours of service last year.

There are many projects under my **reform** agenda and the force has a number of significant transformational projects that are a key part of these reforms. I am committed to working with the force to mitigate any impact resulting from the Alliance termination to secure the planned efficiencies. For example, negotiations with the supplier of a new Command and Control System, Saab SAFE, for the Operational Control Centre (OCC) are ongoing to establish West Mercia Police as the sole customer.

In other transformation areas, such as digital services, the change programme will be coordinated jointly across both forces to enable smooth transitioning of applications and services to new infrastructure by March 2021 to avoid unnecessary delay.

My aspiration to modernise West Mercia's technology is not limited to the force as I am supportive of wider reforms to the criminal justice system. This has included working with partners to introduce Video Remand Hearings (VRH) across Shropshire and Herefordshire. The introduction of VRH across Shropshire and Herefordshire would eliminate the need to move detainees from Herefordshire and Shropshire to the centralised remand court in Kidderminster and bring about significant efficiencies for the police and other partners.

Investing in our estate

Our communities have legitimate expectations around police estates. They expect them to be fit for purpose, located where they are most effective and efficient, and where they can help provide visibility, accessibility and reassurance. My work around estates has focused on delivering against those needs.

This is being achieved through a combination of new build, refurbishment and co-location projects across the portfolio. The police estate needs to be fit for purpose to enable a modern and agile police force to deliver good quality services to the people they serve. To support this ambition my Strategic Estate Manager was appointed to coordinate projects on behalf of policing and to ensure our estates management strategy is delivered.



Turf cutting ceremony for West Mercia's new state of the art Operations Communications Centre shared with HWFRS

I have however been frustrated by the speed of progress where estates is concerned. Significant opportunities and projects have not been delivered in an efficient manner. A number of reasons have been behind this, including the delay in moving to joint police and fire governance.

Investment has included construction of a new OCC sited at Police Headquarters, shared with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The co-location of police and fire incident control teams, operational support teams, partner emergency planning and more recently the Victims Advice Line equips officers and staff with the information and flexibility they need to enable them to work more efficiently and respond more quickly to members of the public. Police headquarters now also houses the fire service headquarters and realises greater public value through reducing running costs and providing opportunities for back office efficiencies and maximises the benefits of proximity to the shared Operations Communications Centre.

By working with partners, as part of the One Public Estate Programme (OPE), I have been able to identify where savings can be made by co-locating buildings without reducing the level of service the public receives. Initially four sites in Shropshire have been identified for co-location with different partners in Bridgnorth, Wem, Whitchurch and Shrewsbury town centre.



Special constables on patrol in Shropshire - volunteers within West Mercia Police have given around 77,000 hours of time supporting the force in the last year

Investing in our people

Providing people with the right equipment and resources to do their job is only part of creating a modern and innovative force. Investing in people to ensure they are reaching their potential and supporting their health and wellbeing is as important as any changes to ways of working or estates. My decision to provide funding for an additional 215 officers is improving resilience and enabling the force to better manage operational demand and provide an increased police presence in our communities.

Our communities value their police and have an expectation that the people that look after them will in turn be looked after themselves. People also expect their police force to represent the communities they serve, making it vitally important to ensure the right commitment to robust, diverse recruitment programmes and ongoing training and welfare. A happy workforce where officers and staff are challenged to improve their own performance will inevitably lead to better performance for the force and our communities as well.

I made a commitment in my Safer West Mercia Plan to hold the Chief Constable to account to properly invest in the workforce and develop officers, staff and volunteers to make sure they are reaching their full potential. I have followed through on this commitment and clear demonstrable outcomes of that process have been published and implemented. For example, the force has introduced initiatives such as the MAX scheme which seeks to support and develop people, realise aspirations, foster talent and support health and wellbeing.

2019 was the year of wellbeing in West Mercia, and it is important to me as Commissioner that the force provides adequate, tailored support for all officers and staff, particularly those exposed to work related traumatic events. The improved approach not only includes the specialist support for those affected by PTSD and other mental health related issues, but a range of other schemes and initiatives, such as a travelling wellbeing bus where free health check-ups can be accessed, Backup Buddy a free app with 24 hour support and advice, peer supporters trained by the charity Mind, multi-faith chaplaincy and critical incident debriefs focused around the impact on officers and staff.

We must never lose sight of the fact that police officers, and all those who do an extraordinary role in protecting us, are ordinary people, with ordinary lives. We must never underestimate the impact that assaults can have not only on those who are assaulted but on their loved ones and those around them. This is why I launched my **#Behind the Badge** campaign in January 2017 aimed at reducing violence against police and improving how the issue is tackled nationally. The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 came into effect in November 2018; however, my campaign is ongoing with a dedicated campaign page and regular social media and video content.

Other successful initiatives include an Alliance wide apprentice scheme, providing opportunities for young people to take part in a 12 month apprentice scheme, taking part in 'Police Now' a national talent programme for graduates and implemented a new Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) programme; the PCDA student officers are due to commence in January 2020. A Degree-holder Entry Programme (DHEP) for recruits with a degree is planned to commence in October 2020.

"Having had a keen interest in both numbers and people my whole life, I am very interested in a career in the financial sector. Seeing that there was an opportunity available to train at West Mercia Police in this area was amazing because I instantly knew that the work I'd be doing was going to have a positive impact and really matter to the greater community."

Finance Assistant Apprentice, West Mercia Police

As part of my own commitment to investing in people for the last two years I have successfully recruited a graduate policy intern in my office for a 12 month period. As part of their placement they have gained an invaluable insight both into the work of my office and a wide range of force functions, as well as developing valuable workplace skills.

I am also committed to ensuring that the workforce of West Mercia better reflects the makeup of our communities and the uplift in additional police recruit numbers I have provided should be providing a real opportunity for the force to become more diverse and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure everything is done to achieve this.



Visiting HMP Hewell to discuss the 'Behind the Badge' campaign, to reduce attacks against police officers



Very recently at a national gender equality summit West Mercia Police was one of four forces asked to showcase its **#UncoverYourPotential** educational campaign, which challenges unconscious bias regarding the stereotyping of certain roles in the police service and aims to encourage more women to join up. It is initiatives like this which will can help break down barriers and turn West Mercia Police into a truly modern police force.



The PCC has supported the use of specially trained and dedicated wildlife officers within West Mercia Police

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

I promised to build communities that not only are safe, but feel safe as well. This has been a key and central focus of my work to reassure our communities in West Mercia.



Shropshire Ambassador Graham Oliver with members of Oswestry Lifeline

My decisions to increase officer numbers in West Mercia were informed by operational factors such as the increased demand seen in forces nationwide. However, a significant consideration was also ensuring greater reassurance within our communities. It is crucial that people feel confident that the police have the right resources, in the right places, to provide the right response when required and to proactively prevent crime. This is why I secured commitments from the Chief Constable that the uplift in officer numbers would deliver improvements across the board around public confidence and victim satisfaction. West Mercia is now at its increased establishment, with further uplifts also expected in the near future, and mechanisms are in place to ensure those associated service improvements are delivered for our communities.

Along with simply increasing officer numbers, I have also worked to increase the capacity, visibility and accessibility of our police in order to provide community reassurance. Every officer and special constable in West Mercia now has technology such as smartphones and laptops, enabling them to spend more time out in the community, rather than stuck behind a desk in a police station. Pilots of this equipment found it enabled an extra hour of community visibility, per officer, per shift. This is a significant benefit both for the force, and our communities.

I have supported new initiatives around officer accessibility, making it easier and more convenient for communities to get in touch with police when they need them. Personal contact numbers and emails have been published for each local Safer Neighbourhood Team. The new force website enables much more convenient access to online crime reporting and services such as firearms licence renewal. The **Open for Business** programme enables communities to see a police officer in a police station without an appointment, any time they are available. These are all valuable improvements in terms of giving reassurance to communities that they can access the right help from the police, when they need it.

I have invested significantly in body worn video technology, which is now in use across West Mercia Police and Special Constabulary. This equipment has numerous practical functions, such as securing evidence and preventing attacks on officers, but it also plays an important role around reassurance.

Body worn video provides irrefutable evidence of what has happened in individual incidents, giving reassurance to both police officers dealing with situations, and the community around police conduct. Body worn video has quickly become an invaluable tool for our police. As noted previously, since its roll-out in July 2017, a total of 74,000 pieces of body worn video footage have been recorded and uploaded to police systems. Video clips have been shared digitally with the Crown Prosecution Service since April 2018, and this too has seen major growth, moving from 48 clips in its first month to 687 in October 2019.

I have invested in the creation of new officer posts to support and reassure our rural and business communities, doubling these resources in 2018/19. These officers are dedicated solely to the specific issues that impact rural and business communities, building important relationships and enabling a greater voice from the community to understand and act on their concerns. In addition to this, I have been pleased to see new wildlife officers established across the police force, again helping to provide vital reassurance that West Mercia has the right skills and resources to effectively address the issues in each individual community.

Within my own office, I have worked hard to fulfil my pledge to be open, honest, transparent and ensure our communities could have faith in my actions as Commissioner. When I was sworn into office I made commitments that I have worked hard to stay true to throughout my term in office. I signed up to a code of conduct, aligned to the Nolan Principles of conduct in public life, and have maintained that approach throughout.



The PCC has funded SmartWater packs in a number of communities, here the project was launched with officers, councillors and residents in Wythall, North Worcestershire

I have ensured information is proactively published around registers of interests, expenses and gifts and hospitality. Recruitments into key posts such as Chief Constable or Deputy PCC have been done via thorough, transparent processes, involving key partners such as West Mercia's Police and Crime Panel to ensure the public could be reassured.

I have increased transparency around how I hold the Chief Constable to account and how decisions have been made in the Alliance, publishing minutes from every meeting on my website. I have also initiated public holding to account meetings twice each year, as a means of giving our communities the chance to directly put their questions to the Chief Constable. These events are streamed live over social media and have focused on issues such as rural crime, police budgets and community policing, and to date have attracted more than 8,000 engagements from the viewing public.

I have actively sought to increase engagement with our communities. This will be discussed in more detail later in this report, however it always has been, and remains, an important element of my reassurance work. Ensuring that our communities have a strong voice in local policing and can be confident in the work I am doing on their behalf has been a guiding principle for me as Commissioner. To that end, I have delivered a new, improved and more cost-effective website to make it easier for communities to find out about my work, delivered significant growth in digital engagement, taken part in thousands of face-to-face engagements with communities and partners, conducted numerous formal consultations and published full responses. A new contact management system has been introduced in my office to cope with increased public correspondence and ensure every item is managed effectively. I have also developed new mechanisms to reliably gauge perceptions like public confidence, police visibility and accessibility, and public trust in their police force. All of these are discussed in detail within the **public engagement** section of this report.

I pledged that as Commissioner I would enable and empower our communities to play an active role in not only supporting policing, but also to take leading roles in some scenarios. I have worked hard to deliver on this promise through new funding, equipment, opportunities and relationships. In the police force, I have supported the ongoing development of the Special Constabulary, police service volunteers and the police cadets programme. In total, our police service volunteers in West Mercia now contribute almost 77,000 hours of service a year. The average monthly contribution by special constables now also stands at 24 hours per month, compared to approximately 12 at the start of my term. The number of police support volunteers has also increased from 92 (2016/17) to a current figure of 216. These measures demonstrate the remarkable commitment and strength of support from our community for their police force. The contribution of volunteers to policing makes a real difference and I have sought to recognise that by, for example, ensuring our special constables are equipped with mobile technology and body worn video, as any regular officer now is. The success of the police cadets programme is also notable, with young people often moving into successful public service careers, and even joining the force, following completion of their cadet programme.



The PCC visiting the intake of new West Mercia Police Cadets in 2019

I have worked closely with Neighbourhood Watch across West Mercia to provide new signage across the force area, and establish new social media pages to ensure communities are informed about local crime and policing in their area. These pages have proven extremely successful, with 20 of them now established, managed and maintained across the force area. The pages have more than 48,000 individual followers (48% growth since December 2018), and achieved 61% growth in terms of reach in the first 11 months of 2019, taking messages to a total of 629,000 people. The convenient medium and community ownership, coupled with support from the police, have helped create a real success story. The number of more conventional Neighbourhood Watch groups in West Mercia has also grown to 464 during my term of office, with 47 new groups established in 2019 alone. A range of other new initiatives are also planned in conjunction with Neighbourhood Watch.

Early in my Commissionership I doubled the amount of equipment available to Community Speedwatch groups, in order to enable more areas to help identify and tackle local speeding issues. In 2016, West Mercia had just 11 of these groups. I am pleased to report that number has now more than trebled to 34. Reassurance is a key element associated with these groups. In some cases, that reassurance is that a problem is being fully understood, and enforcement action will be taken by the police and road safety teams. However, in other cases, reassurance has simply been that perceptions of speed have not necessarily been accurate, and issues are not as bad as some residents feared. In either case, these groups have played an important part in ensuring local road safety issues are better understood and reassuring wider communities.

Rural and Business Crime

West Mercia is a predominantly rural police force area with over a third of its residents living in smaller towns and villages, where farming and the countryside are focal points for the community and represent major parts of the local economy. Rural crime can have a significant cost, in a way that is more than just financial. It brings increased stress and pressure which impacts on mental health, leading people to feel more isolated. My rural crime strategy sets out how I will actively work with communities and partners to tackle rural crime to build safer more secure rural communities.



The PCC funded 'mini police officers' such as these as an additional road safety initiative near local schools. They have proved extremely popular across the whole force area.

I am committed to ensuring communities have the same efficient and effective service regardless of where they are. This is why I have substantially increased the level of investment in rural crime from £51,000 in 2016/17 to over £270,000 in the current financial year. My investment has enabled the force to appoint 15 dedicated Rural and Business Officers (RABOs) to work with local communities to provide support, advice and reassurance. This resource has been further strengthened this year through my precept to provide warranted officers in each local policing areas whose role is focused on rural and business crime. These officers work alongside the RABOs as part of a Wider Problem Solving team. I have also allocated funding to train additional number of officers to gain extra skills as Wildlife Crime Officers and to purchase vehicles and equipment to support those staff and officers working in this area.

“It was good to meet you yesterday and to know someone is bothering with us as sometimes these days we do feel slightly forgotten. We discussed the matter of farm and site security which we are looking into so thanks once again.”

Shropshire farmer

Cyber crime

Cyber crime remains a national policing priority and can have a detrimental effect across all our communities. To help raise awareness of cyber crime I have provided West Mercia Police with £11,000 to work with Get Safe Online. At the time of my election West Mercia was one of only two forces nationwide not to be part of the programme.

I am pleased that I was able to urgently address this and provide access to these valuable resources. Their website is a unique resource providing practical advice for individuals and business in the fight against fraud, identity theft, viruses and many other problems encountered online. As well as online resources Get Safe Online have also run a cyber training event for force personnel and partners; and attended two public events in September 2019, the Ludlow Food Festival and Worcester 10k where over 9,000 cyber advice packs were distributed.

In 2019 I provided a £30,000 grant to the UK Cyber Security Forum to part fund an exciting and innovative cyber security training project which seeks to provide supported training for vulnerable autistic adults in cyber security. In a seven month period the project supported 22 people on training, three of whom went on to secure employment in a related field.

A 25 year old man came to us via an enquiry from his father who was concerned that he spent most of his time alone in the house on the computer. At first he was extremely anxious about attending and missed a couple of sessions because his anxiety overwhelmed him. He has begun to feel relaxed and safe about attending now as he recognises there is no pressure on him. He is very interested in the subject and is exploring becoming self employed.

UK Cyber Security Forum

More recently, I have also provided support for free cyber security events for local businesses, which have also been well attended and received in the community.

Police ethics

Ensuring that West Mercia Police upholds an ethical policing culture is an important part of my role and throughout my term I have liaised closely with the force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) to ensure complaints are dealt with fairly and complainants receive the service they need. During this time there has been an improvement in the recording of complaints by PSD with 94% recorded within 10 days and a considerable reduction in the time it takes to resolve allegations. These improvements in performance are ensuring a better and more efficient service for the public. PSD has recently established a triage function to improve the service given to members of the public who are dissatisfied with the force. The triage team aims to resolve issues as soon as possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant. The triage team has been in place since January 2019 and has had a significant impact on the number of complaints with a resultant positive impact on demand and an improved service for complainants.



John Campion and Deputy PCC Tracey Onslow

Recent legislative changes will, when enacted, bring significant changes to the police complaints and discipline system and give Police and Crime Commissioners a much greater role in the police complaints system. In preparation for these changes I have recently agreed a regional approach for the management of police appeals that will see a shared Complaints Review Manager providing support for Commissioners in the West Mercia, West Midlands and Warwickshire police areas.

I am pleased that West Mercia Police has retained its status on HMICFRS' Best Use of Stop and Search (BUSS) programme. West Mercia was removed from the BUSS scheme prior to my election, so it is a clear sign of improvement that status has been reinstated and retained in recent years. The use of stop and search clearly has the potential to be a contentious issue, so it follows that compliance with its best use is an important point of reassurance to our communities.

Throughout my term, ongoing work (both from my office and the police force) has been independently scrutinised to provide reassurance to our communities. This work has been carried out, previously, by the Trust, Integrity and Ethics and Joint Audit Committees. More recently these functions have been amalgamated into the new Audit and Standards Committee. These panels have met in public, with published papers to ensure transparency. I am grateful to the Committee members for their valuable contributions.

Independent custody visitors

My Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme sees trained volunteers make unannounced visits to all West Mercia's custody suites to check on the welfare and treatment of detainees. There are currently 50 ICV volunteers, who carry out their visits at any time of the day or night, seven days a week. A total of 848 visits have been carried out since April 2016, clocking in at significantly more than 1,000 hours of total service. ICV inspections focus on prioritising the vulnerability and dignity of detainees, such as mental health issues. They check that appropriate processes are being followed by police including, for example, access to legal representation and appropriate health care, as well as things such as stocks of food and washing facilities for detainees.

ICVs fulfil a crucial role in providing reassurance to communities about how police are handling people under detention. The age range of our ICVs spans from 18 to 88, and I am grateful to all of our volunteers for their invaluable contributions, particularly those with many years of experience and service. I have accompanied ICVs on their visits on numerous occasions and my Deputy attends ICV Panel meetings in order to understand and support their roles and experiences.

I have been committed to the ongoing development of the scheme, ensuring it has both the resources and resilience to be as effective as possible. This has seen the introduction of an electronic recording system to enable ICVs to submit their visit reports as quickly as possible and promotion of the scheme with students at Worcester University resulting in a number of new younger volunteers. In 2019 the scheme was successful in attaining compliance with the new National Independent Custody Visitors Association Quality Assurance Framework. I have also ensured up to date custody data has been published on my website, in line with HMICFRS best practice.

Independent scrutiny

To support me in my oversight role the Joint Independent Audit and Standards Committee was been established to provide independent scrutiny of activities, processes and policies. Following termination of the Alliance with Warwickshire Police, this committee has recently been reformed to be the West Mercia Audit and Standards Committee, with a focus solely on West Mercia.



The PCC joined independent custody visitors on one of their inspections at the Kidderminster Custody Suite



PCC Ambassador Sherrel Fikeis joined street pastors in Telford, who have been supported by the Commissioner

The force has been able to improve its approach to its use of stop and search and is now fully compliant with the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme, crime recording standards have increased with the force recently been assessed as **good** and most notably following an **inadequate** grading for its approach to tackling serious and organised crime, the most recent inspection report has judged the force as **good** in this area. I have responded to the Home Secretary with my assessment of the force response to these inspection reports and in doing so have made clear my commitment to support the force in making the necessary improvements to ensure it can provide an efficient and effective service.

Throughout my term it has been important to me that the outcome of key decisions and discussions are made accessible so that our communities can have trust in my as their Commissioner and the police force I hold to account on their behalf. I have achieved this through my Facebook Live events as well as publishing reports notes and minutes from a wide number of governance and scrutiny meetings including the Holding to Account Meetings, the Alliance Governance Meetings while they were held and my Crime Reduction Board and Victims' Board meetings. Additionally the delivery plan I developed outlining how the commitments I have made in my Safer West Mercia Plan is reviewed on a monthly basis and reported to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, who are responsible for scrutinising my activities and responsibilities.



The PCC and Ambassador Graham Oliver joined partners at the unveiling of a new throwline in Shrewsbury to improve safety near the river as part of the Home and Dry campaign

Community engagement

As Commissioner I promised to listen and be responsive to feedback from our communities. I have worked hard to deliver on this promise during my term and hope that the results of this engagement are clear to all.



Shropshire Ambassador Graham Oliver with the Shrewsbury BID team that helped the town achieve Purple Flag status

My decisions to increase police officer numbers are perhaps the most obvious and prominent examples of where this has been the case. These decisions were informed by consistent and sustained feedback from the public, who made it clear they wished to see additional police visibility, accessibility and capacity. These views were also reinforced via formal consultation around my budget proposals in 2019/20.

Formal consultation has formed a regular part of my engagement with the community and partners. In the early stages of my term two formal consultations were held in the development of my Safer West Mercia Plan, with a further one around the development of my Victims' Charter.

A three month consultation around my fire governance proposals returned support from more than 60% of the 1000+ respondents. New strategies around drugs, serious organised crime, rural crime and road safety have also had formal consultation periods. On top of this, I have also sought community views around my budget proposals each year. For each consultation the full results have been published, including my responses to each comment. This feedback has helped shape and determine my ultimate decisions as Commissioner.

I have developed a new confidence and perceptions survey to reliably gauge local views on policing and crime across the force area. The project sees 3,000 people interviewed each year at random, delivering statistically significant samples for each local policing area (LPA) - Herefordshire, North Worcestershire, Shropshire, South Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin. The survey captures local views on a range of subjects, including levels of confidence and trust among our communities, as well as officer accessibility and visibility. Overall results have been encouraging so far, with the headline overall confidence figure standing at 85%. The results have enabled me to ensure community views are reliably represented within the police force and highlighted areas of good performance in the force, as well as areas for learning and improvement. These would not have been possible without this project, which has provided an excellent return on investment.

While the confidence and perceptions survey gathers views from the public, I have also initiated an annual perceptions survey for town and parish councils. I believe strongly in the value of these local councils, who are extremely closely connected to the communities they serve. These surveys have been circulated both directly to local clerks, and via the Associations of Local Councils in recent years. Results have been analysed at force, LPA and individual levels. Again, they have informed my agenda around holding to account, officer visibility, accessibility and capacity, and where applicable I have ensured local issues have been followed up by local policing teams to help improve relationships with local communities. I am grateful to all the councils who have engaged with this project.

I have sought to actively and continually engage face-to-face with communities throughout my term. I have always been conscious of the scale of the geography of West Mercia and the fact that I have a duty to represent all communities within the force area, along with the unique challenges and issues faced by each one. I have been supported in these engagements by my deputy and my Community Ambassadors. Between us, we have taken part in around 2,500 community engagements. These have covered the length and breadth of West Mercia, and included council meetings, visiting young people in schools, meeting different faith groups and organisations, rural communities, local businesses, LGBT groups, BME communities, meeting local MPs, and attending community events.



Telford & Wrekin Ambassador Sherrel Fikeis
with Police Cadets at a Sikh festival

Most recently I have held a programme of 20 **Q&A** surgery style events, right across the most rural parts of our force area, engaging directly with people who wished to provide feedback, raise issues, or offer praise to local police. In each case, I have ensured relevant casework and matters arising have been followed up, both by myself and where appropriate the police force too. Each year I have also engaged in a programme of events during the summer. These have been part of some of the biggest and best attended events spread across the force area, such as the Three Counties Show and Shropshire County Show, visiting different communities, and carrying a range of engagement opportunities from burglary prevention to taking part in consultations. A programme of events specifically focussed on engaging directly with our rural and business communities is ongoing. All of these events have enabled face-to-face engagement with thousands of people during my term.

There has been a notable increase in public contact with my office during my term. In 2016 around 350 items of correspondence or casework were logged by the PCC's Office. That figure has now risen to more than 1,100. I am pleased to see more people engaging with my office and me as an individual. I have introduced new contact management systems to ensure all engagement with my office is appropriately logged, triaged and processed. This helps deliver the best possible service to our communities and provides reassurance that no correspondence goes missing or gets overlooked.

Public engagement has also grown significantly on my digital platforms. Shortly after my election I introduced a new PCC website as a more effective and cost-efficient platform to inform communities about my work and take their feedback. The number of unique users to my website each month is currently more than double the typical monthly figure from 2016. Growth on social media has also been significant. For example, the number of **likes** on my office page has tripled in the last two years, with organic daily reach peaking at 25,000, and regularly achieving more than 5,000 a day. I am clear that social media is an engagement platform rather than just for communication and have ensured views and feedback are captured and actioned via these platforms as much as any others. I have also used social media as a means of direct engagement with public **holding to account** meetings streamed live twice each year. These events have provided platforms for communities to put their questions directly to the Chief Constable about local crime and policing, and more than 8,000 people have engaged with these online meetings thus far.

I have had a number of specific focuses for engagement during my term, in the form of sustained campaigns. My Behind the Badge initiative has sought to reduce attacks against police officers and other emergency service workers. This initiative has seen engagement with the wider community, prisons, MPs and Government Ministers, as a means of successfully lobbying for tougher sentences for those who attack emergency workers. I am grateful to the police officers who have shared their personal stories as part of this campaign, highlighting the dangers that officers face in the line of duty while simply trying to keep us safe, the injuries they have suffered, and the ongoing impact these incidents have had both on them and those closest to them. I believe strongly that emergency workers such as police officers are ordinary people doing extraordinary work and this campaign has proven both extremely valuable in highlighting that, and in reinforcing the strength of public support for the emergency services.



The live public holding to account meeting in January 2020 involving the PCC and Deputy along with Chief Constable Anthony Bangham and DCC Julian Moss



The PCC and partners unveil a new throwline along the River Sever in Worcester to improve safety near the water

The Home and Dry campaign seeks to prevent deaths and other accidents linked to water. I have been a leading partner along with a host of other agencies including local fire and rescue services, the RNLI, RLSS UK, West Mercia Search and Rescue, local authorities, local colleges and local universities. I am also particularly grateful to Kirsty Walsh and the family of Tom Jones, who have, as part of the campaign, shared their own deeply personal stories of losing loved ones in the river in Shrewsbury and Worcester respectively. Their support and bravery has been incredible in working to prevent other people and families going through similar ordeals in the future. The campaign has grown and evolved significantly since its inception, now involving a much broader range of partners, engaging in a wide range of community engagements. These have ranged from education events as part of university fresher's week through to throw-line demonstrations on the River Sever.

My Roads Focus initiative has been delivered in partnership with both Worcestershire County Council and Shropshire Council as a means of trying to make our roads, and their users, safer. This campaign has focused entirely on engaging with communities in a number of different ways. These have included free driver education sessions, drop-in sessions with multiple road safety partners and training for winter driving. These events have provided vital information to hundreds of people across the two counties and resulted in numerous road safety improvements being delivered, having had issues identified at the events by members of local communities. This specific element around free driver safety awareness sessions has now further expanded right across Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin as well, capturing the entire force area. These sessions have so far proven popular with local communities, with high levels of attendance at each event



Local residents discuss road safety in Wolverley as part of the Roads Focus initiative

Commissioning

While the police undoubtedly have a central role in the prevention and detection of crime it is clear that other agencies, the third and voluntary sectors, and indeed communities can also play vital roles in preventing crime and helping victims cope and recover. In some respects, they will be even more effective than the police in these functions.

In my term as Commissioner I have prioritised additional resources for effective, evidence led community projects. This approach has sought to ensure the best possible returns on investment for our communities and help deliver a safer West Mercia. I have also ensured that the commissioning of services or awarding of grants have followed consistent, transparent processes so that all parties, including our communities, can have faith in how decisions involving public money are being taken. Delivery against agreed criteria has then been closely monitored through the lifespan of a grant or service to ensure achievement of objectives and ultimately the best possible benefits to our communities.

In 2019/20 I invested more than £6m across over 40 different projects. These investments have been targeted towards supporting victims to cope and recover, as well as reducing offending and reoffending throughout West Mercia. I have also developed new approaches to increase collaboration and jointly commission services with partners across the West Mercia force area and beyond.

I have consistently supported Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across the force area. Throughout my term I have remained one of the PCCs making the highest financial contributions to CSPs in England and Wales. This has ensured that in West Mercia we have a localised approach to community safety, with resources focused where they are needed to address the most pressing priorities in each local area.

My Commissioning Strategy has been developed to outline the approach and principles undertaken by my office to achieve the aspirations of my Safer West Mercia Plan and its four central themes of building a West Mercia where victims come first, and that is secure, reformed and reassured.

As outlined previously in this report, I have significantly increased funding in services to support victims of crime cope and recover from their experiences, over and above central funding provided by the Ministry of Justice. This has included the establishment of the new Victim Advice Line, but also incorporates increased provision for specialist services for victims of sexual violence, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation.



The PCC visits a local school to see the work done by Mentor Link which has received funding from the Commissioner



West Mercia Police Budget

... decided by the PCC and allocated to the Chief Constable for policing West Mercia's communities.



Victim Services

... the PCC receives an annual grant from the Ministry of Justice for supporting victims. West Mercia's PCC provides a 'top up' to this from his own budget to enhance provision.



Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Grants

... funding for local initiatives to meet the priorities of the CSP and the Safer West Mercia Plan.



The Commissioner's Grant Scheme (CGS)

... a ring-fenced fund to deliver the outcomes of the Safer West Mercia Plan. This is utilised for larger grants and contracts and it is usually awarded West Mercia wide.



Local Policing and Community Ambassador's Fund

... small localised projects, meeting the objectives of the West Mercia plan whilst adding value to communities. Initial decision making for this fund is the responsibility of local policing area commanders.

NB: A branch of this fund is for localised road safety initiatives.



Local CCTV systems have received record financial backing from the PCC

These are areas which have seen considerable and sustained increases in numbers of reported incidents, including a large number of historic cases. My investments have ensured the right support has been in place for anyone wishing to come forward and seek support, whether or not they choose to report the incident to the police.

I believe strongly in the value of fit-for-purpose CCTV systems and the impact they can have in both the prevention and detection of crime and have supported this through my commissioning activity throughout my term. After my election it became apparent that West Mercia had a disjointed and inconsistent approach to CCTV funding. This had resulted in some areas benefitting disproportionately from PCC grants towards CCTV, while other areas had not benefitted at all. I sought to rectify this through a new, consistent approach where a total of £1.25m was allocated equally across the local policing areas, and was available to each and every community to invest in new technology.

These bids have been collated and determined via Community Safety Partnerships, for whom I have also continued to provide local budgets in order for them to carry out valuable work within their respective local areas.

More lives are lost on West Mercia's roads each year than any other area of police business. The impact of this is clearly devastating in terms of victims, their families and friends, but it is also significant for our police and other emergency services. With this in mind, I have invested heavily in road safety initiatives, both with local partners and with communities. These investments have ranged from driver safety and awareness sessions through to new signage and speed management schemes. As previously mentioned, I also doubled the amount of equipment available for the establishment and ongoing work of community speedwatch initiatives.

I have also enabled communities to take the lead through my investment in the **We Don't Buy Crime** initiative, which has played a key role in reducing burglaries across West Mercia. The initiative has seen thousands of homes across the force area equipped with effective and proven technology to deter burglaries, and assist police in bringing offenders to justice where they do occur. In many cases this approach has been rolled out across entire communities to maximise its impact. Recent ONS figures show that while burglaries have fallen 3% in the last year across England and Wales, in West Mercia we have achieved a 6% reduction in burglaries of dwellings and a 7% drop in non-dwellings.

My Safer West Mercia Plan has set the overarching framework for local commissioning. This has been complemented by my Commissioning Strategy below it, which has laid out a very clear process for deciding how to use the resources available to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, and sustainable way, responding to local needs. My commissioning team have used **Understand, Plan, Do, Review** which is a continuous cycle of action and improvement detailed below.

Understand

- A clear evidence base (through needs assessments, engagement with the public, potential service users and partners) must be established to introduce a new or continue an existing service. To include a clear understanding of the outcomes to be achieved and the existing service provision, ensuring a new service does not duplicate effort.
- The strategic direction of key partners is taken into account.



West Mercia Search and Rescue which has received grants from the PCC throughout his term in office

- Map out any co-dependencies. This could include referring agencies or other specialist support provision to provide seamless pathways.

Plan

- Services must be accessible across West Mercia unless the service being funded is developing a proof of concept (pilot).
- Co-commissioning is desirable this can enable more comprehensive service provision and reduce the burden on providers of multiple outcome reporting arrangements. This will be done within the region or across boundaries where it will benefit service users.
- Co-design and engagement with service users, providers and partners is key to the process.
- Outcome measures must be set to ensure that the service provider is demonstrating they are meeting the identified need.

Do

- Proportionate methodology will be used within the confines of the Financial Regulations including three quotes and competitive tendering.
- All tenders will be posted on the national Blue light E-Tendering site. The funding envelope and quality v cost split will be transparent.

- Market Engagement days will be held, where appropriate, to add value or where the value of the contract hits the OJEU (Official Journal of European Union) threshold which requires all public sector tenders to be published.
- Multi agency evaluation of tenders will ensure a broad range of views and knowledge of co-dependent services are considered. Service users will be invited to engage in the process where possible.

Review

- The Safer West Mercia Plan sets out the overall performance framework.
- Contract management ensures performance reporting obligations are appropriate and provides reassurance that all funding is delivering the agreed outcomes.
- Outcome reporting forms are required to be completed by all service providers on a regular basis. These demonstrate the activity undertaken (service provision), the outputs generated (quantitative data such as referral numbers) and the impact they have had on the service user (outcomes).
- Grant visits (to include service user feedback) are conducted during the life of the contract.
- De-commissioning - where services are shown not to be meeting their outcomes support is offered. However, in some cases, where it is not viable to continue, a service will be de-commissioned.

Key principles used for awarding contracts and grant offer letters

- All investment has been assessed against a prearranged weighting criteria which accounted for both the quality of outcomes proposed and the cost. Value for money has been a combined assessment of both of these and not purely the cheapest option.
- Proposals have been cross checked with needs assessments to ensure funding is channelled to the areas of greatest need and impact.



A cohort from a course funded by the PCC, training local taxi drivers, licensees and hoteliers to spot signs of child sexual exploitation

- Where possible, I have invested in services to assist in drawing down additional external funding, sustaining activity or increasing scope and capacity.
- Where feasible, worked in partnership with other stakeholders to co-commission achieving economies of scale and avoiding the possibility of duplication.

-
- Encouraged applications focused on prevention and early intervention for victims and offenders.
 - Provision has been required to have seamless pathways into other linked services to ensure a holistic approach in supporting people with complex needs.
 - Support services have been service user focused and co-designed with the individual from the outset, tailored to meet their needs.
 - Where applicable, services are commissioned West Mercia wide to ensure equitable access to provision. This is assisted by our commissioning framework dash boards identifying current crime patterns and trends.
 - Innovation has been supported where an existing or emerging evidence base has been shown.
 - The views of service users has been listened to at all stages of the commissioning cycle.
 - We have worked with partners to develop and stabilise the market place.
 - We have endeavoured to influence the commissioning of co-dependant services to ensure they adhere to the above principles.
 - Our focus has been on the delivery of outcomes as opposed to funding activity. Recipients have needed to demonstrate the difference our funding has made within clearly defined measures.



The Pathfinder project which has been funded by the PCC has seen young people learn to become safer drivers, such as this group at Throckmorton Airfield

Finance and resources

Through my term I have overseen significant, sustainable increases in policing budgets in West Mercia, balanced against the lowest council tax increases in England and prudent use of reserves.

The budget I inherited upon my election in 2016 for policing in West Mercia was £207.5m. By 2019/20 that had increased to £224.6m. This was made possible through increased funding from central Government, along with increases in council tax.

I promised our communities I would ensure their money was being used efficiently before asking for any more. I have delivered on that promise. In each of my first three years in office I have delivered the lowest council tax increases of any policing area in England. The most significant increase in taxation in 2019/20 went directly into funding an additional 115 officers for our police force, with other inflationary costs absorbed into the force's existing budget.

In 2016, the police force I inherited was not sustainable and lived well beyond its means each year. I have worked to arrest and address this through the course of my term. Through ongoing reforms and sustainable investment the force is now on course to deliver a fully balanced budget by 2020/21. Careful financial management in the last three years has also seen the force return a total underspend of £9.2m.

The prudent use of reserves has been a key element of budgetary management throughout my term. When elected, West Mercia carried a reserve of over £50m. While West Mercia clearly requires healthy operating reserves, I strongly believe that communities contribute their money to use on local policing, rather than for quite so much of it to sit gathering dust. I have therefore utilised reserves as part of capital investments and the programme to modernise the force and make it more effective and efficient and also mitigate against budget reductions. This will continue to be the case. West Mercia's reserves are projected to reduce to £13.8m by 2021/22, more closely in line with accepted national best practice, but still above recommended minimum levels to protect West Mercia's economic security and viability. Healthy reserves also ensure a solid financial footing on which to build a new more responsive, effective and efficient police force following the end of the Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire.



The PCC meeting members of Shrewsbury's Rotary group

To ensure the force remains both effective and efficient, it is undergoing significant transformation, much of which is reliant on capital investment. The last three years has seen capital investment of £58.3m with a further £13.3m planned by the end of my term of office. We have seen the modernisation of Telford and Worcester police stations, the colocation of Probation Services at Worcester and the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services at Hindlip, the purchase of a site at Hereford for a new joint Police and Fire Station, improvements to Forensic Services and the offices at Hindlip and the construction of a new Command and Control Centre at Hindlip. Improvements are also imminent for Kidderminster and Worcester police stations, Defford and Hindlip, including the dog kennels.

I have invested £24.5m in West Mercia's ICT systems to streamline and update technology to ensure the force is capable of meeting the needs of 21st century policing. This includes the introduction of mobile working, the systems for improved incident management, more effective contact with the public, the upgrades of data networks, improved telephony systems, the replacement of equipment for the Airwave Emergency Services network and the upgrade of the automatic number plate recognition system. Significant levels of investment are planned to continue with £72.9m anticipated over the period up to 2021/22, principally over estates and ICT.

My commissioning activity will deliver a total investment of £9.3m during my term of office. The prevention schemes and localised grants captured within this help more than 12,000 people each year.

Along with the £1.25m investment in CCTV already outlined, other key financial commitments have included £350,000 on road safety, £1m on a new diversionary network scheme for young people and £250,000 towards the We Don't Buy Crime initiative.

In spite of the progress made, there remains a number of financial challenges in the medium term, with West Mercia facing the challenge of increasing demand and the changing nature of crime as well as a savings target of £16.4m between the period of 2019/20 to 2021/22. To meet these challenges I have delivered the additional 215 officers previously referenced, and look forward to welcoming a further 93 officers allocated to West Mercia via the first round of the Government's commitment to increase officer numbers by 20,000 in England and Wales. I will as always work closely with the Chief Constable to improve our police services, towards delivering a more responsive and effective service which meets the needs of the communities of West Mercia. The work the force is doing to reform will create Safer West Mercia, which is able to meet the challenges ahead.



The PCC with MP Sajid Javid and officers at Bromsgrove Police Station



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