

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

15 June 2020

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and provide an update on police performance.
3. Members will be aware that in March 2020 the Government announced local government and police and crime commissioner elections were to be postponed for one year due to the coronavirus pandemic. By the time of the announcement preparation work was well underway within the PCC's office to ensure the work of the PCC and his staff would be compliant with pre-election 'Purdah' regulations and best practice. Planning had commenced for the post-election period and beyond in respect of establishing the new PCC in office, whatever the election outcome. The election postponement announcement brought all preparations to a halt temporarily.
4. The evolving situation regarding Coronavirus and associated lockdown restrictions also instigated a rapid period of planning to ensure the PCC and his staff could continue to function safely and effectively during the lock down that came into effect on the 23rd March. This approach meant that the PCC and his staff have been able to move to a position of maintaining business as usual as quickly, safely and effectively as possible.
5. The PCC and all his staff have the ability to work remotely and are doing so where possible in line with the Government's advice to work from home. The Commissioner and one or two key staff are attending the offices for necessary business as required. Solutions have been implemented to enable the PCC to continue carrying out key functions such as holding to account, commissioning services and public engagement. The pandemic has undoubtedly had an impact on the delivery of the PCC function, but the Commissioner and his staff have sought to minimise this impact as much as possible. Establishing these new working practices has in itself represented a significant amount of work, which remains ongoing as the impact of Covid-19 develops.

Delivery plan and assurance

6. The PCC's Chief Executive and staff have a delivery plan to support monitoring and assurance of the Safer West Mercia Plan. Progress against individual elements within

the plan is updated in line with an agreed timeline for each element. The delivery plan is subject to monthly scrutiny.

7. The current delivery plan is undergoing a review following the election postponement. This review will ensure it continues to be fit for purpose in adequately supporting the objectives set out in the Safer West Mercia Plan for the PCC's additional year in office. In addition, the proposed minor refresh to the Safer West Mercia will require some adjustments to be made to the delivery plan, to accommodate and reflect the changes in the plan. As a consequence an extract from the delivery plan has not been included in this report as usual. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.

Putting victims and survivors first

Covid 19 response

8. The PCC's commissioning staff are holding weekly/fortnightly conference calls with all victim service providers in West Mercia to ensure that the impacts of Covid-19 upon victim service delivery can be quickly identified and service delivery challenges addressed. This has resulted in the PCC giving funding for some of these services to provide IT equipment to facilitate working from home, ensuring contact with service users is maintained and for new referrals to continue. Staff are also participating in national APCC victim portfolio group meetings, to sustain links with the Ministry of Justice and other PCCs in relation to victim services meetings.
9. The PCC has recently been successful in securing £434k of emergency Covid-19 funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence services within West Mercia. This additional funding is now open to services that meet the criteria specified by the Government, via a bidding process. The PCC is encouraging services across West Mercia to apply. The funding is open to services which are currently commissioned by the PCC as well as those that aren't and is intended to ensure the right support services are in place and are reaching as many victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence as possible, during the pandemic.
10. A further grant fund has also been established by the Commissioner for local organisations to bid for support in maintaining key local initiatives and services impacted by the pandemic. This is discussed in further detail later in this report.

Sexual violence funding

11. In April the PCC was announced as one of 15 Commissioners across the country who were successful in being awarded additional funding that will see more Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) recruited to support victims across West Mercia. The ISVAs, who are currently commissioned by the PCC, are specially trained to provide tailored support, advice and help to victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse. The £176,000 secured, with match funding from the PCC, will enable the recruitment of several additional members of staff, allowing for more victims to be supported. The resources will be used specifically to support male victims and those who have additional needs, along with ensuring victims have the right support to cope and recover.

West Mercia Rape Review

12. Initial discussions have begun on the feasibility of replicating a London Rape Review which was commissioned by MOPAC, within West Mercia. Conversations are being conducted with the Force, service providers and Worcester University around doing a similar piece of work which looks at the whole end to end process for rape victims in West Mercia.

Victims' needs assessments

13. The PCC has procured an external consultant to conduct several needs assessments in the following thematic areas;

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Cyber Crime
- Hate Crime
- Modern Slavery Human Trafficking
- Road Safety
- Serious Violence
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Stalking and Harassment

14. All of the assessments are due for completion by the end of July 2020 and will focus on need from both a victim and offender perspective. The aim of having multiple needs assessments across crime types considering victims and perpetrators, is to provide the PCC with a greater understanding of the current picture (both national and local) and how best to deploy resources and funding. Through this enhanced understanding, commissioning intentions will be developed to enable services to be commissioned which better support victims to cope and recover from their experiences and reduce reoffending in perpetrator groups.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Strategy development update

15. As previously reported to the Panel, work is ongoing to develop a series of strategies in support of the PCC's strategic commitments. The strategies are at different stages of development; drugs, serious and organised crime have been published, public consultation on the draft domestic abuse and road safety strategies ended in the last two weeks and preliminary work has commenced on a victims and witnesses strategy.

16. Analysis of feedback on the draft domestic abuse and road safety strategies will be used by the PCC to inform any changes to the draft documents before they are finalised. Headline findings from each consultation are shown in appendix 1. Draft copies of the strategies are also attached for the Panel's consideration and any feedback.

Climb

17. Following a successful procurement exercise the PCC had previously announced the Children's Society as the success service provider for the West Mercia Diversionary

Network. Despite the current coronavirus pandemic, Climb, the new name for the service, went live on the 11th of May and is already taking referrals. Climb 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 child criminal exploitation or entering the Criminal Justice Service. All referrals will be assessed via a triage process on their level of risk. The PCC commissioning team are working very closely with partners to implement and promote the referral pathways and criteria. Briefings are also being conducted with the Force to enhance the opportunities for partners to refer.

18. The PCC has very recently submitted a joint bid with the Children's Society to the government's Youth Endowment Fund to further expand the new CLIMB service. The results of this bid will be known later in the summer.

Safer Streets Funding

19. In April the PCC submitted a bid to the Safer Streets fund for £550,000 for a project in Telford to address areas persistently and disproportionately affected by acquisitive crime, such as domestic burglary. The outcome of this funding bid is still awaited.

Policing demand

20. At the end of March the PCC issued a joint statement with the Chief Constable on Covid-19 to provide reassurance to West Mercia's communities that they were working with partners across local authorities, emergency services, health and local charities. This was with a view to ensuring not only an effective policing service, but a range of other services and support mechanisms for our communities, particularly for the vulnerable and those most in need. This has included active work by the PCC to ensure appropriate PPE for West Mercia's police officers, staff and volunteers. An example of which included the Commissioner engaging with local gin producers, and asking them to turn their production to high alcohol hand sanitiser. Large deliveries of these products were taken and distributed across the force.

21. The force has adopted the National Police Chiefs' Councils 'four E's' approach to applying the legislation: Engage, Educate, Encourage, with Enforce as a final option. The force amended its patrol strategy to provide a more visible presence in communities when the lockdown legislation came into effect in support of the 4 E's, moving resources to support critical functions. The impact of Covid-19 on demand and resources is closely monitored by the force and the PCC. As lockdown restrictions ease all local policing areas are seeing demand start to move back towards pre lockdown levels, following a number of weeks of reduced calls for service.

22. The PCC continues to hold the force to account for their ongoing response to Covid-19 including receiving regular briefings. In April a Q & A session was held enabling the PCC to put questions submitted on the crisis to the Chief Constable. This meeting was then broadcast over the Commissioner's social media platforms. The PCC is represented on the force's gold group, established in response to Covid-19 and is provided with a briefing following each of these meetings. In addition, the PCC is sighted on a Situation Report, produced by the force which provides an overview of demand, crime, resources and intelligence issues arising.

23. Where required, the PCC's Strategic Estate Manger has supported the force to ensure buildings are being cleaned and facilities are in place to ensure force personnel can comply with social distancing. As the PCC's staff are working remotely, this has enabled the force to utilise the office space normally occupied by the PCC's staff. This temporary measure is helping ensure police staff can appropriately maintain social distancing, while continuing their important work.

Officer Uplift Programme

24. The PCC is reassured that West Mercia Police remains on target to hit its proposed increase in establishment in 2020/21, despite the Coronavirus pandemic. The majority of the additional officer capacity due to be implemented this year has already been recruited. Officer training programmes continue within the force. The Commissioner represents the Association of PCCs on the National Police Uplift Stakeholder group which supports the national effort to recruit the additional 20,000 police officers.

Criminal Justice

25. At a regional level with agreement from all four PCC's, one of the two jointly funded regional policy officers (RPO) has taken on responsibility for regional criminal justice. This role will co-ordinate the Regional Criminal Justice Collaboration Forum (RCJCF) and associated recovery groups, which look to address regional issues. The RPO is currently co-ordinating the monthly RCJCF (this will go back to once every 6 months, post Covid-19 recovery), looking at opportunities for regional collaboration on the commissioning of probation services and ongoing CJS recovery

26. The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the wider criminal justice system. The PCC and his office have been actively engaged at a national, regional and local level working to help resolve some of the problems. The Commissioner has allocated funding and pressed for virtual court hearings to be introduced in April, with some rolled out early to combat the issues around Covid-19. More recently the Commissioner has written to the Secretary of State for Justice and to local MPs to express his concerns around the growing backlog of over 1200 criminal cases, with no clear plan in place to address the issues.

Reforming West Mercia

Strategic alliance update

27. An update on the strategic alliance has been provided to the Panel in a separate report.

Force transformation project

28. The original Alliance Transformation Programme has now ceased. There is now work being undertaken jointly with Warwickshire (under the new shared arrangements) to achieve digital network stabilisation. The digital network must be stabilised and decommissioned before August 2020 to avoid significant additional costs and risks. As of 31st March 2020 projects to achieve this were on target. Over 100 key digital applications are planned to be moved before this date in order to facilitate this. The

transitioning of applications and services to the new IT architecture by March 2021 will be coordinated (across both forces) to avoid unnecessary downtime, rework and delay. A renewed West Mercia business planning cycle, overarching strategic approach (using the VMOST model) and ICT strategy have been developed.

Completion of the OCC project

29. West Mercia is now the sole customer for the new SAABSafe Command and Control system following Warwickshire's withdrawal from the project. The single force focus is enabling greater clarity, reduced complexity and therefore greater certainty of delivery. Programme delivery is planned for full go live by August 2020.

Strategic Estate Management

30. A preferred location for the replacement of Shrewsbury Police Station and provision of a northern hub is being identified. Initial discussions and negotiations on a potential preferred location, are to be held with the local planning authority by the end of June 2020.

31. The scheme to replace the current Hereford city centre police station and build a combined Police and Fire Station on the Holmer Road in the city with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), has now been cancelled due to HWFRS withdrawing from the scheme. The Commissioner's Strategic Estate Manager is now working with Place Partnership Ltd on an options paper for consideration by the PCC and chief officers.

32. A PCC/West Mercia Police steering group to deliver the newly remodelled estate has been established and is working to deliver the programme. In addition, the Commissioner, through the Estates function, is working with the force to provide options for a future service delivery model, as well as a provider to support the remodelled Estate.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

PCC's media and communications

33. Despite lockdown restrictions the Commissioner's communications and engagement function has maintained as much community engagement as possible. Work with community groups has continued where possible, with the level of communication increasing to reflect the ever-changing landscape. For example, the PCC's monthly newsletter changed to fortnightly to ensure timely information continued to be available.

34. The Commissioner has worked with partners and used his Community Ambassadors to ensure that the most vulnerable in communities are being supported. The Commissioner established a Covid-19 Community fund to support charities and organisations to address concerns around domestic abuse, scams, exploitation of young people and cyber-crime, which are crime types associated with the pandemic. Messages have been issued across social media channels, as well as through local

media. The Commissioner has also been working with partners through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure key messages are captured and shared from all partners.

35. The Commissioner has sought to improve the use of technology to connect with the communities of West Mercia and has developed a podcast series. The 'Safer West Mercia Podcast' series aims to shine a spotlight on areas of policing and services that provide support to victims of crime, by speaking with those at the heart of it. It is the intention that listeners will not only gain an insight into these areas, but they will also benefit from practical advice. There are currently nine episodes available on the [PCC website](#), as well as on all podcast platforms. Subjects to date have included a new diversionary project for young people, the role of independent custody visitors and how victims of domestic abuse are supported.

As a result of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and the resultant potential change in the role of the Police in enforcing them, (as previously referenced) the Commissioner held one of his regular one-to-one meetings with the Chief Constable to discuss the changes which was broadcast online. Taking the form of a Q&A session, the PCC discussed with the Chief Constable via a video call. The session was advertised ahead of the date in order to give members of the public the opportunity to submit questions. It was then streamed on social media channels to allow communities to watch. The PCC continues to review and revise his community engagement in light of ongoing social distancing requirements.

36. PCC's Covid-19 response fund

37. In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the PCC established a fund of £50,000. The fund enables Town and Parish Councils across West Mercia to apply for the money, which then allows volunteer groups to get essential items such as face masks, gloves and ID badges in order to allow them to continue the vital work they are doing in communities, and support those that need it most. Over £37,000 has been distributed so far with more than 25 groups benefiting from this funding.

Community Ambassadors

38. The PCC's Community Ambassadors have had their contracts extended, as a result of the election postponement. Despite the lockdown, they are maintaining business as usual to the best of their ability. This involves maintaining contact with communities and community groups they have been working with. In many cases, they have been able to carry out work remotely, and have utilised technology to do this. The two funding pots (general community fund and road safety) are continuing to be used, as assessments can generally be made remotely.

Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme

39. The PCC suspended the ICV scheme in March as a result of Coronavirus, following public health advice. All ICVs were informed of the decision and the move was supported by them. To provide ongoing assurance to the PCC on the treatment of detainees while the scheme is suspended, the ICV coordinator has been dip sampling custody records from across the custody suites, identifying any areas of concern and escalating these to the relevant custody inspector or head of custody as required.

40. Very recently the coordinator has held a meeting with the ICV panel chairs to discuss a possible recommencement of the scheme in some form. Feedback from this meeting will be used by the coordinator in consultation with the West Mercia Police Head of Custody to develop options, including the use of technology to enable virtual interaction between ICVs and detainees.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

41. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding the force to account. As part of the pre-election planning work a programme had been drafted for holding the force to account up until the previous May 2020 election. The election postponement provided an opportunity to review this and despite the new ways of working resulting from Coronavirus, the PCC has been able to maintain this function with a mix of meetings and virtual scrutiny.

42. The following areas have been addressed since the last report. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website

Month	Type	Subject area
Feb	Virtual	Workforce management information and diversity relating to recruitment / representation within the workforce
April	Public Q & A	Policing response to Covid 19
May	Thematic	Performance

43. Key findings / outcomes from the virtual and thematic meetings include:

- A strategic workforce planning team is to be established with a clear objective to ensure that the organisation has an inclusive, resilient, skilled and agile workforce to meet demand and deliver the policing priorities.
- During the 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019 the force has recruited 9 BAME officers (4.5% of new student officers at that time). The Positive Action Officer reviews this information regularly and has been in contact with applicants to further understand their journey. Monitoring and analysis of this data in the next 12 months will be used by the force to assess progress of the increase in BAME numbers and the success of interventions or initiatives used.
- As a result of additional analysis into the public confidence survey results, the force has committed to refreshing its confidence plan drawing in more evidence based work that is now available to drive consistency in confidence levels across the policing area.
- A recent review of the victim satisfaction survey highlighted where improvements can be made to better support command teams and help improve the service given to victims.
- Following concerns around Serious and Organised Crime during the Covid-19 restrictions, the Chief Constable provided reassurance that disruption activity has still been happening successfully.

HMICFRS inspection reports

44. In March HMICFRS contacted all PCCs and Chief Constables to notify them that the inspectorate would be suspending its inspection programme in response to Coronavirus. No date for the recommencement of its work was given. The force continues to address any outstanding recommendation arising from inspection reports. Oversight of this work is maintained by the PCC's staff.
45. The Force's Service Improvement Board (SIB) provides strategic governance to the force response to HMICFRS inspection reports and is attended by the PCC's Chief Executive. At the most recent meeting of SIB it was reported that HMICFRS has confirmed that the force can rely on and refer to public engagement by others, including the PCC, where it has been used to form part of policing decision-making. This is a change in direction by HMICFRS and will strengthen the PCC's ability to use his engagement activity to influence changes in policing for the benefit of communities.

West Mercia perception survey

46. Two years ago as part of the Commissioner's commitment to ensure both he and the force are acting on community concerns locally, and that the service provided by the force leads to increased confidence in local policing, the PCC commissioned a confidence survey.
47. The company carrying out the work do so via a mixture of telephone interviews and field work (street interviews / focus groups etc). Despite the current lockdown they are able to continue with the survey work, with a move to 100% telephone interviews. The lockdown has actually assisted this work in some ways, as a far greater spread of communities have been at home during operating hours to assist in taking part in the survey.
48. The latest, quarter four 2019/20, survey results have been received and headline findings from the results are set out below:
- The majority of residents (85%) agreed that they had confidence in West Mercia Police and more than 8 in every 10 were confident that they would receive a good service from the force.
 - Over two-thirds (69%) felt that West Mercia Police were doing a good or excellent job
 - Around a quarter (26%) of residents report that they see an officer or PCSO at least once a week with half (51%) satisfied with the levels of policing in their local area.
 - More than 8 out of every 10 were confident that they could access the police in an emergency with just over two-thirds (67%) confident they could do so in a non-emergency
 - Over two-thirds (69%) of residents felt that West Mercia Police understand the issues in their community and a quarter (26%) reported that they thought that crime and ASB was a problem in their area.
 - Two-thirds (68%) thought that crime and ASB had remained the same compared to 12 months ago with less than a fifth (18%) reporting an increase. Further to this, 8 in every 10 residents agreed that West Mercia Police are dealing with crime and ASB

49. The PCC has used the latest survey results to inform a virtual holding to account with the Chief Constable around improving confidence, including challenging how the force can better use the survey results.

Force performance reports

50. Led by the Deputy Chief Constable the force is undertaking a wholesale review of its approach to performance management. It is developing a force Performance Management Framework (PMF), in line with NPCC guidance, that seeks to measure operational performance as part of a wider performance framework that includes: objective setting, risk assessment, people issues, wellbeing, finance and ultimately decision making, prioritisation or choices. The PCC has been engaged and consulted as the framework develops, with support from his policy team.

51. A number of internal performance products are currently produced by the force to enable senior officers and the PCC to maintain strategic oversight of force performance. In particular the PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly summary reports. These performance products are being reviewed and changed as part of the performance framework review. The PCC's staff are working with the force to ensure that there will be a public facing performance product which the PCC can share with the Panel.

52. The March performance report is attached at appendix 1. This report includes those metrics that were previously included in the quarterly performance report, but is in a slightly different format to previous reports seen by the Panel.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Headline consultation results on the draft domestic abuse and road safety strategies

Appendix 2 – Draft domestic abuse and road safety strategies

Appendix 3 - West Mercia Police Performance Summary March 2020

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council 01905 763763
Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive

Headline Consultation Results on the Draft Domestic Abuse and Road Safety Strategies

Consultation on both strategies was via an online survey. Respondents were strongly encouraged to read the draft strategy before completing the survey.

Domestic Abuse

24 online responses were submitted and a further 3 received directly to the PCC's office via email.

Of those that responded to the online survey:

- 34.6% were either a member of the public or on behalf of a voluntary or community organisation.
- 30.8% of the respondents lived in Herefordshire, 19.2% from South Worcestershire, 7.7% from North Worcestershire 7.7% from Telford and Wrekin, 11.5% from Shropshire and 23.1% listed as other including; Force wide, Stratford, Worcestershire and unknown.
- 90.6% agreed with the PCC's vision for tackling domestic abuse is to focus on 4 priority areas, these are; Preventing violence and abuse Provision of service Partnership working Pursuing perpetrators.
- 74.2% agreed with the commitments and recommended actions the PCC set in the draft strategy.

The respondents were asked for feedback on the proposed approach, many of the respondents showed support for the vision set out by the PCC but a number of reoccurring concerns were also raised:

- More support needed for specialist domestic abuse organisations and tailored support for victims with protected characteristics such as BME, LGBTQ+.
- It is not clear if the priorities are all equal and what priority is being given to each area of domestic abuse including time scales.
- Domestic abuse training for magistrates and court staff.
- Lack of input from male survivors of domestic abuse and support available for them.

Roads Safety

137 online responses were submitted and a further 3 received directly to the PCC's office via email.

- 72% of responses were from a member of the public and 20% were on behalf of a local authority (including town and parish councils). The remaining responses were on behalf of community or voluntary organisation, a business or company or another public body.

- 45% of respondents lived in Shropshire, 26% from South Worcestershire, 14% from Herefordshire, 12% from North Worcestershire and 3% from Telford and Wrekin.
- 89% of respondents agree with the PCCs vision for road safety to focus on Reducing Casualties through Prevention, Effective Enforcement and Retraining Offenders and Supporting Victims.
- 80% agreed with the PCC's aspirations as set out on pages 7 and 8 of the strategy.

The respondents were asked for feedback on the proposed approach, many of the respondents showed support for the vision set out by the PCC but a number of reoccurring concerns were also raised:

- Issues surrounding rural roads;
- Speeding and dangerous driving;
- Poor road conditions; and
- Need for tougher enforcement and more visible policing.

Further analysis of both consultation exercises is ongoing.