

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

21 September 2020

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (APRIL – JUNE 2020)

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. Following an easing of Government restrictions for Coronavirus, the PCC and his staff have begun to work in the offices on a more regular basis. Social distancing restrictions do however mean that the number of staff working in the offices on any given day is limited and staff continue to work remotely when not in the office. The revised working arrangements ensure staff are now always available during office hours to provide an immediate response to any public telephone enquiries received in the office.
4. Although the pandemic continues to impact on the delivery of the PCC function, the Commissioner and his staff have sought to minimise this impact as much as possible, ensuring the PCC is able to carry out his key functions and for the PCC and his staff to establish a business as usual approach where possible .

Delivery plan and assurance

5. Work to review and refresh the delivery plan used to support monitoring and assurance of the Safer West Mercia Plan has been completed. The review was to ensure the delivery plan continues to be fit for purpose in supporting the objectives set out in the Safer West Mercia Plan for the PCC's additional year in office and to reflect the changes following the recent minor refresh to the Safer West Mercia Plan.
6. Progress against individual elements within the plan is updated on a quarterly basis, however the delivery plan is subject to monthly scrutiny at the PCC's governance meeting where activity supporting the plan is subject to scrutiny. The next full update of the delivery plan is due at the end of September 2020, therefore the extract included at appendix 1 is to the end of the first quarter.
7. 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

MoJ COVID funding

8. The PCC has been successful in receiving £341,363.39 from MoJ for emergency COVID money to support victims of sexual abuse and violence and domestic abuse. This money has been awarded to 13 organisations across West Mercia to help them continue providing support whilst having to adapt during the past few months. Funding is supporting 'virtual' socially distanced services, as well as additional resource to cope with the increases in demand and access to online resources.

Specialist advisors within VAL

9. As part of the above funding, Victim Support were awarded funding for 3 specialist domestic abuse workers, all of which are now in post, offering 1-2-1 support to victims of domestic abuse. One of these workers is now co-located within the VAL team, further enhancing the skills and capability of the VAL.
10. In addition, a separate bid for £50,000 has been submitted to NHS England for the provision of a sexual abuse & violence co-ordinator, who will sit within the VAL and provide specialist support for victims, co-ordinating multiple services to ensure seamless pathways of service provision. An outcome of the bid is expected in the next few weeks.

ISVA and CSE services

11. The existing Independent Sexual Advisor (ISVA) and CSE services are currently delivered via an annual grant. In a drive to move towards a more structured and formal approach which aims to achieve better outcomes for victims and longer stability for the service providers the PCC's commissioning team is currently going through the process of procuring both the ISVA service and a CSE support service contracts. The ISVA service will support victims of sexual abuse or violence and the CSE service will provide support to children and young people who are at risk of, or experiencing CSE. A Market and Stakeholder Event was held in August for both services and tenders for both services will go out in September 2020.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Safer Streets Fund

12. The PCC has successfully secured £550,000 from the Ministry of Justice's Safer Streets fund, which was launched as part of a commitment to invest into towns and cities and ensure they are as safe as possible for residents. The area of Brookside, in Telford, was put forward after suffering from burglary and thefts for a number of years.
13. The funding, which has been granted for a year, will support a partnership project involving West Mercia Police and Telford & Wrekin Council that will look at a number of measures including: improving street lighting; identifying the most vulnerable properties and ensuring they have appropriate security; improving the CCTV; and introducing a new Neighbourhood Watch group. A group, made up of representatives from West Mercia Police and the council, will also be set up with community representatives.

Safer Roads Fund

14. As part of the PCC's ongoing commitment to improving road safety, and ultimately reducing road deaths, the PCC has launched a new £280,000 fund for initiatives which aim to improve road safety. The Safer Roads Fund (SRF) is available to the public, local authorities, fire and rescue services and those involved in voluntary organisations. Successful applications will be required to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- A reduction in fatalities and casualties
- A reduction in the number of collisions
- A reduction in traffic offences and road crimes.
- Increased awareness of road safety resulting in informed positive decisions/choices
- A reduction in the 'fear' associated with the anticipation of a road traffic collision.

Perpetrator funding

15. The Home Office recently announced a £10m funding pot for domestic abuse perpetrator funding, available only to PCCs to bid for. Full details have now been shared with PCC's confirming that there are two funding pots; one for Drive and one for other perpetrator provision. The PCC's commissioning team are currently liaising with partners to develop either one or two bids with an aspiration to roll out the existing Drive programme in a second area of West Mercia.

16. Prior to the Home Office announcement work had already begun to procure a feasibility study for the rollout of Drive in other areas of West Mercia. This piece of work is expected to be completed around October 2020 and will inform future decision making.

Supporting young people

17. The PCC has donated eight bicycles to a Worcestershire based educational centre that aims to develop positive attitude and skills, for future employment, in young people. The Bridge, in Malvern, supports children who are no longer in mainstream schooling and 'bridges' the gap between GCSE's and the requirement to stay in education until the age of 18. The centre focuses on vocational education such as mechanics, building trades and culinary skills. As part of the training and development offered, young people at the Bridge will recycle the frames and parts of the donated bicycles that have previously been seized by West Mercia Police, and refurbish and rebuild them into useable bikes before selling them on. Proceeds from the sales will be donated to services in West Mercia that support victims of crime.

Policing demand

18. The June report outlined the PCC and force responses to policing the Coronavirus pandemic. The force has continued to adopt a 4 E's approach to policing Covid 19 incidents as lockdown restrictions have eased. There have been a number of localised outbreaks during the pandemic and the force has had a key role to play with partners in managing the local response. As lock down restrictions have continued to ease, all local policing areas have seen demand move back to lockdown levels, following a number of weeks of reduced calls for service.

19. The PCC continues to be represented on the force's gold group, established in response to Covid-19 and is provided with a briefing following each of these meetings.

Criminal Justice (CJ)

20. The Coronavirus pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the wider criminal justice system. There were no trials heard in any of the Crown Courts across West Mercia between March and July and there remains a significant backlog in cases at both the Crown Court and magistrates' courts. Given the capacity constraint of the Courts and the number of cases backing up, West Mercia Police Witness Care Units are now supporting over 21,000 victims and witnesses, an increase of 36% since March 2020, which has placed additional demands against police resources

21. The PCC and his office have been actively engaged at national, regional and local levels, working to help resolve some of the issues. At a national level the PCC is engaged in a fortnightly meeting chaired by the Secretary of State and at a regional level he is part of a strategic CJ forum. The force has established a West Mercia CJ gold group, which is attended by the PCC's Chief Executive. Addressing the slow development of a courts' recovery plan and better coordination of criminal justice agencies have been the main focus of their work.

Reforming West Mercia

Strategic alliance update

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

Electric vehicle pilot

23. As part of the PCC's commitment towards transforming West Mercia Police into a modern, innovative force the PCC has recently endorsed funding to enable a pilot which will introduce six electric vehicles into the West Mercia Police fleet along with six charging points across the local policing areas. This pilot is the start of the force plans to integrate Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) into the fleet. It will be used to inform a detailed 10 year Electric Fleet Strategy and Delivery Plan that will set out how the force can move to 100% ULEVs fleet over the next 10 years, without compromising operational effectiveness or service delivery.

Completion of the OCC project

24. West Mercia is now the sole customer for the new SAAB Safe Command and Control system following Warwickshire's withdrawal from the project. This has enabled swifter and more effective delivery of the project. The move to the new system took place in July with transition supported by a team on hand to resolve any issues as they arose and to ensure any impact to service delivery was minimised.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

PCC's media and communications

25. Despite lockdown restrictions the PCC's communications and engagement function has maintained as much community engagement as possible. As part of his commitment to protect the most vulnerable, the PCC has introduced a dedicated webpage set up with links to local community groups and support services, as well as resources to encourage people to keep checking in with those around them. With Covid-19 lockdown measures easing, local Town and Parish Councils, businesses and organisations and West Mercia residents are all encouraged to use the resources to help keep the community spirit strong and support those that may be more vulnerable, particularly as people return to their daily routines. Resources can also be downloaded from the PCC's website and given to those who may not have internet access.
26. With Covid-19 forcing the cancellation of many summer events, the PCC gave West Mercia residents the chance to engage virtually with him, and local policing Superintendents, in a series of live question and answer sessions. The sessions were advertised ahead of the date in order to give members of the public the opportunity to submit questions. A number of questions were received on topics such as cycle safety, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour. These were then streamed on social media channels to allow communities to watch.
27. The PCC continues to review and revise his community engagement in light of ongoing social distancing requirements.

Complaints review function

28. From February this year PCCs have taken on extra responsibilities for reviewing how complaints are dealt with, where the complainant is not happy with the outcome. This has resulted in a large number of people contacting the PCC's office seeking a review of often very complex and challenging cases. An independent and qualified external body has been appointed to assess reviews on the PCCs behalf, although the final decision on the outcome remains with the PCC.
29. As well as the increased demand generated by the complaints review function there has been a noticeable increase in the volume of correspondence and emails received into the PCC's office since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, including calls on covid breaches and speeding related issues. The PCC's newly launched roads focus grant funding and road strategy demonstrate the PCC's continued commitment to tackling road safety and reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on West Mercia's roads.

Town and Parish Council Survey

30. The PCC has launched his annual town and parish council survey, which will run until the 9th October. The survey gives councils from across West Mercia the opportunity to share their feedback and views on key areas such as police visibility and accessibility. Last year's feedback on road safety issues helped to inform the PCC's extra investment into roads policing as well as a variety of road safety initiatives and introduced a dedicated rural focus campaign.

PCC's Covid-19 response fund

31. In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the PCC established a Coronavirus response fund. In total £47,279.94 of the £50,000 earmarked was given out to community groups, charities and organisations allowing groups at the heart of the pandemic to purchase essential items such as face masks, gloves and hand sanitiser, as well as printing supplies and envelopes, enabling the most vulnerable and at risk to be supported throughout. Examples include:

- £1064 to Weobley Parish Council to enable the Weobley Support Group to deliver prescriptions and food to vulnerable groups and to distribute the parish magazines to all households.
- £1680 to Wellington Town Council to enable the Polish Support Group to provide items for NHS workers and packs for children in hospital in Telford and Shrewsbury.
- £810 to Wythall Parish Council to help support vulnerable people in the local community.

Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme

32. 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. By adapting its working practices and using mobile technology, the PCC has ensured that the scheme was re-introduced at the beginning of July, with visitors being able to work remotely, enabling them to observe social distancing requirements. More recently, the Head of Custody has been working to put control measures in place so that any ICVs who wishes to return to physical visits can do so safely. Visits will recommence in September.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

33. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding the force to account. 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 |
|--------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| July | Public | Diversity, Equality and Inclusion |
| August | Thematic | Diversity, Equality and Inclusion |

34. As part of the preparation work for the August meeting officers and staff from networks representing those with protected characteristics were asked for their personal experiences of working within the force. The feedback received was used by the PCC to challenge senior officers and to seek assurance it would be used to shape the force's recruitment, training and progression programme to make sure that it is fair and inclusive for all

35. Key findings / outcomes from the thematic meeting include:

- The Fairness at Work activity was not being seen as a priority and had been lost amongst other issues. Work has been completed but there was a lack of clarity about what that plan looked like.
- As part of the new People strategy the force will undertake a 'you said, we did' communication plan and are launching a new short 'Speak up' 5 minute survey.
- Sexual harassment was expressed as an area of concern; the Force are working with the women's network to assess the extent of sexual harassment.
- There is no reason why the force shouldn't achieve their target for a BAME workforce of 3.8%, with positive action resource.
- The force is confident about the numbers of BAME officers coming in and they have agreed to replace a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship course with Degree Holder Entry Programme due to improved diversity.

36. A number of actions were agreed at the meeting and include a requirement for the Director of Business Services to share the force's Direct Entry Inspectors work plan with the PCC within a month of the meeting.

37. Work is well underway in support of the September holding to account meeting which is a thematic on mental health. In addition the PCC will be additional meeting in early October focussing on performance of the West Mercia Police Public Contact Centre.

HMICFRS inspection reports

38. 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. In July a further update was circulated to advise that the HMICFRS inspection programme will commence in October, with a focus on the Covid 19 response. Other high priority inspections will also start in the autumn and that the core inspections, PEEL, Child Protection, Custody and Joint Inspections will commence in the New Year. The force has since been informed that it will be one of the force inspected at part of the Covid 19 inspection.

39. Since recommencing work HMICFRS has published a number of national thematic reports on roads policing and police contact management. The Force's Service Improvement Board (SIB) provides strategic governance to the force response to HMICFRS inspection reports and recommendations. This meeting is attended by the PCC's Chief Executive.

West Mercia perception survey

40. 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.

41. The latest, quarter one 2020/21, survey results have been received and headline findings from the results are set out below:

- 84% of consultees tended to agree or strongly agreed they have confidence with West Mercia Police – up 1% on last quarter
- 70% tended to agree or strongly agreed that West Mercia Police understands issues in their community – up 2% on last quarter

- 70% said crime and anti-social behaviour was not a very big, or quite a big problem in their area – up 1% on last quarter
- 31% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – up 2% on last quarter

42. In response to a recent virtual holding to account challenge from the PCC on confidence levels recorded locally and nationally, the force has provided assurance that due to the significant variances in communities they expect differences in communities. However, new confidence plans being implemented they will be able to review confidence by area or demographic to build up a database of best practice.

Force performance reports

43. Led by the Deputy Chief Constable the force is undertaking a wholesale review of its approach to performance management. A new performance framework is being introduced which uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels.

44. The PCC and his office have had oversight of the performance framework throughout its development and have actively engaged and commented as work has progressed. This has included work to revise the performance reports in line with the new framework. The first quarterly performance report for the period April to June 2020, is attached at appendix 2. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practises. The report focusses on gold level key performance indicators (KPI) however there are some measures at a silver level included to create a comprehensive picture across the force. The revised performance reports will be refined as the framework develops and Members are encouraged to feedback their comments on the report.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Extract taken from the Safer West Mercia Plan Delivery Plan
 Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police Performance Report April to June 2020

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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