



John Campion Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Annual Report 2019-2020

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Foreword

Towards the end of this municipal year we were faced with a number of challenges. I believe these challenges truly highlighted the strength and resilience of the force, as well as the communities it serves as people came together during these testing times.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, PCCs have had their term extended by a year. I will use this time to build on the great work that has been achieved, and continue to deliver a Safer West Mercia.

From last year's budget, and additional support from the Government's officer uplift programme, I have been able to deliver on my promise to increase the number of officers policing the areas we live in, as well as delivering on the priorities that matter most to communities. This year's budget also allowed me to address community concerns by ensuring funding was available to support vital areas of policing, as well as projects and initiatives that reduce criminality and improve victim services.

This last year saw the end of the strategic policing alliance with Warwickshire, which will allow all our resources to be fully focused on delivering the best possible services to the communities of West Mercia, increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

I am committed to ensuring victims and survivors of all crimes are receiving the necessary support in order to cope, recover and thrive more quickly.

I have continued to place a great amount of focus on reducing the number of people abused or exposed to domestic abuse. I have worked with partners and the force to disrupt behaviours and improve the police response. I have made a significant investment in tackling this horrendous crime and I have shown a further commitment to make improvements through my domestic abuse strategy. As Commissioner, I will continue to fight for those who are affected.

Through public Q&A sessions, Roads Focus events, summer events and Rural Focus drop-ins, I have had the opportunity to engage with thousands of West Mercia residents. West Mercia is a large area and, as Commissioner, I have made it my priority to get out and meet as many people as possible. It's not only important that I am able to hear views first-hand, but also work with the community and partners to address any concerns. I will continue to build on this by working with the force and communities to ensure that they feel safe, and their concerns are reflected in the priorities for West Mercia.



John Campion

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

The year in numbers

Putting victims and survivors first



2,300 new referrals to Women's Aid IDVA service

RJ

42 restorative justice cases were completed with positive outcomes for the victims



2,665 children and young people received the SELFIE programme



80% of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Mercia Police

82%

82% conviction rate for domestic abuse cases at court



89% of witnesses attended court

Reforming West Mercia

£

£226.7M budget



141,476 999 calls received



91% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds



79% of residents are confident they could access the police in an emergency*

66%

66% of 101 calls answered within 30 seconds

Building a more secure West Mercia

87,176 offences were recorded:

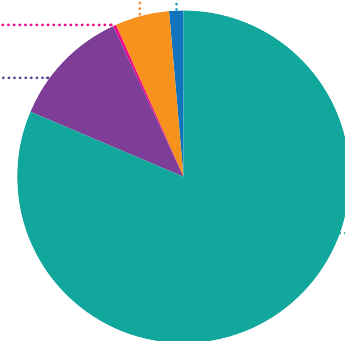
44 people killed on West Mercia's roads

1,561 hate crimes reported

320 offenders managed via IOM

3,383 rape and other sexual offences

23,315 violence without injury offences



Reassuring West Mercia's communities



83% of residents have confidence in West Mercia Police*



54% satisfied with levels of local policing*

67%

67% feel crime and ASB are either not much of a problem, or not a problem at all in their local area*



36.4% of stop and searches resulted in a police action being taken



44,000 hours of police volunteer time



217 independent custody visits

CMS

14% reduction in recorded police complaints

* West Mercia Public Confidence and Perceptions Survey 2019/20

Putting victims and survivors first

I pledged to ensure victims of crime have access to the best possible services to support them to cope and recover after being affected by crime. I have continued to work hard to deliver on that promise in the last year.

April 2019 saw the launch of a new support service for victims of crime in West Mercia. Previous arrangements had delivered a good service however, 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 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 defined 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 the Victim Advice Line 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.



“Dear VAL, Thank you for sending all this helpful information...You were so kind on the telephone.... I will keep the numbers and contacts you have sent us.... With many thanks again for all your kindness at the time and for your helpful email”

Feedback on VAL from a sexual violence victim

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. During 2019/20 over 71,000 crimes have been transferred to the Victim Advice Line. More than 60,000 offers of support have been offered, and more than 12,000 tailored packages of support have been delivered to victims. I have also continued to commission services from Victim Support around an effective restorative justice (RJ) service for West Mercia.

In the last year, 50% of their caseload has involved sensitive and complex issues including sexual violence and attempted murder. RJ 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.

‘...It made me feel sad about what I had done. It makes me feel happier to know that the victim feels safe and better about the situation. I have learnt a lot about how your actions can affect others. I have found it very good and I hope my victim has too.’

Offender feedback on RJ participation

Specialist support

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on victims and families. As a society, more needs to be done, we cannot continue to just accept and justify this behaviour as a fact of life. It is a priority for me as Commissioner, the police service and the services I have invested in, to do all we can to tackle it in all its forms.

I fund Women's Aid to provide an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service across West Mercia. In the last year, I have given additional funds 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. 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 support has been maintained throughout the current Covid-19 pandemic, with all IDVAs providing a support service while homeworking. In the last year, 98% of service users achieved increased health and wellbeing, 94% had increased resilience and strategies to prevent further experiences of violence and abuse and 100% of service users had access to immediate support or advice.

K was extremely grateful for the work that we completed with her. The knowledge that she could apply for housing in her chosen area offered her empowerment for change.

The referring GP expressed her satisfaction at how IDVA paid attention to N and the support that has been put in place

L felt the support she received was helpful and I believe the staff were appreciative for an IDVA to be based at the hospital to draw on our support and advice.

Extract from Women's Aid outcome assessments on domestic abuse victims

We all have our part to play in preventing domestic abuse and I will continue to work with partners to ensure resources are in place to support victims, survivors and their families. Earlier this year I, along with Worcestershire County Council, reaffirmed our support for the Drive programme. This important work involves working with some of the most high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators, and challenges them to change their behaviour. The Council and I agreed to match-fund the extension of the Drive project in Worcestershire until the end of March 2021.

Since Drive was introduced, 176 high risk domestic abuse perpetrators have been referred to Drive. Of which, 184 victims were associated with the individual and 262 children and young people were also identified as being associated. Those victims are referred to support services specific to their needs. A new children and young people worker was introduced in July 2019 to reduce the impact of domestic abuse by working with the whole family.

MR stated that without DRIVE and IDVA she would not be here today. She felt like she was going mad.

Feedback received by DRIVE project



Domestic abuse should never be tolerated. Whilst there is a lot of positive work being done in West Mercia to stop the abuse from ever happening, and ensuring the right support is available, it is clear more needs to be done to break the cycle and change behaviours. In support of this I have recently published my own draft domestic abuse strategy which sets out my ongoing commitment towards tackling this form of abuse.

Over the last year I have worked with partners to improve outcomes for victims of sexual violence. In October, I brought partners together from local agencies and government organisations, including health, care and justice, to discuss the NHS England national sexual assault and abuse strategy. The aim of the session was to look at how the core priorities, that are set out in the strategy, can be delivered at a local level to provide a more holistic approach to ensure victims and survivors get the support they need in order to recover, heal and rebuild their lives.

I continue to provide significant financial support to AXIS and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) to provide Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) services across West Mercia. Both service providers have continued to use the funding provided to enhance their services. This has enabled AXIS to lower the age limit of clients to age five and they now provide a service to anyone over five, who has experienced recent or non-recent sexual abuse, regardless of whether or not they have reported to the police. In the last year, AXIS has received 554 referrals for victims seeking its specialist support, including 60 under the age of 12.

The WMRASC grant maintains the current key frontline ISVA, Male ISVA, Family ISVA and Children & Young Peoples (CHISVA) service provision and supports continued delivery of the SELFIE training and awareness raising programme.

“I am beyond grateful for your honesty, consistency and your support, and I feel so fortunate to have been guided by you for so long”

WMRASC CHISVA client

I have recently been successful in securing an additional £176,065 of Government funding to further enhance these services. The additional funding will enable the recruitment of several additional members of staff, who will enable more victims to be supported. There will be a specific focus on supporting male victims, and those who have additional needs, along with ensuring victims have the right support to cope and recover.

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.

In line with other specialist service providers, both AXIS and WMRASC are having to develop safe ways of working for both their staff and clients during the current pandemic. My office is proactively engaging with service providers and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to ensure that the impact

on services both during and after the lockdown are minimised to better protect victims. I have recently been informed that we have been successful in securing £434k of emergency Covid-19 funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence services within West Mercia. This will help us support and protect victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence most in need at this unprecedented time.

E is 13 year old who was subject to prolonged grooming and abuse by a suspect in his 20's. After about 9 months of working with the ISVA, E started to accept that this was a crime and not a real relationship in the sense she had hoped it was.

Extract from AXIS ISVA case study

I am committed to improving the victim journey wherever possible to deliver the best outcomes, and prevent scenarios where individuals may be let down by agencies failing to work together. My Victims' Board has led a review of how the Criminal Justice System improves compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice. This work has led to significant improvements in compliance with key entitlements, such as the ability to make a victim personal statement and have the statement read out in court. In addition, the Board has supported the Citizen's Advice Witness Service outreach programme, which is designed to provide enhanced support to vulnerable and intimidated victims and witnesses. Over the past year the work of the Board has resulted in more victims and witnesses attending court and I am pleased to report that West Mercia has the highest witness attendance rate in the West Midlands region at 89%.

Building a more secure West Mercia

I am committed to building communities where people are safe and feel safe. To achieve that commitment, it is important that the police provide the right response at the time when it is needed most, so that with support from communities and partners, together we can deliver the best possible results in building a more secure West Mercia.

Policing demand

The first three months of 2020 have brought unprecedented challenges which have and still continue to impact on all our lives. Significant, and sometimes devastating, flooding affected many communities across large parts of West Mercia in February and March, followed by the Covid-19 pandemic. West Mercia Police has an essential role during these times of crisis, to work with partners and communities to provide an effective emergency response while at the same time continuing to provide a visible and responsive police service.

The additional challenges brought about by these events impact on police demand, however, I am reassured that West Mercia Police is well prepared and has responded quickly and effectively on both occasions. I commend the Chief Constable and all the officers, staff and volunteers working for West Mercia for rising to the challenges faced and showing us the very best of policing in our communities. I will continue to ensure the force has the resources it needs to deal with the current issue and keep us safe, and that the views and needs of our communities and our police force are heard within Government.

I want to assure our communities that despite the ongoing health crisis, West Mercia remains focused on other key priorities. An example of this is increasing officer numbers, with 76 of the 93 additional officer posts created this year already recruited.

I listened when the public said they wanted more police, and for them to be visible and accessible in their communities. I promised to bring officer numbers up to 2,145 by the end of the financial year, after the public asked for more visible policing. I have delivered more officers than promised, and four months earlier than promised. This new cohort of officers along with an additional uplift of 93 officers from the Government's national recruitment programme will improve the service, make the police more accessible and ultimately make West Mercia 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.

One area for improvement identified in the HMICFRS PEEL inspection report 2018/19 is that the force had not successfully implemented its Pathfinder model of 'omni-competent' investigators. The uplift in officer numbers has enabled the force to redesign its investigative model in response to the issues identified. The new model will see up to an additional 88 investigative posts phased in across the organisation in the coming year. The increase in resources and improvements in standards through the provision of consistent high quality investigations, investigators and specialist police staff will ensure better outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities.

During the last year the force's Harm Reduction Hubs became Problem Solving Hubs with the newly named hubs playing a crucial role in helping to reduce harm and reduce demand across West Mercia. There is now a North Problem Solving Hub and South Problem Solving Hub with staff based in all local policing areas dedicated to working with partners to identify, manage and reduce risk to our most vulnerable people, finding longer term solutions to identified issues. For example, in Hereford, the problem solving hub, with support from West Mercia Housing and local residents, has been successful in securing a closure order to prevent cuckooing in Hereford.



Cuckooing

Are you living next door to drug dealers?

The closure order related to a house in Hereford where the vulnerable occupant was involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and reports of alcohol and drug related crime including cuckooing. The Closure Order was served to protect the tenant from continuing to be the victim of exploitation, as well as to provide neighbours with respite from continued ASB. By utilising a problem solving approach, and working with partners, the area is a safer and better place to live.

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.

While the force has seen a 3% increase in the number of 999 calls made when compared to the previous year, there has been a 6% reduction on the number of 101 calls made. 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. Providing more opportunities for people to self-serve queries and to report crimes and anti-social behaviour via the force website has helped the force reduce 101 demand, which frees up valuable resources for more serious incidents. The value of this facility has been highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has seen a surge in members of the public reporting breaches via 101. Providing an automated online reporting mechanism specifically for breaches has seen demand being better managed at a time when police resources are stretched.

As part of my 2019/20 budget proposals I am committed to improving police resource, enabling the force to reduce the number of incidents which are un-resourced by 25%. The force has more than doubled on this promise with this figure falling 54% in the first six months alone.

Other commitments, made possible through the additional resources, include ensuring everyone who needs a non-urgent appointment to see a police officer will be offered one within two days, or at a later time by mutual agreement. Improvements have also been made in response times to emergency calls, with the average call being answered in 13 minutes.

Tackling crime and reducing harm

In the last year, recorded crime has seen only a small increase of 1.1%, showing a continued decline in the rate of increase. There have also been some notable reductions in some crime areas. For example, levels of residential burglaries saw an 11.2% reduction when compared to the previous year.

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, cause huge harm to 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 are committed to protecting people from these crimes. 'We Don't Buy Crime' (WDBC) 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'. In total, more than 28,500 homes across West Mercia are now protected and offer a real deterrent to would-be criminals.



The success of WDBC was recognised earlier this year when the scheme was announced the winner of a national Tilley Award for its partnership approach.

There are now five strands to WDBC with the team working with second-hand shops to identify stolen goods, fuel stations to not just prevent people from driving off without paying for their fuel but to work with police to report any suspicious activity, and utilising the latest in covert techniques to catch criminals when they do commit crime.

Last year, to help address the associated harm that often comes with serious acquisitive crime, an exploitation and vulnerability strand was launched.

This involved staff providing inputs to organisations and community groups to help them recognise the signs that someone may be being exploited and what to do if they do suspect they are. This work is led by two dedicated exploitation and vulnerability trainers, whose posts were created using additional funding I provided following evidence of a need for this support both within the force and communities.

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, modern slavery and human trafficking can be devastating. They can destroy individuals and damage entire communities.

In 2018, HMICFRS graded the force as inadequate in its response to SOC. 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 rated as good by inspectors in 2019. This means that 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 response to SOC. I launched my own SOC Strategy in September 2019 which outlines how I will play my part and work with others to ensure our communities are safer and feel safer. I have recently developed a SOC delivery plan to monitor progress against the recommendations set out in my strategy.



Serious and Organised Crime Strategy

A key focus of both the force and PCC SOC strategies is to ensure a relentless and coordinated approach to tackling the emerging threat of 'County Lines'. County Lines is a term used to describe a model of drug supply 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. During the National Crime Agency's (NCA) co-ordinated week of activity targeting county lines (October 2019), weapons and phones as well as more than £13,500 cash were recovered, thousands of pounds worth of drugs were seized including crack, cocaine, heroin and cannabis and over 30 arrests were made.

I have championed a public health approach to tackling county lines and recognise the value of preventative work to reduce the number of children in our communities being drawn into County Lines and other forms of criminal exploitation. As a result 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, and a procurement process, The Children's Society has been chosen to run the service.

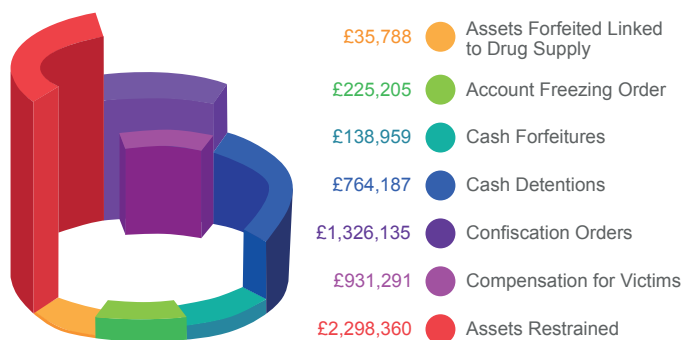
Despite the current Covid-19 pandemic, Climb, the new name for the service, has just been launched and is already taking referrals. Climb will adopt a 1:1 trusted adult, trauma informed, child-centred approach. They will be working with children and young people (11-17) evidencing early indicators of being at risk of 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 £33,935 to Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin's More than Sport initiative. This aims to support young people aged 13-24 to achieve community integration and reduce anti-social/offending behaviour through engagement in sports related diversionary activities. In the last year, 67 young people were referred onto the scheme with over 90% achieving a positive outcome as a result of the intervention.

Seriously 4 weeks ago I'd never would have imagined I was going to start boxing again.... it was not possible without you...thank you very much

Feedback from a 15 year old male suffering from high stress and anxiety levels with a potential to evolve into criminal activity referred onto More than Sport

One of the tactics proactively used by the force to disrupt organised criminals is to take every opportunity to seize cash and assets as part of criminal proceedings. The processes and procedures to do this can be extremely complex and time consuming but in the last year the force's Economic Crime Unit (ECU) has had some notable success. The ECU has removed a total of £4.7 million from criminals using their powers under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The ECU has also obtained over £1.1 million in compensation for victims of financial crime. The assets stripped from criminals in 2019, are broken down as follows;



Knife crime is a complex issue nationwide that doesn't have a single, specific cause. Naturally our police have a central role to play in protecting us from knife crime, and in September the force launched its knife crime strategy, 'Calling Time on Knife Crime'. Elements of the strategy were piloted in Telford and will be rolled out across the force, with a serious and violent crime Sergeant responsible for tackling knife crime based in both the North and South Problem Solving Hubs. Working in partnership with other agencies plays a crucial role in the strategy and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that this work is happening effectively. I am committed to continuing to work with partners to further reduce knife crime in our communities.

Drug trafficking and supply is the primary crime type for over two thirds of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) in West Mercia. Drug misuse is an inherently complex issue and there is no single solution. My own drugs strategy sets out how I will play my part, both in terms of my own role, and working with others to deliver the best possible results. Included are my commissioning intentions and existing funding commitments for substance misuse including £250,377 in support of drug intervention programmes (Dip) across the West Mercia area.

CH completed a 6 month DRR after a sentence for arson, in January 2020. CH is now opiate free and in secure accommodation in a long term tenancy, he is engaging with venture and completing his unpaid work.

Outcome from a Drugs Rehabilitation Requirement of an offender in Shropshire

I have recently chosen to recommit my Dip funding across all areas of West Mercia. Specifically in Worcestershire, I have worked with partners to successfully co-commission a substance misuse service for the county.

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, who are in crisis, with immediate support. This funding enables 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.

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.

“Thank you for everything you have done, you have truly worked wonders with J and I can't thank you enough. You have been brilliant and he thinks a lot of you.”

Father of J, a 17 year old male who had low self-esteem, a cannabis addiction and a poor support network. J had admitted to working for a gang, he was a clear victim of Child Criminal Exploitation although he did not recognise himself as being a victim at the time of referral to the Link worker in Worcester

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. As part of the service, a CSE awareness session has been delivered to 1,343 children and young people, providing them with invaluable advice to help keep them safe. To date, 128 young people have been referred into the project, receiving tailored education, intervention or support.

J is a 15 year old female referred into Branch as a high risk victim of CSE, trafficking and multiple sex offences. Her behaviour in school was putting her at risk of exclusion.

The Branch Project Worker attended a meeting at school and explained that the young person was in crisis and was not a 'naughty' child but a traumatised child. The outcome of this particular case was that the school agreed to keep the young person in, and attempt to limit the exclusions as they were adding to the young person's vulnerability.

I made a commitment in my Safer West Mercia Plan to increase the proportion of hate crimes reported to the police. The last year has seen a 17% increase, compared to the previous year, with over 1,500 reports of hate crime. However, I want the force and partners to do more. In South Worcestershire, the force is pioneering how it supports victims of hate crime with a new pilot initiative of Specialist Hate Crime Advocacy & Liaison Officers (HALOs). These 26 officers provide an information and support service that provides a designated contact for the victim to talk to throughout the investigation, in addition to investigating officers. I will be using my holding to account programme to monitor progress of this initiative and to ensure that, if effective, it is rolled out to benefit all of West Mercia's communities.

Safer Roads is one of the key policing priorities for West Mercia Police, and I welcome this clear strategic focus. 44 people were killed on our

roads last year, a reduction from 52 in the previous year, but too many people are dying on our roads and there is still more to be done. As part of my own commitment, I want to raise more awareness of road safety and reduce the amount of those being killed or injured.

I am seeking to reduce the number of those committing road traffic offences through further projects and initiatives.

To support this, I have published my draft roads safety strategy. 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.

I have directed resources towards initiatives that address the rising number of people killed and seriously injured on West Mercia's roads. This money allows more focus to be placed on something that is a priority, and concern, for everyone.

One example of this is #MORSE. A road safety initiative that aims to focus on individuals who are repeatedly committing driving offences, as well as those who are at risk of re-offending. Targeting these individuals and addressing their driving behaviour will make our roads safer. The initiative is delivered by a partnership of West Mercia Police, Worcester-based charity YSS, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Warwickshire & West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company (WMCRC).

The most important piece of work has been to find CL accommodation. This has provided him with stability and structure.... Furthermore, this has been essential for reducing his driving offending behaviour, as CL does not have to break into cars for somewhere to sleep.

Offender referred to YSS through #MORSE



Reducing reoffending

To continue to break the cycle of crime and reoffending of individuals, as well as 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.

Over the last year, we have focused on how to build on the success of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) to see how we could improve our approach to reducing the harm and crime associated with different types of offenders.

The work focused on identifying those offenders in the community who posed the greatest risk. As a

result of the work our IOM teams are now working with and managing a wider range of offenders. For example, IOM teams now supervise high risk domestic abuse perpetrators, violent offenders alongside prolific offenders.

As a result of the new approach we have already started to see some significant improvements in how we manage our high risk offenders in the community. At the same time improved assessments makes it easier to identify high risk offenders who should be managed through the scheme.

We are also working closely with the National Police Chiefs Council lead on IOM as we want to ensure there is a consistent approach for IOM across the country. We have also started to explore the use of IDIOM. IDIOM is a Home Office tool which measures reoffending rates and calculates cost savings associated with any reductions in crime, which will help support our understanding of the value for money, or return on investment linked to our IOM approach.

As well as working locally with partners to reduce reoffending and harm, I have continued to support the Government's redesign of the Probation Service. I am working closely with the new West Midlands director to ensure that services are designed to meet the need of offenders across West Mercia. In order to ensure that we have a close working relationship and there is collaboration across the region, we have set up a West Midlands regional group, which brings together the four PCCs and relevant stakeholders, thereby ensuring a consistent approach for the region.

As well as providing leadership and governance through my Crime Reduction Board, I have also committed funds to ensure vulnerable offenders in our communities receive the support they need. The support provided often enables offenders the opportunity to address key areas affecting them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, or providing education and learning support. The support provided is designed to help someone address the behaviours behind their offending behaviour so they are able to give up their life of crime and in doing so make our communities safer. In the last year I have committed around £250,000 towards addressing reducing reoffending. Examples include:

- ➔ Willowdene Farm for the LINC project (Local Initiatives Nurturing Change). This project is for women at risk of entering the criminal justice system, or to reduce their risk of reoffending.
- ➔ Remember Veterans. This is a programme designed to identify and support military veterans who come into contact with the criminal justice system.
- ➔ West Mercia Youth Justice Service for the Substance misuse (SM) programme. This aims to provide interventions for young people at risk of entering the youth justice system.

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.

A 12 month tri-service pilot 'Mental Health Street Triage Service' (MHSTS) in South Worcestershire is one example of collaboration which, it is hoped, will bring real benefits to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Funded by the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) the team consists of a Paramedic, Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) and Police Officer crewed together in a marked ambulance. Working together they can ensure a person in a mental health crisis receives appropriate support at first point of contact. As well as a more effective use of resources, it will ensure that any detention under the Mental Health Act (MHA) is the last resort and not the only option available, thereby improving the outcomes and experiences of people who come into contact with the police while in a mental health crisis.

In 2019/20 I have provided CSPs with £602,000. This budget is spent on proactive community safety initiatives, addressing local needs and creating a safer and more secure West Mercia.

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

Reforming West Mercia Police remains a central part of my mission as Commissioner and there is still significant potential to deliver more effective and efficiently run services. Following the joint decision with the Chief Constable to withdraw from the alliance with Warwickshire Police, an extended period of negotiation took place during 2019 to resolve the issues of bringing the strategic alliance to an end. These negotiations did not reach resolution before the end of the original notice period, which led the Home Secretary to mandate both forces to continue the existing collaboration agreement for a further six months, until April 2020.

When a mutual agreement couldn't be made, an independent team was brought in by the Home Office to advise. Their advice highlighted a number of areas for the provision of hosted services and for an agreement of reasonable termination costs. This sees West Mercia providing transactional, forensic services and file storage on a service provider basis for 18 months and continuing to collaborate on IT services. The new agreements to provide service and collaboration are at no cost to West Mercia as they are on a full cost recovery basis.

I am pleased to report that we have also agreed on a settlement figure of £10.5m as a full and final payment. This figure is lower than was recommended by the Home Office's independent body and significantly lower than the amount requested by Warwickshire. As part of exiting a £300m policing alliance, this settlement is good value for money for the communities of West Mercia. It will be paid in instalments over two financial years from reserves and efficiencies.

Investing in our people

As previously outlined, I am committed to ensuring the force has the support and resources it needs to provide a modern and dynamic innovative force. I have invested in an additional 215 officers in 2019/20, bringing officer numbers back to the highest level since 2012. This significant uplift will enable the force to increase resilience and visibility in our communities, improve the response to operational demand and provide enhanced support for the health and wellbeing of our officers.

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 set out this year not only included the specialist support for those affected by PTSD, and other mental health related issues, but a range of other schemes and initiatives. This included a travelling wellbeing bus, where free health check-ups can be accessed, free app 'Backup Buddy' that offers 24 hour support and advice, peer supporters trained by the charity Mind, multi-faith chaplaincy and mental health first aid training for front line supervisors. Investing in the health and wellbeing of the workforce provides officers and staff with the support they need to carry out their role and deliver an excellent service to our communities.

I have supported the force in developing the new police constable degree apprenticeship (PCDA) scheme. This is a new route into policing which sees recruits completing a three year apprenticeship with on and off-the-job learning. On successfully finishing the programme, and completing their probation, recruits will achieve a recognised and accredited degree in Professional Policing Practice from Staffordshire University. The first ever intake of PCDA student officers joined West Mercia in January 2020, with planning under way for further intakes across the next financial year.

I am hopeful that the development of the PCDA route will encourage a more diverse pool of candidates to consider a career in policing, and will help the force to achieve its aspiration for a workforce that better represents its communities.

I want West Mercia Police to be truly representative of the communities it serves. The force has made a significant commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in the workforce through a range of initiatives, such as the appointment of a Positive Action officer, introducing unconscious bias inputs throughout officer and staff training packages, and the innovative #UncoverYourPotential educational campaign, which challenges unconscious bias and aims to encourage more women to join up.

In August 2019, West Mercia Police was awarded Gold in the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). This prestigious award celebrates the advocacy and support that the police give to the armed forces community.

It's important for West Mercia Police to be representative and inclusive, in order to offer the best possible service to the communities they serve, and the outstanding work with the armed forces is a great example of this.

The force continues to implement 'MAX', to maximise the potential of the workforce and ensure the contribution to organisational goals and priorities. 'MAX' seeks to:

- Support improved health and wellbeing;
- Recognise and reward achievements;
- Realise aspirations;
- Support and develop people, based on individual needs;
- Recognise and foster talent, growing potential for the future, and;
- Ensure clarity in focus and direction.



This year, as my own commitment to investing in people, I recruited a graduate policy intern and a graduate communications and engagement intern to work in my office for 12 months. 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. This internship scheme will continue next year.

Investing in technology

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.

Body worn video is playing a significant part in my plans to reform and modernise West Mercia Police. The technology was rolled out to regular officers in 2017, and has proven its benefits for both police and local communities. Smartphones help officers spend less time in the police station, and more time in the community. Body worn video captures vital evidence from incidents, providing reassurance for both officers and the

public. In a typical month, more than 13,000 clips are recorded. More than 2,000 are retained as evidence



The proven benefits of mobile technology has enabled me to invest a further £250,000 in the same equipment to enable the technology to be rolled out to the 300 or so Special Constables in West Mercia. Our Special Constables play an incredibly valuable role in our communities. It is absolutely right they have the same equipment and support as regular officers.

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 (CJS). This has included working with partners to introduce Video Remand Hearings (VRH). In February I committed approximately £19,000 for a three month proof of concept video remand hearing pilot within the Telford custody suite, so the CJS can model the cost v. benefits in order to make an informed decision regarding future funding. The VRH pilot is designed to reduce the burden and costs associated with centralising remand hearings, making the entire CJS more efficient and effective. I look forward to receiving results of the pilot.

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. Examples include:

- ▶ The sale of Whitchurch Police Station, Shropshire, for £331,000 following the co-location of the safer neighbourhood team with Whitchurch Community Health Clinic.
- ▶ The lease renewal for the force's vehicle workshops in Worcester, which now includes a break clause that will enable me to terminate the lease, should they wish to proceed with the potential One Public Estate Worcester Depot project.
- ▶ Securing £84,000 towards the feasibility for the Hereford Joint Police and Fire Station.
- ▶ Securing office space and use of welfare facilities in the newly built Wyre Forest Emergency Hub, to co-locate with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and (SARA) Search and Rescue. The force is due to move into the space during summer 2020.

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.

The Strategic Estate Manager has concluded a comprehensive line by line review of the Planned Minor Revenue & Minor Capital Works Programme 2019/2020, to bring the programme back into budget. This has been successfully achieved, ensuring that the 2019/20 Planned Programme together with the future 2020/21 Planned Programme now provides for a variety of improvements to operational working environments, staff welfare areas, specific security safeguarding measures, compliance, as well as improving internal spaces to remove any risks to staff wellbeing and health and safety.

In the final quarter of the year, the Strategic Estate Manager has reviewed the current Estate Strategy to determine its effectiveness in terms of how the physical estate and built environment supports the delivery of policing in West Mercia. This work will enable a new approach to be taken, remodelling the estate which will provide for a more modern, fit-for-purpose estate, together with a service delivery model that reflects our collective strategic, operational and transformation activities, goals and objectives.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

In the last year I have continued my focus on ensuring that our communities are safe, but also feel safe.

My decision to increase officer numbers in West Mercia has been a central and recurring part of this work. I have worked to make sure our communities are aware that officer numbers are increasing, particularly through the Government uplift and my investment, and then highlight this further through police recruitment, highlighting when new officers are in training, and when they then complete that training and go out into our communities. Despite the ongoing health crisis we have faced, the force remains focussed on increasing officer numbers with 76 of the 93 additional officer posts created this year already recruited.

Delivery against my Communications and Engagement Strategy has been regularly monitored. Engagement will be explored in more detail later in this report. With regards to communication, in the last year I have issued more than 250 public comments or articles in order to ensure local communities are aware of my views, decisions, or strategies.

I have seen a significant increase in contact from the public. The contact management system allows much greater resilience and efficiency in how public contact is managed within my office, and it continues to ensure that anyone contacting me as Commissioner receives a prompt, personal service.

Growth in communication and engagement has also been significant across digital platforms, with a focus on Facebook. In the last year my official page has seen an increase of :

37% for page 'likes', with content reaching around 36,000 people each month.



On Twitter, the most recent analytics show impressions of more than 162,000 in the last month, as well as just under 1,500 profile visits by users.

My website is continually audited to ensure transparency and to engage our communities. I continue to work to increase transparency in my role through the publication of all appropriate decision notices, financial information, office information, strategy documents and FOI disclosures. I have further enhanced this work through staging West Mercia's first public 'holding to account' meetings, which are discussed in greater detail later in this report. In the last year, almost 23,000 different users have visited my website, an increase of 15% on the previous year. There were over 31,000 individual sessions (up 16%), and more than 72,000 page views (up 15%).

I continue to support initiatives to enable our communities to play an active role in supporting the work of our police force. Volunteers within policing, including Special Constables, police service volunteers and police cadets clocked up a total of almost 45,000 hours of service in the last year. This is an exceptional contribution in support of our regular officers and staff and makes a real difference in our communities.

In the last year, I have continued to develop the Roads Focus initiative, which aims to improve road safety across West Mercia. The initiative began as a pilot project in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, with an initial week of targeted engagement in communities with known road safety concerns. This included a free road safety course, drop-in sessions with local SNTs, highways teams and the Safer Roads Partnership.

Since then, I have worked with Shropshire County Council to run a similar week of activities. I then ran a further two weeks of action with Worcestershire County Council to coincide with National Road Safety Week. In addition to this, I ran further driver awareness courses in partnership with national driver-education providers TTC, as well as hands-on driver training to give people the opportunity to become more confident drivers. These sessions were very well attended with many finding them beneficial. The sessions also gave attendees the opportunity to brush-up on skills and knowledge they had forgotten, or not known about.

Just a note to say thank you for the Driver Training course this week. Very instructive and a lot of fun as well.

Attendee of the driver training session, November 2019.

More sessions were planned to take place, but were delayed due to Covid-19. It is hoped that further drop-in sessions and driver awareness sessions will take place in the future, which allows partners to come together to listen to the concerns of 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. In support of my approach I earmarked additional funding from the 2019/20 precept specifically for rural crime. This has enabled the force to provide warranted officers in each local policing areas whose role is focused on rural and business crime, this is in addition to the five existing rural and business officers (RABOs). These officers and staff form part of the wider problem solving teams mentioned earlier.

As additional officers were invested in, I wanted to make sure that they had the right tools needed to carry out their roles to provide a visible and effective response which is why I provided five dedicated rural and business crime vehicles. The five vehicles, with the distinctive 'Rural Matters' and 'We Don't Buy Crime' branding, are based across the force area and used by officers to support rural communities and work to reduce crime.



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, my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner chairs the West Mercia Cyber-Crime Partnership. This is a diverse group of public and private sector organisations and businesses, working together to raise awareness of cyber-crime and to help individuals and businesses take steps to prevent it. In January, the group ran a training event for SMEs to help businesses keep themselves and their customers safe. The event in Hereford attracted over 30 delegates who were able to take part in an interactive training session provided by a cyber security expert. Delegates were also able to access security advice from the We Don't Buy Crime Smartwater team, and the Rural and Business Officer for Herefordshire amongst others. The event will be evaluated with a view to hold similar events across West Mercia. This is just one example of how I'm enabling individuals, communities and business with the tools to help keep themselves safe.

Following support from the Partnership, I have provided West Mercia Police with £11,000 to work with Get Safe Online. Their website is a unique resource providing practical advice for individuals and businesses in the fight against fraud, identity theft, viruses and many other problems encountered online. As well as online resources, Get Safe Online also ran 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.

Police Ethics

I want to ensure our communities can have trust in me as their Commissioner and the police force I hold to account on their behalf. Ensuring that West Mercia Police upholds an ethical policing culture is an important part of my role and I have continued to liaise closely with the force's Professional Standards Department (PSD). I ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, and complainants receive the service they need, and in doing so provide assurance to individuals that their concerns are listened to and addressed.

Recent legislative changes brought significant changes to the police complaints system, including a much greater role for PCCs. As of 1st February 2020, my office has taken on responsibility for carrying out complaint appeals that were previously referred to the force.

I have appointed a Complaints Review Manager to ensure the new statutory obligations are met and that my office provides an impartial, and timely service to members of the public. I welcome these national reforms and see this as a real opportunity to increase independence and improve public confidence in the police complaints system. The changes reinforce and further develop my role in holding the police force to account on behalf of our local communities

“Over 80% of residents said they trust WMP, believe they treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are and act with integrity” [West Mercia Public Perception Survey 2019/20]

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. By observing and reporting on the work being carried out in custody suites, it directly involves independent members of the public in scrutinising an important part of police work and ensures public confidence in the police. There are currently 54 ICV volunteers, who carry out their visits at any time of the day or night, seven days a week. A total of 217 visits were carried out until mid-March 2020 when visits were suspended as a result of Covid-19. Working with the custody inspectors, the coordinator has been able to continue oversight of the scheme during this challenging time by dip sampling custody records.

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- 16,484 detainees in custody 2019/2020
 - 54 ICVs
 - 217 visits undertaken by ICVs
 - 84% of detainees available consented to meeting with ICVs

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. Promotion of the scheme with students at Worcester University has resulted in a number of new and younger volunteers, as well as changes to the scheme's annual report to make it more accessible and informative.

It's been really great seeing your scheme thrive, no doubt down to a lot of hard work.

Chief Executive of ICVA

Community engagement

I promised that as Commissioner I would actively engage with our communities, listen and be responsive to their concerns, to ensure they are safe, and feel safe, and are happy with the service they receive from their police force. In the last year, the scale and scope of my community engagement has grown significantly as I believe it is important to be as accessible as possible.

Over the last year, I have held a number of different community engagement events. I held Q&A sessions across the whole of West Mercia over a number of months. During these sessions, I, along with local SNT officers, the local Rural and Business Officer and We Don't Buy Crime Smartwater team, went to different towns and villages to give members of public the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns they had. In total, 19 of these events were held and I personally engaged with over 200 people.



I also held Rural Focus events across West Mercia to speak to communities that may be feeling more isolated than others, or that may be concerned about rural crime. Five of these were held, with more planned following the easing of Covid-19 related restrictions.

Face to face engagements have also been carried out via my annual programme of summer event. Hundreds of people came to meet me and my team last summer across the six events, and gave me their views on local policing and crime. Working alongside the We Don't Buy Crime and Smartwater team, we were able to hand out 1,000 property marking kits to anyone who visited the stand.

Between myself and my deputy, we have also carried out more than 600 face to face engagements in the community over the last year. My Community Ambassadors have carried out more than 300. Although it is worth noting that due to the floods, that affected many parts of West Mercia, and the Covid-19 crisis, many engagements were postponed.

In an attempt to ensure I am reaching more residents of West Mercia, I have been sending regular articles to parish magazines. Within these articles are short updates that may affect that particular policing area, or will provide invaluable crime prevention advice and initiatives that they may not be aware of. To ensure I am making the best use of technology to connect with West Mercia's communities, I developed a podcast series. The PCC's '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 was my intention that listeners will not only gain an insight into these areas, but they will also benefit from practical advice.

As with previous years, thousands of people from right across West Mercia have been interviewed, gathering their perceptions on local policing and crime. This has, for the first time, given both myself and the force statistically relevant samples of community perceptions, within each local policing area. I was clear when I increased investment and officer numbers in West Mercia Police that I wanted every community to feel the benefit of this uplift. This feedback helps inform my holding to account agenda, and ensures I can be confident of exactly where improvements are being felt in our communities, how much those improvements are being noticed, and where more work is still needed.

These projects have supported and further reinforced ongoing feedback from the community into my office throughout the year, which has increased significantly. At the end of the last PCC's term around 500 items of correspondence were being logged each year. For comparison, in the last year more than 1,000 case files have been logged, processed and individually responded to within my office.

In the last year I have continued to develop new outlets and platforms to engage with our communities. As outlined previously, I have maintained transparency around the 'holding to account' aspect of my work, by making more of my holding to account meetings with the Chief Constable public. These meetings continue to be streamed live on Facebook, giving communities

the opportunity to submit questions both in advance, and live during the event. The videos are permanently added to my social media channels for anyone to view who misses the broadcasts. As a result of the Covid-19 lockdown, and communities feeling unsure about the changes to police officer powers, I held a Q&A session with the Chief Constable via a video call. We took questions before the session, and it was then streamed on social media channels to allow communities to watch. Plans are in place to hold more events like this.



Performance and accountability

Oversight

I want the public to have confidence and trust in my work, along with that of the force. To achieve this I have continued to monitor force performance, using weekly, monthly and quarterly performance reports to inform my regular meetings with the Chief Constable and other senior leads. My office is actively engaged in the development of a new performance framework for the force, providing both support and challenge as it develops. These processes ensure I can effectively scrutinise force performance on behalf of our communities and push for change and improvements where needed.

My regular programme of local policing area visits has enabled me to discuss performance and community issues with the local command 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.

Holding to account

My monthly assurance meetings provide 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.

In the last year I have held the Chief Constable to account around performance, workforce issues, local policing, modern slavery and human trafficking, and serious acquisitive crime.

In each case, actions have been followed up and performance reviewed in future meetings with outcomes published on my website. My Facebook live meetings serve an important purpose in significantly increasing public transparency of my scrutiny process, and ensuring communities have a clear, direct voice in policing. In the last year I have held two Facebook Live meetings, one in June on rural crime and one in January on the budget. I then held the pre-recorded session in April to cover Covid-19.

**Facebook Live
events reach**

15,763

**Facebook Live
event views**

5,531

As set out in my Safer West Mercia Plan, I am committed to putting victims and survivors first. Victim satisfaction is a key indicator of force performance against this objective, ensuring improved consistent services for the victims who suffer most from crime and ensuring that officers and staff have the skills to properly support victims. Satisfaction has remained an ongoing focus for me and I am pleased to see that satisfaction has improved from 78% in March 2019 to 80% in March 2020.

In October, I sought reassurance from the Chief Constable regarding the reliability of the satisfaction survey and data obtained from it. As a result of raising this issue, the force has reviewed this process and changes have been made to the survey.

These changes will improve how the force engages with victims to better understand their service delivery and identify where improvements can be made.

Furthering my commitment to victims of crime, I have maintained a focus and scrutiny on the satisfaction for victims of hate crime over the last 12 months and, as a result, a significant improvement has been seen. Since April last year, hate crime satisfaction has increased by 10%, highlighting that victims of hate crime are more satisfied with the service they have received.

It is important to me that the police are visible and accessible to the public and a key feature of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) is that they are out there in the communities providing reassurance. As part of my scrutiny of Local Policing, I carried out some dip sampling of the automated email response when contacting a SNT and identified some inconsistencies in the response received. Since my scrutiny I have seen improved contact channels for members of the public to be able to access neighbourhood policing.

Independent scrutiny

To support me in my oversight role, the Joint Independent Audit and Standards Committee was 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.

HMICFRS, which is the lead body for the independent assessment of police forces and fire services, published its PEEL report on effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy in September 2019, nine months after the inspection took place. While the report rightly recognised the significant improvements made around tackling serious organised crime, assessing the force as good in this area, overall the force was judged as 'requires improvement' in each of the three areas. I am committed to working with the Chief Constable to deliver my pledge of building safer, more secure communities and I shall support the force in making the necessary improvements to ensure it can provide an efficient and effective service.

It is important that the outcome of key decisions and discussions are made accessible so that our communities can have trust in me 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 West Mercia Governance Meetings and my Crime Reduction Board and Victims' Board meetings. Additionally, the delivery plan I developed outlines how the commitments I have made in my Safer West Mercia Plan are reviewed on a monthly basis and reported to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, who are responsible for scrutinising my activities and responsibilities.

Our resources

The 2019/20 total revised net revenue budget for West Mercia is £226.711m, which is funded through a combination of central government grants, council tax and an amount from the budget reserve to fund transformation and improvements. At the end of the year, this budget was overspent by £1.605m. This means that the actual amount required from our reserve is slightly more (0.7%) than originally budgeted.

The main variances in 2019/20 are shown below:

Area of spend – under/(over) spending	£m
Policing	1.605
Office of the PCC	0.000
Total net underspend in 2019/20	1.605

West Mercia's reserve balances, which stand at £14.991m at the end of the year, are over £4m more than the minimum required. They will support me in achieving my objectives, principally to meet the challenges posed by Covid-19 and to build a new locally responsive and effective force following the termination of the strategic alliance with Warwickshire.

I can confirm that West Mercia Police has established robust and responsive operational arrangements following the end of the Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire. This will ensure it can meet the needs of its residents more effectively, putting them first. It will also enable the force to transform and reform the services it provides, and give it the ability to meet its savings targets of £9.858m in the next three years. In addition, an

exit strategy has been agreed with Warwickshire. Some collaboration on a small number of services will continue for a further year to ensure a smooth transfer. A financial settlement has also been agreed, which was funded from reserves.

The budget and mid-term financial plan (MTFP) was agreed with the Police and Crime Panel in February 2019, which outlined the planned use of reserves, reducing balances to £13.8m by 21/22. The use of reserves and reserve balances are reviewed rigorously each year to ensure that they remain adequate against the risks we face.

To ensure the force remains both effective and efficient, it is undergoing significant transformation, much of which is reliant on capital investment. During 2019/20 £7.4m of capital expenditure has been incurred across West Mercia. This includes £1.2m which has been spent on our estates strategy. Over £3.9m has been invested in our IT systems in 2018/19, to streamline and update systems to ensure they are capable of meeting the needs for 21st century policing and to improve their resilience. Significant levels of investment are planned to continue, with £74.7m anticipated over the period up to 2022/23 principally over estates and IT.

During 2019/20 I continued to work closely with many partners across West Mercia, providing financial support and assistance to a number of local projects and initiatives to protect people from harm. We have invested heavily in the support services we provide for those who are the victims of crime, with the Victims Advice Line going live in April 2019, and Climb, the diversionary network for young people. New projects and schemes were

also put in place to make our roads safer during 2019 and 2020.

I am continuing to drive value for money across all areas of the service, and believe that aside from the transformational changes being undertaken, this can also be achieved through greater collaboration across emergency services. During 2017/18, I submitted a business case to the Home Office which outlined how improved working, more effective services and greater efficiencies could be achieved across policing and fire, if there was closer collaborative working between Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire and Telford Fire and Rescue Services and West Mercia Police. The Home Office has accepted the business case and it is now subject to Judicial Review. I hope that the governance of these fire and rescue services will be transferred in 2020/21.

I am pleased that the Government has recognised

the challenges policing faces and provided increased funding in the 2020/21 budget to employ additional officers with further investment planned in future years. I had already invested in an additional 215 additional police officers in 2019/20. I am currently working closely with the Chief Constable to improve our police service to create a locally responsive and effective service which meets the needs of the communities in West Mercia. I am confident, however, that the work the force is doing to reform will help to create a Safer West Mercia that is able to meet the challenges ahead.

Finally I wish to reassure the people of West Mercia that the Chief Constable and I are focusing on meeting the challenges posed by Covid-19 and above all on doing everything we can to keep West Mercia safe.

Commissioning and grants

My Safer West Mercia Plan sets the overarching framework for local commissioning. This has been complemented by my Commissioning Strategy, 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 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.

In 2019/20 I invested more than £6m across 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. The diagram shows how the monies are distributed. (See diagram on next page).

Details of all the grants awarded are published on my website.

Local Policing and Community Ambassador's Fund (LPCAF)

Through my LPCAF fund I have continued to provide safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) and my ambassadors with the autonomy to support local initiatives. Part of this fund is for 'safer roads', whereby SNTs can apply for funding to prevent the harm caused by road collisions in their local area. Examples of LPCAF funding include:

- ➔ Herefordshire - £300 to the South Wye Police Boxing Club for its summer holidays Fit & Fed initiative.
- ➔ North Worcestershire - £700 towards a joint pilot scheme between the Problem Solving Hub / Bromsgrove Pubwatch & Bromsgrove Town Centre Partnership for the use of cocaine wipes in pubs and clubs.
- ➔ Shropshire - £600 to the Shropshire Hate Crime Perpetrator Group towards workshop costs.
- ➔ South Worcestershire - £2,600 to the Worcester Community Trust towards the delivery of weekly classes to support targeted intervention for young people displaying risky behaviour.
- ➔ Telford and Wrekin - £600 to the Leegate Community Centre to support drop in sessions.

I am writing to you on behalf of Eardisley Group Parish Council and its residents to thank you most sincerely for the substantial grant awarded to us.....We believe the two Speed Indicator Devices we are able to purchase as a result of this grant will greatly increase our ability to analyse and report on vehicles of all kinds traversing our highways.

Chairman of Eardisley Group Parish Council (awarded £6,972 from the LPCAF Safer Roads fund)

Covid Community funding

I have recently established a fund of £50,000, in response to the Covid-19 crisis. This new 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. This allows them to continue the vital work they are doing in our communities, and support those that need it most.

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. Thematic areas include preventing burglary, safer roads, reducing offending, diverting young people from crime, reducing substance misuse, preventing rural and business crime, etc.

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.

Appendix

The year in numbers 2018/19

Putting victims and survivors first



35,000 referrals to support services

4

Just 4 complaints recorded from those 35,000 referrals



61 restorative justice cases were completed with positive outcomes for the victims.



Over 97% of service users left West Mercia Women's Aid with a positive outcome



77.8% of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Mercia Police

83%

83% conviction rate for domestic abuse cases at court.



90% of witnesses attended court

Reforming West Mercia



£211.5M budget in 2018/19



137,135 999 calls received



88% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds



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

62%

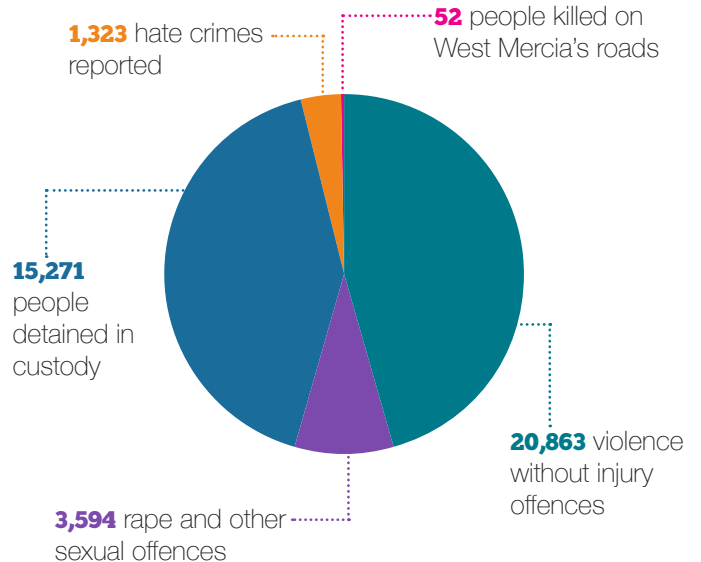
62% of 101 calls answered within 30 seconds



215 additional officer posts created (including 115 from 2019/20 budget)

Building a more secure West Mercia

86,590 offences were recorded, which included:



Reassuring West Mercia's communities



85% of residents have confidence in West Mercia Police*



51% satisfied with levels of local policing*

72%

72% feel crime and ASB are either not much of a problem, or not a problem at all in their local area*



34.4% of stop and searches resulted in a positive outcome



77,000 hours of volunteer time



221 independent custody visits



14,000 alerts sent via West Mercia's Community Messaging system

* West Mercia Public Confidence and Perceptions Survey 2018/19



To contact your Police and Crime Commissioner:

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