

## WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 4 February 2022

### POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2021)

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#### 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.

#### Delivery plan and assurance

3. A delivery plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the plan and is scrutinised at the PCC's monthly governance meetings. As previously discussed and agreed with the Panel an extract of the delivery plan is no longer included with this report.
4. Examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections. This includes an update on the Alliance withdrawal in the 'Reform' section.

#### Commissioned service provision

5. To date in 21/22 there have been a significant number of developments within the PCC commissioned service provision, which are illustrated below. The current year to date funding total, including additional monies secured from the Ministry of Justice and Home Office funding is unchanged from the last report, standing at **£4,143,676.97**.

This is made up of the following;

- ISVA provision - £763,568
- IDVA provision - £241,739
- DA / SV service provision - £649,902
- DA perpetrator provision - £455,939.37
- Safer Streets 2 - £863,185
- Safer Streets 3 - £1,027,895
- Home Office perpetrator fund - £141,448.60

More detailed information on some of the initiatives this money supports have been included within the *Putting victims and survivors first* and *Building a more secure West Mercia* sections of this report.

6. The PCC's Commissioning team is currently developing victims' scorecards which will be produced on a quarterly basis to provide an outcome focused report on how commissioned victims' services are making a difference and supporting the priorities and objectives set out in the Safer West Mercia Plan. In time the intention is to develop scorecards for other funding areas. The victims' scorecards will be shared with the Panel once fully developed and implemented.

## **Putting victims and survivors first**

### **IDVA service provision**

7. Following a recommissioning process the PCC, in partnership with Worcestershire County Council (WCC), has awarded the new West Mercia wide Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) contract to the current providers – West Mercia Women's Aid, which will run from Apr 2022-2025, with a 2 year extension possible. The PCC and WCC have also recommissioned and awarded the DRIVE perpetrator intervention for Worcestershire and Herefordshire for the same period to Cranstoun. The PCC has contributed £1,115,598.64 for 2022/23 and £839,598.60 from 2023 onwards.

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)**

8. Sexual Assault and Rape Centre (SARC) services are offered during the acute stage of a rape / sexual offence. SARC services are offered at 2 locations across the force area. The PCC's Commissioning and Estates team are working with the force to seek improvements to the SARC based in the north of the force in Telford. The current premises require substantial investment to achieve the necessary forensic accreditation standards by April 2023. To progress this, Estates are producing a feasibility study outlining different options and Commissioning have led on discussions with NHS England, who are exploring additional funding towards the refurb/rebuild costs. Alongside this, the PCC will be contributing funding towards a regional Quality Manager role, to ensure the local SARCs meet accreditation requirements.

## **Building a more secure West Mercia**

### **West Mercia Drug Diversion Programme (DIVERT)**

9. The West Mercia PCC has secured funding to implement the DIVERT programme delivered by Cranstoun across West Mercia. This scheme aims to contribute to a culture change in policing and to work with partners to divert emerging offenders from court into the most appropriate intervention to reduce reoffending. Offenders of any age above 13 found in simple possession of any controlled drug will be eligible for an Outcome 22 (prosecution deferred until the accused has been given the opportunity to engage with intervention activity), provided they agree to attend a substance misuse intervention (DIVERT) which has been commissioned for this purpose. This will apply every time they are found in simple possession providing they comply with the requirement to attend the intervention. Individuals can be referred to DIVERT more than once recognising it can take more than one intervention to change behaviour. However if an individual is offered DIVERT and they fail to attend then they are not given the option again.

10. Since the start of service, 221 referrals have been made onto the DIVERT programme. Over 70% of those referred into DIVERT at point of contact with the force have had an assessment. Over 70% of those who are attending the assessment then go on to attend the group. It is expected that the next quarter's reporting will demonstrate a greater attendance rate. The success of the scheme has led to ministerial interest, and it is hoped that a visit from the Policing Minister can be arranged.

### **Training to tackle drink spiking**

11. The PCC has provided £9000 of match funding to the each of the Local Policing areas to try and tackle the issue of drink spiking in the towns and cities across the force. Part of the funding has enabled Exploitation and Vulnerability Trainers to work with night time economy staff including door and bar staff. Training has included how to spot signs of drink spiking, what the symptoms could be if someone has been spiked and how to deal with the situation. Staff from the Herefordshire and Shropshire Pub Watch Schemes and Worcestershire University Students Union have benefited from the training which has continued into the New Year. Alongside the training 90,000 anti-bottle spiking devices and 50,000 drink covers have been purchased.

12. It is hoped that these initiatives will offer some reassurance to the community and provide some comfort to those visiting the bars and nightclubs that the staff are there to help and are aware of the signs.

### **Fly-tipping**

13. The PCC has recently initiated a grant round to tackle the issue of fly-tipping and identify ideas and proposals that can be implemented to eradicate this damaging criminal offence. This has resulted in the PCC agreeing to fund the following.

- £30,000 towards Operation Fly Tip in Telford. Telford and Wrekin Council will contribute a further £10,000 to the project which focuses on prevention campaigns, enforcement through signage, CCTV, lighting, fixed penalty notices and support to those affected, to reduce the impact going forward.
- £37,000 in tackling fly tipping across North and South Worcestershire. In South Worcestershire, a grant of £15,000 has been awarded from the PCC towards SCRAP, a joint project between Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council. In North Worcestershire, a grant of £22,000 has been awarded from the PCC towards the North Worcestershire Fly tipping Prevention Group which is joint between Wyre Forest District Council and Bromsgrove and Redditch Borough Councils.
- The Commissioner is also investing a further £10,000 to prevent tyre dumping. The Tyre Tag initiative is an innovative and sustainable force-wide project with West Mercia Police, alongside local authorities and SmartWater. It aims to prevent garages from being targeted by organised criminals to illegally dispose of tyres.

### **Regional collaboration**

14. The PCC works collaboratively with regional colleagues to ensure that the Strategic Policing Requirement is met and oversight of the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), National Air Police Service (NPAS), Roads Policing, Counter Terrorism (CT) and other national programmes is maintained. Two regional policy officers shared

between the four Police and Crime Commissioners, support the PCCs. Examples of regional activities include:

- A CT deep dive session for PCCs focussed on nominal management. The primary aim was to understand how individuals of CT concern are now being managed since the Fishmonger's Hall attack and seek assurance that the lessons learned from the inquiry have been implemented. PCCs also looked at next steps in relation to the regionalisation of Special Branch and the Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness Review.
- The PCC currently represents the West Midlands PCCs on the National Police Air Service Strategic Board. The PCC has also been Chair of the Board since June 2021. The Board is currently meeting monthly to oversee critical work to identify a new host for the national collaboration.
- The impact of Operation Venetic continues to be assessed. The cash recovered as part of Venetic has been returned to the West Midlands force area as this was where the money recovered, but a spending plan is being implemented which will see some of this resource invested back into the ROCU and also into preventative interventions across the wider region. PCCs are now working towards agreement on how the proceeds from such regionally-seized assets are distributed in future.

### **Search and Rescue support**

15. The PCC is committed to developing a partnership response with the relevant organisations to protect lives and save those who may find themselves vulnerable or trapped in life threatening situations. In support of this, the PCC has launched a grant round regarding water safety, committing £60,000 for three years of funding to run from 2022-2025, to support the delivery of search and rescue teams within West Mercia. The funding will also ensure that operational responses to incidents across the regions are robust, harnessing additional expertise and specialism for those who need it most.

### **Criminal justice**

16. A significant backlog remains in the number of Crown Court cases. A recovery plan is in place and while the backlog is slowly reducing it is 56% larger than it was pre-pandemic. There are currently over 1100 cases awaiting trial compared to approximately 700 pre-COVID. It is estimated that it will take 2-3 years to clear the backlog. Cases are already being listed well into 2024. This is having an impact on victim and witness support services. The force's witness care unit is supporting 60% more victims now than pre-COVID. In the Magistrates' Court, outstanding caseloads remain at their lowest level since the pandemic began, with more cases disposed of than received.

17. Overall West Mercia's criminal justice performance remains above the National and Regional Averages for many key performance metrics including:

- A Magistrate Court conviction rate of 86%, compared to a national average of 82%
- A Crown Court conviction rate of 86% compared to a national average of 79%.
- A witness attendance rate of 88% compared to a national average of 84%

18. A renewed focus on end-to-end performance and 'getting it right first time' has been agreed by the West Mercia Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), chaired by the Deputy PCC.

## **Reforming West Mercia**

### **Alliance Update**

19. The hosted Transactional and Forensics Services concluded as planned in September 2021. At that point IT services moved to a hosted arrangement, with the majority of services due to conclude 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022, the provision of 48 applications until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, and then 30 of those applications until March 2023. All but 100 Warwickshire users will be off West Mercia systems by 31<sup>st</sup> January, with an extension agreed for the remaining 100 until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022. This will be at no additional cost to West Mercia. Otherwise separation remains on target as planned. As stated at the last Panel meeting, this extension of all IT services to the end of January (now with a smaller tail to the end of February) has limited West Mercia's ability to deliver plans to improve digital services for its police officers and the communities they serve.

### **Estates update**

20. The in house Estates service continues to evolve and flourish. Most recently, the direct labour force that were part of a second TUPE from Place Partnership Ltd, have completed the permanent transition to the OPCC Estates Team. There are still some vacancies to recruit to, however the Estates Team continue to provide very good levels of Facilities, Projects and Estates management services to the PCC, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS).

21. Currently, the Estates Team are engaged in the retendering of numerous long term contracts, to commence from 1st April 2022. The aim is to establish new and improved benchmarks for service delivery and value for money. Contracts include but are not limited to; Cleaning, Planned & Reactive Maintenance, Grounds Maintenance and Waste Management services.

22. Capital projects of note include the Redditch Combined Police & Fire Hub project, which is progressing very well. Planning permission was submitted in December 2021 and the project is on track to deliver the new Combined Hub in October 2023. The co-location at Tenbury Fire station by West Mercia Police has progressed well, with building works completed. Plans are for West Mercia Police to co-locate there with HWFRS by April 2022 at the latest.

23. The Estates Strategy continues to be developed in partnership with West Mercia Police, with a final draft version is due for completion in February 2022.

### **Financial management**

24. In the last quarter the finance team has been focused on preparing the budget for 2022/23 financial year. The provisional settlement has been announced by the Home Office and notification of the expected tax base provided from partners. The revenue

budget includes an additional investment of 125 police officers. The PCC has scrutinised the budget proposals from the Chief Constable, and has worked to ensure that the investment made is consistent with the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan. Alongside the officer investment the budget also reflects the requirement to continue to invest in the estate and digital infrastructure. The Finance team has provided support to the PCC through the process to understand the total funding envelope available and to review the proposals put forward from the Force to achieve a balanced budget.

25. Alongside the annual revenue budget, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme have been agreed, which sets out the financial outlook for West Mercia over the rest of the PCC term.

26. The Treasurer Report on Adequacy of Reserves has been completed, to provide assurance that the PCC has the resources available to ensure West Mercia can continue to operate effectively.

## **Reassuring West Mercia's communities**

### **West Mercia Local Policing Community Charter**

27. The Commissioner and his team have worked with the Force to develop the metrics associated with the Charter to track its success and delivery for local communities. The PCC also maintains an active oversight role in monitoring activity against the Charter's commitments. Latest data for the period 1 July to 1 December 2021 shows that:

- 13,933 people have now signed up to Neighbourhood Matters,
- SNTs have used the engagement vans on 537 occasions,
- 1177 events have been attended,
- In terms of priorities, speeding traffic is the dominant priority in every local policing area, accounting of 39% of all priorities in Herefordshire, 44% in North Worcestershire, 33% in Shropshire, 33% in South Worcestershire and 29% in Telford & Wrekin. Anti-social behaviour is the second highest priority.
- Both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have farm thefts as the third highest priority.

### **E - bikes**

28. The Police and Crime Commissioner is seeking to increase visible policing in West Mercia with a further investment of nearly £50,000 in e-bikes. The e-bikes will help officers cover longer distances, with an even greater reach into communities. A mixture of all terrain, off road bikes and urban hybrid bikes will help police reach the most rural of communities, whilst also reducing the need to drive. This investment supports West Mercia Police's commitment in the Local Policing Community Charter to improve visibility and accessibility.

### **Complaints**

29. As set out in the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2021, the PCC is required to publish a statement on complaints handling. This must include how the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account in respect of complaints, and the PCC's assessment of their own performance in carrying out their

complaint reviews function. The first statement was published on the PCC's website in December 2021. The statement will be reviewed and updated in line with statutory requirements. A copy of the statement is attached at appendix 1.

30. The statement highlights the extremely high resolution rate for expressions of dissatisfaction dealt with by the triage team in the Professional Standards Department (PSD). The force's approach to triage has been recognised as best practice in the latest Complaints Handling Newsletter circulated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). This was welcomed by the PCC in a press release issued in January; providing further reassurance to communities that West Mercia Police has effective and efficient processes in place to resolve complaints.

## **PCC's media and communications**

31. The first consultation on the budget was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> December (and closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> January) and received 1,412 responses. This consultation was launched to gather views from the public about where their concerns lie. Increasing visibility and accessibility sat highly as a concern. 69% of respondents said they would be willing to pay more in their council tax for policing. The second consultation, asking the public whether or not they support the PCC's budget report proposals, was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> January and closes on 24<sup>th</sup> January.
32. As part of the budget consultation, the PCC held a public Facebook Live holding to account session with the Chief Constable on 12<sup>th</sup> January. The public were invited to submit any questions they had about the budget, or the police in general, ahead of the session. People also had the opportunity to submit questions during the livestream. The video is still available online for those who couldn't join.
33. As part of the consultation, the team carried out public engagement in various locations. However, due to a spike in COVID cases nationally, these engagements were postponed. A programme for further engagement will be produced as restrictions are further eased.
34. The communications campaign on serious organised crime (SOC), known as 'Everybody's Business', will be launching in February, in association with partners.
35. A campaign plan and delivery plans are being pulled together to support the communication and engagement strategy and, in turn, the Safer West Mercia Plan.

## **Performance and accountability**

### **Holding to account**

36. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding the force to account. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website. Since the last Panel report two formal meetings have been held on the impact of the 2021/22 budget investment and on Force Operations.
37. As set out in the previous section, in addition to the formal meetings, the PCC held a public Facebook Live meeting with the Chief Constable on the budget following publication of the draft budget report. Further details on this are included in the budget consultation report which is appended to the budget report on the agenda.

38. Key findings / outcomes from the thematic meetings include:

- **Impact of the budget investment**

- Headline data shows a welcome shift to online services and an uptake of digital desk.
- The OPCC are engaged with the force around workforce planning. A monthly meeting is in place to ensure governance of resources, front line stabilisation and officer uplift.
- Training in respect of DA is comprehensive.
- Updates to the existing e-learning system and HR system are delayed until 22/23 and 23/24 respectively
- The force has already identified three areas of learning to further improve and mature their priority based planning process in 22/23: not investing the right resources into the process; not engaging key stakeholders at appropriate time; and a lack of maturity in the force budget following the alliance split.

- **Force Operations**

- The uplift in officer numbers within the force has led to an additional 2 sergeant and 17 officer posts in roads policing resulting in a more consistent service to the public.
- Good planning meant that the required provision of force public order resources needed to support COP26 and the G7 summit did not impact on any business as usual activity.
- There has been a significant reduction in the cost of police vehicle damage within the Force Operations department
- Real and perceived barriers deterring underrepresented groups from applying to specialist roles are being identified through discovery days.

39. The next formal meeting takes place at the end of January and will be a performance meeting specifically focussing on homicide and how the force is managing its response to homicide and prevention. The PCC's ongoing scrutiny of this is in response to an increasing trend in homicides across West Mercia, which has seen 13 homicides between 1 April and 31 December 21. This follows 21 recorded homicides in 20/21, compared to an average of 13 homicides for the three preceding years.

40. The issue of victim satisfaction has also been identified by the PCC as a focus area for holding to account with the Chief Constable, following significant and sustained recent declines in performance. The Commissioner and West Mercia Police are committed to delivering high levels of victim satisfaction and maintaining the public's confidence in quality of the service provided. The issue will be discussed in the coming weeks, with a particular focus on satisfaction rates linked to burglary and violent crime. The Commissioner will seek reassurance that equally high levels of service are being offered to victims right across the West Mercia area, regardless of geographic areas.

41. One of the proposals in the PCC's draft budget for 2022/23 is to utilise additional monies from the proposed precept rise to provide additional resources dedicated to investigating the crimes that cause the most harm in society, such as homicide, sexual violence and domestic abuse. The PCC's investment will seek to address concerns that the force does not have the right investigative capacity to deal with these most complex crimes.

## **National Policing Priorities**

42. A key element of Home Secretary's strategic priority for there to be a relentless focus on cutting crime are the new National Crime and Policing Measures, which set out the Government's key national priorities on crime. The key national policing priorities are:

- Reduce Murder and other homicide
- Reduce serious violence
- Disrupt drugs supply and county lines
- Reduce neighbourhood crime
- Improve victim satisfaction with a focus on victims of domestic abuse
- Tackle cyber crime

43. The PCC is required to provide a statement on the contribution of West Mercia Police to achieving improvements against these national priorities. The first statement was published on the PCC's website in January 2022. The statement will be reviewed and updated in line with statutory requirements. A copy of the statement is attached at appendix 2

## **West Mercia perception survey**

44. 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 which has been running for over two years. The survey results are published on the PCC's website. Headline findings from the latest results, quarter two 2021/22, are set out below:

- The majority of residents (84%) agreed that they had confidence in West Mercia Police with a similar proportion confident that they would receive a good service from the force (88%).
- Around 72% of residents agreed that West Mercia Police understood the issues that affect their community. This is a 9% reduction on the previous quarter and an 8% reduction on the same quarter in the previous year.
- 92% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 71% in a non-emergency – stable compared to the previous quarter.
- 19% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – a reduction from 31% in the previous quarter.

## **Force performance reports**

45. A number of internal performance products are produced by the force to enable senior officers and the PCC to maintain strategic oversight of force performance. In particular the PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly and quarterly summary reports. The latest, quarter three performance report for the period October to December 2021, is attached at appendix 3. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practices.

46. The force performance framework uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels. The quarterly 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.

- 47. The quarter 3 report includes a summary table demonstrating how metrics agreed for the Safer West Mercia Plan are integrated into the gold performance framework. As a result, a number of new metrics have been reported on this quarter including Integrated Offender Management re-offending data, mental health incidents and online request for service. Some further indicators are under development and so do not feature yet.
- 48. The PCC's strategic performance lead has begun a mapping exercise with force colleagues to ensure that all the performance metrics agreed for the Safer West Mercia Plan and the 2022/23 budget are captured in a formal directory of PCC metrics which will provide a comprehensive view of all performance commitments agreed with the force.

**HMICFRS inspection reports**

- 49. HMICFRS has commenced an inspection of West Mercia's Custody provision. The inspectors will be in force for a period of two weeks undertaking a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of custody. This is the first custody inspection since 2015 and the report is expected to be published in the spring.
- 50. HMICFRS has published one joint thematic inspection report since the last report to Panel on the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders. Work is ongoing to review the recommendations in this report. The Deputy Chief Constable retains oversight of the force's progress against any recommendations or any areas for improvement through the Service Improvement Board, attended by one of the PCC's staff.
- 51. The Force's PEEL inspection report is scheduled to be published in early February, after the Panel meeting and will be covered in more detail at the next meeting.

**Risk Management Implications**

None.

**Financial Implications**

None.

**Legal Implications**

None

**Equality Implications**

None.

**Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Complaints Handling Report  
Appendix 2 – National Policing Priorities Report  
Appendix 3 – West Mercia Police Performance Report October to December 2021

## **Contact Points**

### **County Council Contact Points**

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### **Specific Contact Points for this report**

Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive