

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

25 November 2021

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2021)

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 updated on a quarterly basis. The delivery plan is subject to monthly scrutiny at the PCC's governance meeting where activity supporting the plan is subject to closer scrutiny. An extract of the delivery plan is included at appendix 1. This covers the latest quarter, July to September 2021.
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.
5. As part of the development work for the new Safer West Mercia Plan a review of the delivery plan's function and format has been completed. In future the delivery plan will remain an internal document providing the PCC with oversight of both completed and planned activity in support of the plan. As discussed and agreed at the Panel's September meeting an extract of the delivery plan will not be included in future reports.

Commissioned service provision

6. To date in 21/22 there have been a significant number of developments within the PCC commissioned service provision, which are illustrated below. One particular area to point out is the increased amount of external funding that the PCC has attracted from the Ministry of Justice and Home Office. The current total stands 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. A number were included in the previous two Panel reports.

Chief Constable

7. Chief Constable Mills commenced in post of 17th September and was sworn in on that date. She has since been implementing a plan for her first 100 days, ensuring she visits as much of the force as possible and working with her chief officer colleagues and the PCC to develop West Mercia Police.

Putting victims and survivors first

Road Safety

8. The RoadPeace pilot scheme provides a new and innovative support and information service for victims of serious injury collisions and is sited within the VAL. The project is proving to be effective with 98 referrals to date, and 95% of users engaging with the service. RoadPeace have seen many more referrals especially since the new RVCC began in post. The majority of these referrals are extremely recent and therefore it may be too soon for them to be accessing support services. However, many victims have expressed they would like to take up the support services at a later stage and until they are ready they continue to be supported regularly by the RVCC. The project has been extended until March 2022 and its effectiveness will be subject to ongoing monitoring to assess the viability for further funding.

Sexual violence and abuse

9. The PCC has been working with local commissioners from Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, the Worcestershire & Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England & Improvement to secure funding for the therapeutic counselling service within West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre. The PCC has committed £100,000 of funding for this service, which offers sexual violence survivors across Herefordshire & Worcestershire therapeutic counselling.
10. The PCC is also working with these partners to support the production of a mental health needs assessment, which will focus on services for survivors of sexual violence and will be used to inform longer term commissioning intentions.
11. The PCC has secured an additional £50,000 of funding from NHS England/Improvement to create a Sexual Violence Officer, a strategic role which will focus on a number of areas within the sexual violence field, with overall aim of improving outcomes for victims of sexual assault and abuse. This funding will be used to fund a sexual violence portfolio lead for an initial period of 12 months, who will work with the PCC, West Mercia Police and partners to deliver the objectives set out in the national NHSE/I Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy. The role will also look at

potential development of a multi-agency strategic group and development of a local strategy.

Exploitation victims

12. As part of the PCC's ongoing commitment, the PCC has recently extended his funding scheme for the victims of modern slavery, human trafficking and forced marriage. Additional funding will continue to provide those in crisis with immediate, emergency support, when police intervention is involved.
13. Officers will use the funding to ensure vulnerable people are safe and supported. In addition to accommodation, it may be used to provide immediate access to food, drink and essential toiletries for individuals who have no means to support themselves. Victims are then referred through the National Referral System or other organisations for further long term support.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Safer Streets round 3 VAWG funding

14. The PCC was successful in securing further funding from the Home Office in October 2021. This fund was specifically designed to improve the safety of public places for all, with a particular focus on reducing violence against women and girls (VAWG) crimes. Two areas were successful in receiving funding: South Worcestershire and Herefordshire.
15. South Worcestershire have been awarded £511,960 and various interventions planned include: Education, Lighting, CCTV, Canals, Parks/underpasses and Taxi Marshalls. Herefordshire have been awarded £515,935. Interventions include: Guardianship Expansion, Education Programme to Partners, Education Programme to Schools/Colleges, Campaign, CCTV, Lighting, Landscaping.

Violence against women and girls

16. The PCC has funded 10,000 personal alarms aimed at increasing personal safety and confidence in public areas. The PCC's team, together with West Mercia Police local policing teams have been distributing the alarms across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Acquisitive crime

17. The 'We Don't Buy Crime' Initiative continues to be supported by the PCC. 1813 SmartWater (SW) packs were purchased in August 2021 by WDBC areas. In August 188 kits were registered, was up from the 146 registered in the previous month, bringing the total registered since April 2019 to 38,324. There has been a total of 56,751 SW packs registered across the West Mercia Police Force since the implementation of the WDBC project in November 2015. Volumes in residential burglary dwelling increased by 32% compared to the previous quarter but remain 26% lower than the same quarter two years ago.

Fly-tipping

18. The PCC has committed to developing a partnership response, working closely with all five CSPs, to properly tackle the issue of fly-tipping and identify ideas and proposals that can be implemented which will help eradicate this damaging criminal offence. A fly-tipping grant round was opened to address the issue, offering £100,000 for up to 2 years of funding from 1 November 2021 until 31 October 2023. A number of bids have been received and the PCC will be announcing the successful schemes in the very near future.

Criminal justice

19. To support recovery following the pandemic the Government has confirmed that there will be no limit on the number of days Crown Courts can sit for the 2021/22 financial year. This will help maximise capacity across the justice system and increase the number of hearings. The caseload in West Mercia is 7% lower than the highest point during the pandemic, but remains well above pre-pandemic levels. Tackling the backlog has been hampered by the closure of the Hereford Crown Court. The PCC has previously offered support to the Her Majesty's Court and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) discussions regarding the current closure of Hereford Crown Court, however this was declined.

20. In the Magistrates' Court, outstanding caseloads are at their lowest level since the pandemic began, with more cases disposed of than received.

21. The Ministry of Justice recently tasked all Local Criminal Justice Boards to complete a Self-Assessment of the Victims' Code of Practice (VCoP). All of the information gathered will be used to produce a minimum data set that can then be used on an ongoing basis for monitoring and reporting. It is hoped to have regular reporting in place next year. In the interim West Mercia has developed an improvement plan designed to address and improve compliance. The Deputy PCC Chairs a Board overseeing compliance across the West Midlands Region as a whole.

Reforming West Mercia

Alliance Update – Provision of IT Services to Warwickshire

22. The arrangements for providing IT support to Warwickshire have been finalised and have been in effect since 1st October 2021. West Mercia now hosts a range of IT services for Warwickshire Police on a further temporary basis. This will ensure key services in Warwickshire are maintained until transition is completed. This involves the provision of some 48 applications for 6 months until March 2022, and then 30 of these applications until March 2023. In addition West Mercia have agreed to provide broader support to Warwickshire for 4 months initially, with the capability of extending beyond that if Warwickshire require. All of these services are being paid for by Warwickshire in full.

23. Warwickshire "remain fully committed to migrating away as soon as possible, so that both forces can benefit in full from the major investments they are making in new and modern IT infrastructure, enabling more efficient and effective delivery of services to the public." The Warwickshire PCC has stated: *"I would like to put on record my*

personal thanks to all the staff in both forces who have worked tirelessly to navigate this highly complex separation. In particular, I don't underestimate the challenges faced by those within the shared IT services over the last weeks and months as they have kept essential services running while also recognising the extra work needed to support this new hosted arrangement. I have been impressed by the focus that has always been on putting the safety of the public first."

24. West Mercia has well laid plans in place to improve digital services for its police officers and the communities they serve. The need to extend the work with Warwickshire does limit the ability to deliver those improvements as planned. However, there is an element of wider public service which means this agreement is the right thing to do. The West Mercia PCC's position is that there cannot be further delays in transition to standalone services and so the commitment from colleagues in Warwickshire that transition will proceed as quickly as possible is welcomed. It is now three years since notice was served to end the Alliance and West Mercia is fully ready to operate as a standalone force.
25. File Storage remains hosted by West Mercia and provided to Warwickshire. All other aspects of the old Alliance arrangements have now concluded.

Estates update

26. The new Estates Service is bedding in well with works progressing to conclusion more swiftly. Since the last report Hindlip phase 2 (refurbishment of the meeting rooms at the Old Hall) has been completed. A Hindlip Masterplan setting out a plan for optimising the use of the site has been approved by the PCC and Chief Officers. Architects have been appointed to design and secure planning permission for the new joint police / fire station at Redditch and the project is on target to deliver the new facility in 2023. Alterations to Tenbury fire station to allow relocation of the police station have been agreed and funding approved by the PCC. It is anticipated the police station will transfer location in the new year.
27. A revised Estates Strategy has been developed in conjunction with West Mercia Police and is with Chief Officers for comment. This sets out a vision for the future policing estate and a route to deliver that vision. Once approved this will set the trajectory and activity for the development of the policing estate over the next few years and will enable a deliverable programme of work that will revitalise the estate.

Financial management

28. Since the update in September the PCC's office has prepared a budget for 2022/23, based on discussions with the PCC to ensure that they are consistent with the proposed police and crime plan. A joint planning session has been held with the Force to agree the key assumptions for the budget, which sets out the overall financial envelope that both the PCC and Force are working within to set the 2022/23 budget. The Force has completed its Priority Based Planning programme and is now working on a budget proposal that meets the agreed financial envelope, fits the operational requirements of the Force and also meets the priorities of the PCC. The Treasurer and finance team will provide advice and support to the PCC to ensure that the Force

budget proposals reflect the priorities in the police and crime plan and that they are providing value for money.

29. The Treasurer is working closely with central government and local authority partners to understand the potential funding scenario's over the medium term which will directly impact on the financial viability of the PCC's plans. The Budget presented by the Chancellor on the 27th October 2021 and the results of the Spending Review are being scrutinised to determine its impact on the assumptions that have been made.
30. The Treasurer is continuing to work closely with the Head of Estates in the development of the Estates Strategy and a review of the capital programme and estates rationalisation plan. The capital programme must be financially viable and there is an expectation that the rationalisation plan will need to deliver revenue savings, which will offset borrowing costs to deliver new capital projects.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

Neighbourhood Matters

31. As previously reported, the replacement for the force Community Messaging System (CMS), Neighbourhood Matters, went live on 1 July. There are now over 11,000 individuals signed up to the system receiving information and updates from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Some teams have signed up groups such as Rural Watch, whilst others have focussed on particular areas that suffer from low confidence in policing.

West Mercia Local Policing Community Charter

32. The Commissioner and his team have contributed to 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. Data to mid-September indicates that across the whole of West Mercia the top three local community priorities identified through Town and Parish Councils are Safer Roads (36%), Crime (26%) and Anti-Social Behaviour (17%). Progress in implementing the Charter and the impact it is having will form part of the PCC's November Holding to Account meeting.

Autumn Roadshows

33. Over the autumn months, the PCC and his team attended a number of public events across the force area including the Shrewsbury Food Festival, the Bromyard Food Festival, The Broadway Food Festival and the Malvern Show. These events provide the PCC with the opportunity to listen first hand to people's concerns and to engage directly on the draft Safer West Mercia Plan.

Animal Welfare Scheme

34. Following joint working between the PCC's office, West Mercia Police's dogs section and the Dogs Trust, the PCC launched a new Animal Welfare Independent Visitor's Scheme (AWS) at the end of September. The scheme aims to promote and ensure the welfare of those animals working within the force. As part of the AWS, independent

visitors are trained to check on the welfare of the animals. The scheme is being managed by the PCC's Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Coordinator and 5 existing ICVs have stepped forward to support the AWS. The first visit took place in October.

PCC's team information

35. As requested by the Panel in September, an organogram for the PCC's team structure has been included at appendix 2. In accordance with statutory information requirements the organogram is published on the PCC's website along with specified demographic and salary information.
36. Two posts shown on the chart are or will shortly be vacant. The PCC's Treasurer (Section 151 Officer) post will shortly be vacant following the recent announcement of retirement of the post holder. Recruitment for her replacement has commenced. In addition, the chart show a new post of Sexual Violence Coordinator. This is a temporary post funded by NHS England and although an appointment has been made, the post holder will not be in place until January 2022.
37. Following a successful recruitment campaign and interview process, two candidates have been appointed to the role of Assistant PCC, replacing the 5 Community Ambassador Posts. The candidates appointed were Nicola Lowery who will be working full time and Paul Middleborough, who will be working part time. Both Assistant PCC's will be in post from 22 November. The decision to appoint 1.5 fte Assistant PCC's was made following an agreed reduction in the Deputy PCC's working hours from 4 to 3 days a week and will ensure the PCC maintains the resilience lost by the change in the DPCC's hours.

PCC's media and communications

38. The consultation for the Safer West Mercia Plan has now closed (1st November). The consultation was shared via the following methods: press releases, PCC website, social media posts (organic and boosted), parish council magazine and newsletters, radio interviews, videos, and 10 public events. Leaflets were shared at other engagements/events and via stakeholders/partners.
39. The Communications and Engagement strategy will be going out for consultation in the coming weeks. This strategy supports the Safer West Mercia Plan.
40. A new communications campaign on serious organised crime (SOC) is being worked on, with a joint campaign on fraud being pulled together in partnership with the force.
41. The PCC has been carrying out joint engagements with the Chief Constable which involves meeting with under-represented communities. These engagements have, so far, taken place in Kidderminster, North Worcestershire, and Telford. There will be three further events taking place in Shropshire, South Worcestershire and Herefordshire.
42. The PCC's social media channels continue to develop. A quarterly performance document will be produced to show the impact, in terms of growth and reach. The PCC's podcast channel has also started again with the new Chief Constable featuring on one, and police volunteers on another. A future programme is being developed.

PCC's Annual Town and Parish Council Survey

43. The attached report (Appendix 3) details the findings from the 4th annual Town and Parish Council Survey, published by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for West Mercia. This year's survey ran from 26th May 2021 to the 18th August 2021. The survey is designed to give town and parish councils from Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire the chance to share their views and opinions on key policing areas. The survey provides the opportunity to inform policing priorities and directions. The report covers four main topic areas: Local Policing, the Charter, Contact and Engagement and Crime and Anti-Social Behaviours. A total of 200 responses were submitted but of these only 97 were fully complete. This year's response rate equates approximately to 21% of eligible councils. To fully understand the views of councils and obtain a representative sample more responses are required and greater consistency in response rate across policing areas.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

44. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable (CC) 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 protecting vulnerable people and a performance meeting focussing on the performance of the Operational Control Centre (OCC), including the impact of a power outage in September.

45. In addition to the formal meetings, the PCC has submitted a number of virtual holding to account challenges to the force on Safer Neighbourhood Team abstractions and most recently on the use of, and service provided by the National Police Air Service (NPAS).

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

- **Protecting vulnerable people**

- The force have a good understanding of repeat victims and constantly evaluate harm.
- The positive impact of additional officers won't be seen for a while due to length of their training.
- The CC is not satisfied with number of enhanced victims that are not receiving updates in line with VCOP compliance. The force are putting processes in place to ensure risk is mitigated including communications to the workforce to put victims first.

- **Performance**

- Business continuity plans were triggered when the outage occurred. This included the rerouting of 999 calls to other forces.
- No complaints were received by the force or PCC's office as a result of the power outage.
- The 80% target for 101 calls will not be achieved by the end of the year '
- Online discovery sessions to attract people into OCC roles were attended by over 400 members of the public.

47. The next planned meeting takes place at the end of November and will review the outcomes of the PCC's budget investment.

Police Ethics and Standards

48. The PCC's draft Safer West Mercia Plan includes a commitment to ensure all individuals and communities are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully. As part of delivering this commitment, the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account for ensuring the Code of Ethics is fully embedded and adhered to within West Mercia Police, and that there is a fit for purpose complaints process which enables the public to raise their concerns or dissatisfaction and have a timely response. There are a number of mechanisms in place to enable regular scrutiny and holding to account in relation to the Code of Ethics, complaints and conduct matters.

49. The PCC receives a weekly briefing document on key professional standards matters including: incidents of note, referrals to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), gross misconduct hearings, officer / staff suspension decisions and upcoming court hearing or inquest dates. Complaints and conduct performance data is reviewed on a quarterly basis across a number of key governance meetings. This includes the Force's Fairness, Policy and Standards Board, as well as quarterly meetings with the IOPC. At this latter meeting, both oversight bodies (the PCC locally, and the IOPC nationally) review the force's quarterly performance data and highlight positive performance as well as any performance pressures or organisational learning.

50. The PCC also meets with the Head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD) on a quarterly basis where any performance concerns can be escalated for further discussion. This meeting also includes a briefing on all live gross misconduct cases, including a focus on any cases related to Abuse of Position for a Sexual Purpose (APSP). An overview of each of the relevant governance meetings is provided to the independent members of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee by way of a quarterly Standards report.

HMICFRS inspection reports

51. HMICFRS has completed its PEEL inspection work, culminating in a 3 week onsite inspection in September. The force has been given some initial informal feedback with a formal debrief scheduled for late November. The publication of the inspection report has been put back a month to February 2022 following the Inspectorate's decision to review its methodology, which will change the format of the final report

52. HMICFRS has published one inspection report since the last report to Panel. This was its final Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) report. 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.

West Mercia perception survey

53. 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. Quarter 2 results have not yet been received and an update will be provided in the next report.

Force performance reports

54. 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.

55. The latest, quarter two performance report for the period July to September 2021, is attached at appendix 4. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practises. The performance framework uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels. The report focusses on gold level key performance indicators (KPI), however there are some measures at a silver level included to create a comprehensive picture across the force.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Q2 2021/22 delivery plan extract

Appendix 2 – Organogram of the PCC's team structure

Appendix 3 – West Mercia PCC's Annual Town and Parish Council Survey 2021

Appendix 4 – West Mercia Police Performance Report July to September 2021

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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