

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Recommendation

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

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and provide an update on police performance.

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.
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 a final update on the Alliance withdrawal in the 'Reform' section.

PCC's team update

5. Following a positive confirmation hearing by the Panel in July, Gareth Boulton has been appointed by the PCC as the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer in the Office of the PCC (OPCC). Gareth started in role on 25th July 2022.
6. A separate recruitment process for the Deputy PCC role has recently concluded with the PCC identifying Marc Bayliss as his preferred candidate. Further information on this appointment is contained in the confirmation report on the agenda for this meeting.

Putting victims and survivors first

Ministry of Justice Funding

£486,205 of additional Ministry of Justice (MoJ) funding has been secured by the PCC to support victims of sexual and domestic violence to March 2025. Securing this investment supports the PCC's priority in his Safer West Mercia Plan to ensure an appropriate range of support services for every victim.

7. The successful bid to the MoJ will fund four additional ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advocates) and IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) working with West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) and West Mercia Women's Aid. The advocates and advisors will specialise in working with;
 - Children and young people identified as having additional needs, who are affected by sexual violence.
 - Children and young people whose abuse has been facilitated through technology.
 - Men and boys who are affected by domestic abuse.
 - Vulnerable children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse.
8. The additional service improvements and benefits to victims arising from the extra funding include an increased number of victims being supported to cope and recover from the harm they have suffered, ensure more vulnerable victims have better access to specialised support services and a reduction in waiting lists for support.

Prevention strategy

9. The joint Force and PCC Prevention Strategy has now been finalised and published. As discussed in the previous report, key objectives of the strategy are fewer victims, less crime, increased public confidence in policing, and greater public involvement in preventing harm.
10. The PCC established a £1m prevention fund in the 2022/23 budget and he is considering a number of bids against this funding.

Needs assessments

11. The PCC has recently commissioned the Force's Strategic Planning and Insight Team to undertake two needs assessments. One is for a domestic abuse perpetrator and the second a children and young people's consultation aimed at informing service provision around domestic abuse and healthy relationships.

Listening to the voice of victims and survivors of serious sexual abuse and assault conference

12. In June the PCC organised a partnership conference attended by over 60 delegates to hear experiences of victims and survivors in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan priority to 'improve responses and outcomes around domestic abuse and sexual violence'. Agencies committed to working as part of a partnership approach that gives direction for sexual assault and abuse services, including developing a whole system sexual assault and abuse services strategy (SAAS) and action plan. As a result a Sexual Assault and Abuse Partnership Board has been established which will hold its first meeting in September.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Safer Streets 4 funding

13. In March the Home Office launched the fourth round of its Safer Streets funding. This committed an additional £50m to support areas persistently and disproportionately affected by high levels of neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls, fear

of crime, and anti-social behaviour. These nationally recognised issues align to a number of priorities under the *Secure* objective of the Safer West Mercia Plan. In particular: 'make West Mercia a safer place by reducing crime and re-offending and 'improve responses and outcomes around domestic abuse and sexual violence'.

14. The PCC, in partnership with West Mercia Police and partners including local authorities, submitted four bids. All were supported resulting in an additional £1.7M of funding. The grants that have been awarded have also been match funded, which means the total funding going into the various projects totals £3.76 million. Examples of projects include:

- In Herefordshire an investment of almost £350,000 into a range of projects, including a local education programme for partners working in the night time economy, schools and colleges, to understand sexually harmful behaviours and new and improved CCTV and street lighting.
- In Telford and Wrekin almost £500,000 will be invested in projects including Neighbourhood Co-ordinators and Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers, an active bystander programme to challenge hidden stereotypes and toxic behaviours and improvements to CCTV and street lighting.
- In Shropshire almost £550,000 will be invested in projects including a pro-active and visible Shrewsbury Ranger Programme, security and taxi marshals and improved lighting, signage and throwlines along the River Severn.

15. In addition, nearly £400,000 will be invested in a West Mercia wide project to improve safety for women and girls.

From Harm to Hope: A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives

16. In December 2021 the government published 'From harm to hope. A 10 year Drugs plan to cut crime and save lives.' The strategy aims to reduce drug-related crime, death, harm and overall illegal drug use. The PCC has been in discussion with partners across the force area on steps needed implement the strategy at a local level.

17. Following these discussions, partners have agreed to the PCC acting as Senior Responsible Officer for two new Combatting Drugs Partnerships in West Mercia, aligned to Integrated Care Board boundaries. The PCC has allocated £100,000 of additional funding to support the work, and to ensure the harm drugs cause in West Mercia's communities is combated.

18. A more detailed report on the drugs strategy is on the agenda of this Panel meeting.

Independent Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Telford (IITCSE)

19. The final IITCSE report was published in July. The Inquiry, which was commissioned by Telford and Wrekin Council in April 2018, found that there were significant failings by public services, including West Mercia Police, in the handling of child sexual exploitation in the borough dating back to the mid-1980s. The report includes 47 recommendations from the inquiry Chair, Tom Crowther QC.

20. Two of the report recommendations are specifically for the PCC and relate to continued funding of CSE initiatives and changes to the PCC's holding to account processes. The PCC has reflected on all 47 recommendations and reviewed where

his office can / should influence or impact against each, both Telford and Wrekin and the whole of West Mercia. This has been developed into a draft delivery plan.

21. The recommendations arising from the Inquiry were submitted to the West Mercia Governance Board where the Chief Constable confirmed that the force are working through the report and developing a response to the recommendations.

Road safety

22. The Safer West Mercia Plan priority to '*reduce the excessive harm associated with West Mercia's roads*' sets out the PCC's commitments to address road safety. Speeding, as well as inappropriate speed, can have a devastating impact on the safety of road users and is a concern raised by many communities across West Mercia. The number of people killed or seriously injured on West Mercia's roads remains disproportionately high.
23. 31st October 2021 saw a new average speed system go live on the A449 in Worcestershire, made possible by a significant investment from the PCC's 2020/21 Road Safety funding round. The project is a partnership between West Mercia Police, Worcestershire County Council and speed technology firm Jenoptik. The average speed system aims to influence and change driver behaviour by ensuring the speed limit is adhered to throughout the whole section of the route, 24 hours of the day.
24. The first six months of the scheme shows that 4027 viable speeding offences have been detected and, encouragingly, no injury collisions have been recorded. In addition the fixed camera scheme has allowed mobile resources that were used on this stretch of road to be redeployed to other mobile sites.

Water safety training

25. In partnership with the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) and the Home and Dry network, the PCC has provided funding for teaching resources to educate children about water safety, and prevent drowning. Eight schools across Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire are piloting the resources, with the view to expand and ultimately help bring water safety education on to the curriculum nationally. Over 200 professionals have downloaded the resources online so far.

Regional collaboration

26. 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. The PCC's commitments to regional collaboration form part of the Safer West Mercia plan commitment, 'West Mercia will form partnerships in the best interests of local communities to reduce crime and harm'. Three regional policy officers support the PCCs. Examples of regional activities include:
 - Consultation around the future operating model of the ROCU. The discussion with the Head of ROCU explored the capabilities that the ROCU deploys to tackle serious and organised crime and how these wide ranging capabilities may need to change in future.

- The four PCCs held a joint confidential inquiry session on crime in prisons which reviewed progress against work previously commissioned by the PCCs. The session discussed what could be done more effectively in future to reduce crime in prisons and crime being perpetrated from inside prisons.
- A review of the regional governance arrangements across criminal justice is progressing. The work will ensure the right priorities and workstreams are being picked up at the regional level
- Work is being undertaken to look at opportunities for the 4 PCCs to work together on strategic road safety issues which are challenging all 4 force areas at present. The issue features in the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan and is a shared priority by the other PCCs in the region. Collaboration in respect of Forensics is also being considered.

Criminal justice

27. The PCC has become the Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) following the departure of the previous Deputy PCC. The LCJB's strategic objectives are to: improve overall efficiency and effectiveness of the CJS, improve outcomes for victims and witnesses and to reduce reoffending. The PCC chaired his first meeting in August, where the LCJB focused on investigation and file quality, performance in the Magistrates' and Crown Courts.

28. A significant backlog remains in the number of Crown Court cases and the PCC continues to work with partners to seek to address this. There are now just over 1,130 Crown Court cases in the backlog which has increased slightly since the last update. One of the key issues is the lack of judges in the Midlands.

29. Another significant issue contributing to the backlog is the continued closure of the Crown Court in Hereford. No plans have been announced as yet from Herefordshire Council to reopen it, and no alternative arrangements are currently operational. The PCC is clear that it is not in the best interests of justice, or victims and witnesses for Herefordshire not to have a functioning Crown Court.

30. Overall performance in the CJS in West Mercia remains stable since the last panel report:

- The overall conviction rate in West Mercia is 86% compared to the National average of 83%
- West Mercia's Hate Crime conviction rate stands at 87% compared to the National average of 77%
- Witness Attendance rates remain the highest in the region at 85%
- West Mercia's Witness Care Units are supporting 21,000 victims and witnesses, 11,000 more than pre-pandemic levels.

Reforming West Mercia

Alliance Update

31. The termination of all remaining ICT services hosted by West Mercia in support of Warwickshire Police came into effect at the end of June. File storage is the only remaining area where West Mercia will continue to provide service to Warwickshire

Police. There will be no further updates on the dissolution of the policing alliance as a result.

Police officer uplift

32. Included in the 2022/23 budget was a further 125 officers for West Mercia, supporting all four core strands of the PCC's strategic objectives within the Safer West Mercia Plan. 15 of these officers were allocated to Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Having due regard to the Safer West Mercia Plan, the Chief Constable has made the decision that 5 of these posts will be additional sergeants to address areas with the lowest supervisory ratios. Sergeants will be posted to Malvern, Redditch, Telford North, Shrewsbury Central and Worcester.
33. The Chief has also decided that the remaining 10 additional PCs into Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be deployed in line with the top 10 Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) on the Vulnerability Location Index (VLI) equalling 2 officers per LPA.
34. The PCC continues to monitor and scrutinise the force's delivery of the local and national uplift through monthly workforce planning boards.

Firearms range

35. As part of the PCC's commitment to ensure West Mercia Police has the facilities to keep communities safe he has approved £16.74m for a new firearms training centre. The new facility will, subject to planning permission, be built at West Mercia Police's headquarters and will feature a 50 metre indoor range, a building search facility training area and a training school with classrooms.
36. West Mercia Police requires access to a facility of this standard in order to maintain compliance with national standards around officer training and to meet the strategic policing requirement. This is vital to ensure that the force can call upon the full range of high quality policing services when they are needed in local communities.

Estates update

37. The consultation on the PCC's draft estates strategy closed at the end of July. 197 responses were gathered, including additional comments from West Mercia Police. This consultation was shared across the same platforms as the 'Your Views' survey. Further information on the estates consultation results is contained in a separate report on this Panel meeting agenda.
38. The estates service continues to progress major projects in respect of the proposed firearms training unit and the new combined police and fire hub at Redditch.
39. Significant resource has been committed to understanding and resolving issues around the estate and IT infrastructure, which have demonstrated capacity to cause significant problems for the Force. A historic lack of planning, maintenance and investment has

been found, which will now require collaborative work with the police to address.

40. The Estates service has also recently facilitated the move of Herefordshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub into new police premises in Hereford city centre.

Financial management

41. The process to prepare the 2023/24 budget has commenced. The PCC has set out his priorities for the following financial year and has undertaken a consultation with the public on the policing issues that affect them. This has been done at this early stage in the process to ensure that these will be reflected in the budget build process.

42. The PCC is meeting monthly with the Chief Constable to make sure there is clear understanding of how the force are building their budget to reflect the issues raised above and the Police and Crime Plan. This process will continue through the end of summer and into autumn with more detail being added to the budgets as each departments requirements are developed. Alongside the annual revenue budget the Treasurer (OPCC) will be working alongside the Director of Commercial Services (Force) on the medium term financial scenarios and capital programme. There has also been engagement with the Police and Crime Panel around enabling earlier briefing and scrutiny for the Panel during the budget build process for 2023/24. This would incorporate a briefing to the Panel in December 2022, followed by facilitating a Panel working group in December 2022 / January 2023.

43. The finance team are continuing to work closely with the Estates service around large capital projects such as the recent approval of a new Firearms Training Unit and the development of the Redditch Joint Police & Fire station. They are also supporting the estates team to invest in the maintenance of the current estate and maximising effectiveness and efficiency.

44. Finance is also supporting the Commissioning Manager to provide an appropriate range of support services for victims and to deliver effective, early intervention and prevention for vulnerable people. Finance have supported bids and investments highlighted previously in this report.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

West Mercia Local Policing Community Charter

45. The PCC supported West Mercia Police in launching their *Local Policing Community Charter* in March 2021, following consultation with local communities. The charter covers six key areas for improved service delivery: visibility & accessibility, responding to communities, prevention, vulnerability, relationships and partnerships. A recent review commissioned by the Chief Constable of the charter in each of the six areas, has produced a number of recommendations to ensure the charter continues to be effective and efficient as it continues to develop.

46. Monitoring of the delivery plan to support these recommendations will be via the Community Charter Delivery Group attended by a PCC representative. A copy of the charter delivery plan is included at appendix 1.

PCC's media and communications

47. The PCC's public survey, 'Your Views', closed on 11th July. The survey was shared via all social media platforms, community groups on Facebook, Neighbourhood Matters, public engagement events, meetings that the PCC and Asst PCCs attended, PCC newsletter and partners. 1,407 responses were gathered. The survey is intended to inform budget priorities for both the PCC and West Mercia Police contributing to the Safer West Mercia Plan priority 'West Mercia manages its resources to maximise value, effectiveness, efficiency and meet demand'

48. The OPCC team has attended a series of large scale planned public events. More events will take place from September onwards. These will include going along to a mix of large events, such as Fresher's Weeks, and smaller more local sessions that take place in community groups. A new survey will be built to gain further views and understanding of issues facing communities.

49. Following the PCC supporting West Mercia Police in the successful rollout of Neighbourhood Matters, the public are now able to sign up to send messages, news and updates to the PCC on the same platform. The PCC continues to promote Neighbourhood Matters to the communities of West Mercia.

50. The PCC continues to monitor data on his engagement and reach with communities. Across all social media platforms, the numbers of people 'following' the PCC's account has increased. During the period, April to June, 71 press releases and statements have been issued ensuring that the PCC maintains a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing his part in community leadership and providing reassurance where necessary. This supports the Safer West Mercia Plan priority to 'ensure all communities have a voice that is heard within policing, criminal justice and community safety matters'.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

51. The PCC has a programme of regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable as part of his role in holding her to account. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website. Since the last Panel report one thematic meeting has been held on 'Connecting with Communities' addressing a range of communication, accessibility and engagement areas.

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

- The Chief Constable is confident that activity is in place to fill critical PCSO roles.
- West Mercia Police has one of the highest sign up rates for Neighbourhood Matters of any force in the country using the platform
- The increased uptake of reporting incidents online has not reduced demand in 101 calls.

- Following evaluation, the force will look to roll out a Street Watch initiative launched in Wythall, Worcestershire, across the force.
- Priority for the force this year has to be recruitment of student officers, however the recruitment of Specials remains a challenge, with low levels of interest in the role.

53. In response to his concerns in relation to West Mercia Police call handling and increased demand, the PCC has held a further meeting with the Chief Constable. The meeting focused on West Mercia Police's plan to improve call handling performance and their efforts to reduce demand on the OCC.

54. In addition to the formal meeting, a Facebook Live meeting was held on safer roads at the end of June. A media campaign was run in advance of the meeting to encourage as many people as possible to participate by submitting questions and watching the meeting. Over 500 people watched or got involved in the live stream session. Topics raised by the public included speeding, E-Scooters, and work with partners.

55. To supplement the formal meetings, the PCC also runs a virtual holding to account process, whereby performance and service issues that do not require a focused thematic meeting, but are areas for which he wishes to retain closer oversight, are scrutinised on an ad hoc basis. The virtual process is run via email and requires the Chief Constable to provide a written response to the concerns raised. Recent virtual holding to account activity has focused on specific issues relating to workforce diversity, performance, and serious sexual violence. In the case of serious sexual violence and performance, requests have been made to the Chief Constable with responses awaited in due course.

West Mercia perception survey

56. As part of the PCC'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.

57. The quarter 1 results for 2022/23 have yet to be received and will be included in the next Panel report.

Force performance reports

58. 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 one performance report for the period April to June 2022, is attached at appendix 2. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practices.

59. 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.

HMICFRS inspection reports

60. HMICFRS has published two thematic inspection reports since the last report to Panel on the police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive Crime and a joint inspection report on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Work is ongoing to review the recommendations in these reports.

61. 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.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Local Policing Charter Delivery Plan

Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police Performance Report April to June 2022

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

Gareth Boulton, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive