



Protecting
people
from harm



Strategic Assessment 2020-2021

SPI/2020/196



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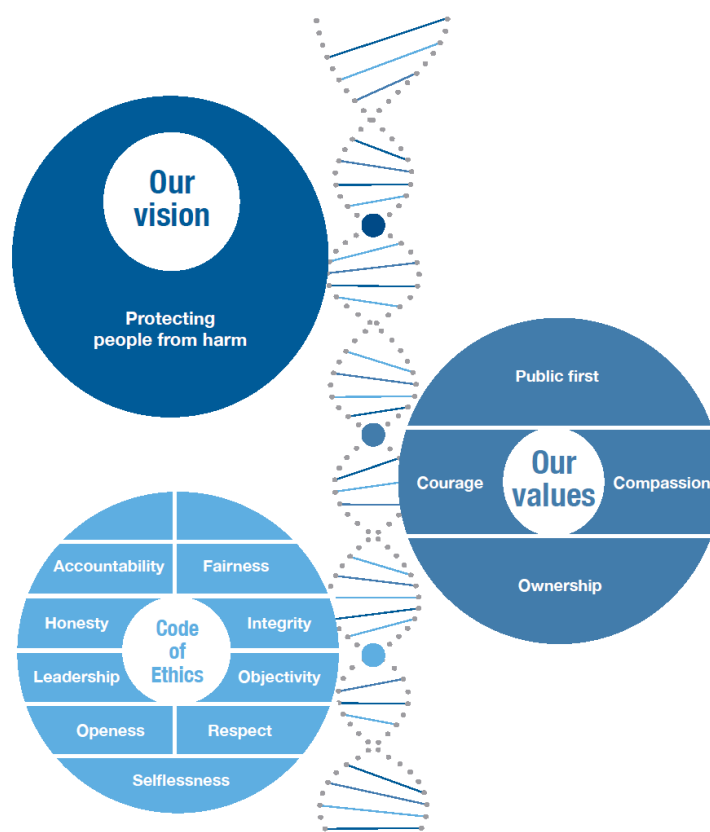
Summary

The Strategic Assessment provides an overview of the current and medium-term future issues that affect, or have the potential to affect, our communities. It informs future policing activity in areas of prevention, intelligence gathering, enforcement and policing strategy.

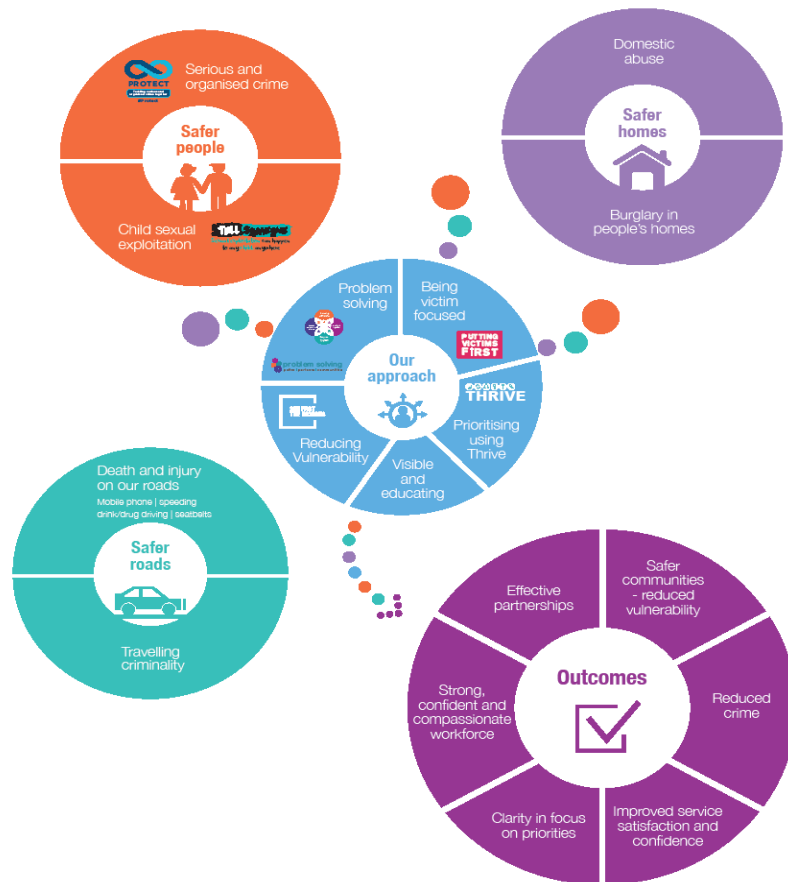
The areas that we assess as the highest threat are Domestic Abuse and Child Exploitation and we will continue to prioritise them. The key aspects that inform this threat are the level of potential harm and the vulnerability of victims. We will also focus on Serious Organised Crime, Organised Acquisitive Crime and Road Collisions where members of the public are killed or seriously injured.

The force has undergone significant recent change in its response to Serious Organised Crime (SOC) and our renewed focus has helped us to develop a more detailed picture of organised crime and, specifically, how individuals become involved in organised crime; the pathways that lead into criminal involvement, so that we can work with partners to remove those factors or divert individuals away from crime.

Our vision and values



Our policing priorities



The Policing Context

The force operates in a complex national landscape with economic, legal and political influences on our local policing delivery and technological and social influences on the nature of crime and criminal activity. National priorities such as the Strategic Policing Requirement and Policing Vision as well as the priorities established by the National Crime Agency in relation to Serious Organised Crime influence the activity we prioritise in the force. Our own priorities are much broader than Serious Organised Crime and are informed by our assessment and the priorities of our Police and Crime Commissioner.

Other areas with an unknown outcome at this time include the impact of leaving the European Union including; demographic changes and potential unrest, the impact on the economy of trade agreements, the potential opportunities that might open up to criminals and the organisational changes required regarding European arrest warrants and data exchange.



Child Exploitation

West Mercia has moved to its focus in line with the national trend to look at all forms of Child Exploitation (CE). Child Sexual Abuse is one form of exploitation within this context, the other is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). CCE occurs when an individual or group asserts an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into engaging in criminal activity. This definition will incorporate children who are exploited through Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) and the criminal drugs activity known as 'County Lines' where children are usually involved. Addressing this issue is a priority at a regional and national level and West Mercia will address this through its Safer People focus.

Serious and organised crime

Most Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) are thought to be involved in many types of serious criminality, but the primary criminal activity is the supply of drugs. Many investigations involving Organised Crime Groups in West Mercia have been brought to conclusion with members receiving significant prison sentences, and their criminality has been disrupted to the extent that they no longer pose a discernible threat. Organised Crime Groups are also active within West Mercia in the commission of Child Criminal Exploitation offences, acquisitive crime, financial crime, counterfeiting goods and violence.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. The strategic location of West Mercia and its connectivity enables networks from Birmingham, London and Merseyside to impact potential markets within West Mercia.



Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is an area where we work especially closely with professionals and partners to develop a plan of activity to support and safeguard victims. The increase in DA has been suggested to be due to increase in the public reporting to the police, and better police recording practices. It remains, however, a significant concern to the force.

The force has developed its focus on vulnerability and domestic abuse through a Vulnerability Strategy which seeks to embed the concept that safeguarding is everyone's business and ensures that everyone understands the need to see past the obvious and use 'professional curiosity' to make sure that positive action is taken.

Over the next three to four years, it is anticipated that levels of domestic abuse demand will stabilise as improvements in service delivery are established and prevention activity is delivered more consistently.

Organised Acquisitive Crime (OAC)

The force is experiencing an increase in the number of vehicles that are stolen by means of breaking into homes to steal the keys. The vehicles stolen are usually high value and may be stolen for parts or for resale.

We have also, to a lesser degree, seen the theft of cars using technology that removes the need for a key including the interception of the car key signal.

Acquisitive crime can have a marked impact on victims especially where homes are invaded and sentimental items are stolen. A national intelligence unit, Opal, has been created with a remit to discover and enhance the development of operational intelligence associated with serious organised acquisitive crime (SOAC).



Death and injury on our roads

The majority of collisions in the force area lead to only slight damage and there were fewer deaths in 2019 compared to the previous year. The types of casualty are linked to the speed limit in the area, for example, pedestrians and cyclists are more likely to be involved in incidents in a 30mph area rather than 60mph areas.

One of the most common causes of collisions is speed, as well as an increase in risk taking behaviours such as drink/drug driving and the use of mobile phones when driving. There is more of an emphasis to police the risk taking behaviours on our roads which should in turn decrease the number of collisions.

Motorcyclists remain a disproportionately high number of killed and seriously injured casualties.

Road safety is a concern for the force and we regularly analyse collisions to identify trends and routes where we can focus policing activity.

The Strategic Roads Network (SRN) is undergoing improvement across West Mercia and this is expected to impact on the reports of road traffic collision incidents. With temporary road layouts, road closures, and new road layouts, West Mercia is likely to see a small rise in collisions as the public get used to the road changes.