

Your policing

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



I am pleased to welcome you to my Annual Report for 2014-15.

As your Police & Crime Commissioner, I do my utmost to represent your views and act on your behalf to hold the Chief Constable, Simon Byrne, to account for the delivery of efficient and effective policing. I also work in a strong partnership with the Constabulary, to ensure that policing in Cheshire continues to develop into an agile, visible and innovative service which is equipped to meet the challenges of policing our communities.

When I came into office, I set out my vision to make Cheshire an even safer place to live. I am proud to report that crime is down by over 4% at the lowest level since the early 1990s and crime detection is at the highest rate since 2010.

In this year's report, I have showcased the work that is being undertaken to place victims at the heart of the Criminal Justice System.

I have also highlighted how the Constabulary and others are being supported to develop responses to people in mental health crisis and how policing has been protecting the vulnerable and tackling rural crime, business crime and alcohol-related harm.

Meeting the financial challenge faced by policing is one of my key roles as your Commissioner. I take great pride that, through working with the Chief Constable, I have been able to set a budget which is focused on ensuring that investment can be made in visible local policing and supports the Chief Constable to meet his 'We're Here' commitments.

Very importantly, I want to make clear that all the work that is highlighted in this report could not have been

achieved without the hard work and dedication of the police officers, PCSOs, police staff, special constables and police volunteers who serve our great county. On behalf of the people of Cheshire, I want to thank each and every one of them for their efforts in making Cheshire an even safer place to live.



John Dwyer
Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire



Blue Light collaboration

In an era of shrinking public sector budgets it is essential that bluelight emergency services look at ways we can work together to deliver improved services for the public.

Over the last twelve months I have worked in partnership with the Chief Constable and leaders from Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and the North West Ambulance Service to initiate a wide ranging programme of work overseen by a partnership board, which I chair alongside the Cheshire Fire Authority Chairman. The programme is exploring ways to work together for the benefit of our local communities and provide services and systems which support frontline emergency services.

In addition to working with local partners, Nottinghamshire Police have now joined the existing Multi-Force Share Service collaboration with Cheshire Constabulary and Northamptonshire Police. This ensures that continued financial savings are delivered through shared support services such as finance and human resources.

Volunteer!

I am committed to increasing the number of people who actively work alongside the Constabulary to support policing.

There are many opportunities for the public to participate as Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers and Police Cadets. Since I came into office, over 1000 people have been involved in supporting policing as volunteers, and Special Constables have dedicated a total of over 66,000 hours to help make Cheshire safer. Volunteering provides people with new skills and opportunities and a number of volunteers have now joined the police service as officers or PCSOs.

My objectives

I have refreshed my Police & Crime Plan which sets the direction for policing in Cheshire and is the basis on which I work in partnership with the Chief Constable and hold him to account for the delivery of policing services.

The Plan was developed following consultation with over 1,350 Cheshire residents about their priorities for policing. This ensured the Plan reflects your views along with the changing political, partnership and policing landscape.

My overarching priority is to ensure that victims and the needs of victims are prioritised throughout the criminal justice system. The five objectives in the Police & Crime Plan are:



- 1 : Enhance frontline policing to enable the Constabulary to prevent and further drive down crime.**
- 2 : Protect Cheshire's communities from harm.**
- 3 : Support victims and witnesses of crime and take a robust stance in tackling those who offend especially those who do so repeatedly.**
- 4 : Continue to build on the strong partnership between the police and the communities of Cheshire.**
- 5 : Ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective police service. This will include building on the use of innovative technology to deliver better services to the communities of Cheshire.**

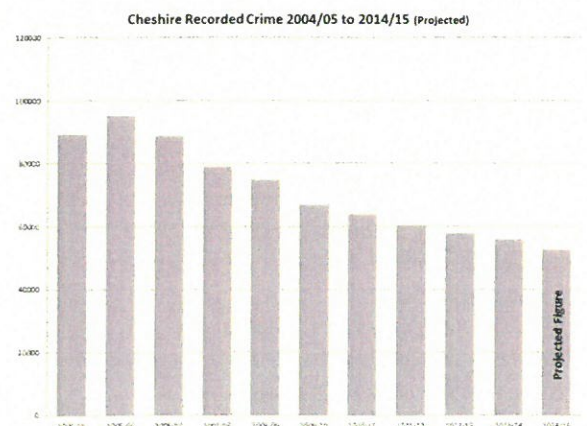
Shining a light on performance

I am pleased to be able to report on excellent performance by the Constabulary against the objectives in my Plan. In 2014/15, there was over a 4% reduction in crime compared to the previous year and the lowest rate since the early 1990s. This means that there were over 2,600 fewer victims of crime last year.

The number of crimes solved has increased by 5.5% to 31.7%, the highest level since 2010. The number of anti-social behaviour incidents fell significantly with over 3,700 fewer incidents across Cheshire. In addition in 2014/15, 14% more warrants have been executed on those evading justice and over £1.6 million of criminal assets were confiscated.

I also welcome the reductions which the Constabulary has made in acquisitive crimes which have a huge impact on a victim's quality of life: burglary has been reduced by 15% to the lowest level for 25 years; robbery has fallen by 25% and car theft decreased by 17%.

Whilst this is good performance, I am not complacent and there is more I wish to do.



Setting a budget for investment

An important part of my role as your Commissioner is to set the budget for policing in Cheshire. This is not something that I take lightly. I need to fund the police to prevent and reduce crime, place victims at the centre of the services they deliver and protect and support the front-line. Current police funding has made setting the budget challenging as I have had to find £8 million savings whilst also aiming to balance the books to achieve the objectives in my Police & Crime Plan to create a truly victim centred service.

I have been working with the Chief Constable, as part of the next stage of my root and branch review, to agree savings to meet the budget gap and to enable policing priorities to be delivered. This has allowed me to identify how significant savings can be made through changing the way contracts are negotiated, how frontline staff are supported and in the way that the Constabulary is structured. I received strong public support for a small increase in the council tax for policing, amounting to £3 per year for an average Band D household, although Cheshire residents continue to pay one of the lowest levels for policing in the country.

I have set a £190 million police budget for investment which will achieve a visible, agile and well equipped service to meet the increased challenges of policing Cheshire. This supports the Chief Constable in implementing a new model of operational policing which invests in local policing with specialists to support the response

to complex issues such as child sexual exploitation.

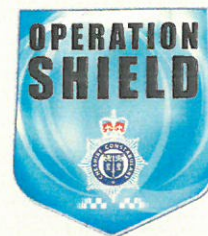
The highlights of the improvements are:

- **Stronger, more visible** local beat patrols.
- **More resources** into local response and crime investigation, therefore up-skilling more police officers in investigative techniques.
- **A stronger focus** and greater resilience on key issues of concern, including child sexual exploitation, rape and domestic abuse and responding to the emerging threats of modern slavery and human trafficking.
- **A growth of 53 additional police officers** recruited by March 2016, and 131 extra officers aligned to neighbourhoods by the same date.
- **Maintaining PCSOs** to ensure that visibility and public engagement is maximised.
- **Support for victims** based on 'We're Here' principles – we, the police, come to you, at a time and location to suit.
- **New technology** to support mobile working and a programme of flexible software and systems to reduce the need for officers to spend time in stations.
- **A wide range of methods for the public to access the police** (online, police contact points, partnership working & face to face) will be maintained and further developed, to ensure accessibility.
- **Enhanced crime recording function** to ensure a high level of data quality.
- **Capacity and flexibility** will be maintained to respond to national threats of terrorism and cyber-crime.

The Constabulary has continued to make great progress in reducing burglary across the county.

The positive progress has not led to complacency and in March 2015, I funded Operation Shield, protecting homes and business through a unique forensic DNA liquid which links stolen property and the offender to the crime scene.

Over 1000 kits have already been distributed by police officers in hotspot areas. This has been complemented by a proactive publicity campaign and targeting of known offenders. The Operation will continue to ensure that the work we do deters criminals and makes people's homes safer. Domestic burglary is now at its lowest level for 25 years.



Business crime

This year, business robbery reduced by over 40% and incidences of shoplifting have fallen by over 8%. The focus has been on catching offenders and preventing crime and I have been keen to make sure that businesses report crimes so that an intelligence picture can be built up.

Over the last 12 months the Constabulary has worked with employers to recognise what they can do to mitigate problems and risks and how they can be more overt in their crime prevention techniques. A conference was held with representatives of the business community to support this and develop how businesses could work closely with the police to further reduce business crime.

Some criminals are getting smarter but we will continue to rise to the challenge and actively work with businesses to raise awareness and provide advice on how to prevent cyber-crime.

Integrity & ethics

Policing by public consent requires transparency and integrity to maintain the public's trust in policing.

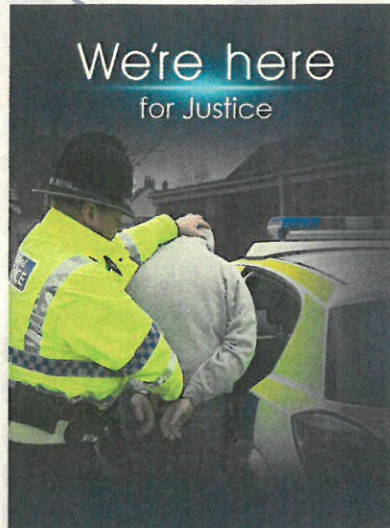
During 2014/15, the Chief Constable and I have widened the scope of the Audit Committee to scrutinise police ethics and integrity issues. The Committee's membership has also increased and there are now six independent people undertaking this important role.



Survivors of rape and sexual assault

Being a victim of any crime can be frightening and upsetting. However, rape and sexual assault are extremely distressing crimes for a victim and the effects can last for a life time. In Cheshire I have taken the lead role, as part of an alliance of funding partners including NHS England, the four local authorities and Cheshire Constabulary, to jointly commission a new service for all victims of rape and sexual assault worth £330,000 per year.

The new service will provide the after care service to current and non-recent victims of sexual assault, rape or sexual abuse across the whole of Cheshire in community based locations. The new service will also provide support for victims of all ages, including those under 13, an age range which was not included previously. The Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre (RASAC), an established specialist agency providing support for people in Cheshire and Merseyside has been awarded the contract which is now in operation.



I was shocked by the horrific findings of the Independent Inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. It is a matter that I take very seriously and I have been bringing together the Chief Constable, leaders from the council, health service and Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards to review child safeguarding arrangements across Cheshire and to continue to strengthen working together to tackle the problem.

There is some excellent partnership work already taking place with agencies committed

Victims Information Pack

A recurring theme from the 'Victims Voice' consultation I undertook last year was the need for more accessible and readily available information for victims. I listened to this feedback and commissioned a Victims Information Pack.

Since June 2014, police officers have been providing victims of crime with the pack to support them from the moment they report a crime through to a trial and beyond if necessary. Each victim differs in the amount of support they require but there are some fundamental principles that apply to all victims such as providing clear information about the process and what happens next, keeping them updated about their case and signposting them to additional support. This is a vital tool that explains victim's entitlements under the Victims Code and guides victims through the process including helping them to complete a Victim Personal Statement, which can be used in court to explain the impact of the crime on the victim.



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A Restorative Just

Restorative justice puts victims in control, enabling them to tell the offender how they feel, and the consequences of the offender's actions. I have awarded £93,500 to Victim Support, a charity that provides help and support for victims of crime, to develop and deliver a Restorative Justice Hub in Cheshire.

The hub helps victims to cope and recover from their ordeal, whilst also having a role in reducing future victims, as

to prevent child exploitation

working even closer together through sharing best practice, and forming specialist DV teams in each council area.

I have also provided funding to the 'Know and See' campaign to ensure that everyone

W can spot the signs of CSE. Part of this campaign included targeted distribution of packs containing information and advice to social workers, teachers and others who work with young people. Awareness packs have been sent to hotels and taxi drivers across the county, enabling staff to recognise the signs of child sexual exploitation.

Support victims

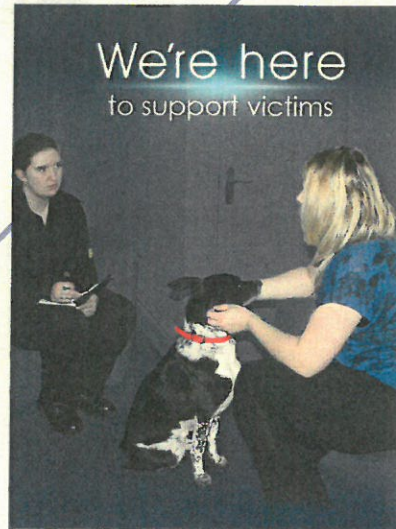
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Tackling domestic abuse

My priority is to not only tackling those who commit abuse but supporting those who suffer it and I have committed over £200,000 to support and develop services over the last 12 months.

This has included:

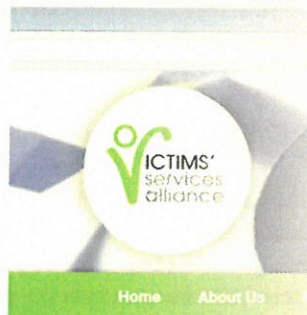
- Funding of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) in Cheshire to provide essential dedicated support to victims of domestic abuse.
- Support for the Constabulary in the implementation, management and enforcement of Domestic Violence Prevention Orders.
- Expansion of 'live-link' facilities which allows victims to give evidence to Court remotely without fear and intimidation.
- The development of a consistent cross-agency framework to monitor how well local areas are doing in responding to domestic abuse.



Online guide for victims

There is a vast range of service and support networks available to victims with some agencies offering bespoke advice and support dependent on the type of crime.

Often people are unaware of exactly how many organisations are out there. This is why I have commissioned the development of an online directory to guide victims to providers of the help and support they need to cope and recover. I have been working alongside the voluntary sector to make sure we have a comprehensive local resource. The website will be launched in summer 2015.



Hate crime

Hate crime is abhorrent to me. Nobody should have to tolerate or suffer abuse of any kind and over the course of the year I have begun to address the need of people who perceive that a crime has been committed against them based on prejudice.

I have allocated over £73,000 to organisations, such as The Lesbian & Gay Foundation, disability centres and Canal Boat Adventure Project, to

ensure that victims of hate crime get the help and support they need.



Hub for Cheshire

Research shows that restorative justice can be effective in reducing re-offending.

I have also provided an additional £100,000 to expand the hub to provide an independent mediation service to help rebuild community relations in entrenched circumstances such as neighbour disputes. The hub also offers crucial family mediation where there has been a breakdown of relationships in the home and where a child or young person may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Community safety funding

Partnership working and preventative activities have been the focus for nearly a million pounds worth of grants for community safety schemes.

This includes targeted activities for young people, initiatives to divert drug users, new ASB Tools & Powers, programmes of activity to reduce re-offending and alcohol-related violence. I also bring together the Chairs of Cheshire's four Community Safety Partnerships on a regular basis to discuss Cheshire-wide issues, local performance and emerging risks for our community.

Crime prevention fund - Year 2

£100,000 was put aside to support local communities and organisations who wanted to make a difference in Cheshire. Over £85,000 has been awarded to 27 projects with three projects awaiting consideration. Each project is required to obtain match funding, which means that my investment has been doubled.

A range of projects have been set up across the county tackling a variety of issues, including reducing anti-social behaviour, tackling drug and alcohol abuse, helping vulnerable people and raising awareness of hate crime.

Police contact points

The introduction of Police Contact Points across Cheshire has provided a valuable alternative method for the public to access police services.

The Contact Points are interactive touchscreen systems which have been placed in convenient locations to allow the public to speak to the Constabulary via telephone or web chat and also provide an A-Z of frequently asked questions. The link between the kiosk and the Constabulary means that the Contact Points provide a service outside of normal police helpdesk opening hours.



Responding to those in crisis

It is essential that those who suffer from mental health issues receive the support they need, at a time when they need it and are diverted away from contact with Criminal Justice System where appropriate.

Through working with partners across Cheshire I aim to achieve a parity of care between physical and mental health crisis care. In November, I was able to secure a joint commitment from partner agencies across Cheshire which sets out how organisations will work together to make sure that people in crisis receive urgent mental health care.

This commitment is now supported by a comprehensive multi-agency action plan which will be led and delivered by a cross-agency group.

I have continued to support and fund the Constabulary in developing an effective response to mental health crisis. The mental health street triage scheme which sees police constables and mental health nurses working side by side to offer an immediate response to mental health

crisis has been expanded, with support from health and other partners, from its initial pilot to a Cheshire wide project. It continues to show great success with a 90% reduction in detentions under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act during periods when the team are on duty.

Work is on-going to further develop joint working between police and health professionals and over recent months mental health nurses have been located in the police control room to assist in dealing with incoming calls where potential mental health issues have been flagged and that may result in the deployment



John Dwyer spends time with the triage nurses.

of specialist resources.

I have also worked with the Constabulary to enable victims with mental health issues, who are in need of support, to be referred to the mental health triage team. This will provide specialist assessment and access to local community based mental health services for those victims who are assessed as needing them, maximising the use of the specialist resources deployed in the teams.

Our community - our opportunity

Investment in a pilot scheme in Runcorn saw the community decide where the money was spent. In two rounds of voting, 21 projects, including activities for younger people, older people, sport, health and community activities received funding following over 1,300 public votes.

Early evaluation of the projects reveals that the Job Club has already helped people into employment, the lunch club for isolated older residents at the Funny Onion Café is packed every Friday, Heath Rangers Football Club has created extra teams as it has so many new participants and the Wild Dance Company is going strong. Runcorn Wrestling Academy has featured in a documentary being filmed by Liverpool John Moore's university.

Crime and incident levels during the early summer were lower than they have been for the last two years. The pilot project could not have happened without the support of local residents and partners including, Halton Housing Trust, Halton Borough Council, Wellbeing Enterprises and the Grange Forum

Four new projects, one in each council area are being introduced this year.



Tackling alcohol-related harm

Over 18,000 alcohol related incidents were dealt with by the Constabulary last year, with the cost of alcohol harm in Cheshire being a staggering £416.69 million each year. As such I have continued to make tackling it a priority for policing.

The Constabulary has continued to rise to the challenge. 2,000 breathalyser tests were completed in December to target drink drivers and initiatives have cracked down on premises that are serving alcohol to those who have had too much or are under 18. Further operations have seen Chester door staff at certain locations supplied with breath testing equipment to test the levels of alcohol on anyone who they believe has had too much to drink, before allowing entry to the premises.

I am working with other Commissioners and locally with partners, to explore how measures such as Minimum Unit Pricing, reductions in drink driving limits and the improved use of licensing powers can help to prevent and reduce the cost of alcohol harm in our communities. Work will continue to ensure that people are kept safe, alcohol awareness is raised and firm action is taken against those who use and supply alcohol irresponsibly.



In July 2013, I appointed a Youth Ambassador, Dominic Rogers, to represent the views of children and young people. Since then, Dominic has consulted with young people to make sure that their views are represented in my Police & Crime Plan.

A number of projects have been initiated and completed as a result of the issues that young people have raised. Examples include:

- A project has focussed on the relationship between young people and the police. Dominic has worked alongside Chester University to look at

the relationships and how officer training can be adapted. He is now working with the Constabulary to implement the recommended changes.

- Dominic is looking at the impact of parental imprisonment on young people. He is leading a working group of partner agencies to investigate how we can work better together to support young people to help them recover from the impact.

- As a result of issues raised by young people following an audit of the custody process, Dominic has worked alongside the Constabulary and partners to revise the documentation given out in custody to make it easier to understand

- A video showing what it is like to call the police has been produced with primary school students. Students raised the concern that they did not know what it was like to call the police and were scared of what would be asked. The completed video is available in a range of formats and aims to ensure that young people know what to expect when calling the police.



Rural communities are important to me. I placed rural crime as one of the priorities in my Police & Crime Plan and I have been active in the national Rural Crime Network.

The Constabulary has been working to better define rural crime so they know how best to tackle it, and meet the expectations of victims. It is not just about burglaries or anti-social behaviour that happen in the countryside, there are specific crimes such as poaching, animal rustling, metal theft and theft of agricultural machinery. Recently, an organised crime group who stole several agricultural vehicles received a combined total of over 14 years in prison and I want to see more of these criminals brought to justice.

I have been keen to ensure that rural communities feel included and not isolated



I have been delighted this year that my campaign to apply pressure to the automotive industry to ensure that there is a traceable and accountable process for vehicle repairs has made significant progress.

Records show that in excess of 250,000 previously written-off vehicles are returned to our roads every year and thousands of us purchase second hand cars in good faith from a dealer or private sale but do we know how safe they really are? Many cars which have been insurance write-offs are returned to the roads for sale and I want to make sure that we can easily trace a vehicle's accident and repair history.

I am concerned about road safety and the need to reduce the number of road traffic collisions which result in life changing injury or death. I have been campaigning to change the way that a structurally damaged vehicle is written-off. A write-off should be crushed and never see the light of day again. If it is not a write-off then it should be repaired by an authorised body shop with the skills, materials and equipment to ensure the vehicle is returned to the roadworthy condition achieved by its manufacturer.

I highlighted this problem on BBC Inside Out North West in February and I am actively working with senior officials at the Department of Transport to tackle the issue.

when it comes to policing and confident enough to report rural and wildlife crimes to the police. Initiatives have been introduced, such as mounted volunteers who can act as the eyes and ears of our communities to report anything suspicious either to the police or CrimeStoppers. This results in local people being involved in how their area is policed.

The Chief Constable and I also held a conference on rural crime which offered crime prevention advice and provided the Constabulary with feedback which will help to shape the Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy.

Public meetings embrace online views

The Chief Constable and I have been hosting a series of community engagement events across the county inviting the public to tell us what you want from your police service.

The Working Together events have been held at colleges, universities and other venues in the county's biggest towns. The aim has been to allow the community to speak to neighbourhood officers to discuss localised crime and disorder issues, ideas and priorities as well as receiving crime prevention advice and information, before joining with stakeholders from the local area to hear the strategic vision from Chief Constable, Simon Byrne and myself.

Using every day technology, people have been participating from the comfort of their homes or offices as each meeting has been webcast live. Viewers have been



invited to log on to the Cheshire Police website and act as they would if they were at the meeting in person, asking questions and voting on priorities either via email or through Twitter.

It is hoped that by working together, we can improve the service the police provide,

and ensure it is meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

For details about future Working Together events visit the Commissioner's or Constabulary website.

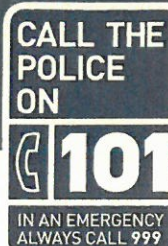


Feedback from communities and partners about the role and value added by Police Community Support Officers has been very positive.

Being the familiar face on the beat, they get to know their local communities, offer help and assistance as well as listening to people's concerns. This link between the community and the Constabulary is important. The support work that PCSOs provide the other officers in the neighbourhood policing team is equally vital.

I have decided to maintain the number of PCSOs funded from the budget at static levels as they do such a fantastic job building relationships and acting as the visible policing presence that you tell me you want to see on the streets of Cheshire.

We're here to support communities



This publication is available on the website in large text, text only, Read Speaker and in 57 languages. It costs 9p per copy to produce and distribute.

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