

OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE



2020/21
ANNUAL REPORT



Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire

Introduction

Every year an annual report is produced which details the progress made against the Police and Crime Plan.

In Autumn 2021, I will produce a new Police and Crime Plan which will set the priorities for policing and community safety until 2024 – the end of my current term of office. I hope that the priorities in that Plan will make Cheshire Constabulary the best police service in the country.

2020/2021 was an unprecedented year which saw the demands placed on policing increase as they tackled the Coronavirus pandemic. Although crime rates decreased in some areas, as police forces battled to impose the restrictions placed on the public by the Government to protect our health, we saw certain crime types such as domestic abuse increase.

Thankfully, the hard work of police officers, staff and volunteers has ensured Cheshire Constabulary has continued to deliver an excellent service. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication and commitment – particularly at a time when their role has put them and their families in the line of danger.

There are, however, some areas in which improvements could be made. As your newly elected Commissioner, I look forward to working with the recently appointed Chief Constable to take Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) ratings of Cheshire Constabulary from good to outstanding. We achieved this and more during my first term of office and our ambition is to return to these improved levels of service and performance again.

Engaging with our local communities to understand their priorities for community safety and ensuring the Constabulary acts on them will be key to this ambition. I look forward to working with you, the Constabulary and key partner organisations to make Cheshire even safer.



John Dwyer

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE



Funding your police force

Funding for police services increased in 2020/21 with Cheshire benefiting from an additional £14.8m compared to the previous year – mainly comprising of an increase in Government grants and the local council tax precept which rose by £10 per annum for a Band D household.

This increase included funding provided to Cheshire Constabulary as part of the Government's Police Uplift programme to recruit an additional 90 police officers by the financial year end – a target which was achieved.

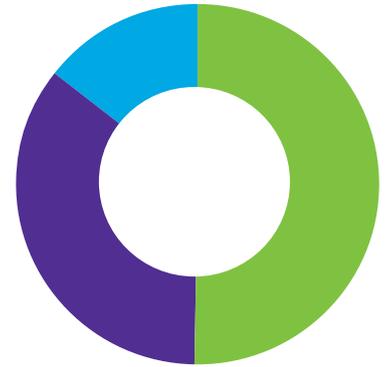
The police budget for 2020/21 also allowed for additional investment into neighbourhood policing and community alignment, supporting the vulnerable, enhancing public contact and proactive operations to tackle serious and organised crime, alongside increased support for survivors of domestic abuse and stalking.

The charts below provide details of funding for policing in Cheshire and an overview of expenditure for 2020/21.

Cheshire Police Funding 2020/21 - £000

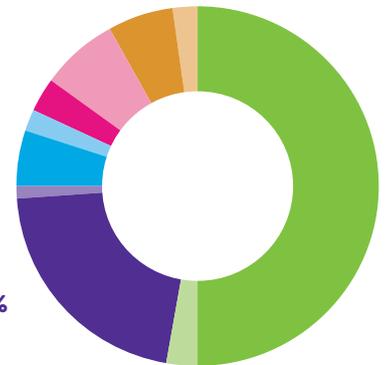
£229,194

- Government Grants **£114,968**
- Council Tax Precept **£80,652**
- Other Income & Specific Grants **£33,574**



Expenditure 2020/21

- Police Pay **50%**
- PCSO Pay **3%**
- Staff Pay **21%**
- Other Employee Costs **1%**
- Premises **5%**
- Transport **2%**
- Communication & Technology **3%**
- Supplies & Services **7%**
- Third Party Payments **6%**
- Financing Costs **2%**



Support for victims

Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for commissioning services to support victims and witnesses to cope and recover from the impact of crime. They are also responsible for commissioning activities which will contribute to community safety and crime reduction.

In 2020/21, more than £1.2 million was invested to support services which help victims of crime. This funding came from a grant allocated to the Police & Crime Commissioner by the Ministry of Justice.

This funding supported key victims' services; Cheshire CARES our flagship service which offers support to every single victim of crime across the county which I established in my first term of office, RASASC which provides bespoke support to survivors of rape and sexual abuse and Remedi which offers restorative justice and mediation services to reduce reoffending.

During the year, the office also completed a full victim needs assessment. This review of victims' services spoke directly to those who have first-hand experience of the support on offer, whether it be victims themselves or those working for or alongside key support services. The assessment has provided a number of recommendations to improve the way victims' services are provided and promoted, which will be implemented over the coming year.



FUNDING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



During the year, Cheshire was also successful in its bid to the Government's Safer Streets Fund – a multi-million pound funding pot to crack down on acquisitive crime across England and Wales.

£550,000 was awarded to tackle burglary and theft in the Bewsey and Whitecross area of Warrington. The funding was used to fit more than 2,000 homes with enhanced security devices and it also paid for improvements to the local area including the upgrading of street lighting, the installation of CCTV and a community allotment.

The Safer Communities and Express Grants funds provided funding to local organisations and community groups who ran projects to make their area safer. The funds aimed to empower local communities to work with the police on community safety initiatives.

In 2020/21, more than £130,000 was awarded from both funds to more than 100 individual projects across the county. The Express Grants Fund in particular supported the local community's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Grants were awarded to projects which provided vital resources or care to vulnerable people who were isolating or shielding from the virus. It also helped the community response to the floods which engulfed parts of the county in January 2021.



Performance

The Commissioner ensures the Constabulary is held to account in delivering against the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan. Performance is reviewed through a broad range of scrutiny activities where assurance is given that the objectives of the Plan are being met.

2020 was a year like no other, which was reflected in the 'deep dive' sessions in the scrutiny programme for 2020/21. This approach provides a Commissioner the opportunity to look dynamically, and in detail, at how the Constabulary is performing in a specific area. The impact of the pandemic altered the demands on policing, and as a result of this, specific crime priorities such as domestic abuse and road safety were given additional focus.



The Constabulary is subject to inspections by HMICFRS and Cheshire is currently rated 'good' following the 2018/19 PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspection. The Constabulary has now entered into fieldwork for the next inspection cycle which will continue until around April 2022, and the findings will be published by HMICFRS later in 2022.

As well as PEEL inspections, HMICFRS produces national thematic inspections. The Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account by ensuring the Constabulary is delivering against the national recommendations made in the reports. In 2020/21, HMICFRS published a variety of reports which focussed on some of the new challenges faced by policing. The scrutiny programme will continue to be used to ensure the Constabulary responds to the recommendations made in the reports and my responses are published on my website.

Crime statistics

Overall crime in Cheshire fell by 12% between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. The total number of crimes reported decreased by 11,480. This was in line with crime statistics across other police forces in England in Wales, who saw an average decrease of 12.6%.

It is important to note that these figures cover a period during the Covid-19 pandemic, in which three national lockdowns resulted in a drop in crime in most categories due to the restrictions imposed.

In Cheshire theft from a person saw the largest reduction, with the total number of incidents recorded decreasing by 72%. There was also a significant decrease in the number of vehicle offences - falling by 43% - and thefts from vehicles decreasing by 50%.

Reports of burglary also reduced during this same period, with the total number of incidents reported falling by 24% and business burglaries falling by 36%. The number of shoplifting, robbery, criminal damage, arson and public order offences also reduced.

The one crime type that did see a significant increase was domestic abuse. During the pandemic, a number of measures were put in place to provide enhanced support to victims and also interventions to manage the risks posed by offenders. This included the ground-breaking Harm Reduction Unit, which helps to protect victims of stalking and domestic abuse, but also adopts a pioneering approach to managing offenders.





Stay in touch



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When should I call 101?

CALL THE POLICE ON

101

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

To report less urgent crime or disorder, to contact the police with general inquiries or to speak to a local officer.

For example:

- if your car has been stolen
- if your property has been damaged
- reporting a minor traffic incident
- where you suspect drug use or dealing
- giving police information about crime in your area.

Always call 999
in an emergency, where there is a threat to life or a crime in progress.