



The West Mercia Commissioner's 'We Don't Buy Crime' - Leading from the Front Application Briefing



A match funding offer to disrupt and reduce the market for stolen goods and protect the homes and possessions of West Mercia's communities

John Campion seeks applications from the four upper tier local authority councillors and partners:

- committed to addressing the issue of (potential) acquisitive crime
- keen to be recognised as a 'We Don't Buy crime' area
- eager to raise awareness of the initiative
- able to complete the project installation by 31st March 2021

John Campion would like to contribute 25% towards the smart water required of the area and free signage

Foreword

My Safer West Mercia Plan sets out my vision for what I want to achieve as Police and Crime Commissioner for our communities.

My aims will be best achieved working in partnership with others who share common goals. Together we can be more effective and efficient in reducing crime, supporting victims and witnesses and building a better and safer West Mercia.



Often the best solutions to community issues come from within communities themselves. I am very passionate about empowering communities to play a more active role in identifying and tackling local issues in ways that the police could never do, by making the right tools and opportunities available to them. It is with these principles in mind that I am opening my Commissioner's grant fund for the 'We Don't Buy Crime' initiative, inviting applications from local authorities that will deliver the results our communities need and expect.

I am aware that acquisitive crime, including burglary, robbery and theft harms our communities. A person's home and possessions often carry an emotional attachment and when crime interferes with this it can have a long lasting impact on its victims. West Mercia Police are committed to protecting people from these crimes. 'We Don't Buy Crime' demonstrates this commitment, by taking an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods and protecting homes and possessions by making them less attractive to the 'would-be criminal'. By working with partners I want us to be able to property mark as many households as possible with Smartwater to create "We Don't Buy Crime" towns and villages and significantly reduce the risk of burglaries. "

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

What is Smartwater?

A Water based solution with a unique forensic code. It's made invisible to the naked eye but can be seen under UV light. Only a small amount needs to be applied to an item and left to dry and then the property is marked. Each bottle is unique which enables the police/Smartwater to identify the owner of property and therefore return it if stolen, link it to any associated crime and prosecute offenders.

West Mercia Police officers now have a UV light to detect the presence of Smartwater when arresting or stopping and searching suspects. Second hand stores are also being offered UV lights which they can use to establish whether property is marked and possibly stolen.

What is a 'We Don't Buy Crime' area?

We Don't Buy Crime towns and villages are where every residential property has the opportunity to mark their possessions free of charge. When 70% of a target area has been registered, street signage is displayed (as in the image below). It has been identified that a 70% saturation rate is the appropriate coverage of an area to deliver deductions. The purpose of the initiative is to let potential offenders know that if they commit crime they are likely to get caught and will not have the opportunity to profit.



Does this approach work?

When academics interviewed burglars about the best deterrent, Smartwater 'outscored' all other forms of crime deterrent. A similar scheme adopted outside of West Mercia identified the following benefits:

- A reduction in burglary by over 80%
- A significant reduction in robbery and other criminal offences.
- Benefits extending up to 750M from the areas using Smartwater
- More than half of respondents reporting feeling safer

Success stories in West Mercia so far

1. Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire became a "We Don't Buy Crime" town in November 2015 with 1,200 homes protected with Smartwater. In the two years prior 14 domestic burglary offences were reported. Two and a half years on there has been 2 recorded domestic burglary offences within the "We Don't Buy Crime" boundary area. At almost 3 and half years into the project Cleobury Mortimer are still reporting a 54% reduction in Burglary Dwelling. Many people have stated that they felt the local authority in partnership with the police had made a real difference in making the town safer and enhancing community spirit. Further work is now being carried out to refresh the signage and the media around We Don't Buy Crime in Cleobury Mortimer.
2. Higher Heath became a 'We Don't Buy Crime Village' in February 2016. Since taking up this initiative the village has reported an 80% reduction in domestic burglary offences.

3. Leegomery is an area of Telford & Wrekin that became a 'We Don't Buy Crime' area in July 2016. Domestic burglary and attempted domestic burglary offences have reduced by 35% since the scheme began.
4. Sutton Hill in Telford and Wrekin and became a 'We Don't Buy Crime' area in July 2016. There has been a 55% reduction in Domestic Burglary and attempted Burglary in this area since the scheme began
5. Ombersley in Worcestershire became a We Don't Buy Crime area in October 2017. In the first year of the project they have reported a 75% reduction in Domestic Burglary offences.

How much will it cost?

...the PCC?

- 25% of the total cost of the required Smartwater kits for a chosen area
- 100% of the signage costs
- The WDBC team co-ordinating the project and available as the councillors single point of contact
- Police volunteer time (where possible)
- Staff time in kind to monitor the reported and recorded acquisitive crime in your area and share this with you

...the Councillor?

- 75% of the cost of the required Smartwater kits, purchased at a reduced rate of £8.90 (+ vat)
- Time required to engage with communities

How do I make an application?

A 'We don't buy crime' application will need to be submitted. The application package can be found [here](#). Any enquiries can be made in writing to grants@westmercia.pnn.police.uk