



## west midlands police and crime commissioner

### STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

#### Notes of meeting held on Tuesday, 2 December 2014 in Committee Room 6, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham

Present: Jamieson, David – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Abbott, Cllr Faye – Board Member  
Hannon, Cath – Board Member  
Hendricks, Ernie – Board Member  
Mosquito, Cllr Yvonne – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Nazir, Cllr Mohammad – Board Member  
Sawdon, Cllr Tim – Board Member

In attendance: Cann, Gary – Assistant Chief Constable  
Courtney, Jacky – Chief Executive  
Garry Forsyth – Assistant Chief Constable  
Foulkes, Carl – Assistant Chief Constable  
Hickman, Fiona – Governance Manager  
Sims, Chris – Chief Constable  
Smith, Lisa-Marie – Director of Legal Services  
Thompson, David – Deputy Chief Constable  
Wilkin, David – Director of Resources  
Williams, Mike – Chief Finance Officer

Observers: 8

#### 112/14 Opening Remarks

112/14

The Commissioner welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

Before moving into the formal business of the Board, the Commissioner took the opportunity to talk about the continuing financial challenge that the Force faced. The Chancellor would make his Autumn statement on 3 December. The provisional financial settlement for West Midlands Police was expected in the week prior to Christmas. The Commissioner was expecting further substantial cuts to his budget. What made the West Midlands position worse was the continuing unfair use of 'floors and ceilings'. This was the application of a lowering or lifting of the amount of grant allocated rather than what was properly due under the police funding formula. The West Midlands Police continued to lose out in this process. Last year the application of a ceiling resulted in West Midlands receiving around £40m less than it should have. The Commissioner was asking local politicians to make representations on behalf of their

constituents at the highest levels. If policing in the West Midlands was funded according to the needs analysis there would be an extra £40m a year available.

**113/14 Conflicts of Interest 113/14**

None.

**114/14 Apologies 114/14**

Apologies had been received from Brendan Connor and Cllr Judy Foster.

**115/14 Notes of the Last Meeting 115/14**

The Board approved the notes of the meetings held in public and in private on 4 November 2014.

**116/14 Public Questions and Petitions 116/14**

No questions from the public had been received.

The Commissioner had received a petition on 19 November 2014 containing signatures of approximately 438 residents from Shirley which read as follows:

*//we believe Shirley Police Station's front desk should remain open to the public. Please consider this petition as part of our review of police front desks across the West Midlands.*

The Commissioner had acknowledged receipt and passed the petition to the Chief Constable on 24 November.

**117/14 Force contact – front offices 117/14**

Before handing over to ACC Foulkes to introduce the report, the Commissioner remarked that the report had been requested before the announcement on the future model had been made by the Force on 18 November. The Chief Constable had an imperative to use resources to best effect. The decision was an operational matter and was for the Chief Constable to make. However, he fully supported the Chief Constable's decision. It was interesting to note that the Chairman for Neighbourhood Watch in the West Midlands had made his views on the decision known through a local newspaper where he had described the front desk closures as 'common sense'. If it allowed for more police officers and PCSOs to be based in the community then he fully supported it.

ACC Foulkes thanked the Commissioner for his support and introduced the report which outlined the front office project and the decision about the future model.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion noted the following points.

- The four volunteer locations did not function as front offices.

- The £3m savings that would be made through the introduction of the new model could be used towards maintaining neighbourhood policing teams.
- There were two main categories of people visiting front offices/desks: people who the Force had asked to come in and people who had chosen to visit.
- The Force would take a graduated approach to the alternative means of public access. There would be a contact point at every closed location and a facility to ring 101, the national non-emergency number for contacting the police. There was no evidence to suggest that front offices were places of safety. The Force would utilise and develop technology such as email, web chat and other social media – this would be part of the work of the innovation and integration partnership with Accenture. The use of some of this technology was already in place and some of it would be further down the line. In addition, Chief Supt Emma Barnett would be looking at a community surgery approach.
- Current public satisfaction levels on contact with the Force by telephone were very good. There was some tidying up to do on email communications.
- Front offices that were remaining open would be re-furbished where necessary. Some were relatively new.
- The front office work had been aligned to the wider estates review.
- The Force had taken into account in their decision on the front desk in Coventry the transport infrastructure and other opportunities available in Coventry. Chief Supt Claire Bell would ensure that there was clear communication with Coventry councillors.
- The decision on the future model had been made. The Force was now focusing on future contact methods and alternative provision. Although this was not an open ended consultation, the Force would still listen to what the public had to say. If affordable improvements could be made, the Force would make them.
- The front desks (manned by police officers and PCSOs) earmarked for closure would be closing soon. The front offices (manned by police staff) earmarked for closure would be closing later.
- There would be redeployment opportunities in other parts of the organisation for those staff placed 'at risk' following the front desk decision. For example, there would be opportunities within the change programmes as well as in the new custody suites.
- The Commissioner considered it very important that the Force keep up its efforts in communicating with the public. Both Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council would be discussing the front offices/desks decision at their December

meetings. ACC Foulkes assured him that the Force would continue to communicate with elected members and with members of the public through the local command teams.

#### 118/14 Questions from the Board on matters not on the agenda

118/14

The questions that had been submitted to the Chief Constable were circulated and were as follows.

1. *Could the Chief Constable update us on what progress has been made regarding the recommendation in the recent HMIC Crime Inspection that, within three months, the Force should have reviewed the resourcing and process for prioritising the examination of telecommunication and computer equipment? As part of this, what consideration been given to issues such as iPhones being remotely 'zapped' and the time taken to examine and return devices which have been volunteered by members of the public? (Asked by Cllr Tim Sawdon)*

The Chief Constable's response was that he had some national responsibilities in this matter as it sat within forensics. The recommendation and the timescales from HMIC were beyond belief. This was a big, long-term issue which the service had been discussing for the past five years. This was not just a local matter. Discussions had been had about whether there should be some bespoke national capacity that forces could buy in to. As to its own forensic team, the Force had been looking at improving the service and was putting more resource into this area. The Force had piloted the use of a kiosk system for front-line staff to download information instantly and would consider extending this pilot. Accenture would work up some proposals for this area of business.

The Forensic Science Regulator was beginning to apply standards to the way evidence was recovered and the introduction of an accreditation system was likely in the future.

The Force was in a better position than most other forces in the way it was positioned but this was a national issue that would need to be addressed by a national resource.

2. *Would the Chief Constable confirm how many Airwave radios belonging to West Midlands Police have been (a) reported as lost and (b) reported as misplaced in the last three years, and would he make a statement on measures he is taking to prevent such losses and inform us of any operational/security implications from the loss of the devices? (Asked by Ernie Hendricks)*

The Chief Constable's response was that over the last three years the Force had lost or displaced 150 Airwave terminals each year at a replacement cost of £70,000 each year. There were 8,500 terminals across the force. The issue of security was very important and the Force ensured that terminals were searched for and disabled remotely as soon as the loss/displacement had been reported. The Force constantly scanned for the whereabouts of the terminals. Ownership of Airwave had been moved from the IT

department to Force Contact where management of the terminals with front line staff was better. The Chief Constable was less concerned about the security issue, given that he was confident that this was being well managed, than he was about the cost of the losses.

- 3. What consideration has the Chief Constable given to the issuing of Domestic Violence Prevention Notices as a means of protecting vulnerable adults and children? What assessment has he made of the ability of the new powers to provide greater protection to potential victims of domestic violence? (Asked by Cath Hannon)*

The Chief Constable's response was that the power to use these notices was relatively new. It had been piloted in forces outside the West Midlands and introduced in the West Midlands in September 2014. To date, the Force had had 30 applications and two were before the Court. The Chief Constable was not aware of any breaches yet. They were an emergency preventative measure so success could be seen in terms of a lack of breaches. It was too early to be clear about their impact but they were considered to be a positive tool which was helpful to the Force. ACC Foulkes would be considering their impact. Thirty-two applications in the first few months was a reasonable platform on which to consider how the powers could be used.

- 4. Would the Chief Constable comment on the recent HMIC inspection regarding the accuracy of recording crime in the West Midlands Police? (Asked by Cllr Yvonne Mosquito)*

The Chief Constable's response was that he was delighted to comment. While there had been much interest in the media in this inspection, not much emphasis had been placed on the variations between the forces. Of the 332 crimes that HMIC had looked at, the Force had properly recorded 328. The Force had the highest levels of accurately recorded crime in the country. The Chief Constable paid tribute to the Command Team for this excellent achievement which demonstrated how seriously the Force took this matter. He was concerned though that if West Midlands Police achieved 99% accuracy and other forces achieved as low as 70% the whole notion of HMIC comparing forces in other aspects of policing was rather hollow.

The Commissioner took the opportunity to congratulate the Chief Constable and his staff on the accuracy of their crime recording.

- 5. In the context of a future HMIC inspection on cyber crime and fraud, what measures has the Chief Constable taken to the development of the West Midlands Police strategy on fraud and cyber crime detection and prevention? (Asked by Cllr Yvonne Mosquito)*

The Chief Constable's response was that this was a big issue but it was important to distinguish between two broad types of cyber crime and fraud:

- Cyber crime - which covered a number of different phenomena including organised criminal attempts to disrupt IT for gain. HMIC inspected the Force a year ago on this matter and concluded that the Force had a reasonable plan for such an incident and had praised the way the Force was building it in to its strategic assessment. The work that the Force was doing with Accenture would include the way the Force would deal with all IT based crime.
- Computer based fraud and crime – this was a massive, new and underresourced part of policing which would be difficult for the Force to absorb along with all of the other pressures that it was facing. The Force was at an early stage in dealing with this type of crime. It was supported by a national agency that managed computer fraud. The Force could not respond to victims of computer-based fraud in the same way as it did to victims of burglary or ‘normal’ theft. It was on the Force radar, however.

#### **119/14 Use of Force**

**119/14**

ACC Cann introduced the report which provided an overview of the use of force by West Midlands Police.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion noted the following.

- The Commissioner had requested the report following recent publicity about the extent of the use of tasers by West Midlands Police compared to other parts of the country. Tasers were only one of the options available to the police so he had asked for their use to be put into the context of the wider use of force.
- Taser created space between a police officer and a person and a point in a situation at which to pause. It reduced physical contact.
- Taser was less harmful than use of CS spray, baton strikes and dogs. More importantly, it replaced the need to use conventional firearms in many situations. No firearms had been discharged by the Force this year and, from the Command Team’s collective memory, none had been discharged for several years.
- There had been no baton round discharges (Attenuated Energy Projectiles) by the Force since 2010.
- Simply showing a taser could diffuse a situation and in 75% of cases tasers were only shown, not fired.
- The Force received approximately ten complaints a year about its use of tasers.
- The Force used tasers more often in Birmingham West and Central, Birmingham East, Coventry and Wolverhampton because of particular issues and challenges in these areas.

- ACC Cann could not pinpoint a particular reason for the change in ethnicity data for the first 6 months of 2014 compared to the data for 2013 set out in paragraph 13. It reflected the demographics of the areas in which tasers were used rather than the demographics of the whole Force area. While the Board welcomed the downward trend in the percentage of non-white subjects, more information about use of tasers in geographical areas would be helpful, including ethnicity of subjects. **ACTION: A short report providing the additional information would be submitted to the next meeting.**

*The report is on the agenda for the February 2015 meeting to allow sufficient time to gather the information requested.*

- ACC Cann did not know how many people subjected to the use of taser had mental health issues.
- Although the Force did not make a formal, recorded assessment of the effectiveness of its use of tasers compared to other uses of force, it did review every single usage of taser.
- After a taser had been fired, the Force would take the person who had been subjected to the taser into custody. The police surgeon would then examine the subject. If a barb needed to be removed, the police surgeon would do that.
- The Force would be looking in 2015 for replacement options for CS spray and different batons.

#### **120/14 Financial Monitoring 2014/15**

**120/14**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which presented the estimated outturn position for revenue expenditure for the financial year 2014/15, based on actual spend up to the end of September 2014.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion noted the following.

- The costs of police overtime had been offset by an increase in external income.
- The full costs of policing party conferences were not met centrally. Only 85% of the actual spend was funded centrally. The actual costs of the party conference were not known when the budget had been set.
- The amount allocated to the work of the innovation and integration partnership with Accenture was currently maintained at a level of £10m. It was unlikely that any of it would be allocated this year. However, it could be used to support the capital programme which would reduce the call on capital reserves and avoid borrowing costs.
- If the Invest to Save fund was excluded, the total underspend

would be less than 0.5% of the budget.

- The key points to note were that the budget was being carefully monitored, savings had been delivered and the underspend was less than 0.5%.
- Mr Hendricks raised the HMIC value for money profiles which had been published in October 2014. The Force had come out well in some respects but not in respect of the generation of external income compared to other forces. He asked if there was anything that could be done to learn from those who generated more income. The Chief Finance Office advised caution in considering the profiles because HMIC did not always compare like with like.  
**ACTION The Chief Finance Officer would discuss with Mr Hendricks outside the meeting.**  
*The discussion has taken place.*
- It was likely that the provisional grant announcement would be made on 17 December 2014.

#### 121/14 West Midlands Police Change Portfolio

121/14

The Deputy Chief Constable introduced the report which provided an update on the Force change programme.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion noted the following.

- The HMIC PEEL report had been published on 28 November 2014. The Force had been identified as outstanding in its approach to efficiency and savings.
- The service transformation programme was reaching completion. A final benefits report would be available in January.
- Accenture had completed their review of programmes that were already in progress. It had been agreed that the Lloyd House refurbishment and the New Ways of Working programmes would continue. There were still a number of activities that were considered to be 'must do' but these needed to be balanced with the 'want to do' activities.
- The Force's current operating model would be signed off next week.
- Just over 800 responses to the public survey about WM2020 had been received. Events with partners were also being run to canvass their views. Partners had been categorised into two tiers. Tier one events had been managed centrally, while the local policing units had been running tier two events. Neighbourhood policing teams had also been running tier two events.
- The Force was trying to encourage effective partnership working but other public services were also having to deal with financial



challenges. At a local level, organisations were working at different speeds and were at different places. There were some opportunities across the board where the Force believed they could get buy in from local authorities.

- The Force already collaborated with other forces and it was constantly looking for further opportunities. There were different models of collaboration. Traditional methods were not always very clear or large in scale. The Force had had a great deal of interest in the work it was doing with Accenture and the Chief Constable was considering holding an national event in February or March 2015.
- Whilst co-location with partners could be very helpful it was not possible to co-locate with all partners. It was more beneficial and important to help the staff within a partnership understand that they were part of a common endeavour to serve and protect members of the public.

**122/14 Performance against the 2014-15 milestones and deliverables in the Police and Crime Plan**

**122/14**

The Deputy Chief Constable introduced the report which outlined the performance against the milestones and deliverables that contribute to the ten strategic outcomes set out in the 2014-15 Police and Crime Plan.

The Board considered the report and noted the following.

- The Commissioner had requested that the Performance report be received on a quarterly basis in future.
- The positive performance in relation to crime recording accuracy; overall crime and burglary rates, which were lower than those of the most similar forces; acquisitive crime, although theft from shops and stores was still a challenge; public perceptions of safety, particularly at night; and offender management.
- Areas that needed improvement included public satisfaction with services provided in relation to the investigation of crimes.
- In relation to paragraph 116, the Force was doing some very good work on child sexual exploitation. The Board had had a report on this matter at its last meeting. More detail would be provided in future reports and the demanding challenges the Force had set itself.
- The Force would add a paragraph on how it was contributing to the local economy once the variations to the Strategic Policing and Crime Plan had been published in March 2015.

**123/14 Chief Constable's Update**

**123/14**

The Chief Constable indicated that he had no matters to raise in the

private meeting.

He had only one matter to raise in the public meeting which related to the recent HMIC report on their PEEL inspection. It was a very powerful report and he was delighted how well the Force had come out, particularly compared to its most similar forces. However, the cost to the service of providing information for the inspection was enormous. The Deputy Chief Constable also remarked on the proliferation of recommendations made by HMIC.

The Deputy Commissioner took the opportunity to express how impressed she was with the Chief Constable and his command team, particularly in how they had managed and delivered the policing service in such challenging financial times. Mr Hendrick paid tribute to the newest member of the command team, ACC Foulkes, and how he had dealing with very challenging issues.

	<b>Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings</b>	
064/13	ACC Operations Portfolio Update	064/13
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>ACTION. The Force and the Commissioner would explore whether it would be possible for a representative from the West Midlands Police to attend the regional NPAS board meetings as an observer.</b></li></ul>	
070/14	Decisions: Victims Services	070/14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>ACTION Alethea Fuller would provide Board members with the information about how the Ministry of Justice were currently monitoring how the money was spent and whether they were getting value for money.</b></li></ul>	