



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Notes of meeting held on Tuesday, 7 April 2015
in Committee Room 2, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham

Present: Jamieson, David – Police and Crime Commissioner
Connor, Brendan – Board Member
Foster, Cllr Judy – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Hendricks, Ernie – Board Member
Mosquito, Cllr Yvonne – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Sawdon, Cllr Tim – Board Member

In attendance: Beale, Marcus – Assistant Chief Constable
Courtney, Jacky – Chief Executive
Graham, Chief Supt Stephen – Head of Force Intelligence
Hickman, Fiona – Governance Manager
Rowson, Chris – Head of Human Resources
Sims, Chris – Chief Constable
Wilkin, David – Director of Resources

Observers: 7

040/15 Opening Remarks **040/15**

The Commissioner welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

041/15 Conflicts of Interest **041/15**

None.

042/15 Apologies **042/15**

Apologies had been received from Cath Hannon, the Chief Finance Officer and the Deputy Chief Constable.

Chief Superintendent Stephen Graham was in attendance in place of ACC Forsyth for the item 6 *Disclosure and Barring Service Update*.

043/15 Notes of the Last Meeting**043/15**

The Board approved the notes of the following meetings:

03 March 2015, held in public
17 March 2015, held in public
17 March 2015, held in private

The Board discussed the outstanding actions in the notes of the 3 March meeting and noted the following:

- 031/15 Professional Standards Department Update – the information about the gender and BME related data for table 12, *Suspended officers and staff as of 19/02/15* would be included in the report on disproportionality in police misconduct and discipline scheduled for the May Board meeting.
- 035/15 Chief Constable update – the Head of Human Resources provided the final distribution of the numbers of new recruits allocated to particular areas, as follows:

Of the 82 new police officer recruits:

19 had been allocated to Coventry LPU
07 had been allocated to Birmingham East LPU
24 had been allocated to Birmingham West and Central LPU
10 had been allocated to Dudley LPU
07 had been allocated to Walsall LPU
13 had been allocated to Wolverhampton LPU

Two, who were currently on the L&D establishment, had yet to be allocated to LPUs.

These items could now be removed from the outstanding actions list.

044/15 Public Questions and Petitions**044/15**

There were no questions or petitions from the public.

045/15 Questions from the Board on matters not on the agenda**045/15**

Two questions had been submitted to the Chief Constable and a copy of the questions was circulated. The questions were as follows.

1. To what extent has there been variation in the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders across the Force area, and to what extent is the Chief Constable satisfied that there has been effective use, monitoring and enforcement of Criminal Behaviour Orders by West Midlands Police and partners since their introduction in 2014?

(Asked by Ernie Hendricks)

In response, the Chief Constable indicated that:

- Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) were being used everywhere. A proper process was in place and they were being used by the Force and partners. The Safer Travel Partnership had used them and in Coventry they had been used in relation to burglaries at the two university campuses.
 - The CBOs replaced the old CRASBOs. While there was a different structure in place, the intent was similar.
 - The first CBO in the country had been made in Coventry.
 - CBOs were mostly managed locally by neighbourhood teams.
 - Since October 2014, there had been 42 applications for CBOs across the Force area. Of those, 13 had been successful, 12 unsuccessful and 17 were still pending before the court. Most related to anti-social behaviour or serious acquisitive crime. There was no cause for concern about the number of unsuccessful applications at this stage because this was new legislation.
 - There had been 21 breaches of the orders since their introduction. Of those 21, 18 had been detected and 3 were pending. Three CBOs would become active once the individuals concerned were released from custody.
 - The CBOs were held on the Force's CORVUS system. The Head of Intelligence and others across the Force could therefore monitor how they were being used.
 - The overall position was a healthy one. The Force had managed the introduction of the new process quickly and it was satisfied with the support it had received from the criminal justice system.
2. Following the Home Office mandated merger of UK police helicopters in 2012, and the recent announcement of the closure of 10 National Police Air Service (NPAS) bases, can the Chief Constable confirm:
- (a) What effect the level of service provided by the NPAS has had on demand from WMP?
 - (b) What the payment arrangements are for flying hours in 2015/16. How does this compare with the hours actually required in 2014/15?

(Asked by Brendan Connor)

In response, the Chief Constable indicated that:

- The creation and operation of NPAS was an unfolding story. When NPAS was created there had been a significant amount of planning about what was desirable and what was not in the new service. However, the estate was too large to be supported from the existing budget.
- The Birmingham base remained a 24/7 facility. Therefore, from the perspective of West Midlands Police, the announcements about the closure of 10 NPAS bases had only a limited impact on the Force. The impact would be greater on other forces in the region – West Mercia for example.
- The funding was structured around a pre-booking system. The Force had pre-booked and pre-paid for 1400 service hours per year but it was unlikely that it would use its full allocation of hours. There was no mechanism for claiming money back for hours that had not been used. The Force would like to amend its forecast to fewer hours (around 1000) but could not. There would need to be a debate at some stage about the funding structure and its mechanisms.
- These were teething problems with a new national set up. Overall, the Force was satisfied with the service. The old system was not without its faults.

During the discussion that followed, the Board noted that:

- The Metropolitan Police were not yet part of the NPAS but the Chief Constable believed that they still intended to be. Without them the funding position would be completely different.
- It had always been understood, even before the creation of the NPAS, that requests for helicopters would not necessarily be granted. The Force would do some awareness work around using opportunities constructively to better use its allocation of service hours.
- It was not a matter for the Chief Constable to hold NPAS or the Home Secretary to account for the way in which NPAS operated. PCC Ron Ball represented the forces in the Midlands region at the NPAS board meetings.
- The funding and operation of NPAS could be raised at the next meeting of the regional Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners and their Chief Executives/Chiefs of Staff meeting which was scheduled for 9 April.
- Relative to the cost of owning and using its own helicopter prior to the creation of NPAS, the Force was now paying slightly less for an air service.

In his opening remarks to this item, the Commissioner explained that he had asked for this report following a series of complaints he had received from members of the public and Members of Parliament about the delays in the processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. He had made it a priority for West Midlands Police to promote economic development in the region and with that in mind, delays in processing checks were particularly disappointing. It was not right that job applications were being jeopardised because checks were not being made in time. He had first raised the issue last autumn and had been informed that the situation was expected to be resolved by March 2015 but there were still significant delays. The Commissioner read out some examples of delays and their impact from letters of complaint he had received from Members of Parliament.

Before handing over to Chief Supt Graham, the Chief Constable indicated that this had been a Force issue for a number of months. ACC Garry Forsyth had been running a Gold Group to deal with short term measures for improvement. However, this was a complicated matter. The improvement plan would probably take up to six months to reach the position the Force would like to be in. This was not a situation that could be improved by simply providing more financial or human resources. Some of it related to the Force's technology.

Chief Supt Graham then introduced the report which provided an overview of the arrangements between the national Disclosure and Barring Service and the Force, and the Force's response to the delays in responding to DBS checks.

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

- The Force had a 60-day target for completion of checks. Unfortunately, over 4000 people had been waiting longer.
- One of the reasons why it was taking so long for changes in the service to take effect was that, out of a department of 55 people, there had been 31 staff changes. The Force was alive to the issue of staff retention. It was, for example, moving away from short-term appointments to permanent appointments. The salary, however, was set by the national Disclosure and Barring Service.
- New recruits to the department had to be coached by experienced members of staff which meant that this had a temporary detrimental effect on the performance of two members of staff.
- The Force's ICT systems were growing less reliable and responsive and this was having an effect on the time it took to carry out checks. The Force had moved the process from FLINTS onto CORVUS which would bring improvements.

- The checks that were made were not simply transactional. Qualitative decisions needed to be made as well.
- The quality of the Force's decision making was important because it endeavoured to have the highest possible degree of confidence when making recommendations to employers.
- The national Disclosure and Barring Service were solely responsible for forecasting the number of checks expected to be carried out by the Force. The Force had no influence over how the numbers were generated.
- The Force was being creative to try and gain some short-term improvements. For example, it was temporarily using people with relevant skills from other parts of the organisation and from other forces to augment the department.
- The Force believed that there were some process changes that could be made. Whilst not wishing to compromise quality the Force would consider whether it was being more risk averse than other similar forces.
- The Force would be meeting the national Disclosure and Barring Service performance manager imminently to discuss best practice.
- The Force could not pass any of its DBS check requests to other forces who were performing better because they had to be carried out on the Force's own systems.
- If the national Disclosure and Barring Service did decide, after its review of its compensation scheme, that forces should pay compensation for delays in future, the Force would challenge this.
- The Commissioner would consider contacting the Home Office to ask whether it was necessary for so many checks to be carried out. He believed that there were some circumstances where it might not be necessary to carry out a DBS check; the requirement for checks should be proportionate to the particular circumstances prompting the requests.
- **ACTION The Commissioner requested an update report on progress in two months' time and asked the Force to alert him, in the meantime, to any problems.**
The report has been included in the workplan.

047/15 Human Resources Update

047/15

The Director of Resources and the Head of Human Resources introduced the report which provided an update on strategic workforce issues facing the Force and the HR Change Programme.

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

- While Force attendance rates were similar to other forces, improvements could be made. The Force would be reviewing, for example, the back to work interview process to ensure not only that they were taking place but also the quality of the interviews. This was part of the action plan for each Local Policing Unit (LPU) and department.
- Long term sickness made up a disproportionate amount of the Force absence rates. 97% was probably the highest attendance rate that the Force could expect to achieve.
- While the quality and standard of the new recruits were very high, the Force would keep retention rates under review. Support arrangements which had been put in place during the new recruits' training, such as mentoring, would be continued through the new recruits' probationary period. In the longer term, retention would play into the WMP2020 Blueprint and what the Force could offer around different specialisms. The Head of HR acknowledged that there would be fewer opportunities to progress vertically than there had been in the past.
- In response to concerns raised by Board members about the small number of BME police officer recruits, the Head of HR highlighted elements of the Force's positive action campaign such as discovery days for potential applicants.
- Promotion outcomes for female police officers had been positive over the past twelve months. The proportion of female officers in the Force was over 34% which was good compared to other forces. The number of females applying to be police officers was encouraging which meant that there would be a good pipeline for future promotion prospects for female officers. The Association of Women in Policing had been doing some very good work around mentoring and other support mechanisms. Merit was, of course, the key determinant for advancement.

The Commissioner concluded the discussion by recognising all of the good work that the Force had done. He still had some concerns about retention. The Force had done some very good work with police officer candidates from the BME community. It was disappointing however that so few had been successful. He wished to see a force that reflected the public that it served in the West Midlands.

048/15 Decision – Fees and Charges 2015-16

048/15

The Director of Resources introduced the report which asked the Board to consider the proposed fees and charges to be made by the Force for 2015-16.

During the discussion, the Board noted the following points.

- Some of the charges were set nationally. Some were set by the Force and these were calculated on both direct costs and overheads.

- There were varying rates for mutual aid. There were bands for different circumstances.
- The charge for firearms licensing was set nationally. Although the charge for a licence had increased, it did not fully cover the Force's costs.
- The reduction in the charge for replacement firearms licences had also been set nationally.
- There was much debate nationally about firearms licensing charges and the actual costs that forces had to bear.

The Board supported the decision.

ACTION The Commissioner would make a formal decision to approve the Fees and Charges for 2015-16 as set out in the booklet attached to the draft decision.

The Commissioner made decision WMPCC 013 2015 Fees and Charges for 2015-16 on 8 April 2015 which can be found on the Commissioner's website at www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk

049/15 Update on issues from the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 9 March 2015 049/15

The Board noted the report which provided an update on issues raised at the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 9 March.

050/15 Chief Constable Update 050/15

The Chief Constable updated the Board on two matters:

- The Diamond Awards – the ceremony had been held on 26 March. The Chief Constable congratulated Dan Barton, Head of Corporate Communications, for the excellent work he had done on awards. The Chief Constable and the Commissioner both expressed how very enjoyable the event had been and how gratifying it had been to see the awards being presented to people who had made outstanding contributions from all areas of the organisation.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers had now been replaced by the National Police Chiefs Council. There was now a formal S22 collaboration agreement in place. It was being hosted by the Metropolitan Police.

	Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings	
	None	