



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

2nd February 2016

Operation Captiva

Aim and Purpose

1. This report aims to summarise the West Midlands Police position in relation to the current firearms threat and articulate the force's approach regarding the criminal use and supply of firearms.
2. Operation Captiva is the strategic response led by ACC Carl Foulkes who has made it clear the Firearms threat is a Force Priority and acknowledges that although the recent focus has been on the increased discharges in Birmingham, it is now time to expand the vision and activity force wide.
3. He is supported by his Silver lead, Detective Chief Superintendent Kenny Bell and then twelve thematic Bronze leads who report into Silver. As a collective they are working together to negate the current threat and lay down strategic and tactical plans to manage the current issues and prevent individuals entering into a gang lifestyle in the future.

Gold Strategy

4. The Gold strategy set by ACC Foulkes is as follows:
 - To reduce the number of firearms related deaths on the streets of Birmingham.
 - To identify, disrupt and reduce the number of firearms available across the West Midlands.
 - To reduce the number of firearms discharges across Birmingham.

- To reduce the wider number of firearms discharges across the West Midlands police area.
- To enhance community confidence and information reporting.
- To work with partners to prevent people entering a gang lifestyle and effectively divert and manage those away from it who are identified as currently active.

Background

5. There have been a number of firearm incidents that have taken place over the past 12 months across Birmingham and the wider force area. The most significant incidents listed as below;

Op Fry

6. Since April 2015 there have been over 20 known firearm discharges which have been linked to the two main Organised Crime Group's (OCG), based on the Birmingham West and Central Local Policing Unit (LPU).
7. Both groups include various chaotic young males and during the summer months intelligence was received about increased tensions being felt in the Newtown area. A number of firearm discharges took place in the months of June and July which included an incident where one individual received gunshot wounds to the back and a second received shrapnel wounds.
8. In August, a male was stabbed and there was one further firearm discharge reported, however over the August Bank holiday weekend, a further six firearm discharges took place. This included one individual being shot in the leg and these appeared to be linked to the incidents earlier in the month.
9. Significant arrests were made at this point and a number of resource intensive interventions took place to negate the current threat. These tactics did alleviate the tensions through September and prevented any further firearm incidents taking place.
10. However, on 10th October, a shooting took place where four individuals were shot and wounded in Great Hampton Row, Hockley.
11. None of the injuries were life threatening but the 'drive-by' method of attack, the location and time of the incident, and the shooting of four individuals made this incident the most significant of the series to date.
12. Very little intelligence has been received alluding to the cause of this dispute, but the release of gang videos from both sides of the conflict, the capture of various other social media events and intelligence indicates that animosity between both groups has been steadily building, and that personal disagreements and territorial issues are central.

13. To negate this threat the key individuals were subject to a significant operation to firstly disrupt their criminal activity and then arrest the said individuals to take them off the streets of Birmingham. Six individuals were arrested in quick succession for drug offences and have been either remanded in custody or managed by robust bail conditions. Firearm patrols and targeted operations were also increased to deter gang activity and also provide high profile reassurance within the immediate community.

Op Brigadoon

14. Other investigations on-going include Op Brigadoon, the fatal shooting of Connor Smith, on Birmingham South LPU on the 8th October. Three individuals have been charged for this offence and are currently on remand.

Op Redrose

15. On the 30th October there was a double shooting of two individuals on Soho Hill Birmingham which resulted in the fatal shooting of Derek Myers and the second victim with life threatening/life changing injuries. The investigation is on-going with regard to this murder and attempted murder and to date five gang nominals have been arrested and bailed with stringent bail conditions.

Other incidents

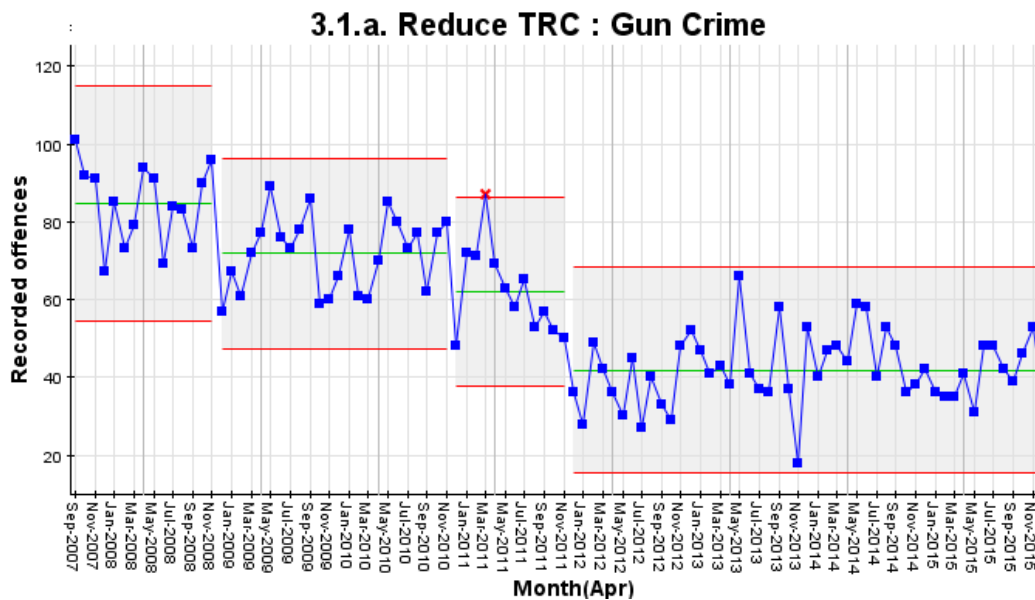
16. In addition to a number of isolated incidents across the force area, there were a series of seven firearm discharges on the Birmingham East LPU over the Christmas period and New Year. Although not linked, this series caused grave concern for both Police and the wider community and there have already been a number of arrests and firearms recovered directly linked to these incidents.

Performance

17. Although the reported incidents equate to increase in firearm activity, they were isolated to specific areas and overall firearm discharges and associated firearm crime continue to reduce.
18. The evaluation of performance has been completed by considering three themes which include; firearm related recorded crime, firearm related recorded crime involving a firearm discharge, and total recorded firearm incidents.

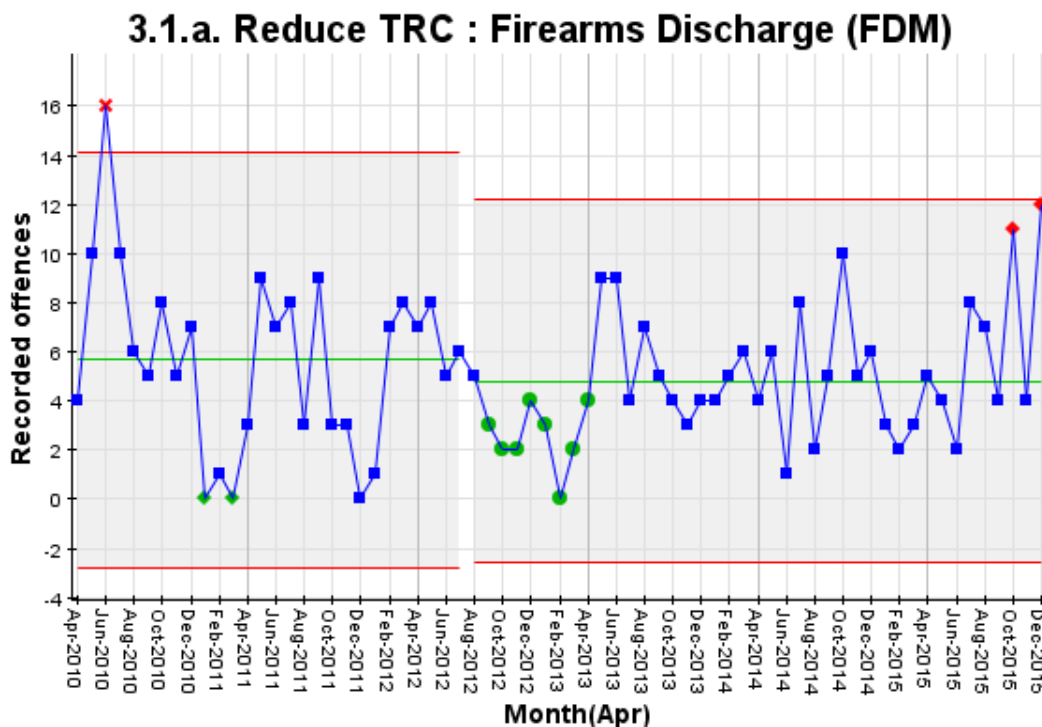
Recorded firearm related recorded crime

19. Since April 2009 West Midlands Police have seen three distinct step changes regarding the number of firearm offences being recorded on a monthly basis. As illustrated below, an average of 42 incidents a month are being recorded, which is the lowest average for some time.



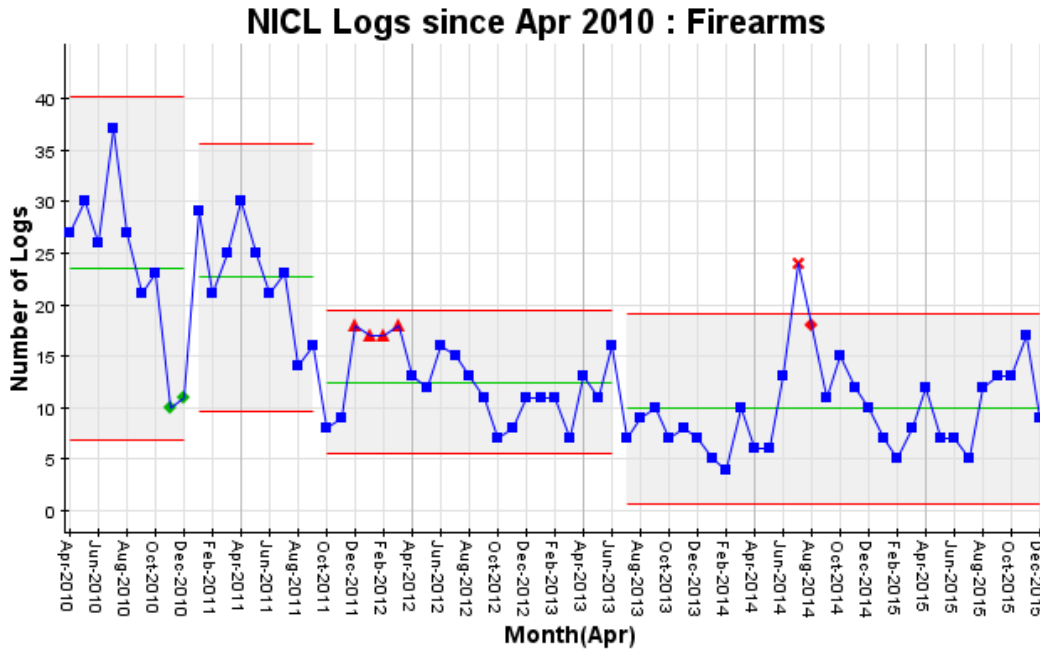
Firearm related recorded crime - involving a firearm discharge

20. The number of recorded crime incidents involving the discharge of a firearm has remained relatively stable at an average of 6 incidents a month since August 2012.



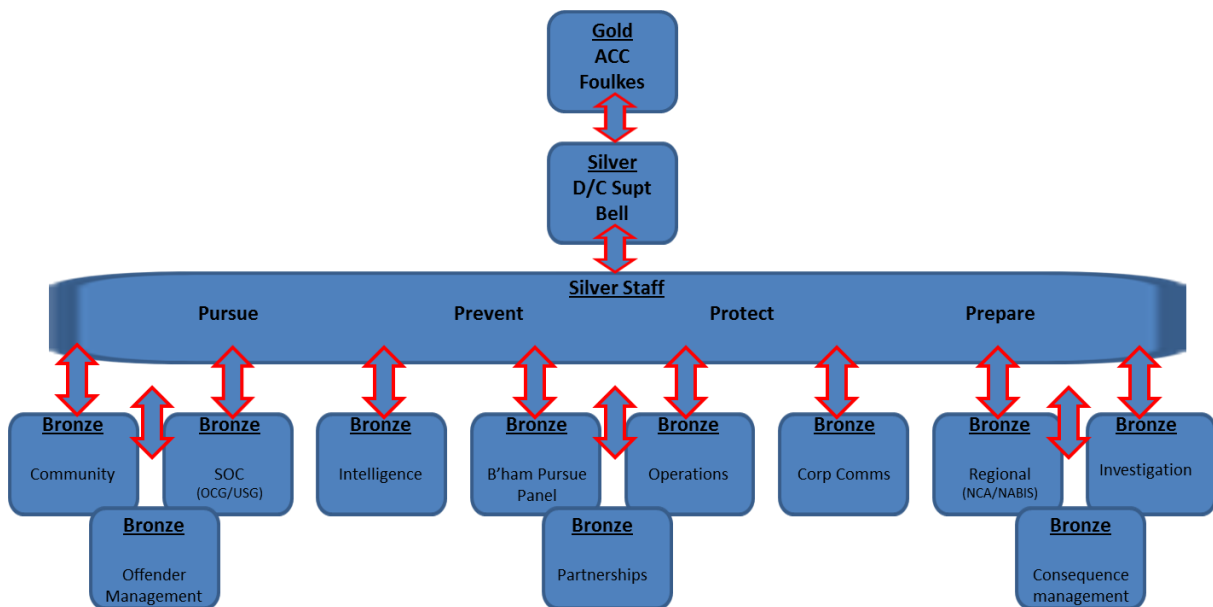
Recorded firearm incidents

21. There have been 3 step changes in the number of firearm incidents recorded since April 2010. There have been no significant increases in reporting apart from in July/August 2014. The monthly average remains at only 10 per month.



Activity

22. There are twelve Bronze thematic leads who are working towards a plan involving four strands, Prepare, Prevent, Pursue, and Protect.



23. Each Bronze thematic lead has an operational plan which then supports the overarching Silver response which meets the Gold strategic objectives as already discussed.

Serious Organised Crime (SOC)

24. A review of the current serious and organised crime strategy is taking place and is being rewritten to ensure a more joined up and focused response towards both Organised Crime Groups (OSG) and Urban Street Gangs (USG) across the force area.

Intelligence

25. The intelligence department scrutinises all available sources of intelligence and makes a mature assessment of the daily priorities facing the force with regard to firearms issues. Tasks are then shared to the relevant department with strict deadlines attached. Comprehensive packages are also being completed to ensure every opportunity is exhausted to disrupt and detain outstanding nominals.

Pursue Panel

26. Pursue Panels are a collective of partners who exhaust all avenues in an attempt to disrupt and convict key OCG nominals. They explore alternative opportunities to prosecute said individuals by investigating all aspects of criminality from driving offences to financial irregularities. The partners involved include Police (intelligence & investigation), Local Authority representatives, Housing, Fire, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Immigration, and Trading Standards. In time, each LPU/LA will have a panel up and running and is a key tool to achieve successful overarching outcomes.

Investigation

27. There are a number of operations on going beneath the Operation Captiva banner and investigative teams are working tirelessly to bring the criminality involved to justice. In recent months there have been some significant arrests of high profile gang nominal and there are further arrests planned in the near future.
28. A number of tactics are planned which include the use of civil interventions and gang injunctions to control gang nominals preventing them from associating and entering certain areas.

29.

Operations

30. An increase in firearm intelligence and subsequent intelligence packages has resulted in a huge increase in tactical firearm operations taking place. 23 have taken place in January 2016 alone which has resulted in a number of suspects being arrested and firearms being recovered.

31. Firearm officers have also been tasked to patrol specific areas to prevent firearm activity and provide reassurance to local communities. In addition, they have made visible and proactive impact patrolling in the right areas at the right time being in possession of correct intelligence.

Partnerships

32. A Birmingham Multi-Agency Partnership proposal is currently under development and there is potential for this to be an approach that Operation Captiva can adopt to develop its partnership response. It includes three tiers which include:

Tier 1 - Early Help / Safeguarding / Vulnerability

Tier 2 - Multi-Agency Civil Interventions

Tier 3 - Multi-Agency Criminal Investigations

33. In addition, there are a number of local groups working together to negate the threat from firearms and gang related activity. Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) have set up the St George's Task and Finish Group. This group was established following a series of firearms incidents over the summer of 2015 to respond to local concerns around housing standards and criminality within the St Georges estate, Hockley. The area was a hotspot for both offenders and incidents. Through the BCSP funding and resources were secured to improve the environment, youth interaction / diversion opportunities, reduce ASB, identify individuals/families to offer diversion away from crime and intensify housing management.
34. Others include the BWC Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) and schools panels.
35. The LSCP enables partners to work together effectively on priorities which make residents feel safer and build confidence in neighbourhoods. The group's priorities have been identified by the communities and partners across Ladywood and Perry Barr Districts and add value to existing partnership activity. For 2016 / 2017 within the vulnerable youth work stream, youth diversion specific to gangs and firearms will be included.
36. School Panels facilitate the sharing of information regarding young people and predominantly ASB matters between the police, head teachers and the Birmingham Strategic Partnership Team. Through negotiation with the panel chairs, future information will be provided to deliver inputs to pupils regarding guns and gangs together with training for staff to identify the early signs of gang membership.
37. Other planned events include a Gun Surrender, planned for February 2016, and the OPCC Gangs and Violence Commission.
38. The commission is scheduled for six months and will include the formation of an "Experts Panel" including academic research, a series of community events across firearm hotspots completing specific focus groups with young people. The commission will conclude with a

submit, to report on recommendations including community led activities, empowerment, engagement and resilience.

Conclusion.

39. To conclude the current performance position with regard to firearm incidents remains stable in the short term and West Midlands Police are achieving an overall reduction in the medium to long term in terms of overall recorded firearm incidents, firearm related crime and crimes involving firearm discharges.
40. A strategic plan has been put in place to manage the threat and reflects the fact that Firearms are a force priority.
41. Reducing the number of firearms related deaths on the streets of Birmingham and identifying, disrupting and reducing the number of firearms available across the West Midlands is key and all efforts will be put in place to achieve these objectives.
42. However, it must be remembered that this will not be achieved by West Midlands Police alone. Together, working with Partners we need to engage in the 4P strategy to address the current situation and put into place intervention and prevention initiatives to manage this position into the future.
43. And finally, the support and trust of the community in which the firearm incidents take place is critical as they will help to both identify a solution to the causes of this activity and then help put the solution into practice in partnership with all stakeholders involved.

Recommendations

44. None

Financial Implications

45. None

Legal Implications

46. None

ACC Carl Foulkes (Crime).