



**Police and Crime Plan Priority:** Supporting Economic Development

**Title:** Business Crime

**Presented by:** Superintendent Harvi Khatkar

**Purpose of paper**

1. This paper provides an update to the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on the delivery of the Business Crime Plan by West Midlands Police and is for discussion.
2. The report focuses on retail crime as previous submissions have covered Fraud and Cyber Crime.

**Background**

3. Business Crime affects all sections of the business community and it accounts for 18% of Total Recorded Crime for West Midlands Police (WMP).
4. WMP recognises the impact of this crime type on the business community and appointed a new force Subject Matter Expert (SME) in February 2018. The SME works closely with the WMPCC Business Lead under the direction of the Strategic Business Crime Partnership. The SME's role is to support and drive the key deliverables of the Strategic Plan using the 4 P Plan methodology based on the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) Principles.
5. The priorities are:

**Prepare:** Raise standards of WMP approach to business crime and promote mutually beneficial principles of engagement to reduce the impact of crime

**Prevent:** Put prevention at the heart of business engagement to inspire confidence and improve relationships

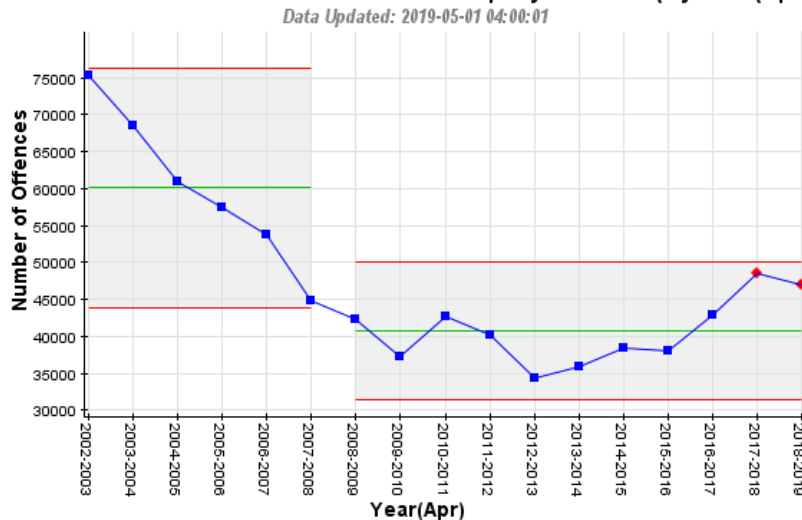
**Protect:** Reduce and prevent business crime through design, training and technology

**Pursue:** Disrupt organised business crime activity.

## WMP Performance Overview (Appendix A)

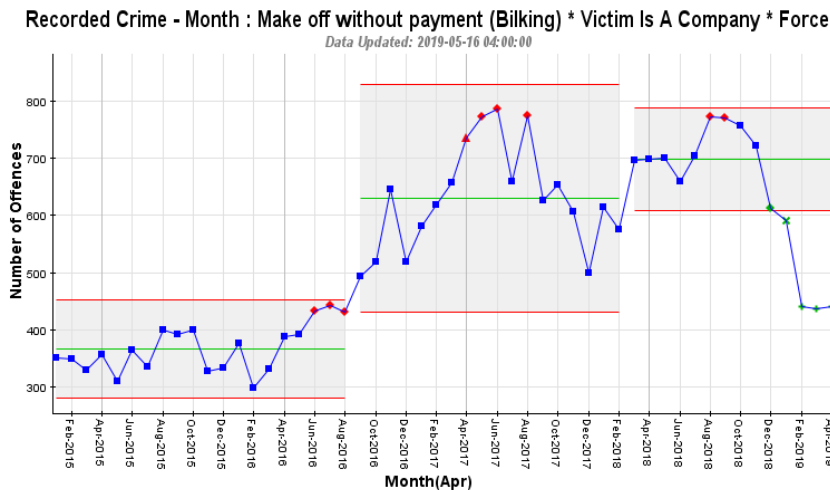
- Total recorded Business Crime in 2017/18 reached its peak since 2007/08. In 2018/19 47002 offences were recorded, this is a reduction of 3% compared to 2017/18 (48445 offences).

Recorded Crime - Month : Victim Is A Company \* Force : (By Year(Apr))



- The Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU's) experiencing the highest offence increases for the same period are Birmingham East, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. A possible explanation for this is due to the demographics of the areas as well as regeneration. However, overall performance for all NPU's shows control within the upper and lower control limits (i.e. it is within expected levels of recorded crime). Those NPU's showing increases in the last 6 months are Coventry, Sandwell and Walsall. Both Coventry and Sandwell have also experienced higher levels of reported crime.
- Theft Shops and Stores; Bilking and Criminal Damage accounts for 92% of all Business Crime. Birmingham West, Birmingham East, Sandwell and Wolverhampton account for the largest geographical distribution of these crimes. These NPU represent both larger city centres and more densely populated areas.
- Theft Shops and Stores not surprisingly is the highest contributor to Business Crime. NPU performance shows control within both the upper and lower control limits. Fluctuations in performance can be attributed to seasonal trends and peak holiday periods, such as Christmas and school holidays. The force plans for these periods and NPU's will run seasonal operations.

10. The trajectory for Bilking offences for the force shows this crime type is reducing.



11. All NPUs are showing reductions and control of this offence type. A possible explanation for this reduction is the improved partnership approach with ‘BOSS’ (British Oil Security Syndicate), where businesses are taking more responsibility to proactively reduce crime by adopting the Design out Crime principles (e.g. Pay at Pump; Better CCTV and improved staff training). The force is also seeing an increase in online reporting of this crime type due to improvements WMP have made to their online reporting (i.e. Businesses are able to use generic email accounts; upload CCTV footage and track their cases). Feedback from this sector indicates that reporting online is easier and more efficient.

12. Criminal Damage offences incorporate a number of offence types (criminal damage other, criminal damage building and criminal damage vehicle). Overall performance in this area shows more fluctuations due to the random and sporadic nature of the offence. The different offence types in isolation would represent low numbers and often the prospect of a realistic conviction is low due to the identity of the perpetrator being unknown. The ‘THRIVE’ (Threat, Risk and Harm) grading is often low as it is generally not reported as a ‘crime in action’. Criminal damage to buildings is the more prevalent offence type and easier to target harden against with the right advice and resources. However, feedback from businesses is that this offence type is under reported due to businesses not wishing to increase their insurance premiums and their perception that most incident reports are filed by the police due to the lack of tangible lines of enquiry.

13. Burglary Other (i.e Not defined as Residential Property); is the fourth contributor to overall Business Crime. Performance in this area shows fluctuations across all NPU's, however, it remains within the upper and lower control limits. It is difficult to identify the actual causes for this fluctuation. This offence type is often not reported as a 'Crime in Action' and most offences occur when a business is closed and the offence is discovered the next trading day. WMP are aware through feedback that these offences are under reported for the same reasons as Criminal Damage. WMP continue to work with businesses to advise on target hardening and general crime prevention.
14. In relation to positive outcomes for Disposal rates (i.e. perpetrators brought to justice) the force is showing consistent performance in this area despite the challenges around demand.

### **Business Crime Strategy**

15. In 2017 working with the OPCC a Strategic Business Crime Partnership was created, chaired by a non-police chairperson from the business community in the West Midlands. The board meets quarterly and has only recently revised its Terms of Reference.
16. Partnership members consist of a range of stakeholders (Chamber of Commerce, Association of Convenience Stores and West Midlands Combined Authority).
17. In September 2018 a Strategic Plan was developed and approved by the Board and covers the priorities referred to in page 1 (Prepare; Prevent; Protect and Pursue).

The key delivery outcomes to date:

#### **Prepare:**

18. WMP have consulted and engaged with businesses to inform and advise the National Business Crime Centre working group in relation to adopting a nationally recognised Business Crime flag as part of the Home Office Counting Rules. Whilst this has been approved an implementation date has yet to be agreed by all forces. This will improve data quality issues for forces and enable better identification of Business Crime victims. Therefore, enabling victims to receive the most appropriate crime prevention advice.
19. All Police Community Support Officers (PCSO; s) receive Crime Prevention Awareness Training as part of their professional development.
20. NPU Commanders are engaged with strategic leads for the Top 8 WMP demand generators (Asda; Morrison's; McDonalds; Aldi; Boots; Co-op; Tesco and Sainsbury's) to ensure consistency across all stores in relation to crime reduction and crime prevention. This work commenced in November 2018 and initial findings suggest WMP has seen reductions in crime in the following stores McDonalds; Co-op, Tesco, Aldi and Tesco.

21. All PCSO's across the force have received basic Cyber Crime training. However, 16 PCSO's across the force have received more indepth Cyber Crime training from the Economic Crime Unit (ECU) and are delivering this through NPU business partnerships and contacts. The ECU have recently appointed a Protect Coordinator to work more closely with these 16 PCSO's.
22. Working with Public Protection and the OPCC Business Crime lead a number of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) awareness sessions have been conducted across the force. Vulnerable places have been targeted during this first phase and include businesses such as car washes and nail bars. This has resulted in increased intelligence
23. Funding (£40,000) has been secured through the Active Citizens Fund to create a Business Crime Co-ordinator role to support the Strategic Business Crime Board. A Job description has been developed and approved by the board. Recruitment into the post has been agreed and the post will sit under the WMP Design out Crime Team. The timeline for this post is anticipated to be 3 months dependent upon completion of a vetting process. This will provide longer term sustainability beyond the 12 month funding. This post will be critical to setting up sub working groups from the different business sectors across the WMP area and to coordinate activities in line with the Strategic delivery plan
24. WMP external crime reduction website now includes links to the National Business Crime Centre website and details have been circulated both internally and externally to the Business Community.

**Prevent:**

25. WMP are working closely with the NBCC lead to ensure Best Practice is disseminated amongst the Business Community and NPU Business SPOC's. WMP was instrumental in implementing quarterly meetings with the NBCC and this includes attendance by regional Police representatives.
26. A Business workshop was held in October 2018 and each Business Improvement District (BID) was represented at this event together with a representative from the NBCC to provide a national update on Business Crime. The event was well received amongst the business community and provided an opportunity to share best practice; explore ways to improve the WMP online reporting offer and discuss information sharing agreements.
27. Working with WMP Economic Crime Unit (ECU) a number of Cyber Crime and Fraud Awareness workshop sessions have taken place across the force. In the future these workshops will feature as seasonal campaigns led by the ECU
28. The issue of Homelessness has been raised with the Combined Authority and this is work in progress. It features as a priority for a number of NPU's as there is a direct correlation between an increase in Theft Shops and Stores offence.

29. However, it is recognised that this is a complex issue and requires a multi-agency approach. Both Birmingham and Wolverhampton NPU are good examples of where a multi-agency approach has been adopted and specific delivery plans are in place to address the issue. It is recognised that the benefits of such plans is medium-long term.

**Protect:**

30. NPU's are adopting through a partnership approach corporate Information Sharing Protocols. The aspiration is that these will replicate NBCC best practice principles. A number of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have also purchased technology (i.e. DISC, Sentrysis) to support information sharing platforms. However, engagement with the OPCC Lead continues to look at how these systems can support and work with current and future WMP IT systems.
31. WMP Design out Crime Team have worked with NPU Commanders to increase crime reduction awareness amongst the WMP top 8 demand generators. This work is ongoing and some of the challenges are about establishing a corporate approach amongst all stores in the WMP area.
32. Birmingham West currently has an accredited Business Crime Partnership and work is progressing slowly in other areas to align all NPU's. The main challenge is around funding.

**Pursue:**

33. All NPU's conduct Seasonal Campaigns during busy periods of identified increased demand. Christmas and school holidays are the main periods and patrol strategies during these periods are seen as a key deterrent to reduce crime. This is linked to the forces strategic and tactical tasking requirements and will be linked to reducing demand across other crime types (e.g. violence).
34. A number of improvements to the WMP Online reporting have been made, making it easier for businesses to report crime online and send CCTV images of potential perpetrators. This includes an improved evidential pack designed to reduce reporting time for a victim of crime. This will require further promotion through the Board as not all businesses are aware of this facility. Whilst it is too early to assess the effectiveness, initial feedback is positive.
35. WMP have established an internal sub group to look at reducing demand in relation to Theft Shops and Stores offences and address repeat offending behaviour. The group consists of representatives from various internal departments and has established a number of work streams. For example Drug Intervention Programmes aimed at diverting and rehabilitating perpetrators and Restorative Justice programmes targeting perpetrators who commit low level

crimes and facilitating discussions whereby they understand the impact of their crimes on victims. Again it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this group, however, it is recognised that early diversion of repeat offenders is key to reducing Theft Shops and Stores offences, as often perpetrators will have drug / alcohol addictions.

### **WMP Business Community Engagement**

36. A Business Workshop event was held in October 2018 and representatives from all BIDs attended. As a result of this a number of networks across the West Midlands were established. Agenda items included updates from the NBCC and WMP Modern Day Slavery lead and Force Contact in relation to WMP online reporting. Based on feedback of the event a number of future workshops are planned for 2019/ 2020 based on thematic areas. For example Cyber Crime and Information Sharing.
37. A number of Cyber Crime / Fraud workshops have taken place across the force. This has raised the awareness of the issue and also highlighted to businesses the need to comply with new GDPR legislation (formally Data Protection Act). Feedback from smaller businesses suggests they have found compliance with meeting GDPR deadlines quite challenging due to government set timescales. They have also struggled to interpret the impact of the legislation on their businesses. This feedback has been provided to the NBCC lead. The ECU have recently recruited a Cyber Crime coordinator to look at ways to promote this area of business
38. The Economic Crime Unit have trained a number of PCSO's across all NPU's, in Cyber Crime. As a result, this has commenced a phased approach of engagement with local businesses. This work is ongoing, with NPU staff managing engagement alongside other force demands
39. WMP have supported the OPCC Business Crime Summits and have hosted a Crime Reduction Stand at the events
40. All NPU's now have a Police representative lead that sits on local Business Partnership Boards. Developing best practice in this area is work in progress.
41. WMP conducted a Christmas Campaign which was widely advertised on social media. Part of the campaign involved NPU staff visiting Business Premises to promote crime reduction; the WMP website, encourage online reporting and increase 'WM NOW' sign ups. The latter is an area that requires ongoing promotion and awareness as the current business uptake to 'WM NOW' is low. The reason often given by businesses is that they are 'too busy'.

42. WMP conducted a live Web Chat on social media in relation to 'Black Friday'. The responses were positive and the questions were mainly focused around crime prevention and Cyber Crime

### **WMP Development of 3 Tiered Business Partnership Model**

43. The Three Tiered approach is in its early stages. Birmingham is an example of where the foundations are being laid, with a Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) forming amongst the Business Improvement Districts (BID). This is a slow process because of the complexity involved with agreeing Information Sharing Protocols and funding. This is an area that can be supported by the Business Crime coordinator once in post.

### **WMP Business Crime Reporting**

44. A number of surveys have been conducted over the year, which have been circulated through Strategic Board members to their networks and also through the NPU SPOC's to their business networks and Business partnerships. The surveys have focused on better understanding the needs of the business community in relation to reporting crime with emphasis on online reporting and information sharing. This work stream has been led by the WMP New Ways of Working Programme. The results of the survey found that there are different challenges faced by businesses and retailers in particular. For example, smaller businesses (sole traders) wanted to report all crimes online as it was easier for them. Whereas, the larger organisations wished to report via a national 'Single Online' system as often their staff have restricted access to IT. However, they reported that they tended to use the 101 number to report crimes and found this time consuming. The 'Single Online' system forms part of a national programme, which is looking at developing a national IT platform which all Police Forces in England and Wales can use. The challenges for WMP are that their current online system is more advanced than most other police forces.
45. As a result of the survey results, a number of changes have been made to WMP On-Line, making it easier for businesses to report crime on-line. There has been an increase in online reporting for simple crime types (i.e. Theft, Bilking) and as a result Force Contact department has seen a significant reduction in demand for 101 services.
46. WMP Initial Investigations Department have engaged with both Boots and Tesco to pilot online reporting via WMP systems. Again this is a recent pilot so too early to assess its impact. It is hoped that the results will inform WMP on improvements to its online offer and encourage its wider usage.



47. In relation to the Digital Platform, it has been confirmed that the work to improve the online reporting of TSS and bilking (fuel) has progressed significantly over the last couple of months. The software development should be completed by the end of May and deployment is expected by the end of July 2019.
48. Most significantly for businesses, an MG11 (statement form) will be generated from the information supplied by the business at the point of reporting. This will streamline the investigation process and reduce the administration between a business and WMP. This is anticipated to 'Go Live' in autumn 2019.
49. There are currently a number of IT information sharing platforms being used by businesses (DISC and Sentries). Whilst they provide a useful tool for businesses; they should be encouraged to use them more frequently for civil recoveries and banning orders. The current challenges for Businesses and WMP in relation to these different IT solutions is how they can be integrated, whilst managing ongoing financial implications. It is important to distinguish that businesses are under no obligation to commit to a certain IT system.

### **WMP Resourcing**

50. The role of the Force SME is to bring nominated leads from different internal departments together and these persons will lead on different work streams contained within the Strategic Delivery Plan.
51. NPU SPOC's (Single Point of Contact) have been identified and lead on managing engagement with local Business Partnerships (i.e. BIDS / BCRP). This forms part of their NPU engagement plans and is seen as business as usual. However, the challenges for NPU staff is managing abstractions with other demands and priorities (i.e. knife / gun crime).
52. The force has a nominated force Cyber Crime / Fraud lead. This person has specialist knowledge and works on the Economic Crime Unit
53. The force has a nominated force lead for Modern Day Slavery and they work within the Public Protection arena
54. The force has a nominated lead for New Ways of Working and they work closely with colleagues from Force Contact and their focus is on improving the digital experience for victims of crime including online reporting
55. The force has a nominated lead for Intervention and Prevention and Early Help work. This person works closely with colleagues from the Criminal Justice Department and is focused on reducing re-offending rates by exploring intervention pathways

## **Forthcoming Events / Factors Affecting Business Crime**

56. A number of Business workshops are planned for 2019 / 2020 following the event held in October 2018. These workshops will be thematic and they are planned for July 2019; October 2019 and March 2020. The planning for these events is currently taking place in conjunction with the OPCC lead. The events will focus on Fraud; Modern Day Slavery and Counter Terrorism.
57. WMP is aware through NBCC national updates that businesses are seeing an increase in the threat and in some cases the use of violence against their staff. This is being attributed to a number of reasons, mainly economic as well as an increase in organised crime groups operating across regions. This is an area which requires further intelligence.
58. WMP recognises the increase in Anti-Social Behaviour due to the closure of smaller retail outlets on the high street. Brexit may impact on more business closures

## **Next Steps**

59. Continue to improve online reporting to make it easier and more efficient for victims of crime
60. Continue to work with Business Partnerships to develop a 3 Tiered Business Partnerships
61. Appoint to the Business Crime Coordinators post under the direction of the board.
62. Seek to explore opportunities to reduce demand and reoffending and explore opportunities to work with the Third Sector

The board is asked to approve the next steps.

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