



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

18 February 2020

Police and Crime Plan Priority: *Playing our part in responding to national threats*

Title: *The West Midlands OPCC Response to Fraud and Cyber Threats*

Presented by: *Brendan Warner-Southwell, OPCC Fraud and Cyber Policy Lead*

Purpose of Paper

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the board with an update on the work being undertaken to develop the Police and Crime Commissioner's local and national fraud strategy.
2. This paper is for discussion and the board is asked to support the ongoing development of the work.

Background

3. In the UK, the City of London (CoL) states that £2.2 billion was stolen from victims through fraudulent activity in the 2018-2019 financial year, with a reported 741,123 cases. However Experian, the credit rating agency, project the total cost of fraud to the UK economy to be closer to £190billion. In the West Midlands 35,964 cases were reported with a total loss of £58.8 million lost to victims in the same financial year. Given Experian's projections, the total impact of fraud on the West Midland's economy is likely to be much greater than that which is recorded.
4. The Fraud and Cybercrime paper for this month's SPCB breaks down in great detail what the fraud landscape currently looks like in the West Midlands. This paper will not look to reiterate the contents of that paper but will explain the advancements the OPCC is currently making both locally and nationally in advancing our response to fraud.

Local Response to Fraud and Cyber Crime

5. As an OPCC we have been working with both the Economic Crime Unit (ECU) and the ROCU Fraud team to discern where our office can add most support regarding West Midlands fraud victims. At present the ECU has recruited a Protect Co-

ordinator. The OPCC is currently awaiting a formal business case so that we can explore further funding for this role

6. In September 2018 Outreach solutions were commissioned by Experian and the PCC's Office to deliver Fraud and Cyber Protect messaging to people over the age 55 across Birmingham. Outreach Solutions received £32,500 from Experian and £15,000 from the PCC's Office. The project utilised Age UK and Age Concern's links across the target area to feed information to the target cohort. The total numbers reached can be seen in the table below:

7.

Type of activity	Target activity	Total activity
Community Events	164	165
No. of attendees	N/A	2697
One to Ones	240	788
Embedded One to Ones	160	252
Awareness Raising Venues	212	222

8. The total number of people reached through the campaign was 3,737. Research undertaken on previous Tackling Fraud programmes, both independently and by Outreach Solution's supplementary research, shows that a programme of this type provides a significant reduction of losses to fraud and scams once individuals have the information they need to self-protect. Estimates point to a 8:1 return on investment ratio. By the time the programme had completed in May 2019, Outreach Solutions stated that they estimated the programme had saved people over age of 55 circa £380,000. It is stated that this saving will further grow over the next 12 months whilst the protect messaging material is further circulated amongst the Birmingham population.
9. The PCC hosted a Cyber Summit at Wolverhampton Science Park in November 2018 and was organised in partnership with WMP, ROCU and Get Safe Online. Topics included Mandate Fraud, secure disposal of data from business assets, Cyber Apprenticeships, the dark web, top ten tips to protect a business from cyber crime, and detecting social engineering. There were 4 workshops to enable a more in depth discussion later in the day. The day rounded off with a highly informative and enjoyable live hack of then APCC, now DPCC, Ashley Bertie's social media presence by Richard Plumb, a DOCO with WMP.
10. One of the most significant things that the OPCC has done locally in this space is establishing the West Midlands Fraud Board. This is a quarterly meeting that had it's inuagral meeting on the 27th of January 2020. The terms of reference were confirmed by group attendees at that meeting. The ambition of this group is two-fold. Firstly, to collaborate with the West Midlands Police and support them in the service they provide to the West Midlands public. The board meetings will give the Board space to understand the threat from Fraud in the West Midlands and to identify opportunities to strengthen the resilience of communities, support enhancements in the support of victims of fraud and identify opportunities to influence government, businesses and other law enforcement partners both locally, regionally and nationally

to ensure an effective response to fraud. The second ambition of the board is to provide a forum to discuss wider fraud Protect and Prevent programmes which can be developed across the West Midlands. The membership of the board will then be tasked with both the implementation and promotion of these programmes.

11. Current membership, as agreed in the terms of reference, stands at:

- Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
- West Midlands Police Assistant Chief Constable
- A representative from the West Midlands Fraud Forum
- A representative from the West Midlands Strategic Police and Crime Board
- An academic expert
- Head of West Midlands Police Economic Crime Unit
- An individual(s) who is an expert by lived experience
- A representative from WM Corporate Communications
- A representative from the City of London Police / National Fraud Coordinators Office
- Regional Fraud Coordinator
- A representative from the West Midlands Trading Standards group

12. Membership is due to be extended to a representative from the Crown Prosecution Service and also a regional representative from CiFAS.

13. The OPCC will be running a ‘Cyber Bootcamp’ in partnership with WMP and the FSB on the 24th of March. The focus of the event will be to provide businesses across the West Midlands with the tools, learning and knowledge which will enable them to protect themselves against cyber crime. Participants will then be given a package of tools to take back into their organisations so that they can train their colleagues on how to defend themselves against cyber crime. The reasoning behind this being that organisations defences against cyber crime are only as strong as their most uninformed colleague.

National Response to Fraud and Cyber Crime

14. The OPCC is also focused on influencing the national agenda around fraud. The HMICFRS’s report on fraud, published in early 2019, highlighted that focus needs to be given to the national response to fraud. This has been consolidated further by the government’s Economic Crime Plan which was published in July 2019. This laid out specific actions which would be pushed at a governmental level to address fraud. Fraud is a topic which is gaining greater public scrutiny. The Times recent undercover story, which focused on the mistreatment of victims by Action Fraud staff, has made the public aware of the current failure of the national fraud strategy.

15. One aspect of the national strategy, the OPCC believes, which has not been given enough focus is the democratic governance functions currently in place. The democratic oversight for the national fraud strategy currently sits with the City of London Police Authority. No mechanisms are in place to communicate to other democratically elected police governors, PCCs, so that they can better hold their police forces to account and also the national strategy providers, the CoL Police. The PCC has been at the forefront of communicating this issue to other PCCs, the CoL Police, the CoL Police Authority and the Home Office. Initially concerns around fraud governance were communicated through the APCC network through a letter, written on a collaborative basis between the other three OPCCs in the region. To gain wider

recognition of our concerns, an article on the issue was collaboratively written between the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, Waheed Saleem, and the subject policy lead, Brendan Warner-Southwell, and was published in Policing Insight. Subsequently to that letter the OPCC met with the City of London Police and the City of London Police Authority, who both agreed that governance needs to be improved in this space. There needed to be clarity around responsibilities. The Police cannot take ownership for addressing everything when there are so many partners, both public and private institutions, trying to address the problem.

16. Subsequently to this the West Midlands OPCC and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners made the joint decision to host a National Fraud Summit to get partners involved in this space to develop a series of recommendations which could be worked against nationally. Through creating a series of recommendations which have been worked on collaboratively, it is our hope that the recommendations we develop will carry far greater national weight.
17. This event will take place on the 20th of February 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The day will be structured into two sections. In the morning we will hear from speakers, who are leaders in the fraud space from across policing, industry and also victims services. The second section will be facilitated by Birmingham City University who will conduct focus groups with the room attendees. Having an Higher Education institution conduct this function supports impartiality in this space. There will be three focus groups in total, focusing on: Fraud Governance, Fraud Victims Services and the Policing Response to Fraud.
18. After the summit a full findings report will be published by Birmingham City University, with a series of recommendations which can be worked against both locally and nationally.
19. It is our hope that through this process we will gain answers to the question of how we address the national fraud problem and justify ourselves in being able to lobby for these changes.

Next Steps

20. The board is asked to acknowledge the contents of this report and support our suggestions for advancing the PCC's Economic Strategy over the remainder of the PCC's term in office.

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