



**Strategic Policing and Crime Board**

**16 June 2020**

**Police and Crime Plan Priority: Emergency COVID-19 Response**

**Title:** Protect the organisational health of West Midlands Police, so it not only responds to the national emergency effectively, but recovers and returns to normality as quickly as possible

**Presented by:** ACC Vanessa Jardine

**Purpose of Paper**

1. The purpose of this paper is to update on how West Midlands Police is responding efficiently and effectively to COVID-19. The paper will include:
  - Officer Recruitment updates
  - Use of Specials and Police Staff
  - COVID-19 Testing Update
  - Implications of COVID-19 emergency planning for: Commonwealth Games 2022
  - COVID-19: Financial impact, including the 2020-21 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan

**Background**

2. West Midlands Police continues to prioritise the response to COVID-19. As the expert understanding of the coronavirus develops, so too does our understanding of the disease and the impacts on operational policing. As national safety advice continues to adapt so does the Force.

### **Officer Recruitment Updates**

3. The second week of lockdown, saw a large increase of 240 applications, which is the highest number of weekly applications since the new entry routes were launched 12 months ago. However, since the beginning of May we are receiving an average of 99 applications per week, which is lower than our pre-lockdown average of 140 per week.
4. On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020 West Midlands Police were one of the first forces to launch the new online assessment centre designed by the College of Policing. 590 candidates were invited to participate in this for West Midlands Police. Over 427 candidates completed the first stage and were invited to the subsequent assessment stages. We are currently awaiting the results from the College of Policing.

### **Use of Specials and Police Staff**

#### *Specials*

5. The Special Constabulary (SC) COVID-19 Governance Group continues to meet bi-weekly to oversee strategic and operational activity. The governance group developed policy and practices that have increased effectiveness and efficiency during COVID-19 and this will learning will be considered as part of the legacy planning.
6. Since the commencement of Operation Colonel, the force response to COVID-19, the SC have completed 1633 duties and a total of 11,714 hours of support. This includes attending 1413 incidents, arresting 70 offenders and seizing 84 vehicles. The SC have also played an invaluable role to the policing and patrols of Tiered COVID-19 locations and local effort to deliver the 4E approach to social restrictions. Figure 1 highlights some of the contributions made by our SC.

## WMP Specials support during CoVID-19 lockdown



Figure 1 – West Midlands Police Special Constabulary contribution during COVID-19.

7. During the month of May, training has re-commenced for new SC students within cohort 6 of students and on Neighbourhood Policing Units. It is anticipated that these officers will be fully trained and fit for deployment from July 2020. In support of the SC deployment principles, new officers will be posted to priority functions such as Local Policing and Force Response.
8. The Special Constabulary Governance Group have developed a range of options to demonstrate WMP and OPCC appreciation for the exceptional commitment of the SC during CoVID-19 and the following progress has been made:
  - A letter of thanks and appreciation will be shared during National Volunteers week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, with each member of the SC who has continued to support WMP during COVID-19.
  - Detailed options have been developed and presented to the Force Executive Team and Office Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC), following consultation with HMRC, regarding a one off payment to Specials who have worked in excess of 16 hours per month during the qualifying period. This supports the OPCC action plan and commitment communicated at the commencement of Op

Colonel to financially reward Specials who have supported the Force during such exceptional times. This approach would be supported by the appropriate recognition of their contribution to policing the West Midlands.

- Regular Newsbeat updates that showcase the exceptional work of the SC, which has been extremely well received by the SC.

### **COVID-19 Testing Update**

9. The government launched the test and trace service on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 as a key part of its Coronavirus recovery strategy. The service is designed to identify, contain and control the virus and reduce the spread of infection.
10. The scheme works on the basis that individuals who have tested positive for coronavirus share their recent contacts with the service who will get in touch with those individuals and advise that they self-isolate.
11. The advice from the NPCC in relation to the operational implications of the service for WMP alongside Public Health advice is currently being reviewed.
12. The total number of West Midlands Police employees that have been tested for COVID-19 is 544, this does include figures of those who have been tested more than once. The number of referrals for family and household members equates to 124.
13. 467 results have been received and of these 422 are negative, 41 are positive and 4 are inconclusive. 1 has attended a further test and 3 are now symptom free and have returned to work.

### **Implications of COVID-19 Emergency on Planning for the Commonwealth Games 2022**

14. WMP conducted a review of the scope and scale of events currently booked from March to early May 2020 in order to assess how critical these are for the business. Certain elements of the Commonwealth Games planning were paused with a small

team continuing to operate looking at detailed planning around venues. This has resulted in nearly all the known venues having the first iteration of plans and resources in place which is a good position.

15. Recruitment has restarted for the Commonwealth Games team and staff who were previously recruited but paused due to COVID-19 are due to be moved across. Phase 4 of recruitment will also be due to start imminently with a view to bring in further staff in autumn 2020.
  
16. A peer review has been undertaken by the Metropolitan Police, South Wales Police, Staffordshire Police, National Police Coordination Centre and the College of Policing. The formal feedback is due mid-June 2020. Further assurance processes are also underway with the Government in June 2020.

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on the 2020-21 Budget**

17. Finance will continue to report to the revised project structure as the force enters a recovery phase.
18. Table 1 shows expenditure on COVID-19 since March 2020 and was presented to Gold and Silver meetings week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

Category	2019-20 actuals (£'000s)	2020-21 actuals (£000's)	2020-21 est. to June 2020 (£000's)	Total expenditure inc. estimates (£000's)	Comments
PPE equipment	1,006	1,101	244	2,351	This PPE does not include orders via National Procurement. All costs expected to be reclaimed from Home Office
Officer and Staff pay costs	0	0	258	258	Officers and staff moved from posts including CWG planning, and creation of MART team
Overtime pressures	65	55	104	225	Actuals on custody, intelligence cell, IT and D and contingency. Planned OT on MART team, NPU PHLs and planning teams
Temporary staff	0	0	335	335	25 additional staff for force Contact. PPU extension of temp staff contract to 30 June
Other non-pay	25	48	459	532	Costs include decontamination, clinical waste, screens for contact staff, and amendments to police buildings to make them Covid secure
Loss of income	107	474	840	1,421	Loss of income at Airport and other force Operations, Police led prosecutions and traffic investigations, vehicle recovery and DBS
Home working (laptops and devices)	533	0	2,902	3,435	2,000 machines purchased in April and 1,050 in May in addition to 600 in March. Also includes mobile devices and SIM cards for mobile data in laptops
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>1,678</b>	<b>5,142</b>	<b>8,557</b>	

Table 1. Expenditure on COVID-19 since March 2020

19. From the table it can be seen that the overall cost of COVID-19 to the Force is currently £3.4m and is expected to reach £8.6m by 30 June 2020.
20. Expenditure on PPE is now £2.35m, with an additional £0.24m spend since the last report.
21. Expenditure on laptops and mobile devices to support home working is expected to be £3.44m with a total of 3,650 laptop machines purchased and issued by early May.
22. We are now starting to identify areas where the Force may be making savings as a result of reduced demand in some areas. Following BP's offer of free fuel for police vehicles during the pandemic the Force has saved £140,000 on fuel costs for police vehicles.

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