

Strategic Policing and Crime Board
Notes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 21st July 2020 10:00am – 12:00pm
Remote Access Meeting (using Zoom Technology)

Attendees:

David JAMIESON	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Brendan CONNOR	:	Board Member
Alethea FULLER	:	Deputy Chief Executive
Mark KENYON	:	Chief Finance Officer
Sarah MARWICK	:	Board Member
Gurinder Singh JOSAN	:	Board Member
Waheed SALEEM	:	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Dave THOMPSON	:	Chief Constable
Jayne MEIR	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Harjeet CHAKIRA	:	Victim Services Policy Manager
Tara MUCHEMENYI	:	Victims Policy Officer
Sue DAVIS	:	Chair of the Audit Committee
Mat SHAER	:	Chief Superintendent

2 Observers and 1 Note Taker.

Please Note:

1. *This meeting was recorded and the entire discussion can be found here:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et9N7dynVuA>
2. *The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here:*
<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/archive/spcb-july-2020/>
3. *Actions arising from the discussion during the meeting are highlighted in bold text.*

064/20	<p>Item 1: Apologies and PCC Update</p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cath HANNON – Board Member • Tom MCNEIL – Strategic Advisor/Board Member • The Commissioner congratulated Vanessa Jardine on her recent appointment as Deputy Chief Constable in the Force. • The Commissioner also congratulated Danny Long and Matt Ward on their appointments as ACCs in the Force.
065/20	<p>Item 2: Notes of the Last Meeting – 16 June 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was one action point from the last meeting: 057/20 Item 5 – Stop and Search and Use of Force “to confirm how West Midlands Police share the information from panels and groups with the public”. The Commissioner updated the Board that all of the minutes from local scrutiny panels are published on the West Midlands PCC’s external website for the public to read and download.
066/20	<p>Item 3: Questions from Members of the Public</p> <p>There were no public questions.</p>
067/20	<p>Item 4: Questions from Members of the Board</p> <p>There were no questions from Members of the Board.</p>
	<p>HIDDEN CRIMES</p>
068/20	<p>Item 5: Public Protection Unit including work on Hidden Crimes</p> <p>This report was presented and summarised by Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer, and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hate Crime is a significant focus and priority for the Force under its vulnerability workstream. Sustained improvement has been achieved in the Forces understanding and response to Hate Crime but there is always progress to be made. Improvements have been made to accessibility for victims and witnesses of hate crime. The Force have developed intelligence and analysis of hate crime which is used across the neighbourhood policing function to influence intervention and prevention approaches. Since the Covid outbreak there has been an increased level of reporting of hate crimes in the region that is in line with national levels. The Force continues to expand hate crime network of key stakeholders and partners ensuring there is a sharing of learning and good practice. Local dip sampling is now in place as the Force seek to reassure that the level of service that victims receive is satisfactory. There is a good practice scheme with the CPS dip sampling some of the investigative outcomes and feeding back which will help shape the Force’s approach to investigative work around Hate Crime going forward. Good innovative work is taking place such as the ‘Stand By Me’ hate crime intervention programme which West Midlands Police will be the first Force in the country to roll out Force wide. Some third party reporting centres such as libraries were not accessible during lockdown, but community spaces and protected characteristic umbrella groups were available. Engagement with third party reporting centres took place where possible and those that were not able to open were still able to report using technology available to them. Data is not requested by the Force from third party reporting centres as it was agreed to be a big ask of voluntary organisations carrying out the work. This means that the Force is unable to trace which the origin of the reported incident. The Far Right has been a driver in hate crime volume increasing which is an area of concern.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A piece of work is being developed with through the Force’s Contest board mapping hate crime hotspot areas across the understanding of Counter Terrorism work where there is an overlap. • During the last 12 months there has been a sustained spike in homophobic hate crime, which is of concern. • Progress around engagement with the disabled and transgender communities to reassure and give confidence to report incidents of hate crime is a key target. • The Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner shared his support for the Chinese community of the West Midlands following the increase in hate crime aimed towards them in the wake of the Covid outbreak. <p>Action: Intel analysis report on Hate Crime victim and perpetrator profiles to be shared post meeting.</p>
069/20	<p>Item 6: Hate Crime Symposium</p> <p>This report was presented and summarised by Harjeet Chakira and Tara Muchemenyi, and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A piece of research was commissioned in 2017 to map what support services were available at the time. This report identified that the victim’s services landscape is quite patchy and that there are services available but they are ad hoc. • Victim Support are the main service provider in the area and other support is mainly available via identity based organisations who work with communities on particular protected characteristics such as LGBT Birmingham where this support is given as a default following the victim approaching the organisation. • Early in 2020 the OPCC ring-fenced £50,000 funding for providers of hate crime services but only Remedi’s hate crime service were successful in this round of funding. • This experience backed up the 2017 report and influenced the thinking behind hosting the Symposium to invite partners to assess and work on scoping what services are available to support victims of hate crime. • The Hate Crime Symposium was held virtually on June 10th. Local Authorities were consulted in advance to find out what their objectives were and what support services were available. • Attendees on the day included voluntary sector representatives, CPS faith leads, local councillors, local university representatives and West Midlands Police officers. • The key issues raised on the day were that there is currently limited support services for victims within the West Midlands; there is a need to establish safe communities for victims of hate crime and a need to increase awareness raising which has been passed onto the Ministry of Justice. • It was also commented that there needs to be a better multi agency response to Hate Crime, the example was given that Housing Associations deal with Hate Crime as Anti-Social Behaviour which organisations present feel the service needs to be more specific because of the complexities associated with hate crime. • There was some misunderstanding with regards to third party reporting centres on the day, victims highlighted that once reporting through the service they didn’t understand what the next step in the process should be so it was agreed that this should be made clearer to victims. • Following the Symposium a working group will start meeting from next week. Attendees at the Symposium will be present and be part of the subsequent sub groups which will help address specific hate crime issues. • There wasn’t much representation from the LGBT community or disability groups on the day of the event but they have been invited to be a part of the working group to

	ensure their voices are included in discussions in order to co-ordinate a community response.
	EMERGENCY POLICE AND CRIME PLAN
070/20	<p>Item 7: External Grants to Organisations</p> <p>This report was presented and summarised by Mark Kenyon, and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the previous financial year the OPCC managed approximately £18.5 million worth of grants which is an increase on the previous year. This increase is mainly because of the introduction of the Violence Reduction Unit during the financial year. • Important to note that these grant schemes are funded through different types of funding. The Victims Fund, Early Intervention Youth Fund and the VRU are funded by grants from Central Government which means the OPCC has to comply with specific grant guidelines. • A lot of the funded projects do not start at the beginning of the financial year which means they are phased over a number of years and don't fit neatly into financial years in terms of expenditure. • The funded projects are monitored on certain criteria to deliver specific outcomes and only if these outcomes are met are the projects paid. • In the new financial year, half of the Active Citizens Fund has been refocussed towards smaller community groups working with people during the Covid 19 outbreak. This Community Initiative Fund is in place to help with the impact of Covid. More detail on the supported projects will be provided to the Board at a later meeting when an update is given on the Active Citizens Fund. • 32 organisations were supported through the Community Initiatives Fund across the West Midlands totalling over £100,000. A second round of funding has just been opened and a further £100,000 is available to community organisations helping with the recovery progress.
071/20	<p>Item 8: Joint Audit Committee Annual Report</p> <p>This report was presented and summarised by Sue Davis, and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks were given to the Commissioner and Chief Constable for their swift response in the change of membership of the Committee as 3 members left and one was absent for a lengthy period. • Since the report was sent out the Committee's independent member Richard Hollands has been appointed as the Vice Chair of the Committee. • There were some limited assurance opinions from Internal Audit which Sue believes reflects that the right priorities are being looked at. • The work of both internal and external audit has been affected with lockdown so an amended workplan will be put in place as the capacity to be out on the front line has decreased. • The External Audit report should have arrived by now but has been delayed due to lockdown. • The Chief Constable thanked Sue and the Committee for the work they have done.
072/20	Item 9: Emergency Chapter – by Exception and also Organisational Recovery, and Force's assessment of the short and longer term crime patterns as

the Covid emergency subsidies

This report was presented and summarised by ACC Jayne Meir, and the following points were discussed:

- West Midlands Police continues to coordinate the response to the pandemic through a strategic co-ordination group which is chaired by ACC Meir. There is also a West Midlands Regional Recovery co-ordination group which is set up through the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- The response phase, which the strategic co-ordination group coordinates, is expected to stand down in the next couple of weeks. This is due to Local Authorities being able to manage local outbreaks and having devolved responsibilities in regards to these plans.
- The Force is currently preparing for the mandatory use of mandatory face coverings in shops and how they work with Local Authorities in relation to the new powers they have been provided with.
- Other than face coverings on public transport and in shops the main area the main powers the police have to enforce is with regards to gatherings of more than 30 people which is still policed using the 4 E approach - Engage, Educate, Encourage and Enforce.
- There were significant reductions in all crime types at the start of lockdown which was understandable however this has slowly risen back to normal levels and there have been significant increases in Domestic Abuse and in relation to hate crime. The increases have been experienced nationally although the increase in Domestic Abuse in the region is particularly high and is something the Force is looking to investigate further to understand why.
- Violence in public places involving those under the age of 25 is also increasing, this is also predicted to continue over the summer with young people out of education and restrictions around holiday activities.
- There is an anticipation that there will be an increase in child abuse reporting in September as schools re-open.
- The reopening of the night time economy and hospitality industry was policed with few incidents. Any future demands on the Force will depend on the restrictions in place.
- Unemployment in the area will increase deprivation in the area and this will increase demand on West Midlands Police but it is difficult to say at this time when this increase will happen and how it will manifest.
- The Force is looking to maintain some of the innovative ways of working that have been developed through the lockdown period such as being able to remain in contact with communities through the pandemic through the use of technology.
- The Force IT department has supported with the roll out of 1300 laptops to ensure that the Force supports the people of the West Midlands with staff working agilely.
- Significant levels of PPE have been procured – over 1.5 million items – in support of officers working on the front line in the region.
- To date, 759 members of staff have been tested for Coronavirus with 45 positive results.
- Approximately £5.6 million has been spent in response to the crisis, a sizeable amount of this has been on PPE. Further funding is anticipated from Government but no details are available as yet on how this may be reimbursed to the Force.
- There is no data currently available that shows those children not currently in education through lockdown are more vulnerable to crime. There are a few incidents that have taken place lately that are being investigated in relation to children falling from windows in Birmingham to discover whether these are anomalies or whether they are related to parental fatigue or perhaps due to unsafe surrounding though it is currently too soon to draw any conclusions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance is awaited from the National Police Chiefs Council on how face coverings are to be policed in the retail sector though learning can be taken from how it has worked on public transport. Retailers will be expected to ensure that those entering premises comply with guidelines and that face coverings are worn. West Midlands Police's role will be to support retailers should any tensions arise. A particular challenge in this scenario will be in relation to those using face coverings to mask their identity to commit crimes. • The correct docking point between the Police and Government in relation is in place with the NPCC, it is important that the police are consulted in matters such as the reopening of licensed premises as the policy develops. • Conversations are ongoing with Local Authorities in relation to new lockdown powers in relation to public outdoor spaces to monitor expectations on what enforcement levels would be. The lockdown in Leicester has caused some community tensions in how it came about so it is important this is approached sensitively. • During lockdown there have been over 2800 directions to leave with which many members of the public will comply, often largely groups of young people have had to be dealt with using enforcement powers though this has only been on a small number of occasions. The level of disproportionality is recognised in relation to Asian and Black people and also directed more at the young. The Force is working hard to understand these figures and ensure that officers are using their powers appropriately. • Through lockdown it is clear that members of the public have preferred dealing with incidents online rather than having officers attending their homes. Learning from the lockdown period will be taken forward and anything more than subtle changes to the way in which things are done will be communicated to communities and community groups so they were aware of changes to the service. • West Midlands Police is one of the Forces that underwrote national procurement and the Force may soon have to get into the position to look at internal cross charging if the Government reimbursement decision is further delayed. • It was noted that Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime are running at record levels and that this is partly due to recent campaigns to encourage people to report incidents but does highlight the levels of offending in those areas. • As the furlough scheme ends there is a concern that levels of unemployment may result in higher levels of crime than usual placing pressure on the police. The OPCC is working with the Combined Authority and the Mayor to understand the social implications of unemployment.
073/20	<p>Item 10: Chief Constable Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIC's report on Roads Policing and Road Safety was released last week and the West Midlands was shown to be truly outstanding. The Force is looking to build on this good work around road safety and focus on nuisance vehicles. The Commissioner congratulated the Chief Constable and the Force on their work in this area. • From the Annual Crime Data report it can be seen that areas in the police and crime plan have been a primary focus, specifically targeting volume crime and acquisitive crimes. Successful outcomes rates have increased in the West Midlands this year. The figures around crimes involving vulnerable people echo the work being done by the Force in these areas. • Work will soon be taking place on the Force Management Statement which will show that the Force deals with a considerable amount of missing people per day than incidents of burglary. • A 2.5% pay rise has been announced for officers but it is not yet known whether the Government will fund this pay rise. It is expected that the money for new recruits from the Government will take into consideration the pay rise.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the cracking of the encrypted telephone service used by Organised Crime Groups through Operation Venetic, a transformative approach on the work has been able to be done around Organised Crime regionally and nationally. This involves work on gangs that were previously known to law enforcement and those less well known. The Force has arrested 93 people and seized £8 million and a considerable amount of drugs in connection with the operation. • The Force are still seeing a large number of unauthorised and unregulated gatherings. Work around enforcing the injunction in relation to car cruising is ongoing and the Force will move to prosecution where possible. • There is concern around street parties and large outdoor gatherings of people that these events may be being driven to sell drugs to young people in the absence of nightclubs and raves. Over the upcoming weeks the Force intends to strengthen its approach to these events. • The Force's policy in relation to releasing body worn footage leaves them open to criticism to the public therefore losing a trust opportunity with them but the policy that is followed is believed to be the correct one.
<p>074/20</p>	<p>Item 11: SPCB Workplan</p> <p>This report was presented and summarised by Alethea Fuller, and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workplan sets out the work that the Board will be considering between now and the end of March focussing heavily on progress made on the emergency chapter of the police and crime plan. • There will be a meeting in August for the first time due to the scale of activity taking place. • Work being done with the Force around disproportionality will be added into the workplan but a future quarterly report on the progress made will be bought to Board. This will be reflected in the Workplan bought to Board in August.
<p>075/20</p>	<p>Item 12: Date of Next Meeting: 18 August 2020</p> <p>The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable and his staff for all of their hard work during the Covid crisis.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 11:57</p>