



**Police and Crime Plan Priority:** Regular Item

**Title:** Emergency Chapter Report – by exception

**Presented by:** Assistant Chief Constable Claire Bell

#### **PURPOSE OF PAPER**

1. Provide an update on the efficiency and effectiveness of the West Midlands Police (WMP) response to the COVID-19 national emergency.
2. To update regarding the organisational health of West Midlands Police in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 national emergency.

#### **BACKGROUND**

3. West Midlands Police (WMP) continues to prioritise the response to COVID-19, maintaining a major incident response in partnership with the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).
4. This paper provides an update on a previous paper presented at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on 17 November 2020.

#### **COVID-19 RECOVERY – CRIME PATTERNS**

##### *Predicted Three-Month Demand Pattern*

5. The COVID-19 recovery phase is not causing any new or unexpected patterns of crime.

### *Predicted Three-Month Demand Pattern*

6. Overall crime levels have continued to increase; October was the highest month since 2005. This has been predominately due to significant increases around recorded Domestic Abuse crimes and Harassment offences that now make up one in every six recorded crimes. A number of interventions to continue ensuring as high a crime data accuracy as possible have pushed up volumes of low level harm crimes. Traditionally the changing of the clocks sees increases in Serious Acquisitive Crime however the Force is still seeing good reductions in this area. Historically January is also a high month for reporting of Domestic Abuse.
7. WMP continues to see approximately 200 records of contact a day relating to Covid. A specific policing response under Operation Colonel is in place and in broad terms includes:
  - (1) Operation Reliant which is the forces response to Unlicensed Music Events (UME's), large house parties and unlawful activities in licensed premises, including Shisha lounges. Dedicated resources are available at key times.
  - (2) 'COVID' cars, these are double crewed cars provided by Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) staff on each early and late shift. They respond to calls for service reporting breaches of the regulations, they began in the local authority areas that were under the heightened restrictions and now operate on all NPU's. A review is currently underway to look how this response can be enhanced. There are also dedicated patrols across all NPUs for COVID enforcement in hotspot locations; partnerships joint Covid enforcement teams and there have been a number of local NPU enforcement days.
  - (3) Contact Triage is dedicated staff ensuring that calls for service related to Covid enforcement are correctly identified. A triage capability has been created within Force Contact to highlight, prioritise and allocate these logs and they play a key role in optimising deployment of the Covid Cars and Operation Reliant resources. Officers attending those calls for service have been following the Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce (4E) model and on the vast majority of incidents we have attended we have not had to resort enforcement. Officers are also using powers outside of the Covid legislation by working with partners and using council licencing laws.

*Predicted Six and Twelve Month Demand Pattern*

8. This position remains broadly the same as reported in the previous paper which was presented at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. However any further tightening or relaxation of restrictions could significantly affect demand patterns as was seen during the national lockdown in April and May 2020 depending on the level of compliance and duration of any restrictions.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS**

9. Directions to leave have a number of outcomes including: dispersal, fixed penalty notice (FPN), summons and arrest. This month has seen the continued use of recording of lower level compliance as an outcome which is now the most used outcome over the last reporting period.

10. There has been a significant increase in use of directions to leave since the start of current lockdown on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

11. There have been a total of 14,099 directions to leave forms from March 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (this has increased by 7423 since last paper) as can be seen in figure 1 below. Low level compliance records the number of people on 1 form rather than taking individuals details.



Figure 1 Direction to leave data from March 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020

12. Of the 14,099 directions to leave given 24% were dispersed and 6% were for fixed penalty notices or summons and 28 resulted in arrest. The introduction of recording of low level compliance has accounted for over 9000 directions to leave.

13. Our baseline for assessing disproportionality is the 2011 census. We base ratios on the rate of an activity rate against the people the census says make up that ethnic group.

Whilst the census has been updated with estimates since it was carried out, it is some years old. It is acknowledged that more recent estimates show that the demographics and population of the West Midlands is far more diverse than in 2011. The data also shows that 29% of people were aged 18 to 39 years, 27% were aged 40 to 59 years and 22% were aged 60 years and over.

14. Since the start of current lockdown on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 6950 directions to leave were given. 280 of these were given Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's). Of the recorded proportion 54% of FPN's have been given to white people, 25% to Asian people and 9.5% to black people.
15. The data also shows that directions to leave are disproportionately used by age. 25-39 year olds have received 47% of FPN's and 18-24 year olds have received 22% of FPN's. If this is compared to the census data the two age categories would need to be combined showing 18 to 39 years olds have received 69% of FPN's, which is 39% above the 2011 census data.
16. There have been 13 Super Fines issued since the legislation came into place. 3 of these have been issued for directions given since start of current lockdown to date which is 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

## **WORKING AND OPERATING EFFECTIVELY WITH PARTNERS**

### *Strategic Co-ordination Group and Tactical Co-ordination Group*

17. There is currently no change to the working and operating with partners. The Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) and the Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) maintain a weekly rhythm with extraordinary meeting being established when required. Chairing of the SCG remains with the Local Authorities and the TCG is chaired by a Health representative. Meeting frequency is under constant review and may need to be increased to address the rise in local case numbers, but presently remains at weekly.
18. The SCG and the TCG will be coordinating the activity of the mass vaccination centres and the distribution hubs and are working with multi-agency partners to ensure there is adequate security and logistical planning to deliver an effective rollout of the vaccine.

## **SPECIAL CONSTABLE BONUS ALLOWANCE**

19. This remains the same as the previous period and since March 2020, 140 Special Constables have claimed the bonus allowance.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PROVISION

20. The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) revised guidance was issued on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020. This guidance stresses the importance of officers and staff using PPE when required to intervene with a member of the public inside their social distance, regardless of whether they are displaying symptoms, or whether or not the officer is in uniform.
21. The key change is that goggles should also be worn where close contact with the public is likely and social distancing isn't available and there is suspected risk of infection, or a person is symptomatic. The guidance remains that in all scenarios officers have PPE readily available and as a minimum requirement this is a fluid resistant surgical mask (IIR) and gloves (non-latex).
22. The guidance for PPE was published on the WMP PPE portal, along with the responsibilities for line managers and individual officers and staff. Leaders have been briefing this into their teams. Figure 2 shows the operational guidance for PPE.

Hygiene and PPE requirement	Inside duties			External/public facing duties	
	Cleaning of police, stations, cars and equipment	Contact with police colleagues and suppliers – Social distancing available	Social distancing not available – confined space	Contact with the public is likely – but with social distancing measures available	Close contact with the public is likely and social distancing is not available and there is a suspected risk of infection, or a person is symptomatic
Social distancing: first vital step in protection 	2 metres	2 metres	Aspire to achieve 2 metres separation or other physical measures	2 metres	2 metres unless closer contact is essential
Basic hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth</li> <li>■ Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and hot water and when not available use alcohol based hand sanitiser as often as possible, after incidents, and on return to station</li> </ul>				
Fluid resistant surgical mask (IIR) 	 No	 No	 Yes	 No	 Yes
Disposable gloves (non-latex) 	 Yes	 No	Risk assess	 No	 Yes
Disposable aprons 	Risk assess	 No	 No	 No	 Yes
Goggles 	Risk assess	 No	Risk assess	 No	 Yes
Fluid repellent coverall/over-suit 	 No	 No	 No	 No	Risk assess

Figure 2 Personal Protective Equipment Operational Guidance

23. Providing the appropriate level of PPE to all officers and staff is a key priority for WMP. WMP began planning and purchasing of PPE at an early stage and have therefore been in a strong position to respond to the changes in PHE/ NPCC guidance. As part of WMP's response to COVID-19 a strong PPE capability that is responsible for sourcing, distributing and monitoring the use of usage of the PPE remains in place. This function is overseen by a member of the Force Executive Team.

24. Appropriate PPE has been rolled out to all areas of the Force where there is a requirement. All PPE issued is in line with the national standard agreed for policing. There continues to be significant operational input into the PPE and how it is used. The Police Federation and Trade Unions have been fully engaged and consulted throughout and positive feedback received. The Force continues to have a central store for all items of PPE. We are able to assess our stock levels on a daily basis and take action where needed.
25. A weekly PPE update is provided to the executive lead, the update details the current stock level for each item, expected consumption over the next twelve weeks, the quantity that is on order and when that order will arrive. Each item is then given an appropriate status: red, amber or green. This level of visibility provides on-going assurance.
26. Strong supply lines have been developed with existing suppliers and through developing relationships with new suppliers. For the last 4 months the Force has been able to obtain 96% of its PPE needs from the national PPE policing stock. This means that as a Force we are spending very little on PPE.
27. Through creative thinking and a relentless focus on PPE, the WMP position is expected to remain strong. Should the position change this would be highlighted immediately, and reported into the COVID-19 command structure. We have secured additional PPE to meet demand through the winter period.
28. Each Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) and Department have designated PPE single points of contact, who are responsible for taking receipt of PPE stock delivered from the central WMP store, distributing it appropriately and feeding back to the central function if additional supplies are needed. This continues to work extremely well. Each NPU and Department also receives a weekly supply of PPE to ensure they have what they need. If there are any shortages following this delivery these are immediately addressed.
29. WMP has continued to see a high demand for PPE from its own officers and staff. We have been proactive in embedding good practice across the Force. The Force has sourced, procured and issued 2 face coverings and a bottle of hand sanitiser to all staff and officers who travel to and from work on public transport.
30. 4,000 staff and officers have requested face coverings and these were issued within 48 hours of Shared Services receiving the request. We have also offered these to volunteers across the Force. The face coverings are good quality and can be washed 100 times each and therefore we expect the 2 face covers issued will last around 6 months. We are getting really good feedback about them.

31. The end to end process was put in place a week before the start date of the government mandating face coverings being worn on public transport. We have also distributed face coverings to all operational officers and staff, in line with the expectation that like for the public, they are worn in shops and enclosed spaces. These were distributed in advance of the requirement for the public to wear them.
32. From 5th November 2020 the wearing of face coverings was mandated in all communal areas of all WMP buildings to ensure every precaution is taken to keep people safe. Face coverings have been provided to all officers and staff that need them.
33. Alongside the standard face coverings transparent face covers have also been purchased to cater for lip reading and face covers for those officers and staff that have turbans or longer beards.
34. Where staff and officers cannot wear face coverings due to medical reasons lanyards have been secured covered in sunflower images, which is the national symbol that makes it clear to others that the person wearing it cannot wear a face covering.

## **FORCE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

### *Assessment of the effectiveness of the COVID-19 testing regime for officers and staff*

35. Track and trace continues to identify learning opportunities that has allowed us to work towards a safer working environment. Without this function the infection rates would be much higher as our early interventions minimise risk reflected in the national statistic i.e. that every positive person will infect 1.5-2 people. Track and trace continues to allow us to engage effectively with Public Health England (PHE) and successfully challenge some of their initial assessments and decisions. The internal service has the benefit of an inbuilt escalation process where situations or questions require clinical input and expertise. An additional three colleagues are currently in the process of being recruited into the team on a full time basis, alongside the range of other colleagues from People and Organisation Development who undertake the activity in addition to their normal roles. The team have received praise from Public Health England for the robust and rigorous approach they have taken to support colleagues and the force.
36. Whilst there is a rise in positive cases amongst officers and staff it is reflective of the local picture. However, due to the in house approach we are able to confirm that the majority are due to non-operational interventions.

### *Impact of COVID-19 testing on operational effectiveness*

37. The impact of the COVID-19 testing on operational effectiveness actively contributes to infection control within the organisation by quickly removing from the work place individuals at risk and raising their awareness of their own health and safety and that of their family.
38. There is an immediate efficient response to positive tests due to 7 day cover within the test and trace function, this removes the risks associated with the inbuilt delay of the PHE process which can take up to 5 days to inform employers of a positive test by which time the opportunity for further infection escalates.
39. Hotspots or areas of concern continue to be identified quickly enabling better informed approaches and planning. This learning continues to be shared with the organisation to ensure behaviour change and improved compliance with the COVID secure requirements. In the last reporting period we have held a Webinar and Team Talk for staff.

#### **OPERATIONAL AND ORGANISTATIONAL LEARNING**

40. A series of 1-2-1 interview debriefs are being conducted with the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Covid Gold Executives and Gold Chief of Staff Officers. The scope of these debriefs explore WMP's strategic response and stakeholder engagement during Covid incident response as per the framework of Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004.
41. Upon completion of the aforementioned interview debrief process all 3 levels of a Gold, Silver and Bronze response structure learning will have been completed.
42. All Covid-19 CCA 2004 learning captured, is recorded on a tracker sheet for progression that establishes:
  - Context and detail of learning. How it will be used?
  - Progression. Understanding interdependency for learning to be implemented and how it is applied and associated business owner(s)
  - Validation process. How the new arrangement will be tested?
  - Embedding process. How awareness and understanding of changes from learning will be shared?
43. Through the above analysis the lifecycle of learning identified can be tracked. Engagement with WMP Risk-Assurance and Organisational Learning Team provides an independent feedback on the development of this process.

44. From learning established through the departmental business continuity questionnaire we have updated the business continuity plan template for departments. Amendments to this include:

- Initial Activation Actions, consideration and activities have been added
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Critical Function Analysis. Further guidance and alignment to the business continuity matrix
- Recovery Actions. Enhanced guidance and Incident Management Team structure
- Action Card has been created with bespoke departmental incident cards that provide considerations for Response, Resume and Recovery activities for specific disruptions.

45. As part of the validation process for learning, a request to the National Police Business Continuity Forum has been submitted for a peer support evaluation of the plan template.

46. Aspects of key learning taken from both the Silver Resilience Group and Operational Silver debriefs, as detailed in the SPCB board on 21st July 2020, have been incorporated within the command structure established for the second wave response.

47. It is recognised that the recovery element of learning is still pending to be identified and captured in addition to the collation of learning from WMP engagement with partners through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

48. Activity to progress the partner agency aspect of this is being established and opportunities to utilise learning through two LRF debrief processes is being explored that may negate the need for further sessions required to obtain WMP specific considerations.

49. Through the National Police Business Continuity forum we have ensured active representation as part of the forums Recovery Cell where it is anticipated further learning will be captured.

## **FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**

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

50. The finance department has identified and reported actual and future planned costs associated with Covid-19 across the force since March 2020.

51. Table 1 below shows expenditure on Covid-19 from March to end of October 2020 and includes a forecast of expenditure in November 2020. This information is presented to the Secure and Sustain board on a weekly basis:

Category	2019-20 actuals (March) (£'000s)	2020-21 actuals (Apr- Oct) (£000's)	2020-21 est. for Nov 2020 (£000's)	Total expenditure Inc. estimates (£000's)	Comments
PPE equipment	939	1,399	15	2,353	This PPE is net of orders via National Procurement of £4.25m, which has been reimbursed National orders and Medical Grade PPE ordered by the force of £1.76m have now been repaid by the Home Office. The forces forecasted net full year exposure for PPE costs is £0.69m.
Officer and Staff pay costs	0	693	45	738	Officers and staff moved from posts including CWG planning, creation of MART team and work by Guardian team on Covid-19. New costs include POD track and trace roles.
Overtime pressures	65	983	443	1,491	Actuals on custody, intelligence cell, IT & D contingency, MART team, NPU PHLs, planning and patrols in hospitality sector. Costs now include the first month of enforcement patrols in October. November estimate includes £0.3m for enforcement work across the force. Note £1.8m has been received from HO to support this cost from October 2020 to March 2021 (£0.3m per month).
Temporary staff	0	546	20	566	25 additional staff for force Contact – were extended initially to 30 September and then to 31 December. PPU extension of temp staff contract to 30 December to clear backlog of DA cases. This may extend further to March given the second lockdown.
Other non-pay	25	989	40	1,054	Costs include decontamination, clinical waste, screens for contact staff, and amendments/reinstatement of police buildings to make them Covid secure.
Loss of income	107	2,578	260	2,945	Loss of income at Airport and other force Operations including sporting events, Police led prosecutions and traffic investigations, vehicle recovery and DBS. Airport income loss reduced from July as some limited operations recommenced.
Home working (laptops and	533	248	27	808	3,650 machines purchased between March and May of which approx. 420 were directly related to

devices)					supporting the forces Covid-19 response. Cost includes mobile devices and SIM cards for mobile data in laptops.
Budget savings	0	(783)	(110)	(893)	Savings in fuel (per BP fuel offer which ended on 8 <sup>th</sup> June) business travel and accommodation.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>6,653</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>9,063</b>	

Table 1: Expenditure on Covid-19 from March to end of September 2020

52. The table highlights a number of areas for discussion. The overall cost of Covid-19 to the Force (excluding the national order of PPE) was £8.32m at the end of October and is expected to reach £9.06m by 30 November 2020
53. Expenditure on PPE is now £2.35m. After placing a national order for £4.25m (not included in the above table) it is expected that this will continue to provide for 98% of the force's PPE requirements. Further local PPE expenditure will be required to satisfy requirements for officers to wear face coverings in relation to the latest national guidance and this continues to be managed by the Shared Services team. The Home Office have now reimbursed the force £6.01m for all medical grade PPE purchased from March 2020 including the national order.
54. A loss of income of £0.1m was identified in March 2020 and this has grown to an estimated £2.69m by the end of October 2020. The loss of income for 2020-21 principally relate to Birmingham Airport, roads policing, events policing (football) and from the Criminal Justice processes.
55. The force has just completed a return to the Home Office on income loss from April to July in which 75% of lost income was reclaimed where this is budgeted. The submitted claim for this period recognised lost income of £1.11m which was then subject to a 5% deduction against budgeted values, resulting in a 75% claim of £0.72m for the period from April to July 2020. This scheme will enable the force to report further income losses for the remainder of the financial year which will be reported to the Home Office in December 2020 and April 2021. At present, the income we expect to receive from the Home Office in respect of these future losses will be around £1.1m.
56. We have identified areas where the force has made 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 £0.2m on fuel costs for police vehicles. Savings have also been noted in business travel and accommodation where savings of £0.58m have been identified from April to October. This level of saving is expected to continue for the

remainder of the financial year and will help to offset some of the costs in the table above for which there is no current offer of compensation.

57. It is pleasing that the government has provided additional funding to Forces to cover the costs of medical grade and Non-medical grade PPE required in relation to COVID-19, 75% of lost income and enforcement activities. However, it is not yet clear whether the government will provide additional funding to Forces to cover all other costs associated with the pandemic. Table 2 below shows the forces net costs in relation to Covid-19 after income received up to November has been applied

#### Net position expected to 31 March 2021:

	Expenditure £'000s	Income £'000s	Net position £'000s
PPE (exl. National order)	2,453	(1,890)*	563
Overtime pressures	3,263	(1,831)	1,432
Other costs	3,664	(170)	3,494
Income loss	3,735	(1,820)	1,915
Budget savings	(1,333)	0	(1,333)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,782</b>	<b>(5,711)</b>	<b>6,071</b>

Table 2 Net Position expected to 31st March 2021

\*Note this income is indicative of 1 month's pro-rata element of the £1.8m surge funding provided in October

58. The table shows that after income has been received for PPE, surge enforcement patrol overtime funding and loss of income the force will have spent a net £6.07m in dealing with the impacts of Covid-19 from 01 March 2020 to 31 March 2021.

#### Impact of Covid-19 on the Medium Term Financial Plan

59. In relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan it is expected that some impacts may be felt from the Government reprioritising public spending due to COVID-19, council tax collection fund deficits, tax base contraction and more permanent changes to income as the UK settles into a new normal. At present, it is too early to model these potential impacts. However, the finance team will continue to monitor the long-term situation to address these impacts if and when they crystallise. When the national position becomes clearer, the Medium Term Financial Plan will be updated and brought to a future meeting of the Board.

#### NEXT STEPS

The board is asked to consider this paper.

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