



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Notes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 28th September 2021
1000 – 1300 hrs
Main Conference room (G2), Lloyd House

Attendees:

Jennifer ALDER	:	Sexual Assault and Abuse Services Coordinator
Claire BELL	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Nicky BRENNAN	:	Victims Commissioner
Charmaine BURTON	:	Board Member
Harjeet CHAKIRA	:	Victims Policy Manager, OPCC
Simon FOSTER	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Alethea FULLER	:	Deputy Chief Executive
Bhupinder GAKHAL	:	Board Member
Karen GEDDES	:	Superintendent
Vanessa JARDINE	:	Deputy Chief Constable
Andy KELLY	:	Assistant Director - Corporate Asset Management
Mark KENYON	:	Chief Finance Officer
Richard NORTH	:	Chief Superintendent
Mike O'HARA	:	Assistant Chief Constable
David THOMPSON	:	Chief Constable

Plus one note taker and seven observers

Apologies:

Wasim ALI	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Cath HANNON	:	Board Member
Jonathan JARDINE	:	Chief Executive
Tom MCNEIL	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner

Please Note:

1. *This meeting was recorded and the entire discussion can be found here:*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_4imSwb-Q
2. *The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here:*
<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/archive/spcb-september-2021/>

042/21	<p>Item 1: PCC Update:</p> <p>The Commissioner made the following comments -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commissioner said it was a pleasure to attend Birmingham Pride on Saturday 25th September with West Midlands Police colleagues and the thousands of other attendees at the celebrations. The Commissioner reminded the Board that there had been an increase in recorded hate crime and stressed that Hate Crime will not be
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	<p>tolerated and that tackling hate crime remains a priority alongside ensuring that support is in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response to the Governments comprehensive spending review has been submitted pointing out the serious long-term issues relating to West Midlands budget and missing officers.
043/21	<p>Item 2: Notes of the Last Meeting – 20th July 2021:</p> <p>The notes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
044/21	<p>Item 3: Questions from Members of the Public:</p> <p>There were no Questions from members of the public.</p>
045/21	<p>Item 4: Questions from the Board on matters not on the agenda:</p> <p>1. Can the Chief Constable provide an update on the case of PC Declan Jones? (Asked by the Police and Crime Commissioner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Constable updated that Declan Jones was convicted for 2 matters and then came before the Chief Constable where he was dismissed without notice. He has subsequently been sentenced to 26 weeks in prison and a potential pension forfeiture may be considered. • Model policing is required from the Force and in this instance the fact that both of the injured parties were black men plays into the broader concern not just within West Midlands Police but in the wider world around Use of Force. • The Force rigorously ensures the monitoring of the use of body cameras to make sure that the issues are captured and dealt with. Training with the NPCC is reviewed as officers work in tricky conditions so the training needs to be correct. If there are issues of concern it is important that these are looked at properly. • A minimal amount of force is used within British policing and it is important to differentiate between organisational activity and the clearly criminal activities that took place in this case. • The Commissioner shared his best wishes with the victims and assured that he will take full action when possible. <p>2. Following the tragic events in Plymouth this summer, can the Chief Constable reassure the Board that steps have been taken to review the West Midlands firearms licensing arrangements? (Asked by the Police and Crime Commissioner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions are already substantial in the UK but the Government are looking at the legislation around firearms, specifically shotguns, which hasn't been updated since 1968. • Work is taking place around Incel groups and colleagues working within Counter Terrorism and wider afield will look at this closely. • West Midlands Police delivers licensing in conjunction with Staffordshire Police. The number of shotgun certificates in the West Midlands is lower due to being an urban area in comparison to Staffordshire. • Potential law reform on this matter is expected but the Chief Constable is satisfied that the West Midlands' approach is substantial and will continue to monitor. • The Commissioner added that the incidents in Plymouth showed why more robust processes around firearms and shotguns are required. He added that he was

	<p>concerned that the charge for firearms is less than the certificate needed and it can't be right that police forces should have to subsidise this cost.</p> <p>3. How is West Midlands Police ensuring all victims of crime are properly informed of the Victims Code? (Asked by Victims Commissioner Nicky Brennan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All officers have received training around the Code and its obligations. • Improvements are looking to be made in some areas of this work, particularly around the card left with victims which informs them how best to access their rights. • A number of materials have been made accessible online to read and review and a Citizens Charter has also been put in place by the Force. • Logs are being scrutinised to check that the Code is being complied with. The code changes periodically and it is important that officers are using it correctly. Dip sampling is also taking place though this is a work in progress. • This work is of paramount importance as the Victims rights are at the forefront of the Criminal Justice System and as such right that this is kept as work in progress.
	<p>POLICE AND CRIME PLAN</p>
<p>046/21</p>	<p>Item 5: Crime & Performance</p> <p><i>DCC Vanessa Jardine provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</i></p> <p>Was there a pattern that explains the rise in 999 calls?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No pattern has been identified but a piece of work has been undertaken to analyse demand and the calls coming in as forces nationally are seeing an increase. The lifting of restrictions is through to have contributed to the increase in calls. • The Force have used media to share the message that inappropriate use of 101 and 999 should not take place. <p>There was a significant delay to the answering of some calls by the Force, some taking 12 minutes before being answered, could this be explained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand levels have meant that recently some 101 calls have taken 12 minutes to be answered, the Force's priority will always be the 999 calls. There are usually approximately 1900 calls over a weekend, the most recent weekend saw double this amount received. • 101 calls are non-emergency calls which are not waiting for an urgent pick up. The complexities of these calls have increased and a lot of thought is given to how long to stay on a specific call. Nationally, call length has increased. • 75% of the calls into contact centres is dealt with there. There is currently a resourcing issue but West Midlands Police compares well against other forces. • Wellbeing provisions for call handlers are in place, there is access to Occupational Health at all contact centres. <p>With the rise in Violence in the Night Time Economy is there work going on with partners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a partnership approach in place, working closely with the licensing department of Birmingham City Council. Since the lifting of restrictions establishments have struggled to recruit into door staff positions. • The Force are trying to encourage people to come out safely to enjoy the Night Time Economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers from Neighbourhood Teams liaise with universities throughout Freshers week and are also there for new starters. • There is a good relationship and good communication with promoters wanting to hold events. The events are all wrapped up in the conditions of the licenses they hold. <p>In relation to core demand, could the decision to deploy resources into Force Contact be explained? How long will this be in place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This decision was taken because the demand in the department was so high. • The resources came from non-operational areas of the Force and while the demand is still so high there is no plan yet for staff to return. <p>Could a breakdown of gender and ethnicities relating to the Cadets be provided please?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further action required: A breakdown of Gender and Ethnicity of the Cadets will be sent through by the Force <p>Is there any disparity between the effectiveness between online and over the phone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no difference noted between the two platforms, the Force are keen to resolve issues either way. If the query can be resolved as soon as possible this is considered a success. <p>How are communities being worked with to help educate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the VRU is a longer-term approach to get out into the communities to engage. The VRU works on programmes going into schools and engaging with young people and talking to them. • The Force are following the work of the VRU, it is important that the police are good at being the police and the education is being done by the educators. • The Cadets are also key, going to speak to communities. A report will be submitted to a future Board meeting on the Cadets. <p>There has been a rise in the reporting of children being missing, Is this a concern?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the lifting of restrictions, the numbers have increased. A number of those going missing are looked after children. Engagement with Children’s Homes has taken place on this matter. • Missing Children is a priority for the Force and processes are in place to ensure this remains the case. • This increase could relate to one child going missing a number of times.
	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p>
<p>047/21</p>	<p>Item 6: Estates Strategy Review 2021</p> <p>Andy Kelly, Assistant Director - Corporate Asset Management and the Chief Constable provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <p>Is it better for Neighbourhood Teams to be based with Fire Service or Local Authorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing has evolved and the buildings in current geographical locations are not necessarily in good enough condition moving forward. Great work has been done with West Midlands Fire Service and local authorities such as Walsall Council as a result of working alongside one another. <p>Is there the possibility to work with community led organisations?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force work closely with West Midlands Combined Authority and there is a lot of good progressive work taking place there, but there are not currently community leaders around the table. Operational sensitivities and security issues around items such as technology, tasers and CS Gas may prevent this. <p>How have public voices, wants and needs been considered in decisions being made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations are run locally with reference to custody blocks as the Force are aware they may cause concern. • When buildings may be closed, the public have always been engaged with to explain what the provision will be moving forward. This is done on a case by case basis. The C3 build and Fleet build were not consulted as the public may view this agnostically. <p>Has provision been made at the Custody Blocks for Children and Young People?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space has been made for children and young people in the new custody blocks. Separate checking in areas for young people are available and better facilities are available to protect young people from some of the stressful scenes in custody areas. <p>Is the Force able to provide a dedicated summary around the specific attention focussed on making sure the West Midlands has a greener estate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a number of years part of the Force have been analysing CO2 emissions carrying out best practice. Until recently this had not bought together but the Force are in the process of doing so, reporting on KPIs on CO2 emission per sqm on estate and the fleet on distance travelled. There is more work to be done on this. • An Environment and Sustainability Manager has been in post for 3 weeks and is trying to understand what the Force's aspirations are moving forward in relation to Environmental policy. This now needs to move to a strategy. • The Force can buy efficient boilers and vehicles, a lot of it needs to be down to how individuals behave and use the items. <p>Is the Force looking at greener vehicles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Police were the first police force to have electric vehicles and had the first neighbourhood electric car 8 years ago. • The Force recharges on its own estate. An Electric charging station was bought in, the Force need to look at upgrading to be ready for when electric vehicles are the norm. • The Force are looking to see what can be done to switch to using electric vehicles, the charging infrastructure is not currently at the right point as yet. <p>Is anything the Force are doing that is classed as <i>Outsourced</i> something that the Force could bring in house?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force will always take the most cost-effective model for items, such as the previously mentioned Firearms licensing. • The Force looks for partnerships that are economically beneficial such as the Crime scene investigation with Warwickshire. There is very little level of outsourcing. <p>There has been an increase in the proposed hub response model – the 2018 strategy suggested a 6 hub but the new strategy suggest 8. Where will these be located?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stechford and Bloxwich are now back in the model. Uplift has changed this. It doesn't make a massive difference on deployment times and is mainly around capacity.
048/21	<p>Item 7: Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls</p> <p><i>ACC Claire Bell and Harjeet Chakira provided an overview of their reports and the following points were discussed:</i></p>

Recommendation 9 of the Joint inspection response to rape says “The Home Office should undertake an urgent review of the role of the detective constable. This should identify appropriate incentives, career progression and support for police officer and police staff investigators to encourage this career path. It should include specific recommendations to ensure there is adequate capacity and capability in every force to investigate rape cases thoroughly and effectively”. What is being done to tackle this internally?

- There is a great deal of work going on around capacity and capability of staff around training such as training for detectives around sexual offences.
- The major crime remit is to deal with complex and serial sexual offences, that complex team would be taken away from the team and this would prove difficult to deal with due to demand and workload.

How will the Force ensure that this work is ‘*Everyone’s Business*’ as set out in in the report?

- This is a police strategy but it is still as important that it is everyone’s business in the West Midlands to deliver on this.
- There is a tendency to think that this only sits within the PPU or those dedicated to investigating domestic abuse. All interactions that staff have can have a bearing on how we are seen by women and girls and impacts on their confidence in reporting.
- There needs to be buy in from men and boys to this work as well.

In Item 1 of the report it is stated that the Force will “Provide services to assist victims and their family to understand”. Could these services be explained?

- This would depend on the requirements needed. The Force are careful as to who would be chosen to interpret, officers have a language line where a translation can be done there and then.
- Care and attention will always be paid, officers always need to be culturally aware and aware of the incident that they are looking to attend.

HMIC found that forces performed well in responding to incidents during Covid. With Covid and other crime types demand increasing how will this impact on policing domestic abuse cases?

- Domestic abuse is a priority and has remained so for a number of years, Neighbourhood Officers had to change and adapt but this priority is embedded in the psyche of officers.
- Domestic abuse is always a challenge to respond to, it is more likely to result in an arrest than other offences. It will usually require 2 officers to attend.
- A huge amount of work has taken place and there has been a significantly reduced attendance of domestic abuse priority calls against non-priority calls.
- Domestic abuse has never come off the agenda as a priority for the Force.

In the HMIC Thematic Review of Policing and Domestic Abuse it is noted that the Force has recorded a notably lower number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. Is it the case then that West Midlands Police is not using all the powers available to it?

- The orders were rolled out after pilot and initially didn’t make great use of them so as part of a PPU redesign a manager and team was put in place focussed on delivering on DVPNs and DVPOs. A lot of time has been put in to improve this.
- A lot of judges in this region were not happy to have virtual hearings, this isn’t reflected within the national report. The Force are looking at increasing the use, though focus is on those in custody.
- Looking to have all hearings done in person in Court in Birmingham in future, also starting to explore how to broaden out protective matters. There is always improvement that can be made but it is definitely on the agenda.

	<p>How will the Force be increasing the use of Forced Marriage Protection Orders and FGM Orders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force wouldn't push for increasing the use of these orders but would instead push for the correct use of them. • There is always the option to improve the knowledge of the workforce and the process and also ensure that prosecutions are in place. <p>There has been a distinct rise in reporting of stalking offences, and also a low attrition rate. Is there the need of a dedicated function or team to investigate these issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More understanding is needed on these statistics. There is some complexity around how stalking and harassment is recorded. • There is a need to understand the experience better. It is important to separate stalking from harassment and to manage the risk posed to victims. <p>Is WMP committed to planning as HMIC directs a shift to policing VAWG?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commitment was made in the Force strategy. The Force has stepped forward and called the strategy VAWG for first time but it is important to note that the Force are only a small part of it and that it needs collective commitment. • An integrated VAWG strategy hasn't generally been put forward before and is not common nationally. The Force will look to build a wider approach to this issue as a criminal justice approach will not solve all of the problems. <p>The Commissioner added that VAWG was a key campaign pledge of his which will be reflected in the upcoming Police & Crime Plan.</p>
049/21	<p>Item 8: Emergency Chapter Report – By exception</p> <p><i>ACC Mike O'Hara and Chief Supt Rich North provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</i></p> <p>Is there any evidence to explain those absconding from International Travel Quarantine?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some found it difficult to remain in a hotel for the required time, there were discussions around whether medical treatment was required and also whether the country they had returned from was on the red list and whether they should be quarantined at all. • These cases were prioritised by the Force, Officers would track down the absconders and they were issued with fines. This was the function of the government policy at the time. <p>How are international students being handled and dealt with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the regions local Neighbourhood Policing Units are very strong around student engagement. There is a good understanding of the demographic breakdown of students coming into the region. WMNow is also used. • Student liaison officers are in place to assist students coming into the region. • The majority of the work is carried out by the local policing teams. • An increase in hate crime has been noted in the East side of the Force where there is a large Chinese population. • There are no government restrictions to enforce at this time, the Policy is an emphasis on common sense and personal responsibility. <p>What has learning been from complaints that have been received on this subject?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is understood that complaints relate to Officers breaching self-isolation rules at the time rather than misconduct through interaction with the public.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been very few breaches of duty, West Midlands Police Officers performed very well throughout lockdown and showed a lot of discipline on and off duty. If they did breach, they were treated as a member of the public would be. <p>What is in place for the wellbeing of Officers and Staff that have suffered with Covid?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wellbeing offer from WMP is very strong. There is a new Wellbeing portal which can be accessed by all staff. • There is help around upskilling managers, mental health support and awareness guidance and broader work around the employee assistance programme which has just been renewed. • Occupational Health have put a lot of effort into long Covid clinics. • A lot of work is done around briefing and debriefing, discussions in person take place to check and support. • A Snap Wellbeing survey is about to take place. • The Chief Constable is happy to explore wellbeing as part of a future paper <p>Dealing with outcomes of various £10k super fines imposed, a total of 31 imposed through July-August 2021, numbers show that 21 haven't proceeded, one reduced to £100 and 3 successful, 1 pending trial and 5 pending PCD trial. Why is there such a low level of success around these fines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was mainly due to problematic legislation raised during the pandemic which missed off some aspects which was then scrutinised. • Quick law isn't good law, there are some challenges that policing has faced as a result of the legislation. • People forget the issue that was being policed, just have to take a view on these things as they move forward. It wouldn't have been possible to just impose a £10,000 fine on someone, some won't have the income for that level of fine. <p>What strategy is in place for the lower level unpaid fines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of people receiving fines view the fines as contentious due to the legislation mentioned, Colleagues in Criminal Justice are trying to manage this situation. <p>How will Force ensure they remain safe and keep the community safe as well, through use of PPE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no shortage of PPE around the Estate. • Sensible health and safety matters are followed throughout within engagement, following public health guidance. Officers will wear face masks where required. <p>The Commissioner offered his gratitude to the Force for their service in protecting the public through the pandemic.</p>
050/21	<p>Item 9: Chief Constable Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last week. Westminster Magistrates Court dismissed an appeal to extradite 3 men from the Sikh community of the West Midlands to India. The Chief Constable is aware this matter will have caused concern for the Sikh Community in the West Midlands so wanted to clear up any misunderstandings. In December 2020, Westminster Magistrates Court issued an extradition warrant for the arrest of 3 men following a request from the Indian Government. As per the legal direction set in the warrant, West Midlands Police were required to undertake the arrest of the men and place them before an appropriate judge as soon as possible, which was done. West Midlands Police were not involved in the obtaining or issuing of the warrant. The Force understand the concern that will have arisen from the arrests but the Chief Constable

	<p>wished to reaffirm that the Force remain committed to working with all the regions communities to ensure safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are high demands on the Force at the moment, especially in Contact handling. The Chief stressed that if it is not 999 people should be encouraged to go online, the Webchat is very responsive and a way to get in touch quicker. • Also think whether this is something for the police, noise issues are not a Policing issue and should be dealt with by the Local Authority. • People do need to think about the level of alcohol being consumed on nights out as lots of drunken violence is being recorded. • The Chief offered a Thank You to all staff. There are tremendous demands on staff, but added that all staff who worked through the pandemic are to be commended. The Force's role has ended in that phase and the work largely returns to the Public Health space.
051/21	<p>Item 10: SPCB Workplan & SPCB Actions and future lines of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workplan is now complete. • There were no actions to be discussed at this time.
052/21	<p>Item 13: Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable, the Force and Board members for their detailed reports and discussion.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Strategic Policing & Crime Board will take place on Tuesday 26th October 2021.</p>