



**STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD**

**Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

**Report: Community Policing**

**Police and Crime Plan Priority: Rebuilding Community Policing**

**Presented by: T/ACC Richard Baker**

**Purpose of paper**

1. To provide the Commissioner with a report on progress towards the objectives in the West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 relating to “Community Policing”.

**Background**

2. West Midlands Police have always been fully committed to the model of Neighbourhood Policing. It is recognised that a consistent, effective and engaging Neighbourhood Policing model is essential for improving trust, confidence and legitimacy. Being able to work with local communities, listen to and understand their local concerns, work with them and partner agencies to improve safety and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, provides the foundation of Neighbourhood Policing. We remain fully supportive of the objectives contained within the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 which include:

- Engaging with, listening to and working with the people and communities of the West Midlands
- Putting additional officers into Neighbourhood Policing, strengthening the local bonds between the public and the police and improving our ability to proactively solve local issues
- Working at the heart of neighbourhoods, combatting violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, tackling violent crime specifically in under 25s,

including knife crime, and investing in schemes to support young people to prevent them becoming victims of crime, criminal exploitation or offenders

- Involving the public in the work of the police by encouraging volunteering and working with communities to improve policing in their areas
- Putting prevention at the heart of what we do and ultimately delivering justice, safety and security for all people and communities of the West Midlands

### **Key points**

3. There is a significant Neighbourhood Policing investment in WMP compared to other Police force areas. Since the 2017 HMICFRS State of Policing Report, WMP has risen from being the eighth highest force in terms of net revenue expenditure on Neighbourhood Policing per head of population, to the sixth highest spending force in England and Wales in this category.
4. Neighbourhood Policing numbers have seen excellent investment in relation to resources and have remained at, or above, establishment and will rise in the coming months; this is a commitment through the Uplift Programme and embedded into our operating model under our annual Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB) cycle. The role of the Neighbourhood Officer continues to be enhanced by a whole force approach to tackling entrenched issues, understanding what matters to communities and developing targeted intervention plans to deal with local issues.

### **What is the current establishment and strength of each Neighbourhood Policing Unit in West Midland Police?**

5. The tables below show pre-PBB Neighbourhood Policing levels for each Neighbourhood Policing Unit and works through the uplift phases through to full PBB uplift implementation (post March 2022). They show the growth in Police Constable establishment and strength on each Neighbourhood Policing Unit. This includes 176 dedicated posts into impact areas (showing as 167 constable posts there are also an additional 9 sergeant posts), 45 dedicated posts into Neighbourhood Taskforce (showing as 42 constable posts there are also an additional 3 sergeant posts) and 29 dedicated posts into Neighbourhood Policing Unit Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation hubs.

	Actual- Pre Uplift 1st March 2021		Phase 1 Uplift Posts 1st April 2021	
	Establishment	Strength	Establishment	Strength
Birmingham East NPU	292	302	313	310.1
Birmingham West NPU	267	312.3	308	336.3
Coventry NPU	136	153.5	156	164.7
Dudley NPU	79.5	88.5	94.5	92.7
Sandwell NPU	113	123.3	136	132.3
Solihull NPU	63	73.7	80	78.7
Walsall NPU	87.5	98.7	102.5	105.7
Wolverhampton NPU	127	138.4	142	133.4
<b>Total Establishment &amp; Strength</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1290</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>1353.9</b>

<b>Growth in Establishment</b>			<b>167</b>	
<b>Reason for Growth</b>			IA, Youth Intervention & Early Help	

	Projected 31st March 2022		Projected 31st March 2022	
	Establishment	Strength	Establishment	Strength
Birmingham East NPU	316	314	320	310
Birmingham West NPU	319	304	319	310
Coventry NPU	166	164	174	169
Dudley NPU	94.5	103	99.5	96.5
Sandwell NPU	136	144	143	139
Solihull NPU	80	86	86	83
Walsall NPU	102.5	109	107.5	104.5
Wolverhampton NPU	147	141	154	149
<b>Total Establishment &amp; Strength</b>	<b>1361</b>	<b>1369</b>	<b>1403</b>	<b>1361</b>

<b>Growth in Establishment</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>42</b>	
<b>Reason for Growth</b>	SOCEX Posts		NFT Posts	

Table 1. Pre PBB-uplift through to post uplift implementation PBB growth

6. At periods during uplift implementation actual police constable strength and establishment will vary. Strength is projected based upon anticipated leavers, retirements and promotions together with planned student officer resources that will be posted to Local Policing. On occasions, Neighbourhood Policing will show as being over-establishment due to student officer rotations.

7. It is projected that by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022, Local Policing will be resourced at establishment and that by March 2023 there will be a small number of vacancies (circa 40 or 2.9%).

**What steps WMP will take to re-build community policing?**

8. To continue to evolve and improve community policing, WMP Neighbourhood Policing framework focuses on the College of Policing 7 Neighbourhood Policing principles below. Each of these pillars has a Chief Superintendent lead and a delivery plan to support and improve in each area.
  - Engaging Communities – Working with the Crime Commissioner to deliver and support Neighbourhood Policing and ensure it is built on effective engagement and consultation with communities
  - Solving problems - Ensuring officers, staff and volunteers use structured problem-solving to deal with local priorities, working collaboratively with communities and, where appropriate, private, public and voluntary sector partners
  - Targeting activity – Ensuring policing activities within neighbourhoods are targeted according to the needs of different communities, taking account of threat, risk, harm and vulnerability
  - Promoting the right culture - Promoting an organisational culture that encourages the public to participate in Neighbourhood Policing. Taking steps to ensure that all police contact with colleagues, partners and the public seeks to build trust and is consistent with procedural justice
  - Building analytical capability - Ensuring there is sufficient analytical capacity and capability necessary for problem-solving
  - Developing officers, staff and volunteers - Working with the College of Policing to support and equip officers, staff and volunteers to work in Neighbourhood Policing and ensuring they receive learning and continuing professional development
  - Developing and sharing learning - Working with the College of Policing, the wider police service, partners and academia to identify and share learning about Neighbourhood Policing and current threats

**What steps WMP will take to maintain the establishment and strength of Police Community Support Officers?**

9. West Midlands Police have an establishment of 477 Police Community Support Officer's (PCSO's) posts, actual strength is currently at 455. Establishment and strength are closely monitored by the Local Policing Workforce Board and HR Business Partnering. Recruitment and attrition are included as a standing agenda item in this board each month.
  
10. Over recent months we have seen an increased level of movement of PCSOs to Constables through internal recruitment. It is predicted that approximately 40 vacancies from full establishment will exist by April 2022. Recruitment is currently on-going for PCSOs and it has been agreed through Workforce Strategy Board to increase the next planned PCSO intake. The next recruitment intake will be in April 2022 where we are aiming to recruit 48 PCSOs. This will ensure we are back at full establishment in May 2022 based on current predicted attrition.

**What steps WMP will take to grow the Special Constabulary (with reference to recruitment from undergraduate courses and recruitment of long-term Special Constables)?**

11. There are currently 311 Special Constables supporting West Midlands Police. This work is managed through the Citizens in Policing Board owned by T/Assistant Chief Constable Richard Baker. There are two main groups of Special Constables being recruited; university undergraduates currently undertaking Policing or Criminal Justice related degrees at local universities and older recruits (24 years +) that have a longer-term career intent.

**Undergraduate Special Constables**

12. West Midlands Police have built strong links with Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University, linking in with course directors to ensure promotion of the Special Constable's opportunities available. This includes but is not limited to attending university recruitment and volunteer fairs and continuing with engagement to promote the recruitment of Special Constables from within that cohort of undergraduates. In this financial year 2020-2021 (up to October 2021) we have recruited 22 Special Constables from universities. Students that we recruit usually remain with WMP during

their university course, however, they then either apply to join as regular officers or join their home force meaning that we have a high turnover of Special Constables. Students bring enthusiasm and skills to the Special Constabulary and are a vital part of our volunteer cohort however often we are unable to convert them into long term “career” Special Constables. We seek to increase the level of long term “career” volunteers within our Special Constabulary.

### Career Special Constables

13. West Midlands Police support the Police and Crime Commissioner’s ambition to grow the Special Constabulary and to ensure that Special Constables meet their service level agreement requirements. Those Special Constables that we have are motivated, focused and completing more volunteer hours than in previous years, as shown by the graph below. Strong line management and inclusive appropriate tasking and deployment has led to officers being more motivated to undertake regular duties. You can see from the graph below those duties already in 2021 exceed those undertaken in 2020. In 2021, Special Constables have contributed 12,636 tours of duty, equating to 79,210 hours of patrol. This compares to 240 Special Constables (average during 2020) and 10,011 tours of duty and 64,567 hours of patrol in 2020. This is evidence that the Covid 19 pandemic has not adversely affected the hours or duties that the Special Constabulary has volunteered in 2021.



Table 2 – Special Constabulary – Annual Total Hours and Duties

14. Special Constables are now also welcomed into specialist departments such as the Airport Policing Unit, Safer Travel, Regional Organised Crime Unit and Central

Motorway Policing Group. Our intention is to grow the number of specialist deployments available for Special Constables in order to support the continued professional development of our officers and aid retention as this is one of the drivers for Special Constables resigning. We will continue to recruit a minimum of 122 Special Constables annually specifically looking to recruit from underrepresented communities. We currently average approximately 45 resignations per annum however, about 40% of these go on to join the regular WMP or their home forces.

15. The academic research currently being undertaken with Dr Iain Britton, a well-known and respected police academic, will, in year 2 (2022/2023), look at retention of our existing Special Constables evaluating strategies already in place and suggesting new ways of operating. We have seen the very recent retirement of the Special's Chief Officer and currently have a Temporary Chief Officer and Temporary Deputy Chief Officer. We are now also strengthening the strategic leadership of the Special Constabulary with training and support and will work to embed WMP Conversations into the Special Constable's structure.
16. Together with Dr Britton we are currently undertaking a 3-year academic study to investigate and evaluate methods of recruiting "career" Specials. The evaluation stage is complete, and we are testing a strategy to recruit "career" Special Constables (those in long term established career paths) who wish to volunteer in their community and are actively seeking long term volunteer opportunities. We have undertaken demographic evaluation and by working with the recruitment team and learning from their achievements, we understand where the communities are and the demographic of who we are looking to attract. We are testing these strategies in the west and east of the force area, starting with Coventry as the City of Culture who have used volunteers so well over the last 12 months. This will enable us to easily evaluate the finding and provide a consistent response.
17. This strategy involves employing and evaluating the following attraction and engagement strategies within areas we wish to recruit from. These will then be evaluated by Dr Britton. These strategies involve:
  - Physical engagement within communities we seldom receive applicants from
  - Engagement with community leaders and networks already established
  - Engagement at community events to encourage recruitment

- Area specific recruitment advertising
- Demographic reflective printed media and advertising
- Targeted and localised Facebook advertising
- Local newspaper, radio, community social media advertising
- Engagement with employers to encourage engagement and recruitment if they are part of the national Employer Supported Policing Programme

18. We will utilise the Employer Supported Policing (ESP) Programme to encourage employers who have already signed up to the plan to allow us to engage with their staff. By working with the Corporate Communications team, media is being utilised, such as LinkedIn, social media and press releases sharing testimonials of our existing “career” Special Constables who meet the demographic of the community we wish to engage with. A short recruitment video is being developed which shows the skills that are transferable from the workplace to the Special Constabulary and undertake some “myth busting” using the above-mentioned testimonials. These methods will be evaluated so we can continue to reflect, review and embed those that are successful in the small pilot area to ensure they are rolled out across the force area. These insights will form the basis of how we recruit Special Constables in the future in order to increase both recruitment and retention of Special Constables.

19. Ensuring we link Special Constables’ recruitment into every strand possible is important to us, therefore whilst the focus of our strength-based engagement activities in impact areas is to increase capable guardianship, Active Citizens and police support volunteers, we are also linking in the Special Constable roles. This engagement is in the form of World Café activities which have been delivered digitally in each Neighbourhood Policing Unit and now face to face where local community members are invited to join a facilitated engagement activity where their views are recorded and insights from local people sought. During these World Café meetings, the opportunities to volunteer and the accessibility to volunteer is discussed with the participants. This is an ongoing piece of work which is still in progress and under evaluation.

**What steps are WMP taking and what are the plans to offer training, learning and development to support the effectiveness of officers engaged in community policing?**



20. Neighbourhood Policing Officers and Police Community Support Officers receive a range of engagement training such as hosting Mutual Gain training which includes World Café workshops. Other training includes facilitating Speed Watch and Street Watch schemes to upskill community volunteers. Partnership based training such as contextual safeguarding to help identify the signs of exploitation and vulnerability is also provided according to local authority area or safeguarding board. Through Local Policing People Board there is a key work stream to 'professionalise' the role of a Neighbourhood Police Officer. Uplift will provide additional police officers working within schools, pupil referral units and delivering early help intervention. A training programme is being developed for when staff take up posts as part of the uplift in Local Policing described earlier in this paper. The programme will be divided into an induction programme for all those officers joining Local Policing and Continued Professional Development will be delivered to those working in Neighbourhood Policing roles.
21. Covid 19 has had an inevitable impact on training, however during this period a 2-day problem-solving masterclass was still organised for Neighbourhood Policing Unit and Project Guardian officers and staff, continuing the relationship with the external academic (Sylvia Chenery). To date 160 people have been trained across these classes and further funding has been secured to train an additional officers/staff. The 'Go to Guide' has been launched to support staff with problem-solving including a nationally shortlisted example of problem-solving within West Midlands Police. The recent HMICFRS graded the problem-solving approach as 'Good'. Planning for a Force Problem Solving Conference is well advanced and will take place in February 2022 with the further masterclasses planned for March 2022. The ambition in 2022 is to ensure that impact areas and Neighbourhood Policing Unit staff have a significant uplift of between 300-400 problem-solving trained staff. Any additional availability will then be made available to other departments and functions in order to continue rolling out problem-solving outside of Neighbourhood Policing.

**What steps are WMP is taking to take to ensure effective joint working with schools, Pupil Referral Units and alternative provision?**

22. Neighbourhood Policing Staff have started to re-engage in person with schools from the start of Autumn Term following a long period of not having a physical presence within an educational environment due to the Covid pandemic. Through the uplift into Local Policing, there will be an investment made of officers engaged with youth

intervention work from Q2 2022-2023 across all Neighbourhood Policing Units. In total 38 police officers will be based within Pupil Referral Units to maximise opportunities to divert young people who are on the cusp of criminality onto alternative pathways. There will also be an investment of 25 Schools Based Officers who will work within educational settings to provide a more generic offer to those young people who present a medium level of risk of future offending. Additionally, 37 police officers will be dedicated to supporting young people and families through Early Help schemes. Training programmes and role profiles have been developed to support delivery of this significant investment.

23. The Police Cadet scheme is working with schools across the WMP area to deliver Volunteer Police Cadets. We currently have 22 open Cadet Units with 570 Police Cadets supported by 181 Police Cadet Leaders. Each Unit can support 30 Cadets so there is capacity for 660 Cadets. Work is on-going to get the units to full capacity over the next quarter. By working with an additional 4 schools and colleges that have been identified, we aim to open additional units and will then have capacity for 780 Police Cadets by the end of financial year 2021-2022.

24. Police Officers, Police Staff and members of the community are recruited to volunteer as Police Cadet Leaders. We build strong links with school staff to ensure we collaborate, because experience shows this ensures the cadet unit and the young people who are members thrive and ensures a 2-way collaboration between WMP and the school. The programme is designed to deliver active citizenship, friendship and personal development opportunities for young people. Schools within impact areas are prioritised, enabling the attraction of those who are most at risk of engagement in crime or who are vulnerable to exploitation. Engagement with Pupil Referral Units are being explored with a view to setting up a cadet programme within one or several of these.

**What steps WMP are taking to ensure that it responds appropriately with partners to the requirements of individuals presenting with mental health needs?**

25. West Midlands Police are fully engaged with the whole spectrum of mental health partners. This will ensure that our service offered to those with mental health needs continues to improve and that individuals are dealt with humanely with empathy and sensitivity. The force recognises that growing demand is to a large degree driven by incidents where mental health is a primary underlying causal factor. We work closely

with Mental Health partners, third sector and victim groups to ensure the most appropriate response is given irrespective of whether the person being dealt with and needing support are victims or offenders.

26. Recent austerity in the past years has led to a reduction in partner services. Policing can often be seen as the service of last resort and as such will frequently take on work that does not primarily require a policing response. Police staff and officers often do so to ensure that no person is left unsafe, in fear and in mental health crisis. We work hard to ensure the relevant partners deal with their own work wherever possible and will continue to work with them at senior levels to improve these partnerships.
27. West Midlands Police works closely and collaboratively with appropriate partners including the three Mental Health Trusts serving the WMP area to learn the lessons provided by Coroners' Preventing Future Death processes and reports. We have established various memoranda of understanding in relation to how we work with each other. These are working well and have been utilised on several occasions to support vulnerable people in crisis.
28. WMP will imminently be moving away from the Street Triage scheme but are simultaneously implementing a Mental Health Tactical Advisor initiative. This will put in place a much wider provision for supporting the public, colleagues and partners when dealing with people with mental health needs. This will provide many more police officers and staff from across force functions to be trained to deal with mental health matters to the same level as the current triage officers, whilst continuing to undertake their normal day job. The intent will be to widen the support for colleagues dealing with people with mental health issues and see the provision of a more effective framework within WMP to best support people in crisis no matter how they have come into contact with us.

**What steps are WMP taking to ensure it responds appropriately with partners to the requirements of neuro-diverse individuals who present to policing?**

29. Neurodiversity is not dealt with as a discrete area of mental health within the Mental Health in Criminal Justice portfolio as it forms part of the whole spectrum of mental health affecting our various businesses. Through the support of the Violence Reduction Unit, Custody is working with Barnardo's to increase awareness of the impact of trauma in police custody. Young people that are arrested often find this a difficult and emotional

experience. This can also be amplified for those who suffer from neuro diverse conditions. Individuals can therefore present with behaviours that can lead to adverse incidents. Educating staff how to recognise the signs of trauma in behaviour will lead to better interactions and therefore better health and wellbeing outcomes. The training is currently being delivered to all custody staff (circa 270) between October and December 2021 following which an evaluation will be conducted.

**What training and development do Police Officers and staff receive to develop their ability to identify and support vulnerable adults, those suffering with mental ill health and victims of domestic abuse, coercive control and sexual assault?**

30. To develop officers' ability to identify and support vulnerable adults and those suffering from mental health, the below training are given to officers;

- From the 1st December 2021 there will be 111 Mental Health Tactical Advisors trained across Force Response (60); Force Criminal Investigations Department (14); Public Protection Unit (11); Force Support Unit (9); Criminal Justice Service (12) and Force Contact (5). Training will continue to increase these current numbers. The course is 3-days in duration and encompasses training in all aspects of the force's nine mental health guidance documents
- Investigators in Force Criminal Investigations Department and Public Protection Unit and officers and staff within Criminal Justice Services will undertake a 1-day course relating to the specifics of mental health demand in custody and investigations
- CPD sessions will be run in 2022 for Force Response, Force Criminal Investigation Department, Public Protection Unit and Criminal Justice Service departments within WMP
- A bespoke course will be developed and delivered for Force Contact early 2022 as department presents some of the greatest vulnerability around mental health demand. The intention of this is to help Force Contact staff direct callers to appropriate services and ultimately reduce demand for other WMP departments

31. To develop officers' ability to identify and support victims of domestic abuse, coercive control and sexual assault, the below Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and training are given to officers and staff;

- 2-day Rape and Serious Sexual Offences response received by Complex staff and a small number of Child Investigation officers. This looks at supporting sexual assault complainants by referrals to Sexual Assault Centres and Specialist third party services/Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
- Neighbourhood Policing Unit – 3-hour input on training days around responding to Rape and Serious Sexual Offences and being open minded
- PricewaterhouseCoopers project - 15-minutes briefing inputs to response officers and neighbourhood Officers. This includes specific input on signposting Sexual Assault Centres and specialist support organisations
- Domestic Abuse matters - External providers trained several champions to deliver to domestic abuse teams, it is recommended for response officers and will be rolled out in 2022
- Public Protection Unit leaders have provided training inputs around domestic abuse, stalking and control/coercion to officers and staff in multiple frontline departments

32. Mandated NCALT packages includes –

- The Initial Response and Rape - Myth and Reality.
- Introduction to Public Protection
- Abusive Relationship
- Missing Daughter
- Family Disturbance
- Man in Distress
- Victims' Code

**What steps are WMP taking to develop better management information concerning the effectiveness and impact of community policing?**

33. In April, WMP moved to a new system of crime recording (Connect) which brought together the data from 9 legacy systems. This is the first time these systems have been joined together, allowing WMP a much more holistic view of the reporting, recording and investigation of crime, as well as the management of offenders. This supports Neighbourhood Policing Units to deliver community policing by providing a significantly wider breadth of management information than ever before. This

information enables decision makers at all levels to deploy their resources where they are most needed and to start to evaluate their effectiveness.

34. Strategy & Direction and the Data Analytics Lab have been working to develop and innovate this information using the Business Insights interface. These innovations include:

- Developing dashboards around the WMP Improvement Plan Key Performance Indicators, so users have real-time updates on Neighbourhood Policing Unit performance and demand, encompassing traditional neighbourhood crime reduction information, alongside crime severity within impact areas and victim satisfaction with services
- The roll out of a community policing training program from Neighbourhood Policing Unit's senior leadership team downwards, to ensure all leaders and practitioners are able to make data driven precision policing decisions
- Creating new apps to understand in detail the effectiveness of community policing, such as the Targeted Patrol Time app (currently reaching the final stages of development) which will allow local leaders to see where resources are/have been and what impact they have had on incidents, stop and search, crime severity – in what time and at what cost
- Reducing harm in our communities by creating apps to better understand and effectively deal with higher risk offenders

These new insights will support the development of the Force's 'Precision Policing Doctrine'.

**What steps are WMP taking to ensure that community policing activity is focused on Impact Areas?**

35. Since the launch of the Police and Crime Plan, we are changing the language away from Serious Acquisitive Crimes to Neighbourhood Crimes, this includes Burglary, Robbery, Vehicle Crime and Theft from The Person.

36. Within West Midlands Police, there are 19 Impact Areas, with each Neighbourhood Policing Unit having at least 2 Impact Areas.

37. Community engagement is increasing as can be seen through WMNow Sign-ups and the recruitment of Active Citizens. There are 12 Cadets Units in Impact Areas and these are set to grow in 2022/2023 and Neighbourhood Crime reductions still exceed those force wide:

- 15 Impact Areas are good/outstanding for Residential Burglary reduction
- 18 Impact Areas are good/outstanding for Robbery reduction
- 14 Impact Areas are good/outstanding for Vehicle Crime reduction
- 10 Impact Areas are showing reductions for Theft from The Person
- 12 Impact Areas have reduced under 25 years Violence with Injury (Year to Date).
- The Crime Severity Score is higher across Impact Areas than in other areas - but it is reducing. 10 of the 19 Impact Areas have seen a reduction in harm severity score up to November 2021
- Targeted problem-solving work in top demand locations on Impact Areas has led to some good reductions in incidents across all Neighbourhood Policing Units
- Offender Management principles applied to under 25 violent offender cohort have been piloted in Impact Areas, these offer positive engagement and referrals of known offenders and work alongside Force Criminal Investigations Department colleagues on implementing a diversion approach to prevent escalation and further offending from our young people
- Many Impact Areas cover town/city centres so Retail Crime features prominently, not just theft but also issues of the safety of retail workers and customers. Business Improvement Districts and Business Crime Partnerships are the principle partnerships to support reduction of these types of offences. These areas often have prominent Night Time Economy, which also sees complex partnership approaches with organisations and the Local Authority to try to minimise the risk and increase safety of all who work in or visit these areas
- There is also greater focus to encourage Connect & Build activity within Impact Areas (although many of these exist across the whole of Neighbourhood Policing), these include initiatives such as:
  - Street Watch
  - Safer Streets
  - Community Speed Watch
  - Hospital Watch
  - Cadet Units

- WMNow sign-ups
- World Cafes
- Weapon sweeps supported by members of the public and volunteers such as ‘the Detectorists’ and Cadet Units
- Prioritising Proceeds of Crime Act funding/Community Initiative Fund Panels being allocated to local initiatives
- Working with young people/organisations, partnering with schools and colleges
- Looking at schemes to support female victims of domestic abuse or other violence.

38. At a Tactical Level, where Neighbourhood Policing Units must make decisions around prioritising the staffing levels of teams, for example; vacancy rates across teams, the tasking of resources to support demand, the engagement with communities, the starting position is always to prioritise Impact Areas. As owners of ‘the place’ the role of the Neighbourhood Policing Units is to engage, work with and hold to account internal partners (matrix departments) and external partner agencies (e.g., the Community Safety Partnerships) to influence them to lever their priorities and resources in similar ways.

39. As communities are beginning to open more after the lifting of Covid restrictions, Neighbourhood Policing Units are prioritising their engagements in Impact Areas. This includes events such as World Cafes, working with young people/organisations, partnering with schools and colleges, looking at schemes to support female victims of domestic abuse and other violence.

**What steps are WMP taking to support and work with local communities to solve local issues, particularly in Impact Areas, thereby reducing crime, severity of crime, fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour?**

**Plans for Impact Areas in 2022**

40. As well as the activity already described throughout this report, further plans for 2022 involving Impact Areas include:



- The first annual Impact Area conference in January 2022, seeing Neighbourhood Policing Units and partner agencies come together to share effective practices, cross-pollinate innovative approaches and to look to design a tactical menu to assist those leading on Impact Areas. Lead: Chief Superintendent Phil Dolby and Superintendent Rich Harris
- A second wave of customer surveys across all Impact Areas. The first wave was conducted in 2019 but the opportunity to act upon the results were affected by the pandemic. There is confidence in the methodology of asking for the communities of Impact Areas to share with us what their priorities are, we then join with them in framing Local Policing priorities. We will be launching this in 2022, with the aim to have the work completed in time for the new performance year

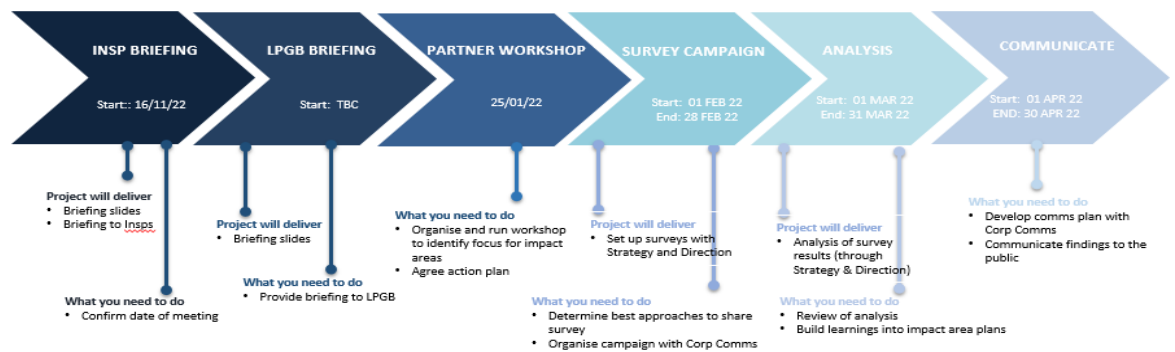


Diagram 4 - Customer Survey timeline

- The new WMP Fairness & Belonging Strategy has three main themes, one of which is 'Our Communities', led at a strategic level by Assistant Chief Constable Matt Ward. Planning for his work has begun and it has been decided that the starting position will be to focus upon improving further our work with our Black communities, building on the previous Fairness and Belonging Plan. In order to prioritise the beginning of this work, it has been agreed to start this work in the Impact Areas in 2022
- The Special Constabulary have been asked by the Impact Area lead to see what they can contribute to the force's Impact Area work. As a result, planning has commenced on a series of Special Constabulary led proactive operations within a 2-week period toward the end of the 2021-2022 performance year, with the support of Neighbourhood Policing Units and departments
- In the next calendar year, the Leads for WMP Cadets are going to consider which of their activities could be usefully undertaken within the Impact Areas, as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Unit's Connect & Build efforts within these

challenging areas – especially around younger people. Planning is underway with Cadet Units

**What approach is WMP taking to using WMNow to support community policing?**

41. WMNow is an excellent engagement tool that has been part of a recent overhaul in terms of the scheduling and style of messaging as part of our digital engagement strategy work. We have historically focused on the number of sign-ups to the platform with considerations focused on diversity of users and locations in Impact Areas. Whilst important, this has missed the relevance of the quality in our messaging and feedback demonstrated that users were leaving the platform as some of our messaging was leading to an increase in the fear of crime.
  
42. Corporate Communications have led the work with support of Neighbourhood Policing Unit colleagues to design a new methodology. A successful pilot of this methodology has been run on Sandwell Neighbourhood Policing Unit and the plan now is to roll this out across the whole force from January-March 2022. The messages are shorter and contain information to show what key concerns are, what WMP are doing about it and what the reader can do to support in their community, which includes sharing the message across digital platforms and other community networks. The pilot's results are as follows:
  - Message Satisfaction increased to 95%
  - Interaction levels increased by 20% (based on the number of replies/ratings of our messages)
  - Propagation levels increased by 43% (share rate)
  - Messages readability increased to 9.6 (Baseline was 6) (represents voice, style and tone as well as how easy the message is to read)
  - Sandwell area has a sign-up population of 11,000 which is a significant sample.
  - Continued focus on using the platform as a database to manage digital Key Individual Network / volunteers
  - V4 upgrade coming next year including implementation and training to roll out further

43. Senior Leadership Teams across Neighbourhood Policing Units have been briefed on this roll out and are fully supportive. Further work will develop in terms of new qualitative metrics to measure the impact of WMNow, rather than focussing merely on numbers of users on the platform.

### **Equality Implications**

#### **How does the force have regard to the public sector equality duty in relation to community policing?**

#### **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**

44. Work is on-going to baseline and evaluate existing processes for Fairness and Belonging (previously Diversity and Inclusion) data captured across WMP to help identify strengths and weaknesses of this strategy including how we share data with key partners. This will be facilitated by the creation of a Diversity Dashboard to help identify and understand causes of disparity involving under-represented groups.
45. We are rolling out an Equality Assessment Training programme beginning immediately and to be concluded at the end of 2022. Several trained assessors will sit in Local Policing, where they will Equality Assess analysis in collaboration with community partners. Every department will be required through their plans to drive Equality Assessments through their Fairness and Belonging working group. This will enable WMP to meet its duty to help reduce or eliminate discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
46. We will be open to scrutiny in all aspects of our work and use the insight to help us learn and improve. Being open to scrutiny and supporting scrutiny panels will help us listen and learn. In 2022, Local Policing will look to expand how we engage and open up scrutiny from communities and to be braver in our ambition of seeking external scrutiny. Where there is evidence of unlawful discrimination in breach of the Equality Act, we will ensure matters are addressed at the appropriate levels such as with our Professional Standards Department.
47. One of the key objectives for Local Policing is to understand the historic relationships with our communities and the impact this has on individuals and their relationship with

the police. This will be delivered by developing a programme of work starting at induction into the organisation and will be implemented right the way through the organisation. This work will specifically educate officers around different communities which exist within WMP. It's hoped that by increasing the knowledge amongst officers we can ensure officers approach individuals in a fair, informed and understanding way. We will work with Statutory Partners to effectively share diversity data to help create a richer picture and inform better decision making for local community policing.

**Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

48. Through the Fairness and Belonging Strategy utilising the three strands which include 'Our Communities', 'Our Partners' and 'Our People' WMP will build capability to identify and understand disparities using internal and external diversity data. By baselining and evaluating these data processes WMP will utilise Local Policing demographics and focus its efforts to advance equality of opportunity.
49. WMP will hold itself to account through independent external peer reviews involving community partners to ensure quality. This will also help foster good relations.
50. We will work to better understand disproportionality with an aim of reducing it. Currently WMP are addressing key areas of police powers in stop and search, the unlawful use of force and disparity across the criminal justice system. By addressing these disparities, we will advance opportunities with communities where interventions such as low-level drugs possessions may have provided obstacles for achieving education and employment. These figures are regularly monitored by local teams and departments. The fair and effective use of police powers board supports academic research into the causes of disproportionality with two distinct pieces of work commencing in 2022.
51. Currently the data we use to inform our departments of the make-up of our communities is being improved and re-examined. Historically census data, compared with local knowledge would help us to know who makes up our communities. By having a better understanding of partnership data such as health data, housing data and education data we believe we will be in a stronger position to offer the best policing and partnership solutions to existing and emerging communities.

**Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

52. In order to foster good relations, WMP will:

- Produce an annual report to showcase achievements and demonstrate transparency to increase trust and confidence of our communities
- Equality Act Assessors/Fairness and Belonging Leads will consult and engage local community groups such as Independent Advisory Groups, religious organisations, particularly from under-represented groups
- Capture diversity data in relation to public complaints to understand disparities within protected characteristics and tackle these through appropriate interventions
- Through the Citizen Experience work understand if there are differences in how we interact with people from different communities. Our strategy will explore innovative methods to better understand the experiences of our communities meaning we will not simply rely on existing methods of capturing feedback which historically relied on less effective methods. In addition to our victim surveys, we are now exploring how we can capture live feedback from stop and search and use of force to help us learn from our actions

53. Will we continue to have a focus on police powers through the Fair and Effective Use of Police Powers Board. This is specifically looking to understand and improve the relationship between police officers and the public when conducting stop and search or use of force. A large amount of work is being undertaken to improve confidence and legitimacy.

54. Using a robust and compelling evidence base, we will develop and test initiatives known to improve police encounters such as trauma informed training within custody, teaching staff to have improved cultural and diversity awareness. We have also developed reflective practice debriefs for both stop and search and use of force. This enables officers to watch back their stop and search or use of force and provide their own assessment of their behaviours and discuss how they can improve. This has many benefits and is shown in studies to improve the quality of future interactions and reduce the use of force.

**Has the force prepared any equality impact assessments relating to community policing?**

55. There are currently no formal Equality Impact Assessments generated within WMP specifically for community policing. There are however several activities which replicate aspects of an Equality Impact Assessment. For example, the force community threat assessment will look at activity which may be impacting on different communities. For example, a recent incident at Perry Barr custody suite involving a Sikh male highlighted the community risks associated with our actions. This incident has been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct and an apology has been given to the individual involved. Hate crime is monitored at a tactical level to identify trends and the impact this could have on communities.
56. Historically WMP Equality Impact Assessments have been developed and used primarily for change initiatives and policy implementation, for example the closing of front offices or opening of new stations. The new training that has been developed will support the roll out of Equality Assessments at a greater rate than previously seen and for a far broader section of operational policing initiatives.

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