



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Date of meeting: 25th January 2022

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Responding to National Threats
Title: Strategic Policing Requirement
Presented by: ACC Mike O'Hara

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the PCC and the Strategic Policing and Crime Board with assurance that West Midlands Police (WMP) is effectively and efficiently playing its part in addressing national policing threats as set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), with a specific focus on:
 - Serious and Organised Crime
 - Counter Terrorism
 - Public Order
 - Civil emergencies
 - The response to a National Cyber Security Incident
2. The paper includes updates on:
 - **Serious and Organised Crime** - the working relationship with the National Crime Agency, including day-to-day tasking and requests from the Director General. The resilience of the capacity and capabilities required for SPR compliance, including reference to vacancy rates
 - **Counter Terrorism** – The implications of the West Midlands Special Branch review for SPR compliance. The resilience of the capacity and capabilities required for SPR compliance, including vacancy rates. Maintenance of the CT armed uplift capability and multi-agency preparedness for a marauding terrorist attack
 - **Public Order** – The capacity and capability of West Midlands Police to meet and sustain the commitment in the National Policing Requirement for public order policing. The recovery of public order training post COVID19
 - **Civil Emergencies** – Local lessons for resilience planning learned from the COVID19 pandemic
 - **National Cyber Security Incidents** – Information on the planning expectations placed on forces to meet this threat

BACKGROUND

3. This paper provides an update to the last briefing to SPCB on 19th January 2021.
4. The SPR was issued in 2012 in execution of the Home Secretary's statutory duty to set out the national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. While many threats can be tackled by individual police forces within their own force areas, national threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, serious and organised crime, public order, a national cyber security incident and child sexual abuse/exploitation require a coordinated or aggregated response in which resources are brought together from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively and with other partners, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively.
5. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Chief Constables are expected to plan and prepare together in support of national arrangements. The policing response that is required nationally to counter these threats, in partnership with other national agencies sets out:
 - The combined national capacity of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national Government strategies. PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective contributions, they will make;
 - The capabilities that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes;
 - The requirement for consistency among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated, or work effectively alongside each other. In some instances, this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies;
 - The connectivity arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be coordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other agencies – such as the Security Service or National Crime Agency (NCA);
 - The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners.

Serious and Organised Crime

Working with National Crime Agency (NCA) and Regional Forces

6. The National Crime Agency embed staff within each Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) and share a close working relationship. ROCUWM also works closely with the NCA's Regional Organised Crime Co-ordinator (ROCC) attending weekly meetings to support our operational efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, the National Crime Agency are a partner in the monthly Regional Tactical Tasking & Co-ordination (RTTCG) meeting. ROCUWM is able to access National Crime Agency resources when necessary to support the challenges in tackling SOC.
7. During 2021 the use of the Serious and Organised Crime System Tasking (SOCST) was embedded, which is a multi-agency project with the aim of establishing a single, whole system approach to fighting Serious and Organised Crime. This was a programme of work led by the NCA through the Federated Tasking Team (FTT). Through the SOCST approach, the ROCUWM is now seeking to develop a consistent approach to prioritise and respond to threat across the region.

8. The National Crime Agency (NCA) will also support as a partner in the Strategic Governance Groups which are aligned to Commodities, Vulnerabilities and Prosperity priorities. These groups will be reinstated from April 2022 and will produce, own and implement strategic action plans through de-confliction and rationalisation of national plans, whilst being cognisant of local priorities.
9. The relationship with the NCA has developed significantly over the last 18 months. The key connection between ROCUWM and the NCA is the Regional Organised Crime Coordinator (ROCC). This has been crucial in understanding how the NCA can support the ROCUWM, but also conversely, how the ROCUWM can support the NCA. The partnership working approach cannot, however, be based upon a relationship alone. In order to facilitate better communication channels, the following has been set in place:
 - Agreed a protocol in terms of support requirements – using the ROCUWM Gateway for support requests.
 - In emergency situations to use the ROCUWM Head of Intelligence or on call duty arrangements.
 - All requests for support (only tasking takes place under s.5(1)(a) Crime and Courts Act 2013) are assessed and taken to the ROCUWM weekly tasking process for agreement in terms of support or otherwise.
10. If any ask for support is likely to have a significant impact upon the region, or the ROCUWM capabilities, this is referred through to the Regional Intelligence Group and the Regional Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group for an auditable decision record. The relevant activities are then monitored and reviewed as part of a weekly meeting that has been established between the ROCUWM Head of Intelligence and the ROCC.
11. Any s.5(1)(a) Crime and Courts Act 2013 tasking actions are received by the ROCUWM and taken directly to the RTTCG meeting for both visibility and accountability purposes. The activity itself and progress is tracked through that forum.
12. In the past 12 months there has only been one formal tasking under s.5(1)(a) of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 and this relates to national policing standards for organised immigration crime (OIC). In working through this task, the ROCUWM has not designated specific resources or people for delivery. The task itself leans on capabilities that sit within the ROCUWM and form part of daily business. This is akin to a focusing of activity and a response to a threat that needs developing, rather than additional work per se. OIC/MS threat sits within the top priority of the ROCUWM control strategy and there are conscious efforts to ensure the volume of operations in this space is increased. This was the case prior to the formal tasking. The fundamental elements of the task are in ensuring that local to national tiers are joined up in our approach to intelligence, how we ensure a more proactive stance is taken within this thematic, and how we can look to increase the number of operations / enforcements that seek to disrupt OIC/MS crime. As part of this tasking there are also requirements on each force, again, which is seen as part of focusing activity in this space. This is for activities such as proactive haulage operations, ensuring CPD / learning is available, and that initial responses are guided by National Response Plans.

The resilience of the capacity and capabilities required for SPR compliance

13. The resilience of the capacity and capabilities required for SPR compliance, including reference to vacancy rates as at 1st December, ROCUWM was carrying 53 Police Officer vacancies. (Establishment 499 including 27 PUP uplift posts, strength 446). The 95% of baseline figure required to achieve uplift is 448, so currently we are two short of achieving that.

14. The table below breaks this down by force:

	West Midlands	Warwickshire	West Mercia	Staffordshire	Total
Current Officer establishment	344	12.5	58	57.5	472
Current Officer strength	330 (14 vacancies)	14 (1.5 over)	48 (10 vacancies)	54 (3.5 vacancies)	446 (26 vacancies)
21/22 Establishment with uplift posts	361	14.5	62	61.5	499
95% baseline to allow for 21/22 uplift	327	12	55	55	448
Difference	3 over	2 over	7 short	1 short	2 short

15. Out of the current 53 officer vacancies, the situation is as follows:

- 28 posts are out to advert (Regional Intelligence Unit (18), South Investigation Team, Covert Ops, County Lines, Dark Web, RPIU)
- 5 candidates are identified and awaiting vetting
- 3 with start dates in December
- 1 with start date in January
- 1 with start date in March
- 1 awaiting release - no date confirmed

16. The remaining vacancies are in surveillance and are dependent upon candidates successfully completing the academy process. The Mobile teams are carrying 18 vacancies (officers and staff) out of an establishment of 90 which shows 20% vacancies for this team. Currently the Regional Intelligence Unit is running with a 17.5% vacancy rate (officers and staff).

17. When officers who are currently in the recruitment process arrive, the establishment will be as below:

- 32 vacancies (Establishment 499 including 27 PUP uplift posts, strength 467)
- The 95% of baseline figure required to achieve uplift is 448, so we will have achieved that and be 19 over

18. The below table breaks this down by force

	West Midlands	Warwickshire	West Mercia	Staffordshire	Total
Current Officer establishment	344	12.5	58	57.5	472
Current Officer strength	340 (4 vacancies)	15 (2.5 over)	52 (6 vacancies)	60 (2.5 over)	467 (5 vacancies)

21/22 Establishmen t with uplift posts	361	14.5	62	61.5	499
95% baseline to allow for 21/22 uplift	327	12	55	55	448
Difference	13 over	3 over	3 short	5 over	19 over

Counter Terrorism

Implications of the National Special Branch Funding Transfer

19. The implications of National Special Branch Review for SPR compliance are minimal. As a result of the work undertaken by the National Special Branch Project Team, the funding transfer will take place in April 2022 using a Core Policing grant 'one-time adjustment'. Under this mechanism, Police Services' individual funding has decreased by the amount budgeted for their 'Special Branch' function, meaning that the impact on budgets on other policing services is nil.
20. The endorsement of the National Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by Chief Officers is expected imminently and will be adopted as an interim agreement between CT Policing and Police Services (Chief Officers and Police and Crime Commissioners/ Deputy Mayors) to set out the basis for the transfer of funding for Special Branches. The existing 22A Collaboration Agreement will continue to govern the management and delivery of Special Branch services, both from an operational and organisational perspective, following the funding transfer.
21. The MoU details that a National decision has been taken not to transfer Overseas Visitors Records Office (OVRO) and Vetting (over and above conducting CT vetting check as outlined under 'Intelligence – Query Resolution') services to CT Policing. Following the funding transfer, a transition of these services to forces is expected and should then continue under the ownership and responsibility of Police Services.
22. The existing s22A Collaboration supported by the MoU will remain in place and continue to support our Regional operating model. During the period April 2022-2023 our existing Regional CT Section 22A agreement will be updated to reflect the new arrangements and funding transfer.
23. Throughout this process there has been full engagement with regional PCC'S and Chief Officers. WMCTU Project Amplify is continuing to engage with all regional forces to ensure financial and resourcing models are monitored throughout this transition period.

Resilience of the capacity and capabilities required for SPR compliance

24. In order for us to reduce the risk and threat of terrorism and protect the public, our people need to be at their best. They can only be at their best if they are able to be themselves at work and are supported through development and learning within their current role and future roles within the CTU. This will be facilitated through the implementation of our refreshed People Plan.

25. Our workforce optimisation/organisational capability framework will identify and address future resourcing risks, and will facilitate succession planning for key roles. To complement this, our People Plan will engage and empower our leaders, delivering on key themes of the strategy including fairness and belonging, wellbeing, leadership and progression.
26. Other essential activities will be undertaken throughout the year: recognition and appreciation, cadre management, surveillance academy, health & safety and the security board will continue to contribute to the smooth running of the CTU.
27. The Unit's vacancy rate remains the second lowest across the national network. Our establishment is currently at 92%. This is broken down as: 93% for officer roles, 91% for staff roles, and 90% for firearms roles.
28. The Strategic Efficiencies and Reinvestment Review (SE&RR) will have an impact on resources. Different configurations and the possible mitigations are still being worked through within a formal project governance structure.
29. Funding comes from the CT Grant allocation for CTP: WMCTU, and from forces within the region through the provision of staff within our hub sites. Throughout 2021, the Unit was required to reduce our police officer and staff overtime by 7.75%, and travel expenses by 31%. The financial reporting frameworks within the region will remain largely unchanged, with financial data monitored quarterly and sent to CTPHQ in the form of Financial Reporting and FTE Monitoring Statements supporting Revenue, Capital, Armed Uplift Programme and FTE allocations. This data will be collated into quarterly Financial Management Information Packs (FMIPs), which are used to inform the financial management of the Grant.

Maintenance of the CT armed uplift capability beyond March 2022

30. The Firearms Operations Unit (FOU) has an establishment of 258 Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs). WMP provide a service level agreement of 10 Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) on a 24/7 basis, along with the Tactical Firearms Team (TFT) of Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFOs). CTSFOs provide the force's response to planned deployments and on-call response to both internal force requirements and any national Intervention Response Team (IRT) requirements from the CT Network on a 24/7 basis.
31. The strength of the FOU currently sits at 235, which is 23 Constables under establishment. FOU strength is higher than it has been over the course of the last few years and continues to get closer to establishment. By July 2022 the FOU anticipate strength will be 248 (10 Constables under establishment). However, the 2022 recruitment process will then be in place, with a view to identifying new applicants.
32. The CTSFO numbers in force currently sit at 37, against an "end state" number of 56. The strength has reduced over the past 18 months due to retirements and transfers out of force. There are currently 10 Specialist Firearms Officers (SFOs) qualified in force, who are capable of providing all in-force responses, but are not qualified to provide national (CT) responses. All ten officers are allocated spaces on CT Upskill courses in 2022, with five attending in January and four at the end of February.
33. In addition to those current SFOs, an ongoing process of identifying new candidates for Pathway courses (taking AFOs from ARV to SFO and then on to CTSFO) is in hand. This process can take 12-18 months as all Pathway courses are delivered through the National training Team of the CT Network.

34. All of the FOU SLA requirements, both internal and external, are maintained through business as usual. The staffing picture means that the strength of the FOU will increase over the next twelve months, and the number of CTSFOs will also increase (depending on people passing their pathway courses). Confidence is high that the maintenance of the armed uplift will not diminish beyond March 2022.

Public Order

The capacity and capability of West Midlands Police Public Order Response

35. West Midlands Police provides just under 55% of the regional public order capability, which amounts to 17 Police Support Units (PSU's). We continue to maintain our overall establishment in line with the national recommendations from NPoCC to train 3 times our regional requirement. This equates to a total figure of 1326 Public Order, Level 2 trained officers.

36. Positive work between the Operations department and Organisational Learning and Development department has resulted in consistent availability of courses to both train and reaccredit officers. This has resulted in West Midlands Police currently being at 90% of the 1326 target figure.

37. Recovery following the COVID pandemic and the impact that this had on training is ongoing, we are in a healthy position and currently have a full training calendar scheduled to maintain and increase our target figure. With Commonwealth Games 2022 on the horizon we are seeking to maintain our Public Order capability in the coming year.

38. As a Force, we have also sought to increase our capability in specialist areas within the Public Order curriculum. These include increasing the number of Police Liaison officers to deploy to protests, evidence gathering teams to support operations and the re-introduction of specialist Public Order Medics. There is work ongoing to review the scope of enhancing the Force and regional capability for Protest Removal teams (PRT), particularly with demand in this area of business likely to increase, both for protests within West Midlands Force area but also due to Staffordshire Police Force having a significant anti HS2 camp well established on their Force area and currently holding the only PRT capability in the region.

39. Command resilience and capability has also been increased over the past six months and moving into 2022, with the establishment of a 24/7 rota for Tactical (Silver) Command along with existing Operational (Bronze) Command rotas. This is aimed at enhancing the Force's capability to meet planned and spontaneous public order demand but also enhance our response to a major incident with tactical commanders being available at all times to support existing Force command structures. With an expected busy year ahead in 2022 with significant planned events there is a strong desire to ensure our resilience at command ranks can support this demand and also manage business as usual requirements.

40. West Midlands Police supported the national requirement for Public Order Mutual Aid at G7 and COP26, sending 258 officers to support Devon and Cornwall for G7 and 552 to Police Scotland, the majority being Public Order assets. The return to a full season of Football has been a challenging area of business with fan behaviour being particularly poor and highlighted incidents of violence and ASB echoing the national trend. This has been exacerbated by a lower level of stewarding seen at Football clubs and therefore an increased reliance of Police Officers to backfill and perform these roles at times and support the clubs. Work is continuing to ensure we build effective working relationships with the clubs and the role of the Police at Football is clearly outlined and maintained.

41. Protest was a continual area of demand over the Summer months with nationally inspired events such as the conflict in Palestine providing a backdrop for well supported protest in the West Midlands which whilst disruptive, was predominantly peaceful. Anti-Government protests with anti-vaccine themes have also continued throughout the summer and expected to rise again with recent Government announcements and this remains a well-supported thematic for protest within the West Midlands. Again, whilst predominantly peaceful, it has also involved some more disruptive elements and seeking to block major highways and tunnels in the City Centre. It is yet to be seen how influential the impact of Insulate Britain will be on wider protest groups and their tactics. A single incident of Insulate Britain activity has been seen within West Midlands which did not cause significant disruption and the Extinction Rebellion (XR) protest at the Amazon distribution centre in Coventry provided a challenging day for our resources and the investigation into 14 protestors for aggravated trespass continues.
42. Commonwealth Games is clearly a significant event on the horizon for WMP along with the Conservative party conference later on in the year which will draw on our public order capability. Football is expected to continue to provide a challenging and demanding environment to police and with the season starting early next year to account for the Football World Cup in 2022 it is not expected this area of demand will diminish but will also impact on our Night time Economy policing demands. Protests are expected to continue with XR already indicating further targeting of Amazon sites along with Insulate Britain expected to pick up their campaign in earnest from Spring 2022 onwards although yet to be seen whether this is focused outside of London and the South East but regional command structures and plans are already in place.

Civil Emergencies

Local lessons for resilience planning learned from the COVID19 pandemic

43. In support of the Major Incident response to COVID-19, an Organisational Learning project was set-up to define and deliver a strategic approach to capture learning; document changes; and collate best practice across the Force, assessing impact of learning and decisions taken during the emergency. This co-ordinated approach provided a framework to feed the insight and recommendations into the organisation, supporting the emergency response, as well as strengthening the forces approach through recovery.
44. WMP moved into the recovery phase where insights and learning lessened significantly but continued to be gathered when received. A Recovery Board was implemented and continued to identify opportunities, improvements and changes to inform the continuous improvement agenda, as well as inform the organisations path to recover. The Organisational Learning project was closed in October 2020 but the process employed to capture learning is being integrated in to the learning framework and methodology, internally to ensure and maintain the organisation's ability to become a more dynamic learning organisation. This is being supported by the refresh of a pool of CoP trained structured debriefs, to ensure learning is captured in line with the CoP guidelines for the outcomes to be fed into the Governance boards currently being established.
45. WMP has made a concerted effort to ensure all learning from the COVID pandemic is captured. The following details key learning products and reviews:
 - A debrief report was commissioned that covered the two Silver groups, providing key lessons learnt in anticipation of any escalation in response activity to COVID19. The learning from this was provided to the Gold Recovery Board.

- A Business Continuity review, referred to as the Op Colonel Recovery Learning Report, was completed. This focussed on feedback received from specific questionnaires sent to all departments across the force.
 - A Coordination Cell debrief documented a review of the Coordination Cell initiation and a full understanding of the functionality during the COVID19 pandemic.
 - A Recovery Force Assessment was produced for the National Business Continuity forum, which collated an understanding of the activity of all forces as part of the recovery set up and structure.
 - A learning log tracker detailed the learning outcomes from the debriefs which have been updated with associated activity in progressing learning
46. There are 10 key learning points which were highlighted from the internal debriefing in force and they are as follows:
- Resilience to key roles to be built into the role profile
 - Continuity of staff where possible (the same staff members returning to key roles) to be able to take advantage of their experience and knowledge
 - Adhere strictly to the 'Gold/Silver/Bronze' command structure
 - Ensure the use of existing and relevant plans
 - Decision making and policy decisions to be recorded on CLIO (a single system, accessible to all commanders with a clear audit trail)
 - Bronze commanders & SMEs to attend key meetings to provide expert advice and assist the Silver Commander making tactical decisions
 - Empower Silver Commanders to make decisions at the earliest opportunity
 - Provide clarity on roles & responsibilities (particularly relevant when two Silver roles are operating together)
 - The provision of planning support and the use of a resourcing cell be considered at the earliest opportunity
 - Agree a Communications Strategy with the Silver commander as early as possible
47. In September 2021 a full debrief of the WMP response to COVID19 was commissioned in an effort to capture overall organisational learning. In light of the re-emergence of COVID19 (OMICRON variant) this has been postponed and will be conducted as soon as possible in 2022.

National Cyber Security Incidents

Information on planning expectations

48. A national cyber security incident, which the NCSC identifies as a Tier One risk, may require an aggregated police response under the guidelines set out by the UK's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-UK). The ROCUWM contains the Regional Cyber Crime Unit (RCCU) which is responsible for coordinating the force's response to cybercrime.
49. The RCCU has developed a '4 P' strategy working closely with each force within the region to ensure that relevant activity is in place to prevent and protect against a cyber-incident, with funded resources in each force responsible for liaison with relevant policing teams and key stakeholders. Responding adequately to a national cyber security incident and supporting the overall incident management and response, requires appropriate connectivity from local to national, and the RCCU work closely with the NCA and local force cyber leads to establish relevant relationships. Mechanisms for the reporting of any national or cross force cyber incidents are in place with the RCCU positioned to receive relevant reporting and coordinate a response with the effected forces.

50. A government shift in approach, seeking to focus on Economic and Cyber Crime through the same 'lens' may require ROCUWM and the forces within the West Midlands Region to consider how force and ROCU Economic and Cyber Crime can be better connected, with '4 P' strategies aligned. At present the ROCUWM hosts a Regional Economic Crime Unit (RECU) separate to the RCCU, although activity of both units is overseen and coordinated centrally by the ROCU. The development of the recently drafted National Cyber Crime Strategy has been supported by the ROCU WM RCCU, ensuring the region is well positioned to understand the emerging threats and ensure local capability and capacity is consistent with national requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

51. The board is asked to take note of the contents of this report.

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