



**Notes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 25th January 2022
1000-1300 hrs**

Remote Access Meeting (using Zoom Technology)

Attendees:

Simon FOSTER	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Alethea FULLER	:	Deputy Chief Executive
Brendan CONNOR	:	Public Question
Bhupinder GAKHAL	:	Board Member
Charmaine BURTON	:	Board Member
David THOMPSON	:	Chief Constable
Emma POINTER	:	Chief of Staff
Joanne CLEWS	:	Head of NABIS
Jonathan JARDINE	:	Chief Executive
Mark KENYON	:	Chief Finance Officer
Mike O HARA	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Nigel JOHNSTON	:	Programme Manager
Nicky BRENNAN	:	Victims Commissioner
Richard COSTELLO	:	Head of Communications
Tim MARTIN	:	Head of Intelligence

Plus one note taker and three observers.

Apologies:

Dave STURMAN	:	Chief Superintendent
Jayne MEIR	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Matt WARD	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Tom MCNEIL	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Vanessa JARDINE	:	Deputy Chief Constable

Please Note:

- This meeting was recorded and the entire discussion can be found here:
[Strategic Policing and Crime Board - January 2022 - YouTube](#)
- The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here:
[SPCB January 2022 - West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner \(westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk\)](#)
- Actions arising from the discussion during the meeting are highlighted in bold text.

001/22	<p>Item 1: PCC Update:</p> <p>The Commissioner made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commissioner praised the efforts of the Force in keeping the streets of the West Midlands safe. Throughout 2021, officers recovered 132 viable firearms, including shotguns, pistols and revolvers. This is a reminder of the dangerous work the Force undertakes and that the challenge of gun crime remains. Intelligence work carried out by the National Ballistics Intelligence Services is crucial to understanding threat and risk. We will continue to prevent and tackle gun crime in 2022. • The Commissioner expressed admiration and thanks for the work carried out by the highly skilled officers at West Midlands Police during the course of the siege in Coventry. As a result, the Force were able to bring a dangerous situation to a safe resolution. Gratitude was extended to the community who were supportive and understanding throughout the difficult time. • The Commissioner held his Annual Business Summit last week, and met with businesses within the West Midlands who encourage firms to employ former offenders who have served their time. This helps to break the cycle of crime and ensure former offenders can make a positive contribution to society. The Commissioner was delighted so many firms took part within the Summit. The community benefits from rehabilitation.
002/22	<p>Item 2: Notes of the Last Meeting: 21st December 2021</p> <p>The notes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
003/22	<p>Item 3: Questions from Members of the Public:</p> <p>1) In the light of the evidence given to the Manchester Arena Inquiry concerning the lack of coordination and preparedness of the 3 emergency services responses on the night, would the Chief Constable set out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What arrangements have been agreed with his counterparts in the Fire Service and Ambulance Service to ensure a coordinated response? b) Whether the primacy of command by police has been accepted by the Fire and Ambulance Services? c) Whether any arrangements have been 'live' tested with the 3 emergency services? d) Whether the new ECS has been integrated into planning for the Commonwealth Games? <p>(Asked by Brendan Connor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a national level, the response to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) is being extensively explored through the Manchester inquiry and the Force are keen to learn the lessons of this. • The guidance and operating procedures on how to deal with an MTA were revised by the three services under the Joint Emergency Services Planning and issued by counter terrorism policing. • When these principles were released, the three Chiefs of the Blue Light Agencies wrote to all West Midlands Police Commanders to set out clear expectations. The new principles have a bias to action that has been strengthened as a result of the Manchester Arena Attack. • Extensive testing has taken place and these will continue at pace for the Commonwealth Games. The Force have completed a review which was held by a senior representative from the Ambulance Service, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer.

- The governance of the three Chiefs has been robust and explicit and has allowed the Force to test and review the progress.
- The Force have extensively published the new C3 Command Control Coordination Site, that has been built to ensure the public of the West Midlands have a police facility that can command a large-scale major incident and large-scale planned events. The room mobilises at the right pace and Command and Control can be transferred during such incidents.
- This area is subject to inspection by HMICFRS; particular attention is been paid to these inspections when they are received. The Force will develop learning from future inspections.
- This is an extremely challenging scenario, as Forces and Blue Light Agencies have one chance to respond to such incidents correctly. The most effective way to ensure this is through constant focus and testing.

- 2) The Policing Plan 2021-2025 refers to police performance information and information on Stop and Search, being easy for the public to access. With statements on transparency and in particular for local communities having trust and confidence in West Midlands Police and yourself. The lack of such information, especially local crimes, can lead to rumours that “crime is up” and the real picture is being hidden. Historically crimes information for neighbourhood watch and other partners could be easily obtained from the national police website.

The website states (undated): ‘West Midlands Police: Due to recent major system changes, the force is unable to provide Crime and Stop & Search data from April 2021 onwards. The force aims to rectify this issue as soon as possible in the coming months.’

On the 28th September 2021 DCC Vanessa Jardine reported to the Board ‘there has also been some challenges whilst the system has fully embedded. The adoption period is now over... the force is using CONNECT and ControlWorks as part of business-as-usual.’

Why then is there no data for crimes for ‘your local area’ (by post code or name) and Stop and Search available to the general public since the 1st April 2021 on the national police website? (Note - checked on 30th January 2021 before submission). When will the information be made available to the public? Was the Commissioner aware of this failure to provide the information?

(Asked by David Page)

- The Police.uk system is intended to allow the public to have a good understanding of crime within their area. There have been difficulties in supplying this information, the reason being the Force have changed its crime, custody, case management and intelligence system into the new Connect system which is both a large and generational change in the Force’s information technology.
- The Connect system is available to many Forces across the UK.
- The Force’s main challenge is ensuring that data extracts move from the current system to Connect and national systems that the Force have to serve, including the PND, crime data for the Home Office and Police.uk.
- In terms of Police.uk, the Force have overcome the challenges in terms of submission and have started to load data onto the system. This will start to be visible to the public later this month.
- The Force have not reduced overall crime reporting and extracts have been completed manually; however, the Police.uk data extract will start happening moving forwards.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a matter of legitimate public concern. The Connect system went live in April 2021, and the inability to provide data nationally was reported to the Commissioner on 5th July 2021 and was the result of a formatting incompatibility. It was understood that additional server capacity would address this difficulty. • The OPCC Chief Finance Officer was tasked with monitoring this issue. It was reported that manual workarounds would allow the data to be reported and published; at that time, it was suggested that two quarters of the data would be affected. • The Commissioner raised this with the Chief Constable on 15th and 29th November 2021. The Commissioner expressed he was grateful to the Chief Constable for providing a further update and that the timescale referred to is helpful and reassuring. • The Commissioner assured he will keep this matter under review until closed.
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004/22	<p>Item 4: Questions from Members of the Board:</p> <p>1) Could the Chief Constable share any information in regards to drink driving incidents over the Christmas and New Year period? If so, are the incidents higher or lower than previous years? (Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force consider Christmas and New Year as part of a national campaign to educate the public. Targeted action is however important around this matter. • Across the seasonal period for December 2021, there were 62 positive tests for drink and drugs – 38 tests for drink and 24 tests for drugs. This was a positive test rate of 7.5% of all tests conducted. • Of the total tests, 5.3% were tests people refused. • Compared to the previous year, the Force conducted a slightly higher number of tests however the numbers that tested positive were lower. • 755 breath tests were completed in comparison to 466 last year. • Enforcement activity was increased. <p>2) Can the Chief Constable detail the impact and implications Home Office crime recording rules are having on West Midlands Police and the pressure it puts upon the force's limited resources? (Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Police are graded 'good' by HMICFRS in terms of crime recording accuracy. This is not just based on classification, but also the number of crimes spotted and seen in a particular incident. • Accurate crime data is extremely important to the public. The Public Administration Committee completed a review in 2014 and raised concerns over under recording by Forces. As a result, tighter crime recording standards were implemented and crime data is managed by the Office of National Statistics. • West Midlands Police have a desire to ensure they crime to investigate oppose to investigate a crime. • The standards to cancel crimes are extremely high, meaning that crimes are likely to remain in the system recorded as crimes as the Force cannot provide the standard of evidence to negate it as a crime. This has a direct impact on data. • There is a risk for the over recording of crime issues due to crimes entering the system and impacting the information used for patterns and trends. • HMCIFRS test if the right number of crimes are recorded per incident. It is common to see not only the principle offense recorded when it happens, but also other crimes that may have been exhibited. This has created a significant challenge around the volume of crimes recorded, many of which are never going to be detected in the future. This impacts performance data and outcomes.
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- These areas affect violent crime data; violent crime has increased as a result of the crime recording standards.
- It is right to have accurate crime data and recording crimes to investigate them, however this has to be balanced with an appropriate level of control to ensure that crimes can be cancelled if evidence is not sufficient.
- The Force need to concentrate on the principle crime being recorded.

3) Can the Chief Constable describe how West Midlands Police is improving its compliance with the Victims Code?

(Asked by Cath Hannon)

- The successive governments have sought to improve the clarity of victims' rights, particularly through the code and statutory intervention.
- Assistant Chief Constable Claire Bell heads the victim code service delivery group and acts as a lead senior officer as victims champion.
- West Midlands Police continuously update the Force in terms of national guidance good practice, undertake monthly audits and compliance, consider areas of underperformance, complete training and refresher work and raise issues with groups such as the Criminal Justice Board where performance is broad ranging.
- All departments are represented at the victim-wide victims code champion group and all information is disseminated through the overall strategic group.
- The Force complete bespoke victims code training delivered to single points of contact, which is an adaption of the training provided to new recruits.
- This correlates with the work being completed by the Victims Commission and also aligns with the work of the OPCC Policy Officers.
- Concentration is drawn to parts of the Force where improvement plans are needed. For example, the PPU and FCID have increased engagement with victims and the code and therefore have their own plans.
- This is also sampled via the public and not solely case review. SMS surveys are completed which provide a good way of gathering feedback from victims regarding if the Force are meeting the code.

4) Can the Chief Constable describe the improvements made to the Victim Personal Statement process which have increased the number of Victim Personal Statements presented in court hearings?

(Asked by Cath Hannon)

- Victim Personal Statements provide the opportunity for the victim's voice to be heard and put forward their version of experience.
- A new app has been made available on officers' mobile devices and force desktops that offers help and guidance around how to complete victim personal statements.
- The Witness Care Unit are currently working at 85.46% of victims' personal statements going before court, which demonstrates good progress.
- Hate Crime and Sexual Assault are working at 100% of cases going to court with victims' personal statements and all other cases range between 79-86% dependent upon the month.
- The Force are paying high attention to crimes with extremely high personal impact such as hate and sexual offences.
- Victims care are also dip sampling cases to discover where improvements can be implemented.

005/22

Item 5: NABIS Annual Report:

Chief Superintendent Joanne Clews provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:

NABIS relies on highly trained and specialist staff, the market for which is limited. What are the issues around ensuring a steady supply of trained firearms forensic staff? We hear of instability and issues around the private forensics market, which has a role in relation to firearms forensics, what impact is that having on both NABIS and on the ability of Forces to obtain firearms forensics information and firearms intelligence information?

- Technicians and experts work within the Force Forensic Hubs. Previously, the Force have faced difficulties directly recruiting experts due to the level of training required and that this area of forensics is so niche.
- Over recent years, the Force have recruited technicians and trained them to the level that they are able to move into expert vacancies if those vacancies are available.
- The Force engages with key universities where there are forensic listed courses in order to ensure suitable people are coming through,
- The Force have recently undertaken a recruitment process, and will be welcoming two technicians who are due to start within the next month.
- This is a continuing challenge due to this being a niche area of the market, however the Force do receive significant interest when work is advertised.
- The Forensic Service Providers undertake work concerning the classification of firearms, scene attendance, assessment of scenes and the trajectory of firearms. The transforming forensics work is aiming to identify potential options for future delivery of all of those services to maintain resilience across the whole of the forensics platform. The options that have been identified are undertaking options evaluation next month with a view to consider feasibility around whether these options are suitable for UK policing.
- A number of Forces have the ability to undertake firearms classification, however some Forces do not have the financial resources to pursue this.

We act as hosts - as do Greater Manchester Police - for NABIS, does this carry any overhead costs that are not covered by payments made by other Forces?

- The collaboration agreement identifies those services that the Force go into, such as human resources and financial support, however for the majority of operations that the Force undertakes, they are mostly self-sufficient.
- For example, the Force pay for their estates in terms of lease agreements with both West Midlands Police and Greater Manchester Police.
- The Force have not processed the requirements in terms of IT and human resources, however this is largely limited within both Forces.
- The Force's benefit from the proximity of the hubs as they are co-located with West Midlands Police forensic staff and also Greater Manchester Police forensic staff. This outweighs any additional costs from providing those additional support services.

Are the Force aware of any action or campaign either by the Government or elsewhere to consider regulating the importation of blank firing pistols? What action is possible to take to regulate the extent to which the blank firing pistols can then be converted to fire live rounds?

- The Force have discussed this topic with the National Crime Agency and the Home Office Firearms Policy Group.
- There will always be the requirement to have blank firing pistols, as there are legitimate uses for them.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward venting blank firing pistols are not able to be legally imported into the UK without specific licencing. The top venting are only those seen of late. • The Force have been working closely with the National Crime Agency in taking enforcement action where those have been identified as potentially converted. • The Force have collaborated with the Home Office and National Crime Agency around linking in overseas with those countries where the pistols are being manufactured. Overseas visits have been carried out in an attempt to address issues. • Within the legal framework, if there is an ability to prove these items are readily convertible then the items become unlawful. • The Force are focusing on those blank firing pistols that are readily convertible. <p><i>Has Brexit financially affected West Midlands Police's funds within this area, and if so, how?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a NABIS perspective, the funding hasn't been affected by Brexit in any way. • The funding goes through to Chief Constables Council and is agreed at that level. There is then a funding formula by which each Force's specific funding is identified. <p><i>What is your assessment towards the progress of speedier and more complete submission of ballistic material and firearms intelligence to NABIS by Forces in general?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is certainly an appetite by Forces to improve this. • Only recently, a method has been identified where assessments can be made around the recovery of items at scenes as there has to be a balance between the time taken to search a scene and the prospect of recovering ballistic material. • There are some challenges with the current route using external forensic service providers to complete preliminary work on items before they reach NABIS. • There has been a change in tasking from the National Crime Agency, resulting in greater focus from Forces. • Further challenges include the inability for the Force to effectively track an item through the entire system. • There is a spending review bid for a replacement NABIS database, that if the Force receive the funding for, would be provided with the capability for a staff member on the street to have on their mobility device a NABIS app. At the point they recover an item, it can be photographed and uploaded to ensure the Force are made aware, also allowing the item to be tracked through the system. • Firearms intelligence must be turned around quickly. <p><i>In relation to the timescale that exists for the funding bid submitted to the Home Office for the replacement of the NABIS database, at present do you have an idea of what that timescale is?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bid is a joint-bid with the ballistic evidence analytical management system and the national firearms management system. • The Force have not yet received confirmation around funding, however are hoping to receive further knowledge from the Home Office in due course.
006/22	<p>Item 6: Preparing for the Commonwealth Games: Chief Constable David Thompson provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>Bhupinder Gakhal commented that he has received an email from the committee regarding a nomination to carry the Queen's relay baton. If successful, Bhupinder expressed his excitement towards the opportunity.</i></p>

- The Commissioner congratulated Bhupinder Gakhal.
- These opportunities have been recently publicised and the organising committee are looking for 2,022 volunteers to carry the baton whilst it moves around the UK.
- The Force encouraged the public to nominate good citizens of the West Midlands for this opportunity.
- Escorts include police officers from the four forces across the West Midlands region.
- The organising committee are also looking for people to take part in the opening ceremony of the games.

What does the Youth Programme entail?

- The Force are leaning on the opportunities available through the organising committee.
- Through the Engagement Team, the Force have visited schools within the areas where the commonwealth games are taking place.
- The Force are using the games as a vehicle to engage with young people.
- Artwork has been created through these programmes and is going to be used within logistic sites across the country to exemplify the efforts of young people within those specific areas.
- There is a youth programme running within the commonwealth games itself.
- In terms of tourism, travel, business and employment opportunities, these will emerge in due course.
- The programme is tailored to different educational levels.

Could examples be given on how the Force are engaging communities other than education institutions, faith organisations or community organisations? There are members of the community who are not attached to any of these institutes, or who may not be as engaged due to the pandemic.

- Engagement is occurring from different agencies for the commonwealth games, for example traffic and transportation is being run by West Midlands Combined Authority.
- The Police engagement ensures that the areas that are directly impacted and affected by the games are well aware of the issues, Perry Barr being a heavily affected area.
- This is an opportunity to increase excitement around the games but to also ensure the public is aware of the impact of the games during key phases.

Can the Force give examples of the safety and security legacy?

- The Force are keen to grow volunteering opportunities.
- Volunteers will also be used as security for the event, alongside private contractors and the Force.
- The Force are supporting the ongoing work of the organising committee, as people licenced and accredited for security work and catering are needed. The organising committee will be skilling such people during this period.
- The Force aim to create a 'one team' ethos for security, as police, military, Private Sector Security and volunteers will be working collaboratively. An aim is to attract more people to engage and work within policing.
- The Force are using police staff on mutual aid to COP 26 as policing is more than just police officers. Police staff sre being upskilled.

How will the Force ensure positive welfare and wellbeing for communities and volunteers?

- The duration of the operation is a key challenge; extensive operational work will begin in July.

- Sites will be hosting staff on mutual aid as many will be staying overnight.
- Police vehicles and parking may impact on the community.
- The Force have a dedicated team to consider the logistics of this operation.
- Peer review work has been completed after events such as COP 26 and G7.
- The Force must have a sustainable volunteer and police workforce; the aim is to add value to communities oppose to being destructive.

Are any communities not engaging with the police?

- The main challenge is ensuring all communities understand and are excited about the games.
- Thoughts have been given to the sports that will be taking place in Birmingham to ensure they are attracting a wide range of interest of many communities. For example, the women's cricket taking place at Edgbaston should attract attention from a number of different communities.
- The engagement from the organising committee has impressed the Chief Constable.
- Ticket sales are good exemplifying excitement and engagement.
- The venues being built will have enormous benefits to communities even after the games have concluded.

Issues that appear with some regularity at events relate to the welfare and accommodation of mutual aid police officers - what assurance can be given that these officers will be well-housed and appropriately supported? Issues may also arise regarding the good conduct of officers that are deployed away from home, what thoughts have been given to this issue? The games will attract a number of supporting or cultural events, what is the Force's level of understanding of these other events and are appropriate mechanisms in place to understand where these events are going to be and what the security and policing implications are?

- There is a requirement for an extensive level of mutual aid. Approximately one third of the resourcing used for the games is West Midlands Police. Everybody within West Midlands Police will be engaged with the operation of the games as ensuring services are delivered will be a joint effort.
- The mutual aid will progress through stages such as specialist, firearms and search capability.
- The Force have learned from large operations over previous years. The Force have thought of the venues where mutual aid officers will go to and where they will be deployed. Consideration has been given to their proximity to accommodation.
- The command will remain from West Midlands Police or the regional forces as they are integrated into our planning.
- It was encouraged that staff take a small amount of annual leave whilst within the West Midlands.
- The accommodation provision is of a high standard and the Force have worked collaboratively with the Federation and Unions to ensure there is a good understanding.
- Mutual aid liaison officers will also visit the West Midlands to ensure they manage the welfare of the people from their Force. A senior leader will be embedded within the mutual aid deployment.
- The jubilee celebrations are taking place in early June which will develop across the region. There is also an early start to the football season; the Force are working with the Football Authorities to minimise the number of home games.

The West Midlands community are excited, however are also concerned about the wider policing service. How are the Force ensuring that there will not be an adverse impact leading up to, during or after the games, in terms of access to policing response, investigations, backlog of cases or challenges in relation to leave?

- Demand is high during the summer period for West Midlands Police.
- The Force have paused recruitment during this period, meaning there are less members of staff in training and therefore minimising abstraction. There is also a restriction on annual leave that can be taken and will be managed carefully leading up to the summer.
- The Force are working with the Home Office in an attempt that rest days will not need to be reinstated and can be taken as paid.
- West Midlands Police are already pressured due the number of rest days previously cancelled due to the pandemic.
- Due to the volume of extra resourcing, this may have a positive impact on crime during this time period.
- Positively, the Force are being funded to deliver this operation and are well supported by the government.

Illustrated during the 2012 Olympics, there is a risk concerning private contractor security. Due to the pandemic and Brexit, there is a chance that this risk is further enhanced. What steps are the Force taking in order to address issues that arise around the failure of private contractor security?

- The labour requirement to service such large-scale events is colossal.
- There are a number of areas where labour shortages already exist, such as transportation.
- The organisation committee and procurement department has worked to spread the risk and has engaged with suppliers to ensure this is worked through.
- There is work being undertaken to support the labour market and increase the number of qualified people within these roles.
- It is important to keep labour throughout the games. If people are not well treated when on a temporary contract, they are less likely to stay. People need to feel part of the intrinsic family and cared and valued by the police.
- The use of military personnel is a strong feature of the games.

The Commissioner concluded that there are 1,500 West Midlands Police officers, 270 police staff and approximately a further 2,000 officers from around the country who will be working on Operation Unity. This will be the most important undertaking in the Force's history. The West Midlands will be hosting thousands of athletes and visitors, and ensuring safety and security is therefore paramount. To ensure the games have a minimal impact on other policing activities, the Force have enacted a leave embargo and financial agreements are being sought from the Home Office to ensure wider police activity in 2022 is not put at risk. The Commissioner trusts that the Home Office will provide the appropriate support.

Regular Items

007/22

Item 7: Budget 2022/23:

Mark Kenyon provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:

Can we sustain the forecast of price increases for fuel, gas and energy?

- The Commissioner buys through a framework contract with other sources.
- The market is monitored closely and consideration is given to how costs can be afforded.
- Despite the significant pressure, this is monitored and something that has to be paid for. The Commissioner is managing this risk.
- In terms of the Green Agenda, energy reduction is also being monitored.

It is not clear on what the West Midlands will receive from the additional £42 million settlement. What information is available at present and what is the timeframe on when the information will be clear?

- Not all areas were announced through the financial settlement.
- As part of the settlement, the Commissioner was promised that the additional funding streams would be known before the end of January in terms of crime reduction and drugs misuse.

What impact, if it doesn't come sooner rather than later, will it have on areas such as the Violence Reduction Unit and organisations that are already delivering services, waiting to find out if funding will be renewed?

- There are multiple programmes in place that run from year to year.
- The Commissioner does what he can to provide confidence to providers that long term funding will be received.
- The Commissioner works collaboratively with the Home Office and other funding providers to ensure that funding will continue, albeit a formal announcement hasn't been received.
- A guarantee to gather some of the Commissioner's money from other funding sources can ensure that activities can continue for a short period of time into the new financial year if money is not received from the settlement.
- It would be helpful if multi-year settlements were in place, similar to the police grant and precepts. This would allow us to plan for the longer term and give confidence to providers.

Have some of these issues been highlighted to Government and if so has there been a response?

- The Commissioner has lobbied the government in relation to this for a number of years, as some of these funding streams have been in place from year to year.
- Until we have received a grant funding letter, nothing is certain.
- Due to the scale of the Commissioner's Office and the financial resources it can call upon, we are in a position to work with providers in the short term to manage business continuity. This would ascertain a guarantee to ensure that services do not start to unwind toward the end of the financial year.
- A lot of schemes are competitive and bid in on a short time and competitive basis, such as the Safer Streets fund. The minister is advising to have schemes ready at the point when the announcement is made. Organisations are left to adapt and guess what these competitive schemes will entail and put bids in at short notice. Intuitively, this is not the most efficient way to allocate funding and will lead to allocations that are not based on need, but that suit the conditions put through by the funding body.

Is there any information on how total funding to West Midlands Police compares with funding to forces of a similar size? Regarding the low council tax precept levels, what other factors affect the level of funding that West Midlands Police receives?

- The most similar forces in comparison to West Midlands Police are Merseyside, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester Police and Metropolitan Police.
- Apart from West Yorkshire Police, West Midlands Police are funded the lowest per head of population. Our force does not fare well in comparison to forces of a similar nature.
- Greater Manchester Police is a good comparison in terms of the amount of money they receive due to the similarities in terms of size.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Greater Manchester Police increase their precept by £10 next year, they will have around £17 million more per year through the current funding mechanism. This demonstrates inconsistencies in terms of funding. • The council tax base impacts the generating of the level of council tax, which is the value of property across the West Midlands. Although the government advise that the average precept is Band D, the average banding across the West Midlands is lower. This portrays that we have a lower council tax base in terms of strength and our ability to raise precept is at a disadvantage. • People’s ability to pay council tax affects funding. • A number of local authorities have deficits in their local collection funds. <p><i>Can you explain the process taking place in connection with the setting of the budget and precept for 2022-2023?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Police and Crime Panel will consider the proposal on 31st January. Providing this is supported the Commissioner can set the budget by 1st March, which is a statutory requirement. • If the proposal is not supported, the Commissioner will have an opportunity to take a revised proposal to the Panel. <p>The Commissioner concluded that he was elected on a mandate to rebuild community policing; the public advised they wanted preventative, proactive, problem solving and visible police officers on the streets to keep families and communities safe and secure. The government have assumed an increase in the policing precept and stated that they expect police forces to increase their policing precept by £10 for a Band D property. The Commissioner would rather the government fully funded this increase rather than effectively mandating it. Despite this, West Midlands Police will still have the second lowest council tax precept in the country and it will be over £60 lower in comparison to neighbouring forces such as Warwickshire, West Mercia and Staffordshire. With rising costs and inflation, West Midlands Police’s budget remains under pressure and a further £11.3 million pounds of savings will still be required to balance the budget.</p> <p>The Commissioner encouraged the people of the West Midlands to respond to the consultation, which will remain open until 30th January.</p>
008/22	<p>Item 8: Strategic Policing Requirement: Assistant Chief Constable Mike O’Hara provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>Have West Midlands Police had any engagement to date with the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) review and is there an update on the review at present?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main area dealt with by national leads at present concerns the expansion of violence against women and girls. It is right and appropriate that the SPR considers a range of key strategic threats. • It is a document that the Force must have due regard to. • The Force will remain engaged moving forwards. <p><i>As a point of clarification, the report requested that the sixth area of the SPR (child sexual exploitation) was discussed in other reports that will be presented to the Board in the future.</i></p> <p><i>There seems to be an issue at a local, regional and national level around ensuring that there is a sufficient cadre of firearms officers particularly at advanced levels. What is the overall approach to ensuring that we have as full of strength of these specialist roles as possible? Are</i></p>

there opportunities for collaboration to improve resilience? In relation to major cyber incidents, what is the approach to the Force and multi-agency training and exercising and are there protocols in place?

- West Midlands Police are the only Force CTSFO hub nationally, which creates challenges but also has benefits.
- A pathway from an armed response vehicle role profile officer through to a CTSFO is an uplift in relation to the impact on training, time away from home and specialism. This has a direct impact on the diversity and inclusion agenda.
- The National Police Chief's Council lead for armed policing is undertaking a national piece of work around attrition, in particular to the armed environment. This feeds in regionally.
- The Armed Policing Portfolio Board are working closely with regional colleagues regarding exposure, training and throughput. The Force are confident that they will be able to meet the establishment of 56 to support the hub.
- Some pathway courses can take over a year.
- The cyber concerns are a developing issue.
- The capabilities for the region are linked to the capabilities in the ROCU which is where response is coordinated.
- ROCU structures are nationally coordinated so organisations can support each other.
- The Force will keep the position under review.

In relation to the CTSFO position, is there security of funding around the uplift? Does the response to cyber incidents feature in the exercise programme for the local resilience forum and other civil contingencies mechanisms?

- The funding issue is linked in with the broader settlement. There has been no debate in taking away the funding from the CTSFO as this is a national issue.
- The Force are in consultation with the police settlement.
- The commonwealth games work received attention as a preventative issue.
- The Force are not entirely certain around the local resilience forum planning specifically for this issue.

ACTION: The Force to provide a response to whether cyber incidents feature in the exercise programme for the local resilience forum and other civil contingencies mechanisms.

In relation to the training programme for public order, given the disruption of Covid is there a confidence around whether the Force have resilience for a sustained public order requirement?

- There are ongoing discussions around Section 22 and the Midlands Regional Tactical Training Centre, however the Force have been well served by learning and development colleagues in ensuring that face to face training has continued.
- There was a pause during last year's training regime, and the Force are at 90% of their 1,300-target figure.
- Broader training requirements are being considered as work progresses.

Will there be an increase in capabilities with the introduction of new officers? Is there anything that the Force are not doing at present that will be considered when these posts are filled? Are there any additional capabilities the ROCU are exploring?

- ROCU's were included within the discussion around uplift.
- The first year of growth was concerning lifting capacity oppose to new capabilities.

- There was a brief update at the Chief's Council on the national leads work around potential areas of capability uplift. This would be right and appropriate to be considered.
- The ROCU piece is staggered over a longer timeframe than the Uplift Programme.

ACTION: The Force to provide a further update when more information on the national work is available.

How has the increased focus on county lines affected the ROCU's? What comparative evaluation, if any, has there been of the county lines task forces deployed within the West Midlands compared to elsewhere?

- County lines describes the mechanism by which a number of drugs organised crime groups provide the ability to supply through mobile telephony.
- The Force have received a level of funding from the government to fund and create a county lines taskforce to tackle this particular phenomenon.
- It is important to address this due to the harmful supply of drugs, alongside the violence, gang criminals and exploitation of young people that coincides with this.
- The aim is not to only disrupt the lines, but also safeguard young people.
- Three forces were funded around this, reflecting the national picture. The operational models were subject to a Home Office evaluation.
- Funding has been given to Forces who surround the West Midlands.
- The areas around diversion and safeguarding work are strong.
- There is expanded capacity around bringing people to justice.

The overall establishment is currently at 92%, are the Force likely to maintain this over the coming financial year and is there any succession planning in recruitment being undertaken to consider broadening the entry routes to counter terrorism policing?

- The Force lead regional work around this area, including leading the regional partnership and the national counter-terrorism hub.
- Counter terrorism policing is dealt with as a national structure.
- Jobs are national roles.
- The Force are recruiting direct entry police investigators at degree level through their recruitment programme.
- A national scheme could potentially be introduced within this area.
- The Force are succession planning with the current head of the unit to transition staff through.
- National innovation is expected.

What is the Force's assessment of the capability to sustain large scale public order operations at present, and are there any particular challenges faced by West Midlands Police in sustaining large scale public order operations?

- The Force are in a good position at present.
- The Force currently provide 55% of the regional public order capability, however over train to three times over our regional establishment or requirement.
- A number of public order officers sit within BAU functionality. The Force must be able to deliver BAU and respond to a public order incident.
- Nationally, the top three risks relate to environmental activism, anti-government protests and football.
- Capability tactics, intelligence and strategies must be accurate and fit for purpose.

	<p>The Commissioner concluded that protests have been a growing source of demand for West Midlands Police. The police have a role to facilitate lawful and peaceful protests, however must be balanced to ensure public order. There is a growing concern of anti-vaccine protests. West Midlands Police are engaged in an ongoing review to enhance the regional capability for protest removal teams in view of an anticipated increase in the form of protest that might require this type of enhanced capability.</p>
009/22	<p>Item 9: Chief Constable Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Constable thanked the public for their support during the siege at Coventry. It was disruptive to communities, businesses and schools and the public were incredibly understanding. • The operation was extremely complicated and officers ensured that due to the age of the child, the child's welfare was at the forefront of the operation. The Chief Constable expressed thanks to the officers involved. • A national debrief has been completed around this work in terms of learning and good practice. • Vehicle crime is a growing area of concern for the Force and is receiving further attention as a result. There are many factors driving this such as a global shortage of vehicles and enhanced technology that combats keyless vehicles. • The Chief Constable encouraged the public to consider vehicle safety measures through immobilising the vehicle, steering locks and being alert to suspicious behaviour.
010/22	<p>Item 10: SPCB Workplan: For Noting.</p> <p>There are five actions which remain outstanding.</p>
011/22	<p>Item 11: Date of the 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 and Crime Board will take place on Tuesday 22nd February 2022.</p>