

STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Tuesday 22 March 2022, 1000 – 1300 hrs

Agenda

1.	10:00	<p>Apologies and PCC Update:</p> <p>The Commissioner will provide a general update.</p>	Verbal
2.	10:10	<p>Petitions:</p> <p>1) Halesowen Police Station Closure Petition – James Morris MP</p> <p>Any member of the public, other than a police officer or member of police staff, who lives, works or studies in the West Midlands may ask a question or submit a petition relating to the duties or responsibilities of the Commissioner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Morris MP is unable to attend. 	
3.	10:20	<p>Notes of the Last Meeting:</p> <p>The notes of the Board meeting held on 22 February 2022 are attached to this agenda. The notes include actions in bold, with the steps taken to address those actions included in italics. The notes carry forward any outstanding actions from previous Board meetings to ensure that the Board is regularly updated on progress.</p>	
4.	10:25	<p>Questions from Members of the Board:</p> <p>This item is for Board Members to ask particular questions on matters that have arisen between Board meetings and which are not connected with the reports on this agenda. A copy of the questions will be circulated at the meeting and will be made available on the Commissioner's website at www.westmidlandspcc.gov.uk.</p>	
Police and Crime Plan			
5.	10:35	<p>Preventing and Reducing Crime – Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)</p> <p>To be presented by: ACC Claire Bell</p>	Written Report
6.	11:15	<p>Preparing for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games</p> <p>To be presented by: ACC Matt Ward and Chief Superintendent Dave Sturman</p>	Written Report

		Regular Items	
7.	12.00	Fees and Charges 2022/23 To be presented by: Mark Kenyon	Written Report
8.	12:15	OPCC External Commissioning Budget 2022/23 To be presented by: Mark Kenyon	Written Report
9.	12:45	Chief Constable Update: The Chief Constable will give a verbal update on operational policing matters which can be discussed in the public domain.	Verbal Update
10.	12:55	SPCB Workplan a. SPCB Workplan for noting. b. SPCB Actions and future lines of inquiry for noting.	Written Report
11.	13:00	Date of the Next Meeting Tuesday 26 th April 2022.	For Noting



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

**Notes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 22nd February 2022
1000-1300 hrs**

Main Conference room (G2), Lloyd House

Attendees:

Simon FOSTER	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Alethea FULLER	:	Deputy Chief Executive
Arron OWEN	:	Cranstoun
Bhupinder GAKHAL	:	Board Member
Charmaine BURTON	:	Board Member
David THOMPSON	:	Chief Constable
Emma LISTER	:	Staff Officer
Helen DAVIES	:	Birmingham and Solihull Family Drug and Alcohol Court
Jack TRACEY	:	Policy Officer
Jayne MEIR	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Joy DOAL	:	Anawim
Mark KENYON	:	Chief Finance Officer
Natalie WILKS	:	Jonah's Project CIC
Nicky BRENNAN	:	Victims Commissioner
Richard COSTELLO	:	Head of Communications
Tom MCNEIL	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Vanessa JARDINE	:	Deputy Chief Constable

Plus one note taker and three observers.

Apologies:

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

Please Note:

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

012/22	<p>Item 1: PCC Update:</p> <p>The Commissioner made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC offered his congratulations to the Chief Constable on the receipt of his knighthood. The award is testament to the Chief Constable's commitment, dedication and hard work shown through the course of his career in policing which has been invaluable to the people of the West Midlands. • Following the shocking murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes a recently published inspection report has identified actions within public sector organisations which includes West Midlands Police. The PCC and Chief Constable are committed on delivering on the actions identified. • The process to appoint the next Chief Constable is underway. The role is one of the top jobs within policing and the PCC is keen to have as diverse a group of applicants as possible. All eligible potential applicants in the United Kingdom have been contacted to inform them of the process. • On February 1st the cross-party West Midlands Police and Crime Panel supported the proposed budget for the forthcoming year following public consultation. Passing the budget will enable West Midlands Police to put more community officers on the streets to keep people and communities safe. The PCC stressed that he would rather the Government had funded this rather than have had to raise the Council tax and putting the burden onto local council taxpayers. The PCC continue to campaign and make representations to central government for the return of the 1,000 missing officers and to secure fair funding for West Midlands Police, to keep the people of the West Midlands safe and secure.
013/22	<p>Item 2: Notes of the Last Meeting: 25th January 2022</p> <p>The notes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
014/22	<p>Item 3: Questions from Members of the Public:</p> <p><i>1) What is West Midlands Police's attitude to Neighbourhood Watch?</i> (Submitted by Reg Banks, Asked by PCC Simon Foster)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Police is hugely supportive of Neighbourhood Watch and the Force has done work to encourage active citizens through Streetwatch, public patrols with local PCSOs and the WMNow system. Neighbourhood Watch predates all of these new schemes. • The Force is currently looking at Neighbourhood Watch to assess how best to support the scheme moving forward. Other Forces in the region use modern technology to ensure that support is in place. • West Midlands Police remain committed to the scheme and are keen for people to become involved with it and will look to ensure Neighbourhood Watch teams get the support they deserve. • Those interested in the scheme are advised to contact their neighbourhood teams. <p><i>2) Given the significant improvements in battery range of electric vehicles and their commercial availability, what progress has been made in transitioning WEST MIDLANDS POLICE internal combustion vehicles to electric versions?</i> (Submitted by Brendan Connor, Asked by PCC Simon Foster)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Police and Crime Plan and the Force's commitment to creating a green strategy, West Midlands Police are committed to making sure they are one of the greenest Forces in the country and the wider world.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can't take place very quickly, though West Midlands Police were one of the earliest police Forces to start off with the Nissan Leaf in the fleet. Electric vans are also being bought into the fleet. • Infrastructure sites are growing to increase charging points, these are currently up to 44 and growing. There is a long-term approach to developing sites to increase this number further. • The high intensity fleet is not currently suitable to change over just yet though these changes are taking place. • West Midlands Police will continue to keep their eye on the market to enable the Force to switch over more of the operational fleet. <p>3) <i>Does the Police Vehicle Procurement Framework assist in delivering this objective by placing a premium on Life Cycle cost including carbon emissions as opposed to 'price sticker' cost?</i> (Submitted by Brendan Connor, Asked by PCC Simon Foster)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All vehicles are procured nationally. Blue Light Commercial operate a number of vehicle framework purchases for West Midlands Police. • This delivers the best value for money but also, when purchasing nationally it allows the Force to work effectively and closer with manufacturers. • Each lot is measured against whole life costs and includes Co2 values, The Chief Constable is happy that the Force is in the right place and the fleet is fit for purpose.
015/22	<p>Item 4: Questions from Members of the Board:</p> <p>1) <i>After the arrest of the 3 Sikh gentleman from Birmingham and the Perry Barr Custody incident the relationship between West Midlands Police and the Sikh community is at an all-time low. Can the Chief Constable advise what is being done to repair this damage?</i> (Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Constable said that though there are challenges he would not agree that relations are at an all-time low. • The three arrests relate to 3 Sikh men who were arrested on warrants issued by the High Court for extradition. It was West Midlands Police's responsibility to execute the arrests but it was not a West Midlands Police investigation. This is something that West Midlands Police would do again if required. However, in future the Force could better explain the context of the situation to prevent any misunderstanding within the community. • Work is ongoing with the Sikh Police Association. The Force has a lot of Sikh officers and work is taking place with a Gold Group directly with the Sikh community to ensure there is good connectivity. A meeting is set to take place in March with senior Sikh figures to progress work. • It is important that this is done right, the West Midlands has the largest Sikh community in the UK and it is a good place to recruit to public service particularly the police. • The Perry Barr incident is a concerning one and is currently subject to an IOPC investigation. An apology was issued as soon as the Force were made aware of the facts. There was some misinformation across social media in relation to the incident but the matter is taken very seriously.
Police and Crime Plan	
016/22	<p>Item 5: Preventing & Reducing Crime – Economic Crime: Assistant Chief Constable Jayne Meir provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p>

The stats show an increase in car theft which is an issue. Has WEST MIDLANDS POLICE thought about setting up a car theft unit as the issue seems to be increasing?

- This work is a Force priority, ROCU are looking to work in the covert areas and there are also Force proactive teams looking at operations to identify offenders.
- CMPG, NPU's and Force Response are all aware that this work is a priority area and are looking at preventative measures and to also get messages out to the public to stay secure and how best to report.
- There is a comprehensive strategy in place to use all Force areas rather than the approach of a small, dedicated team to have an impact at any one time.

As resources are stretched, what assurances can you give the public that this will remain as a priority as the crime type has been sustained for so long.

- Resources do have to be juggled around but there is a key opportunity at the moment with the second-hand marketplace which is a target for criminals who go after a commodity. If issues of supply of vehicles subside then criminals may start to move to a different crime type and resources would be prioritised.

What systems are in place for those to help those affected by fraud deception who do not have English as their first language or where going to the police is taboo?

- Fraud is uniquely reported through Action Fraud, offenders are often based outside the UK. Online and telephone systems allow members of the community to report fraud and understand the type of scams and provide the support needed.
- There is an opportunity to engage with policing online which can help with translation. Neighbourhood Policing Units are also available to engage with as they may have officers that speak the required language. Interpreters can also be bought in to speak with members of the community.

What reassurances can be given to members of the public who are upset with the lack of response around their stolen vehicle or when a disk of CCTV footage is not collected until a few days following the crime?

- The concern from communities to the responses to these crimes is recognised. Investigations may not be undertaken right away as crimes that involve risk to members of the public rightly take priority.
- Technology is being piloted to assist with the uploading of CCTV and information to West Midlands Police.
- When a crime is reported, the investigation is not stalled until the CCTV arrives. There are a number of systems at play to assist with recovering the stolen vehicle such as using ANPR.
- The reason for not attending these incidents in person is due to a lack of forensic evidence.
- Principally, the aim is to prevent the crime to begin with. Some vehicles are easy to steal due to access to systems within the car. There is work ongoing with the PCC's office to engage with manufacturers to make vehicles more difficult to steal.

The report mentions a decrease in organisations reporting this form of crime. Is this to do with the pandemic or is there another reason? Has this been looked at?

- This has not been looked at so this can only be hypothesised. It could be Covid related but it could also be a reporting issue. The Force is reliant on businesses reporting into the process.

The section of the report which discusses the ECVCU talks about education and prevention. In terms of the wider community if they are concerned about something, how does that fit into the wider conversation? How does that service deal with possible frustrations?

- The ECVCU is there to enhance support, if you are vulnerable to a fraud you can be a repeat victim. The ECVCU is there to work with Victim Support to give additional support.
- The Action Fraud helpline will give information to provide help on how to protect themselves. Anything additional can be found on West Midlands Police's website.

How is this work being promoted to wider society?

- Work takes place with community organisations such as AgeUK to get information to communities. There is also a key place for PCSOs to work with communities to see how vulnerable people may be targeted.
- Campaigns are also shared with the public on how to keep themselves safe, this is also carried out by Action Fraud, banks and building societies.
- The ROCU have digital PCSOs to support.
- Offenders are often transnational and as such it is not possible to prosecute those responsible which is why it is far easier to encourage prevention.

Online dating is now a big business and unsurprisingly criminals are targeting people via this medium, there is a note on work done around Valentine's Day in the report can you advise of what other support is available?

- The work referenced in the report continues after Valentine's Day. Action Fraud take the lead nationally and West Midlands Police follow up locally.
- It is important that this information is pushed out via word of mouth. Work has taken place with dating sites, particularly those where women are targeted.
- There is a significant risk in this area, there can be many months of grooming that takes place where a victim can then lose money.

Given the discussion and the concerns raised, I am quite worried that the response to fraud and cybercrime in the UK is fragmented. Do you recognise this concern, do you see anything in a national collaboration agreement around action to be taken?

- Cybercrime is more co-ordinated across policing. The City of London lead on this, it is essential to communities that PCCs are encouraged to prioritise this crime type. A co-ordinated awareness campaign is essential.
- The West Midlands and other regions in the UK have a regional approach to cyber security to ensure that increasing SME robustness to cyber-attacks, this is co-ordinated nationally through a tasking process where it is likely to be targeted.
- This is an ever-growing area, prevention must be a key point.

One of the concerns that has been raised is that an incident can take place in the West Midlands and is then referred to Action Fraud or a similar body, but there isn't the same incentive for that body to take immediate action in the West Midlands.

- There is always more that can be done. The Force would like to follow through each investigation and uncover each opportunity but this is not always possible.
- National structures need to look at trends and patterns in overseas jurisdictions to disrupt them.
- In reality this can't be dealt with like a normal crime. Natural structures do look for trends and how to intervene even if there isn't a local response.

What is West Midlands Police's view on the recent Police and Crime Bill amendment around taking offences against shopworkers more seriously?

- The Force is not currently at implementation phase on this.
- These issues are taken seriously in general. The people that work in those services are not best paid and if involved in such incidents they should be investigated right away. The Extra penalties will hopefully be helpful in that regard.

Assistant Chief Constable Jayne Meir provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:

On spiking, we have visited venues to assess how they are looking after vulnerable people within those venues. How are West Midlands Police working with student unions ahead of Fresher's week to educate that it is safe for students to be out?

- There was concern that when students returned there would be an increase in reporting. Each NPU that has universities within their area has engaged with the University and Student Union to ensure that information is passed out to students.
- Communications have also been shared in a campaign to the wider public on potential risks.
- There has also been work with the night time economy to make sure that they understand the risks and how to report signs of vulnerability to protect those vulnerable members of the public.

Is there good crossover working with similar projects that West Midlands Police are working on, such as New Chance for vulnerable women and Offender to Rehab? Also, if someone agrees to take part in such a programme, should the admission of guilt be that threshold or should we be looking at them admitting the guilt as they go through the restorative process?

- There is a single lead for a lot of programmes such as commissioned services, Nicola Lloyd has this in the Crime portfolio.
- In relation to the Crime Free programme, there may be opportunities but there is not a one size fits all. If there is an opportunity to create a programme to engage with offenders and divert there may be an option to divert that.
- Crime Free is looking at making sure those that are being investigated are being looked at with the longer-term expectation in mind to see if this will divert the offender. If they admit involvement, this will be the first step. If they do not wish to go on the programme they will follow the CJS route.

Drug & alcohol crime can lead to all sorts of other crimes. West Midlands Police work with many organisations but sadly in the real world some people are reluctant to admit family members are alcoholics. What are West Midlands Police doing to get more companies on board that can help with these tests?

- We have to recognise that these things reported are the small numbers that the public report.
- This is potentially an area that the Force may wish to suggest that the NHS may wish to step into this space. A lot of people drink and wouldn't ever reach the threshold of committing crime.

In relation to the Offender to Rehab project – how can it be on track to achieve its aims when none have completed the programme and from 17 referrals only 11 people are still actively engaging with the project?

- The project is a service commissioned by the OPCC, the reality is that what we are looking to do is prevent people from going into the criminal justice system.
- It is early in the project and it will have been assessed that those individuals have made inroads not to offend in the future.

In the report, Paragraph 10 says "In Spring 2020, UK law enforcement made a massive breakthrough in the fight against serious and organised crime after the infiltration and subsequent exploitation of EncroChat" But in paragraph 12 it was concluded that we can't say for sure there was a net reduction in drug supply as a consequence. Are you able to reconcile these positions, is this a source of frustration?

- The Force would suspect that taking 600kg of drugs off the streets would have an effect but did not want to draw conclusions without clear evidence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to move drugs into the country still exists post Op Venetic. There was an increased price for a while, action now needs to be taken to take drugs off the streets where possible. It is recognised that drugs are a common theme across organised crime and may be involved in other crimes of exploitation.
Regular Items	
018/22	<p>Item 7: Performance Report: Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine & Mark Kenyon provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>In the report it is mentioned that Project Guardian consists of a team of 22 people covering the West Midlands. Is this enough people to cover such a large region?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Midlands Police receive external funding for Operation Guardian and the team are targeted in specific areas. If the team were spread across the region there would not be enough coverage. Additional officers could be added but due to demand and priorities this is not possible. <p><i>In the Appendix it mentions that 46% of those leaving the Force are leaving through retirement. This represents a lot of experience being lost.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is just the % of staff members leaving due to retirement. There is a good retention within the organisation. Retirement numbers are planned for and recruitment plans are in train. <p><i>Point 8 around reduction in serious crime talks about improvements in crime data recording and that this could be an impact on why there has been an increase in knife crime and weapon possession etc, what has been added to this that was so different to before and why was this not used before?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously, a lack of awareness around the complexity of the rules would mean that not all incidents reported would be recorded as a crime. Following guidance from HMIC around what should be recorded as a crime, the Force has got things in order over the last two years, investing in training for officers, dedicated staff have been put in to review all logs to ensure that the correct crime numbers go in. Things have improved so much that the level of crime numbers have gone up. These were crimes that were already taking place but the lack of awareness meant that they were not being recorded. The Force is very compliant now which is why it appears that numbers have gone up so much. These figures can sometimes create a misleading picture so they may not be in the public's best interest.
019/22	<p>Item 8: Finance Budget Monitoring: Mark Kenyon provided an overview of the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Constable pointed out that it has been a volatile year managing the budget. The team in the Force has done a lot of work with Mark Kenyon in the OPCC, the finances are very challenging. Work on utilities and fuel prices have hit the Force as have Covid absences. The Force is not using reserves in year which has previously been the case. <p><i>The report mentions pressures on energy budgets and West Midlands Police is no more exempt from cost of living crisis than any of us. Could you give an update on this?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the budget was set there was an indication of what the pressures would be. From the information we have to hand, gas and electrical prices will see an increase of £2.2 million next year which is based on an increase of 66%.

- A significant increase is expected next year, this is one of the reasons there are pressures on next year's budget and the need to increase the Council Tax precept and to make the Force more efficient.

Partnership Presentation

020/22 Item 9: Criminal Justice System:

The following update presentations were given:

- *Partnerships to drive integrated support (Problem Solving Courts and the Diversion Hub) by Jack Tracey*
- *Birmingham and Solihull Family Drug and Alcohol Court by Helen Davies*
- *Anawim/New Chance by Joy Doal*
- *Cranstoun - Substance Misuse, Diversion and Re-Offending by Arron Owen*
- *Jonah's Project CIC: Peer Hearing and Community-Based Leadership by Natalie Wilks*

Can you expand on the process around referrals operate? How efficiently? Sense of the extent of which the opportunities and options that are available are well known by officers from West Midlands Police?

- JD – referrals can be made as easily as they would like. The name of the person and their details can be given to make contact. The challenge lies in getting word across to Officers. Updates are given to officers as they progress as feedback is hugely important.
- AO – We are averaging 100 referrals a week for Divert. A webpage has been created and bookmarked as an app dedicated to West Midlands Police, this gives officers options in custody for CARS or on the streets for Divert and other conditional cautions depending on offence. This has been downloaded 4,500 times and referrals are coming in thick and fast. Awareness and dummy sessions run for WM and PCCs offices have worked well.

The necessity of a wider infrastructure of support to be put in place if these interventions are successful, such as housing, which is so important. Could you speak about how this operates within your organisation when you are providing them with your service.

- JD – housing is currently our biggest issue. Safe housing for women in Birmingham is pitiful, good providers are coming out of this space as a result of the exempt providers status. The work done by councils around rogue landlords is fully supported but there is a need for a parallel idea of working for safe properties.
- AO – The uniqueness of the service is that they don't tread on toes of other organisations. It is recognised that the Criminal Justice System is a space to engage with those with vulnerabilities and there is a case of providing the correct service when needed.

Is there any support for children within the Family Drug and Alcohol Court process with those involved in proceedings?

- The main responsibility remains with the Local Authority but additional support and services is provided such as interventions with young people whose parents are struggling with addictions.

	<p><i>Could you give examples of sorts of outcomes of resolutions reached following Peer Hearings?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NW – the ideal outcome is that they don't finish as they are in long term diversion. The panel would suggest you do 10 hours at local football club, by the time they are involved in the diversion they have forgotten they are in a diversion and feel it is a safe place to be instead and wish to stay within the diversion. <p>The PCC offered his thanks to all those that had attended the meeting to present updates on the work that they are doing.</p>
<p>021/22</p>	<p>Item 10: Chief Constable Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Constable spoke about the joint targeted area inspection of Solihull in response to the death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. It is important that it is recognised that the review is not a review into the circumstances of Arthur's death. It is a review of safeguarding on Solihull and its partners, one of which is West Midlands Police. It is clear from the findings of the report that there are areas of improvement for partners and individual agencies. It is important to note that neither West Midlands Police or the other agencies have waited for the publishing of the report to start this. In reference to the comments made in the report around the information quality held on West Midlands Police's Connect system. The Connect system brings together multiple systems to ensure multiple records about the same person are brought together. This is important for all operational policing but it is also important involving circumstances around children who may be at risk. The Connect system was introduced in April 2021, which was after Arthur's death. It was introduced specifically to bring together a number of standalone systems as one. This is an important point because the issue of proliferation of records held in different systems is one that a lot of Forces face. There is an obligation on members of staff when they submit information to make sure that the quality of the data submitted including names and information is clearly set out. There is also a responsibility for supervisors and the information management team to ensure that the information is linked correctly to ensure that the systems are as accurate as they can be. This was highlighted in the report and work has been taking place since Connect was introduced, there are considerably fewer duplicate records in the Force systems than before Connect but the need to work to ensure that the information is of the best quality is an area the Force continues to work on. Additional focus and attention have been put on this work as a result of the feedback from the inspection. The inspection team did highlight the commitment and knowledge of staff in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and their dedication to meet the needs of children in Solihull. They also recognise the immense pressure on those partners. The Force has responded to ensure that there is additional resource put against this area and improved governance framework has been put in place around the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure performance data across all agencies is collectively available. Driving forward the improvements that all agencies want to see in Solihull is now overseen by the Solihull Improving Outcomes for Children Board which West Midlands Police is represented on by an Assistant Chief Constable to make sure that the effective work needed is carried out and of the best standard possible. The Force is absolutely focussed on its statutory duties as a safeguarding partner who want to prevent any harm coming to children.
<p>022/22</p>	<p>Item 11: SPCB Workplan: For Noting.</p>

	There are six actions which remain outstanding.
023/22	Item 12: Date of the Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Strategic Policing and Crime Board will take place on Tuesday 22 nd March 2022.