



Strategic Policing and Crime Board
22 November 2022

Title: Initial Review of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
Presented by: ACC Matt Ward and Superintendent Nicholas Rowe

Purpose of paper

1. This paper will provide an insight into the initial findings from Operation UNITY, the policing of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, which took place in the West Midlands region, and other Force areas, from July to August 2022. It follows previous papers submitted to Board members in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. The latest report was presented in May 2022; which was the final update report on the planning and readiness prior to the Games commencing.
2. This paper also presents a West Midlands Police Freedom of Information published information scheme for the Games. In accordance with the Operation Unity Publication Strategy, it was agreed that West Midlands Police would proactively publish information and data related to the operation by November 2022. Therefore, the attached scheme sets out factual information related to procurement costs, crime statistics, resources and governance. Additional information related to finances will be published at a later date.
3. The Operation UNITY team, in collaboration with the College of Policing (CoP) and the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC), is progressing the formal structured debrief report following the event. The purpose of the formal debrief report will be to identify areas of good practice and any key learning observations; the final report is anticipated January 2023. A further updated paper will be presented into the Strategic Police and Crime Board once the final structured debrief report has been received.

B2022 Commonwealth Games Summary

4. Birmingham City was awarded the Host City Bid in December 2017. West Midlands Police enacted Operation UNITY soon after to commence the planning and readiness programme for the Games.
5. The Chief Constable of West Midlands Police was appointed the Strategic Commander for the Birmingham 2022 Safety and Security Programme. The Programme consisted of Security Partners, including the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, the Emergency Services, Local Authorities, HM Government, the military and private sector contractors and volunteers.
6. The agreed aims of the Security Partners were to deliver a safe and secure Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games by providing a reassuring and proportionate policing and security operation for athletes, the Games family, spectators and the public. It will be an operation which welcomes visitors to Birmingham and the West Midlands, reflects the values of the Commonwealth Games and enriches our communities with lasting benefits.
7. Operation UNITY commenced planning for the Games and a number of multi-agency testing and readiness exercises had been scheduled to assure progress against the plans; some of the exercises included Exercise Borderfist, Exercise Mercurian and a number of Training and Testing exercises (TTX) and Command Post exercises.
8. October 2021 saw the successful launch of the Queens Baton Relay (QBR) from Buckingham Palace commencing the international leg, which saw the Queen's Baton visit 72 nations and territories. The National Leg of the Baton's route commenced in June 2022, which travelled across England, Scotland and Wales prior to arriving at the Alexander Stadium on Thursday 28th July 2022, the evening of the Opening Ceremony.
9. Record breaking ticket sales of over 1.5m made Birmingham 2022 the most attended edition of the Commonwealth Games ever to take place in Britain. In addition, exceptionally large crowds were regularly seen in attendance at the non-ticketed road races as well as at Live Sites, particularly those in Birmingham City Centre.

10. The key highlights, observations and learning opportunities will be set out within the formal structured debrief report that the College of Policing will formalise. This report will be shared across the Safety and Security Programme.

Business as Usual and Recovery

11. Operation Unity utilised 26,038 Police Officer shifts for the Games Time period; this was the period from Thursday 28th July until the completion of the Games on Monday 8th August. 1,665 Officers were utilised on Thursday 28th July, the day of the Opening Ceremony. Sunday the 31st July was the peak day with 2,269 Officers deployed.
12. The period leading up to the Opening Ceremony, known as pre-Games Time, saw the search operation across all competition and non-competition venues. As this was focused more on the search activity than policing activity there was a smaller Officer footprint. The pre-Games Time resourcing utilised 7,587 Police Officer shifts.
13. To assure the resourcing for both the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and business as usual performance within West Midlands Police was not impacted, Operation Unity required the utilisation of Police Officers from other Police Forces within the United Kingdom; these resources are referred to as Mutual Aid. Overall Mutual Aid accounted for 48% of resources deployed.
14. Up to 200 Police Staff resources were utilised per day in a variety of roles; mainly logistical activity.
15. Unforeseen accommodation challenges at the start of the Games required the Operation UNITY logistics team to work at pace to successfully re-house some Mutual Aid officers.
16. In order to meet the Games resourcing requirement and maintain West Midlands Police's capacity to continue preventing crime, protecting the public and helping those in need across the whole conurbation a dedicated Business as Usual Command team was established involving every force department. Through the use of cancelled rest days, extended tours of duty, the sharing of resources and flexible working patterns the force was able to ensure that no West Midlands community was disadvantaged by the delivery of the Commonwealth Games.

17. A build up re-rostered rest days and the requirement to police a number of significant events, post Birmingham 2022, such as the death of the Monarch, Birmingham Pride and the Conservative Party Conference 2022 have left a resourcing challenge which will take many months to resolve.

Crime & Security Outcomes

18. Despite the huge popularity of Birmingham 2022 there were no significant Games related crimes, counter-terrorism threats, disruptions, disorder or community tensions.
19. Between 24 July (the start of the searching of venues) and 8 August (the closing ceremony), 551 offences had been recorded by West Midlands Police, of these 108 were Games-related crimes. The two highest volume of crime types within this period were for theft (42%) and assault (34%); updates of the outcomes of all investigations will be provided in the final debrief reports.
20. 17 officials and athletes were reported as missing from their Athletes Village accommodation during the Games; all were assessed as low risk and believed to be staying with contacts within the United Kingdom and none were in breach of their six months visitor visas. During the Games, the policing operation detected over 200 unauthorised drone flights with restricted air space around Games venue. About 100 drones were intercepted with several being seized and their pilots issued with warning notices.
21. Accreditation, private contract security and stewarding challenges were experienced during the pre-Games search phase and at one venue during the sporting schedule. This resulted in the activation of the pre-planned and pre-authorised military assistance contingency.

Legacy Benefits

22. West Midlands Police and the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee commissioned the Benefits and Legacy Strategy; this strategy identified opportunities that the Games can bring for the Security Partnership and the region as a whole. West Midlands Police has thus far identified four key pillars that the Games has bought for UK policing, these include; people, place, tech and process. All Security Partners are in the process of contributing their initial findings to support this strategy which will be included in the final debrief reports.

Next Steps

23. As previously noted within the report, Operation UNITY, in collaboration with CoP and NPoCC have conducted the formal structured debrief sessions. This process took place over a number of weeks and covered a multitude of themes and topics. All organisations within the Security Partnership have had the opportunity to input into this process. The CoP are currently in the process of completing the first draft of the debrief report, it is anticipated that the formal debrief report will be finalised by January 2023. The final debrief report will be shared with the entirety of the Security Partnership.

24. Internally within West Midlands Police, the formal debrief report will be shared with the Strategy, Delivery and Assurance department to drive forward the recommendations identified.

25. The XXIII Commonwealth Games will take place in Victoria, Australia in March 2026. Victoria Police participated in a West Midlands Police hosted comprehensive observer programme during the Games, and West Midlands Police participated in a transfer of knowledge briefing to Victoria Police in October 2022. The formal structured debrief report will also be shared with Victoria Police and their wider partnership.

Conclusion

26. The Board are asked to note this report and approve the publication of the Freedom of Information published information scheme.

Appendix – Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Freedom of Information Published Information

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