



**STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD**

**22 November - 1000 – 1300 hrs**

**Attendees:**

Simon Foster	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Nicky Brennan	:	Victims Commissioner
Charmaine Burton	:	Board Member
Alethea Fuller	:	Deputy Chief Executive
Andrea Gabbitas	:	Head of Business Services
Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Ernie Hendricks	:	Complaints Reviews Manager
Andrew Hill	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive
Vanessa Jardine	:	Deputy Chief Constable
Nigel Johnston	:	Programme Manager
Charlotte Killeen	:	Staff Officer
Caroline Marsh	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Dr David Nicholl	:	Member of the Public
Andrew Parsons	:	Chief Superintendent
Sam Ridding	:	Chief Superintendent
Sir David Thompson	:	Chief Constable
Matt Ward	:	Assistant Chief Constable

Plus, one webcaster and three observers.

**Apologies:**

Wasim Ali	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Dr Cath Hannon	:	Board Member

1. *The meeting was recorded, and a webcast of the entire discussion can be viewed here:*  
[https://westmidspcc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/683292](https://westmidspcc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/683292)
2. *The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here:*  
<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/strategic-policing-and-crime-board/agendas-minutes-reports/>
3. *Actions arising from the discussion during the meeting are highlighted in bold text.*

<b>100/22</b>	<b>Apologies and PCC Update</b>
	The Commissioner Made the following comments:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the final SPCB for Chief Constable Sir David Thompson. The PCC referenced the highlights over his tenure, including the successful Commonwealth Games, modernisation of the Force and grappling with austerity. The PCC wishes the Chief Constable the best for the future.</li> <li>• The Autumn statement means that the Force will have to find £30m in savings. The PCC emphasised this is due to poor decisions made by the Government. On 01/11/2022, the PCC wrote to the Home Secretary to express concern that the police grant settlement does not deliver the baseline funding for WMP. Three immediate requests were mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ [The Home Office] Needs to face up to the acute challenges faced by WMP.</li> <li>○ Needs to level up and reinstate £1000 police officers.</li> <li>○ Reform the police funding formula which costs the Force £40m a year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• On 03/11/2022, volume 2 of the Manchester Arena enquiry was published. The report focuses on the emergency response and the PCC will ensure that the report is taken seriously by the Force, learning the lessons from Manchester.</li> <li>• In August 2018, Raneem Oudeh and Khaola Saleem were brutally murdered. In December 2018, Raneem's estranged husband was convicted of their double murder and sentenced to life in prison. On 18/11/2022 a Birmingham Coroner's Court concluded that the Force's failures contributed to their death and more could have been done. The PCC said that he will be working with the Force to ensure the appropriate conclusions with the coroner are made.</li> </ul>
101/22	<p><b>Notes of the Last Meeting</b></p> <p>The notes of the Board meeting held on 25 October 2022 were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
102/22	<p><b>Questions from Members of the Public</b></p> <p>1. <i>"We the undersigned are neurologists working in the West Midlands who have seen over the last 2 years directly an increase in admissions of patients as a direct result of Nitrous Oxide abuse. We understand that supply of Nitrous Oxide for recreational use is a criminal offence under the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016), and this has, for example led to at least one recent conviction in Cardiff.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to ask West Midlands Police how many arrests and convictions for Nitrous Oxide supply have taken place in our region since this Act, and what actions the police, in conjunction with the National Crime Agency, can make to take action against the illegal suppliers, as their actions are leading to, in some cases, permanent neurological disability."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Asked by Dr David Nicholl)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Force recognise that young people don't always regard this as a harmful activity, but, this question from Dr Nicholl emphasises that it is.</li> <li>• Operations run with in conjunction with tackling other forms of substance misuse.</li> <li>• Work is currently done within the ROCU to scan illicit drug supply/ substance supply. However, this hasn't been focused in a prevention sense or enforcement sense as an individual priority.</li> <li>• Four arrests have been made in connection with the Psychoactive Substances Act.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views of medical professionals will be considered in determining whether a specific, more targeted approach is required.</li> <li>• The term 'laughing gas' needs to be countered, as it reinforces that nitrous oxide is not lethal. Online retailing exacerbates the issue.</li> <li>• The Force acknowledge that online retailing is a large issue in tackling illicit substances and would be interested to see more information on where sales take place.</li> <li>• There is a Westminster Hall debate this week which will focus on the regulation of nitrous oxide. One of the national associations of suppliers of the gas has called for an end to retail sales.</li> <li>• Patients are often willing to tell the police who their suppliers are.</li> <li>• The PCC is grateful to Dr Nicholl for highlighting this important issue.</li> <li>• In some cases, misuse is leading to permanent neurological disability. Dangers also arise from people driving under the influence nitrous Oxide.</li> <li>• Consideration is being given as to what further action can be taken to prevent and tackle the use of nitrous oxide and how the government should strengthen the regulatory regime.</li> <li>• There will be an inclusion of nitrous oxide abuse in the Strategic Needs Assessment, among other measures to prevent and tackle it's use.</li> <li>• The PCC urges the Force to give consideration as to what can be done to prevent and tackle this issue and urges retailers to consider how they're applying the law.</li> </ul>
103/22	<p><b>Questions from Members of the Board</b></p> <p><i>A recent HMICFRS report criticises police vetting arrangements. What reassurance can the Chief Constable provide that the arrangements for West Midlands are effective and to an appropriate level.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Asked by Cath Hannon)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the public will be aware of the contentious HMICFRS thematic inspection report that was released.</li> <li>• Work has been done in the past 18 months to tackle recommendations from this report, although it was not specific to West Midlands Police.</li> <li>• The Force has had to do more work on aftercare, re-vetting those at key points during their service. The aftercare recommendation has been now closed off.</li> <li>• The CLICK data visualisation dashboard has been implemented to keep track of all staff as to where they are with vetting.</li> <li>• Robotics systems have been used to speed up the administrative functions. Some of the arrangements need more thought, where people have families that have lived outside the UK for a period of time.</li> <li>• Social media analysis will need to be done in the future.</li> <li>• Recent report from HMICFRS was almost a 'part 2' from the Metropolitan Police report on counter-corruption vetting.</li> <li>• The Force received a briefing in May on Operation Santos. The OPCC will be following up on this.</li> </ul> <p><i>Can the Chief Constable provide statistics about the numbers of Road Traffic Collisions involving elderly people for the previous 5 years? What level of service can families expect if their loved one is injured?</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Asked by Cath Hannon)</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In reference to those aged 66 or over, there have been 469 collisions over the past 5-year period that involve 477 people, the majority of these have been pedestrians, sometimes the driver or owner of the vehicle is involved.</li> <li>• A minority have been fatal, however there are often medical issues that arise after the collision.</li> <li>• In terms of the level of service provided, this depends on the level of injury. The Force has a dedicated family liaison structure if someone loses their life or is in a near-death situation.</li> <li>• The level of support will be proportionate to the level of impact on families.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Police and Crime Plan</b></p>
<p><b>104/22</b></p>	<p><b>Commonwealth Games</b> ACC Ward presented the paper and the following items were discussed:</p> <p><i>It's called Operation Unity- presumption that there was a lot of liaison with local communities. How did this liaison occur?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Force quickly established dedicated community engagement teams whose responsibility it was to engage with different community groups, such as schools, youth groups and other community associations.</li> <li>• Some people volunteered during the games with the idea they would volunteer with the Force post the games.</li> <li>• The Force recognised that over one million visitors would be welcomed and wanted this to be an opportunity the for region to showcase itself, working closely with institutions such as museums and shops.</li> </ul> <p><i>The decision to award the games to the West Midlands was due to existing infrastructure. Are future Games viable now? Can it be delivered in a way that's affordable, manageable and proportionate to its needs? What is the handover mechanism to the next host?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to the security operation, keen that this would not be a "fortress Games", instead fitting the image of the friendly Games.</li> <li>• The security operation has come in significantly under the budget that was initially devised. This was primarily due to innovation and a proportionate risk assessment of the situation.</li> <li>• The security operation was also incredibly cost effective and should not deter future countries from being able, or willing, to host.</li> <li>• As the Games goes to Victoria in 2026, they've already been engaged with to ensure transfer of knowledge.</li> </ul> <p><i>In reference to paragraph 17, When does the Force envisage the build-up of re-rostered rest days being resolved, what challenges do they mean for the Force?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Force wasn't able to pay officers to use their rest days and are working through how to smooth this off and deliver core business simultaneously.</li> <li>• A resourcing cell has been established, working through shift patterns and duties.</li> <li>• Carrying over more annual leave has also been offered to compensate for operational demand.</li> <li>• It will take some time to be in a position where colleagues are using all their leave and there is no backlog.</li> </ul> <p><i>Any thoughts or insight for the security of Birmingham European Athletics Championship in 2026?</i></p>

- Well-trained and experienced commanders within the ops planning team are present to lead events such as these.
- The legacy of the Games causes no concerns at all for the Force when planning the security for the European Athletics Championship in 2026.

*What plans are in place to mitigate private security contactor concerns?*

- Working with the private contract security sector was one of the main challenges from the Games.
- The Force highlights the incredible support from the voluntary sector, including charity groups stepping in to scale their support.
- Going forward, the Force want to do more work with these charitable organisations and build a closer relationship with the private contractor security industry.

*Is there any issue in engaging women to enter the security industry?*

- The Force worked with the SIA to put in new training courses encouraging more people to join the security industry ahead of the Commonwealth Games.
- There is no information available regarding a gender breakdown.
- The Chief Constable added the City of Culture in Coventry and the Commonwealth Games encouraged him to stay beyond his initial term. They gave the ability to transform the image of the region. The Chief Constable paid credit to the whole team in making the Commonwealth Games a success.

The PCC made the following comments:

- The PCC thanks the Force for running a highly successful security operation for Commonwealth Games.
- Work on the budget is yet to be finalised, but indications show that there will be a significant underspend for the Commonwealth Games, which is an immense achievement.
- The PCC paid homage to prearranged military support which helped to ensure the Games ran smoothly.
- Concerned that labour shortages in the private security sector is causing issues at major events.

### Emerging Items

**105/22**

**Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)**

ACC Hill presented the paper and the following points were discussed:

*This is a deeply troubling report for victims of RASSO, concerning victim reporting and disengagement. One of the elements in combatting this is expedient and quality investigations, supported by additional government funding.*

*How do officers work with commissioned ISVAs to help reduce victim attrition? What plans are in place to decrease workload pressure on officers given the amount of trauma they experience?*

- A digital examination of a victims' phone to gather evidence to support a prosecution and return of their phone within 24 hours is highly important. ISVAs will hold the Force to account in ensuring timeliness of the phone being returned.

- The role of the ISVA's is important in holding the actions of officers to account.
- Additional resources put in through uplift will help to manage the non-recent investigations and allow a greater focus for the investigations in the pre-12-month focus.

*What are the new Home Office counting rules? Out of the 65% of victims disengaging, what percentage is from the BAME community?*

- In 2017, as a Force, compliance with crime data integrity wasn't sufficient. Work has been undertaken to ensure that the right offences are recorded at the right time.
- **The Force to obtain the percentage of the 65% of victims disengaging that are from the BAME community.**
- In the past, the Force has recorded the principal crime, now many separate offences are recorded, rather than one principal crime.
- Third party reporting will still be recorded as rape, trying to make sure those cases are still prosecuted.
- 65% disengagement does not relate to direct reports, but instead relates to third party agency reports.
- Rise in recording is disproportionate to what's happening elsewhere in the country.

*What level of challenge exists and are our structures relevant to deal with RASSO? There is a perception that complex cases are being managed by inexperienced officers. Student Officers make up a majority of the PPU, hence high turnover to other departments.*

- Less experienced officers value the opportunity to investigate complex offences as it allows them to develop their investigative skills.
- The detective shortage is a problem nationally.
- There will be a lag of student officers and staff investigators coming through in being able to gain experience in policing.
- There are many challenges around the detective pathway. Have to recognise that there will be a varied team of investigators.
- A significant amount of actions sit within the Pillar 4 space, with 80 recommendations falling out of Operation Soteria.
- In terms of the optimal operating model for RASSO, this is awaited with interest.
- The Force is relatively specialist in this area compared to other many other Forces.
- The non-recent offences team has been brought back, this will take away an area of crime from the complex team.
- In a position that just over 30% of the Force by March will have under 3 years' service.

*When will the proportion of this team which is appropriately qualified for the role be better than where it is now?*

- Prioritisation in the Spring for public protection. Will need to balance the risk that will be generated in other teams.
- As every month goes by, officers become more experienced and qualified.
- New officers are now coming to the end of the probationary period, and are graduating.

*Officers don't need too many caseloads to the point where dealing with them becomes inefficient. Also, appropriate seniority needs to be applied to the complexity of the caseload. Stability is hugely important, determined by a low turnover of staff. In connection*

*with the wider CJS, it's not just a policing issue. What is going on to improve the relationship between the Force and CPS?*

- Monthly strategic and tactical meetings are held to look at performance and compare with national data.
- Early investigative advice has been reviewed.
- There are significant pressures within the CJS that mean times for charging decisions and cases moving through the court process are slow.
- Bail cases put more and more pressure on trial listing. This impacts on victims and witness care units.
- Unlikely that these pressures will be lifted soon.

*Not always possible for a positive CJS outcome to be achieved. There was a discussion about working with sex offender managers and integrated offender management teams to facilitate disruption as an alternative strategy. Could the Force outline the work going on in connection with this?*

- There is more work to do on the use of civil injunctions/orders, this is a priority.

*How is WMP using the uplift to appropriately resource RASSO?*

- 124 officers and staff sit within the complex side of RASSO.
- Additional resources will be added in Spring.
- Internal reshaping of these teams has been done so officers are sometimes not picking up new cases and can focus on their existing workload.

*How do you plan to use the findings of the pilot to improve victim attrition? Are there plans for the pilot to continue?*

- First point is getting the coding right with supervisors.
- More conversations are being had with the ISVAs and other stakeholders about the continuation of the pilot.
- A benchmarked operating model can be used as a 'gold standard' to hold the Force to account.

The PCC made the following comments:

- The Criminal Justice System has been failing victims of RASSO for too long despite the dedication and hard lies with Government. Government has imposed reckless financial cuts on policing and the CPS, and has failed to adequately fund juridical sitting days.
- Each PC or DC is carrying 20 complex investigations now on average, compared to 10 in 2018. They're also carrying 10 court cases on average, compared to 5 in 2018.
- Ultimately, the resources available to West Midlands Police are not keeping up with demand. By 2023, there will still be 1000 less officers than 2010.

### Regular Items

106/22

**Professional Standards**

**DCC Vanessa Jardine and Chief Superintendent Sam Ridding presented the report and the following points were discussed:**

*18% of PSD are from under- represented groups. How is this broken down?*

- Primarily relates to black or Asian colleagues and consists of staff and officers across all rank structures.

*How is diversity training being delivered? Classroom-based or virtual?*

- Some computer-based training is being done, although this is all being reviewed at the moment due to the large number of packages available online.
- Majority is in person training.
- From a cultural competence point of view, there is a group of trusted stakeholders that can be reached out to obtain their views and expertise.

*In reference to police officers' use of private WhatsApp groups. What approach will PSD be taking around this issue?*

- The social media policy has been revised and relaunched in the past 6 months.
- The annual integrity health check asked everybody if they were a part of a WhatsApp group related to work, and reminded them of the social media policy if they were.
- Information held by PSD will be dealt with as robustly as possible.
- Often matters relating to social media and WhatsApp comes into the criminal investigation space.
- A number of WhatsApp groups were closed after colleagues were consulted about them.

*What steps are been taken to help officers and staff feel they can raise issues about other colleagues?*

- Campaign has been led around being an 'upstander not a bystander'.
- The corruption line works in a way where one can report anonymously or a contact detail can be given and is readily available to staff.
- Standards Managers are there to remind staff of appropriate behaviour.
- Moral courage training was recommended as a part of Operation Santos and is being delivered.

*How do we ensure that the process of issuing and embedding recommendations leads to service improvement?*

- 4 recommendations made by the OPCC which were initially refused, have now been accepted.
- 2 of them require further conversation, this is a work in progress.

*How do we ensure that diversity training is not a tick-box exercise?*

- College of Policing will want to expand the time that officers are borrowed for self-defence training to improve de-escalation skills.
- Police need to be much better at de-escalation and understand why different communities react in different ways.
- Diversity issues should be addressed in a variety of different training settings.
- Time allocated for face to face learning is going up.

*Is there no direct access to PSD? If there isn't would this be beneficial to have in place?*



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are directed to the online complaints form in the first instance.</li> <li>• PSD try to make contact within 24 hours of receiving the complaint. The complainant is then asked which contact method they prefer.</li> <li>• There are phone lines into the office and calls from the public are taken, when directed from Contact.</li> </ul> <p><i>What assurances can you give that learning is embedded properly within the Force? How is this followed up?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers that receive an allegation from a member of the public are made aware of the allegation.</li> <li>• If an Officer receives 3 or more allegations/conduct matters, a line manager conversation should happen and solutions are explored.</li> <li>• Organisational learning themes are discussed in a monthly meeting with Standards Managers.</li> </ul> <p><i>What efforts are made to encourage young people to understand and be able to complain?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A young person has to be represented by an adult to make a complaint or have written permission for someone to make a complaint on their behalf.</li> <li>• No work being done currently to encourage young people to complain.</li> </ul> <p><i>Will work be done?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, including work on measuring the satisfaction of complainants including those who haven't asked for a review.</li> </ul> <p><i>Is the proportionate investigation policy something that is written down; is it something that is properly communicated to members of the public?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportionate investigation policy is owned by Force CID and is now explained in letters as a result of OPCC dip sampling in July.</li> <li>• Colleagues in initial investigation Team have altered the wording of texts informing members of the public their investigation has been filed.</li> <li>• Requests for information have been dealt with so that they do not come in as complaints, with signposting items on the Force website.</li> </ul> <p><i>Are complainants updated regularly?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to contact individuals within the first 24 hours, if not the first 5 days. Most complaints are dealt with within 28 working days.</li> </ul> <p>The PCC made the following comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and confidence in policing has been tested by a series of events, especially but not exclusively in the Metropolitan Police Service. This paper illustrates some of the work taking place to ensure the Force has the highest possible professional standards.</li> </ul>
107/22	<p><b>Complaints and Reviews</b></p> <p>Andrea Gabbitas presented the report and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>What are West Midlands figures compared to other similar Forces?</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower than expected for a Force this size.</li> <li>• We also understand that PSD service-recover a higher proportion of complaints than similar sized forces, which means that a lot of them are ineligible for review.</li> <li>• In the last quarter, the number of schedule 3 complaints has increased.</li> <li>• Sancus helped identify process improvements for PSD.</li> </ul>
108/22	<p><b>Responding to Incidents</b></p> <p>The report was presented by T/ACC Caroline Marsh and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>What would a P3 log consist of?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependant on the threat, risk and harm grading of the incident.</li> <li>• As the severity decreases, the response time delays down to 24 hours maximum for the least serious matters.</li> </ul> <p><i>The pattern in the report is that the median response time has increased over the past couple of years. Where will the investment and greater experience of officers start to show given that demand is flat?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an increase in a demand for calls to service.</li> <li>• New student officers investing a significant amount of time and resource for training them up to the appropriate standard.</li> <li>• By November 2023, improvements will start to be seen in meeting demand. COVID will have impacted upon demand.</li> <li>• There are work productivity issues associated with immobility of officers.</li> </ul> <p>The PCC made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear that issues of concern remain with the time it takes for the Force to respond to 999 incidents.</li> <li>• There has been a sustained increase in 999 calls received into WMP, and lack of resources and increased demand is continuing to impact the way in which WMP responds to incidents.</li> <li>• Strategies to improve response times are linked to mobility, staffing and demand profile.</li> <li>• The PCC will be subjecting the strategies to ongoing oversight and scrutiny.</li> </ul>
109/22	<p><b>Chief Constable Update and Farewell:</b></p> <p>As this was his final SPCB meeting, the Chief Constable did not provide an operational update. Instead he offered his thanks to the PCC and the Board for thoughtful and probing policing governance. Reference was paid how policing has changed hugely through the Chief's tenure and how it is unfortunate he will not be the last Chief Constable to deal with austerity. Finally, he emphasised that as the budgets of other service areas shrink, those who are adversely affected come to the doors of policing. In retirement, Sir David Thompson will continue to be a supporter of policing.</p> <p>The PCC thanked the Chief Constable for his service.</p>
110/22	<p><b>SPCB Workplan:</b></p> <p><b>a. SPCB workplan for noting</b></p>

	<b>b. SPCB Actions and Further Lines of Inquiry</b>
<b>111/22</b>	<b>Date of the next meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>