



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

20th December 2022

Report: Citizens in Policing

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Rebuilding Community Policing

Presented by: ACC Matthew Ward

Purpose of paper

1. To provide the Strategic Police and Crime Board with a report on progress towards the objectives in the West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 relating to “Rebuilding Community Policing”.
2. West Midlands Police remain fully committed to community policing which includes expanding the role our communities can play as part of our police family. Creating opportunities for active citizens, of all ages and backgrounds, to participate in policing is essential to improving transparency & legitimacy and building new capacity & capabilities in order to deliver safer communities. Led by a specialist Citizens in Policing team and delivered through our neighbourhood policing teams, our focus continues to be the development and success of:
 - Special Constabulary
 - Volunteers
 - StreetWatch
 - Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme
 - Junior PCSO Scheme
3. This paper will set out how each of these programmes and schemes has continued to develop post the Covid pandemic and how they have been influenced by unique opportunities during 2022 including the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Special Constabulary

4. The Special Constabulary remains an integral part of the volunteering family within West Midlands Police. 292 Special Constables, with fully warranted powers as Volunteer Police Officers, are expected to commit an average of 16 hours service per month to work alongside regular officers and Police Community Support Officers in Neighbourhood Police Teams, Force Response, Roads Policing, Force CID and Public Protection.
5. **Recruitment & Retention** - Between January 2022 and November 2022, the number of Specials within West Midlands Police reduced from 298 to 270. This was partly due to a pause in recruitment for the Commonwealth Games in July and August 2022. Following the re-commencement of recruitment, strength has risen to 292 (as 22/11/2022).
6. Between January 2022 and November 2022, 90 Specials left the Constabulary with the main reasons being to either join a regular police service (34%) or due to a change in personal circumstances (32%).

Recorded reason for leaving	Count of Reason
Career Change - Joined Regulars (Own Force)	21
Personal Reasons - Change in Personal Circumstances	16
Personal Reasons - Work Life Balance	13
Career Change - Joined Regulars (Other Force)	10
Resigned whilst Training - Could no longer commit	7
All other reasons	23
Grand Total	90

Table 1: Recorded reason for Special Constable resigning between 1st January 2022 and 19th November 2022

7. A large proportion of our Specials are currently undergraduates in Higher Education studying Policing degree courses at Birmingham City University, University of Wolverhampton or the University of Warwick. Many of these students have an ambition to join West Midlands Police as regular officers upon graduation. For West Midlands Police this offers a pipeline of trained and experienced officers. However, it also results in the loss of trained Specials, leaving a deficit in experience and numbers within the Special Constabulary. For this reason, we are looking at ways to increase the attraction of older 'career' Specials who are settled in their non-policing career path.

8. **Deployments** - The service level agreement (SLA) is for all Special Constables to undertake at least 16 hours volunteering per month. In reality we have a large cohort of officers who far exceed the 16 hours per month minimum.
9. Inevitably, there are times where an individual cannot meet the 16 hours per month SLA requirement due to family circumstances, employment commitments or personal injury. In these situations, West Midlands Police ensures individuals receive appropriate welfare and support. Officers not compliant with the minimum 16 hours of duties are supported to improve by their line manager using the appropriate support tools and processes recommended by West Midlands Police HR advisors.

SLA Compliance	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Under 16 hours	69	58	78	79	93	76	73
Over 16 hours	159	165	138	150	134	140	139
In training	22	29	28	6	5	28	23
Non-operational	23	24	21	22	22	21	17
Leave of Absence / Suspended	29	26	24	27	26	20	22
Total Special Constables	302	302	289	284	280	285	274

Table 2: Number of hours that WMP Special Constables volunteer

10. In October alone, the Special Constabulary delivered an incredible 5,942 voluntary hours of duties helping to keep the communities of the West Midlands safe.
11. Over the past 12 months Special Constables have proudly worked with Operation Guardian to tackle knife crime, Homicide and football policing. This season, for the first time, the Special Constabulary fully aligned Special Constable SPOCs with specific football clubs and nominated Dedicated Football Officers. This has allowed Special Constables to work alongside spotters, public order teams and mutual aid colleagues to develop a range of skills and expertise.
12. During the Commonwealth Games, 18 Special Constables were deployed on a full-time basis, alongside mutual aid officers, and a further 25 Special Constables volunteered for dedicated Games' duties. Throughout this period, the Special Constabulary carried out a total of 4,547 hours supporting both the Games and the West Midlands Police business-as-usual backfill operation. This included policing the visit of HRH Princes Charles to Birmingham for which the Special Constables received exceptional feedback from the lead operational commanders.

13. After the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Special Constabulary sought to offer support, at the earliest opportunity, to Operation London Bridge. Members of the Special Constabulary senior leadership team participating all police planning meetings. This resulted in the deployment of 16 public order trained Special Constables, on mutual aid, to Windsor for three days to support the state funeral of Her Majesty. These Specials represented West Midlands Police, and the country, with great dignity and empathy demonstrating the progression and professionalism that is becoming the norm for West Midlands Police Special Constabulary.

14. **Learning & Development** – West Midlands Police continues to ensure that Special Constables have access to a number of different pathways to support their personal development. This includes role specific training such as driving courses for those officers deployed on CMPG.

15. Special Constables are able to access all courses that are available for regular officers, and they are encouraged to take advantage of the continued personal development opportunities that are available. That includes access to mentors, coaches and personal development online tools. The senior leadership team are working with Learning & Development to ensure that Special Constable supervisors have access, using the latest online system Blackboard, to supervisor training “Passport to Management” which will support them to be well-trained and supported line managers.

16. The Special Constabulary undertakes two CPD weekends annually based on topics from individuals’ requests, operational debriefs and organisational learning. Future CPD workshops include inputs from force subject matter experts on Sexual Offences and International Warrants.

17. **Leadership** - The Special Constabulary has successfully appointed senior ranks and increased diversity in leadership roles. We continue to encourage females within the Special Constabulary to develop into leadership roles by holding regular *Women In Policing* meetings with inspiring guest speakers helping to build confidence to apply for and be successful during promotions processes. As a result, there is now an increase in female Inspectors. The support network is still in place for all females within the Special Constabulary and, having been so successful, is now be made available to all Special Constables.

18. There continues to be a plan to ensure Special Constables feel integrated within the regular police officer teams they are deployed with. As part of the continued investment in the Constabulary, most Specials now have personal issue radios and body worn videos.
19. **Challenges** - Despite the leadership support there are still challenges due to the unique nature of the Special Constabulary:
- A large number of Specials work outside of the West Midlands Police during normal daytime hours. This continues to create a challenge when there is a requirement to access enabling services such as IT support and learning & development.
 - Accessing Personal Safety Training (PST) and First Aid training can prove particularly difficult for Specials Constables - planned future changes to increase the PST programme to two days will create additional challenges in ensuring Special Constables keep their accreditation.
 - It continues to be a challenge ensuring the unique capacity and capability of the Special Constabulary is routinely considered and included in a timely manner during all aspects of business planning. This can include force training programmes, force wide initiatives (such as Operation Santos) as well as local and force operational deployments.

Case study - Special Constable Eli Tan

Special Constable Eli Tan moved to Birmingham from China eight years ago to finish her university studies and instantly fell in love with the city. After her course finished, she decided she wanted to learn more about the UK, the people and the culture. Since then, the 29-year-old has been happily living here and has made the city her home.

Growing up in China, Eli had always wanted to join the Army so when she arrived in the UK, she looked at the recruitment requirements for the British Army. Unfortunately, having a Chinese passport meant she wasn't eligible. However, she had done voluntary work before and decided a career with the Special Constabulary would be just as rewarding.

"As I studied at Uni, I'd noticed there were hardly any Chinese police officers around the city centre," Eli said. "As the UK's second biggest city, Birmingham attracts a lot of overseas students and Chinese immigrants, and this surprised me."

Now she's proud to be a part of Birmingham's Chinese community, helping to bridge the gap between Chinese people and the police, and she was excited that she had the opportunity to be part of the Commonwealth Games which came to Birmingham this year.

Volunteers

20. The West Midlands Police volunteer programme offers members of the community the opportunity to become *citizens in policing* - bringing valuable skills and expertise to policing teams, creating a closer and more effective relationship within communities and increasing the capacity of West Midlands Police. Volunteers bring fresh ideas, raise local concerns and offer practical solutions. Volunteers also act as advocates for West Midlands Police by sharing experiences of working alongside the police. Overall, volunteer's contribution of time, effort and skills continues to add significant value in achieving the force's vision and values.
21. **Roles, Recruitment & Retention** - West Midlands Police have Police Support Volunteers supporting and working as integral members within some of our busiest teams and departments. Examples include volunteers undertaking puppy walking, leading Police Cadet troops, supporting the Police Heritage Museum, assisting local neighbourhood policing teams, or using their specialist skills to volunteer in departments such as the Economic Crime Unit or the Public Protection Unit.
22. Over the past year WMP have continued to increase the range of volunteering and have begun to recruit volunteers into 20 new roles within Forensics, CMPG and Partnership teams.
23. The last 12 months has seen an increase in the number of volunteers increase from 440 volunteers to 530 volunteers. This increase includes an additional 93 volunteers within the Puppy Development Programme, an additional 33 volunteers within the Multi Faith Chaplaincy and an additional 24 metal detecting volunteers across all neighbourhood policing units.
24. West Midlands Police continues to seek to develop relationships with local universities in order to attract more student volunteers. Previous experience has shown that student volunteers demonstrate significant commitment during their courses but also result in a higher turnover of volunteers when their courses finish.

25. Due to the rising cost of living, there is a growing risk of volunteers needing to reduce their available volunteering time in order to find part time jobs or prioritise work.
26. **Recognition & Appreciation** - Key changes over the past twelve months have seen WMP volunteers included in rewards and recognition and given increased access to support services.
27. In June 2022, for the first ever the Long Service Award was presented to volunteers for their continued service. Volunteers are eligible for an award after completing 2,3,5 and 10 years' service with WMP. To date, 48 volunteers have received an award this year.
28. Volunteers can now access the West Midlands Police wellbeing portal – VIVUP – which offers guidance, support and money-saving benefits.
29. **Governance & Future Vision** - A small Citizens in Policing Team co-ordinates the West Midlands Police response to Police Support volunteers in line with the Citizens in Policing Strategy 2022-2025 and the NPCC (National Police Chiefs Council) Valuing Volunteers Framework.
30. In 2023 the team will continue to work to:
- Support local communities to engage with volunteering opportunities, encouraging active citizenship and community engagement to support all strands of volunteering
 - Collaborate with departments to test and evaluate innovative practice and implement those that succeed force wide
 - Ensure WMP, its employees and volunteers are safeguarded against harm and litigation by ensuring policies and processes support a positive volunteering experience for all

Case Study - Police Heritage Museum

There are currently 106 registered Police Heritage Museum volunteers with 80 volunteering at least once a month. Volunteers are crucial to the operation of the museum and regularly change their duties to ensure the museum can open at all times. There is a sense of community and a wonderful family atmosphere with volunteers developing friendships. There has been success in recruiting a diverse range of

volunteers, from retired officers to volunteers from within the education sector who are skilled and experienced at the school activities.

The Museum has developed a partnership with Birmingham City University, accepting students on placement and allowing them to lead educational activities, which provides them with unique work experience.

The Museum has helped break down barriers between policing and public perception. This has been evident with the number of young people that have visited the Museum and changed their view based on their experience at the museum and interaction with volunteers.

StreetWatch

31. StreetWatch is a community-led initiative based on street patrols carried out by members of the public with no police powers. Groups are managed by a Volunteer Co-ordinator who keeps a volunteer list and provides advice, guidance and support in consultation with the local police. StreetWatch volunteers must be between 18-80 years of age.
32. Volunteers patrol in pairs and register each patrol on a website. The neighbourhood policing team can look at the website before the patrols take place. If volunteers spot suspicious activity they report it to the police but do not get involved.
33. The purpose of StreetWatch is to:
 - To increase feelings of safety by providing reassurance and promoting good citizenship within the West Midlands
 - To assist WMP by promoting effective communication and prompt reporting of activity that gives rise to concern
 - To prevent crime by improving security, increasing vigilance, creating and maintaining a caring and cohesive community and reducing opportunities for crime by increasing crime prevention awareness
34. There are currently 202 StreetWatch Groups involving 1,432 volunteers within the West Midlands.
35. During the Covid pandemic, there was renewed interest of volunteers joining StreetWatch because they were working from home and had spare time to commit to the initiative. With

the reduction of agile working and return to pre-Covid working practices, some volunteers are either leaving or have less time to commit to StreetWatch.

	Aug -21	Sep -21	Oct- 21	Nov -21	Dec 21 - Jan 22	Feb -22	Mar- 22	Apr- 22	May- 22	Jun- 22	Jul 22 - Aug 22	Sep -22
New	72	66	59	83	67	47	41	31	20	45	54	35
Resigned	215	96	110	84	97	53	51	56	37	112	108	64

Table 3: New & Resigned StreetWatch Volunteers August 2021 to September 2022

36. **Deployments** - Recent activity has seen the support of StreetWatch patrols in tackling a rise in vehicle crime in Birmingham East as part of the force wide Operation SECLUSION. StreetWatch patrols have also been instrumental in supporting the Commonwealth Games and Queens Baton Relay.

37. There are future opportunities to develop the online forum used by the StreetWatch Groups to promote greater awareness of the value and opportunities of StreetWatch amongst wider WMP departments. This will provide additional opportunities to mobilise communities to help keeping communities safe.

Case Study – 2022 StreetWatch Awards

In October 2022, a special force awards ceremony recognised the unique contributions Streetwatch Groups have made to community safety within the West Midlands. The awards included:

In October 2021, five groups based in Sutton Coldfield worked with the incident room to provide much needed additional reassurance patrols and hand out witness appeal leaflets.

During the Commonwealth Games two volunteers from the Sheldon Country Park and Chelmsley Wood Group spent 42 hours walking and walked 80 miles patrolling the NEC venue sites

In Halesowen town, a new StreetWatch Group was formed from local small business owners who patrolled the town centre during their lunch breaks in order to promote a safer community and encourage more visitors into the town.

Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme

38. The Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme is a national scheme aimed at making a difference in local communities, building character, confidence and contribution through youth-led social action. It seeks to build trust and confidence between young people, their communities and the police. And it enables young people to have a real voice and influence in shaping policing.
39. WMP currently have 538 Police Cadets aged 13 – 17 years old and 164 Police Cadet Leaders who are all volunteers. There are 24 Cadet units located in Impact Areas with spaces available for up to 720 Cadets when all units are full to capacity. In the past 12 months two new Cadet units have opened in Walsall College and Wolverhampton College.
40. The Cadet Scheme has striven to ensure they are reflective and inclusive of the local community using a variety of methods to recruit volunteer Cadet Leaders. 103 of 165 Cadet Leaders are external community volunteers and not employed by WMP as either police officers or police staff. The community volunteers bring vital skills and experiences and are positive role models for Cadet Scheme members.
41. **Social Inclusion** - WMP continues to recruit Cadets to meet its 750-total ambition, also ensuring that the scheme prioritises those young people who are at risk of social exclusion, looked after, at risk of exploitation or at risk of engagement in crime.
42. The aim is for 25% of Police Cadets to be from disadvantaged backgrounds and to achieve this WMP needs to ensure the right referral pathways are in place to support the recruitment of those young people who will most benefit from engagement in the scheme.
43. To support social inclusion and eradicate economic exclusion WMP ensures its Cadets scheme is free at point of delivery - no charges for joining are levied against either the young people or their families.
44. Police Cadet units are predominantly located in one of the force's 19 Impact Areas meaning the location is easily accessible by those young people who live in the most deprived areas within the West Midlands.

45. The Cadet scheme works with Local Authority Children’s Services and West Midlands Police’s Early Help Intervention Teams to ensure those young people who are in most need and would benefit most from membership of Cadets are supported to join.
46. The Cadet Scheme supports young people with a range of disabilities including Down’s Syndrome and Autism. To ensure they are welcomed into the Cadets, staff and volunteer Cadet Leaders are provided with additional training to ensure they are able to accommodate the needs of all young people within the scheme.
47. **Recruitment** - To ensure the Cadet Scheme is safe to operate and able to accommodate 750 cadets safely there must be sufficient numbers of police Cadet Leader volunteers to deliver the Cadet Scheme. It is anticipated that a further unit will increase the number of spaces available to achieve 750 cadets by the end of the financial year in March 2023.

2022	No. Cadets	No. Cadet Leaders
February	564	186
March	562	175
April	515	170
June	553	175
August	508	174
September	563	166
October	543	170
November	538	164

Table 4: Numbers of Police Cadets & Cadet Leaders in 2022

48. Between January 2022 and November 2022 there has been a fall in numbers for both Cadets and Cadet Leaders. During this period, there has been an ongoing robust approach to review active members and remove if necessary. WMP continuously accepts applications for new cohorts of Cadets to start at the beginning of each school term so expect to see the next significant rise in January 2023. Currently, there are a large number of applicants for the Volunteer Cadet Leader role undergoing the recruitment process and it is anticipated that WMP will start to see an increase in numbers from January 2023 onwards.
49. The current recruitment campaign includes engagement with Further Education establishments, community networking and outreach events alongside internal recruitment practices and external events such as career fairs. The Employer Supported Policing scheme has been utilised to contact companies to market the Volunteer Cadet Leader role internally.

50. **Curriculum** - The Cadet scheme offers a standard curriculum that follows the Police Competency Values Framework (CVF) endorsed by the College of Policing. The scheme is in the early stages of scoping an accreditation pathway for all Cadets with a further education provider. This would offer all Cadets an accreditation just for completing the Cadet Scheme curriculum. This would greatly support those cadets who are not reaching the standards required to join as a Police Officer.
51. In the past 12 months, all Cadet units have resumed full face-to-face sessions after a phased return following the Covid pandemic. This has led to Cadet Leaders and Cadets participating in community events that have supported force initiatives and operations including the Queens Platinum Jubilee, Commonwealth Games, County Lines Intensification Week, and Birmingham Pride. The Cadet units have also supported many external organisations at events such as Race for Life, British Police Symphony Orchestra, Canals & River Trust, Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Parades.
52. The Cadet scheme works closely with the Princes Trust and can refer Police Cadets to their programmes should they need additional support with education or training. The scheme works with local Colleges and Universities to explore course opportunities and welcomes guest speakers from organisations that can show the broad spectrum of job opportunities including those at apprenticeship level.
53. There is ongoing engagement with third sector organisations to demonstrate to Cadets the benefit of volunteering (post 18) to broaden their skills and future opportunities. For example, work with the Canal and River Trust resulted in Police Cadets volunteering to plant hundreds of trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. Many Cadets (post 18) develop to be Cadet Leaders.
54. It is recognised that some of the Police Cadets will want to pursue a career in policing and the scheme works closely with WMP's Outreach Team to ensure that all Cadets who have an interest in policing are supported to do so and receive real time advice. In 2022 at least two Cadets were successful in applying to join WMP as police officers.
55. **Safeguarding** – WMP complies with the UK Youth Safer Spaces Framework and the National Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) safeguarding strategy. By adhering to a national safeguarding framework, WMP is able to follow a streamlined and consistent approach to the reporting and managing of safeguarding concerns, the recruitment of leaders, training, organising activities and beyond. This ensures that everyone involved knows what is

expected of them at a local and national level and that confidential reporting and investigation is completed in a consistent manner.

56. Within the West Midlands this means that all Cadet leaders are subject to both DBS checks and police vetting and require two references. They are required to complete four Safeguarding Courses prior to joining and having contact with Children. All Cadets are given VPC approved safeguarding inputs and WMP have two NSPCC trained Designated Safeguarding Leads.

57. As of November 2022, 92% of Cadet Leaders mandatory training has been completed and work is ongoing to ensure that all mandatory training is completed by the end of the financial year.

58. **Future Challenges** - As the Cadet Scheme continues to grow, with Cadet units supporting more events and activities across the West Midlands, the requirements for transportation will increase. This will incur additional costs. A lack of additional support and/or a change to the 'free at point of delivery' ethos of the scheme is likely to be a limiting factor on the growth of the scheme.

Junior PCSO Scheme

59. The Junior PCSO scheme is the WMP branding for a police engagement programme aimed at children aged 8-11 years.

60. Based on the National Volunteer Police Cadets '*mini-police*' programme, the scheme was first introduced in Sandwell in 2015 as a school engagement programme designed to build relationships with Key Stage 2 children and to empower schools and students to support local communities (parking/bullying etc.)

61. The Junior PCSO scheme currently engages with over 3000 children in 150 schools across the West Midlands with a focus on keeping the Junior PCSOs and other people safe on the roads around their schools; helping to keep their schools and communities clean and tidy; being a friend to anyone who is maybe having problems at school or at home and being safe when using the internet.

62. The scheme is led by local PCSOs, under the direction of the Citizens in Policing Governance Board, with ongoing work to create more standardised practice across WMP. Working with Wolverhampton NPU, the scheme utilised a member of the Partnership

Team, employed by the local authority and an ex-teacher to review the Junior PCSO training package and provide an initial assessment of OFSTED compliance.

63. COVID resulted in all schemes being halted from March 2020. There has been reluctance from some schools in September 2022 for the schemes to be re-ignited due to staffing and resource concerns. Local police neighbourhood and partnership teams are working tirelessly to re-establish relationships with these schools, especially considering the huge impact that the pandemic has had on young people losing virtually two years of their schooling life.

64. Schools are now being engaged and consulted regarding the training package with an opportunity to influence the content and also to select the pupils to take part in future schemes.

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

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