



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Tuesday 28th February 2023 - 1000 – 1300 hrs

Attendees:

Tom McNeil	:	Chair (Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner)
Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Brendan-warner Southwell	:	Policy Manager
Charmaine Burton	:	Board Member
Craig Guildford	:	Chief Constable
Dr Cath Hannon	:	Board Member
Edward King	:	Member of the Public
Jacqui Every	:	Business Crime Co-ordinator
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive
Mark Kenyon	:	Chief Finance Officer
Matthew Ward	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Natasha Cullen	:	Policy Assistant
Vanessa Jardine	:	Deputy Chief Constable

Plus, one webcaster and 7 observers.

Apologies:

Simon Foster	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Nicky Brennan	:	Victims Commissioner
Clare McArthur	:	Member of the Public

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/683294*
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.*

012/23	<p>Apologies and APCC Update</p> <p>Apologies from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Foster • Nicky Brennan • Clare McArthur <p>The APCC made the following comments:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public are desperate to see community policing rebuilt to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour and car theft. • Clear that the PCC's main commitment is rebuilding community policing with 450 additional officers. • Community policing has been decimated over the last 10 years due to aggressive government cuts. • 45 dedicated community police officers have recently been appointed. Now have 256 new officers. • On VAWG, the government has listened and ensured that this is a national, urgent and strategic priority. • There have been well over 100 closures of children centres, coupled with local authority cuts, adversely affecting women's refuge centres. • Huge cuts to CPS, courts and Probation is making tackling sexual violence much harder. • The PCC's Office has been delivering positive work to tackle VAWG, such as ISVAs and IDVAs. A brand-new service to tackle stalking and harassment has also been introduced. • Working with local authorities to deliver work in schools to help young men recognise misogyny. • Ministry of Justice has initiated Operation Safeguard, including a number of forces across the country, to look after prisoners in custody as there's not enough space in prisons. The APCC condemns this as a disgraceful situation. • The Commissioner's budget has recently been passed, with unanimous cross-party support to increase the policing precept. Without this increase, the Force will have lost 260 frontline police officers. Even with this additional funding, the Force will be 1000 police officers fewer than in 2010. In the West Midlands we have to deal with serious crime challenges with fewer police officers, when compared to other police forces with record numbers of officers.
013/23	<p>Notes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>The notes of the Board meeting held on 24th January 2023 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>
014/23	<p>Questions from Members of the Public</p> <p>1. <i>"Policing on Erdington High Street is failing. Retail outlets are under siege from violence and shoplifters, and members of the public are increasingly too frightened to visit or shop there. Brazen drug dealing, street drinking, sexual harassment, and aggressive anti-social behaviour now define the culture of the Town Centre.</i></p> <p><i>What's more, repeat and violent offenders, even when detained by shop security – with evidence of their crimes, or who are known to local law enforcement – are routinely not arrested or processed.</i></p> <p><i>The current message to local retailers and residents alike is clear: Erdington High Street is not policed, and offenders will not be brought to justice. Erdington High Street is, in real terms, lawless.</i></p>

But there are many who believe it can be changed, starting with a stronger and more effective working partnership between the local police teams and the existing High Street infrastructure – such as the Street Warden and shop security personnel.

Keeping in line with his mandate to ‘rebuild neighbourhood policing’, will the Chief Constable commit his force operating in Erdington to engage in solution, action, and outcome focused talks with local representatives – to reform the relationship between the local police and local community, and change the message to one of ‘no tolerance’ to crime on Erdington High Street?”

(Asked by Edward King)

- The Force have secured a Public Space Protection Order with Birmingham City Council, lasting until December 2023. Individuals have been identified who are the most persistent offenders.
- Civil Injunctions (CIOs) have been used in instances where people do not cooperate. Two further CIOs have been sought from Birmingham Magistrates Court.
- A number of vehicle enforcement tickets for illegal parking have been issued.
- Licences within the area have been renewed and working well with the council regarding the provision of CCTV. A review of the location of CCTV cameras is now being undertaken, which the Force are supportive of.
- There have been limited intelligence reports received from the local community or other sources relating to substance misuse and prostitution.
- The High Street is subject to one of the Operation Guardian patrol areas, meaning extra patrolling is present. A bi-weekly pop-up surgery is also held so residents can talk to police.
- The Force have recovered stolen items on the high street during Operation Magpie.
- Regular meetings are being held with the BID to share concerns and agree approaches.
- Proportionately, if a shoplifter is of young age, restorative justice may be used to prevent reoffending.
- Plans to set up a pub-watch and bet-watch scheme are in place.
- When the operating model changes, there will be a higher level of visibility across area in question.

Peacocks and Co-Op have specific cases of assault and shoplifting; officers are presented with CCTV evidence but are not actioning these cases. The use of public space protection orders is a rarity. Measures taken by police feel like a plaster on a wound to people in Erdington. The BID does not translate the regular meetings to the regular community. If people will talk to the police in constructive terms, they can provide intelligence. There is a new sergeant in post for some time, but they have only recently met with the retail community. This is unacceptable.

- The Chief Constable concurs with Ed King. The public are urged to report through 999 and 101. Local services need to work with the BID.
- The Force will encourage firms to organise their own security as well as the police being there.
- Larger businesses do not take as much responsibility as others to deter these types of offences.

The APCC made the following comments:

- The PCC campaigned vigorously for a change in law on offences against shopworkers. Tougher sentences indicate to society that these offences are totally unacceptable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC won a national award for a project piloted in Erdington, targeted at repeat offenders who've experiencing heroin and crack addiction. The result was saving retailers large sums of money. • This situation cannot be policed out of. Rehabilitation programmes are crucial in this endeavour. • Must be careful in discussions to not let the public imagine that this is all a police responsibility.
015/23	<p>Questions from Members of the Board</p> <p>1. <i>“What is the role and current powers for West Midlands PCSO’s? How might the Chief Constable consider enhancing their role?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Asked by Cath Hannon)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Constable is not an advocate for expanding PCSO powers. It is not ideal for PCSOs to be placed into roles of excessive confrontation. Would say they fulfil a relation-building and intelligence gathering role. <p><i>Generically PCSOs are about local enforcement. There are some questions about whether this role could be expanded at all?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly satisfied with the operating model the Force has at the moment. <p>2. <i>“Sexual predators David Carrick and Wayne Couzins operated freely as officers of the Metropolitan Police victimising staff and the public. With this in mind:</i></p> <p><i>How many West Midlands police officers or staff are currently charged and awaiting court hearings?</i></p> <p><i>What are the offences and time scales for hearings?</i></p> <p><i>Given the time delays in the criminal justice system how are victims and witnesses being supported?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Asked by Cath Hannon)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this time there are 7 officers and 1 member of staff who are undergoing the court process at various stages, the majority of these are suspended from duty. • The DCC determines suspensions and reviews them. • In addition to the court process, there is a dual process for misconduct. Criminal processes will always be concluded first. • If witnesses are internal, they have support of the Force, staff associations etc. <p><i>There is a significant amount of internal work being done to identify staff that shouldn’t be police officers or work for WMP. It is concerning that the work in principle isn’t shared with the public.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently requested that hearings chaired by the Chief Constable and LQCs are published on the Force website. <p>3. <i>“What would the Chief Constable say to encourage people to be upstanders not bystanders? what does upstander mean and how can this be done without triggering negative repercussions?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Asked by Charmaine Burton)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bystander is someone who takes no action, either during an incident or post an incident. An upstander is someone who takes responsibility and shows moral courage.

- As a member of the public, one would ring 999 and be a witness.
- If employed by WMP, there is a contractual duty to be upstanders.

In terms of serious incidents, members of the public may want to intervene in any capacity, but might be afraid to, due to repercussions.

- If this is someone’s fear as a member of the public, the hope is that they will ring 999. This still constitutes being an upstander.

4. “Can the Chief Constable please outline the performance of the 101-telephone service and explain what he plans to do to improve it?”

(Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)

- Performance has been improved dramatically in responding to 999 calls, which is in line with national target. The Force are in the top quartile for the 43 Forces.
- Data shows 1 in 3 101 calls are missed. Plan in place including a variety of measures, relating to structures and resources. In some instances, police officers who were previously call handlers prior to recruitment may be deployed as call handlers for a temporary basis.
- Variety of locations across the Force in which the telephone is answered.
- The Chief Constable expects to see levels of performance improving in the months to come.

101 telephone remains a huge issue. While online alternatives are welcome, many members of the public still prefer the telephone service. Waiting times over 45 minutes to an hour remain unacceptable. Request that the Force produce a report including improvements on the 101-telephone service towards the end of the year.

5. *We’ve consistently warned that the cost of living crisis risks fuelling crime and exploitation. Does the Chief believe that the recent rise in violence crime in the West Midlands will be partly linked to growing poverty?*

(Asked by Tom McNeil)

- The link between poverty and acquisitive crime is clearly made out. However, the Chief is to be convinced when it comes to violent crime.
- On a local basis, a change has been observed in recording practices for violent offences involving no serious injury. Most of these are committed in private spaces between known parties.

The APCC made the following comments:

- The PCC continues to write to the Prime Minister to emphasise his qualitative understanding of how the cost of living crisis fuels crime and exploitation.
- Intelligence of people being exploited into sex work to even pay for rent, as well as children and young people being exploited by criminals into things such as county lines. Deeply concerned about loan sharks and exploitative lenders.

Police and Crime Plan

016/23 Preventing and Reducing Crime – Substance Misuse

ACC Matt Ward presented the paper and the following points were discussed:

Females aren't mentioned in the document at all. Are these classed as vulnerable people? Please could a round-off be given on what happens to females that are involved in drug-use or drug supply. Re table 4 on referrals. There are 4 NPU's missing, why is this? How is success measured in combatting the drug supply chain?

- Whilst not reflected in the figures, the Force have identified that there are particular vulnerabilities amongst females; activity such as pre and post arrest diversions and post-conviction rehabilitations will deal with this.
- New courts will be reflected in the figures for future papers.
- **ACC Ward to provide an explanation around why the 4 NPU's are not included within table 4.**
- An overview of success is present in the paper in relation to covering success in combatting the drug supply chain.

Could you explain how the assets or money seized is returned to policing or communities?

- Every time assets are seized; the Force is able to claim back 50% of the monetary value from government.

How often do Local Responsible Officers have meetings with faith leaders/ community groups?

- LROs are typically Detective Chief Inspectors, part of the wider senior leadership teams for NPU's.
- LROs liaise with other colleagues, delegating the responsibility to them to liaise with the communities.
- This is a concept that has been running for 12-14 years now.

How often are PCSOs or officers going into community centres and places of worship?

- Happens on a very regular occasion. Evidence of this is when the tensions in Leicester spilled to Birmingham and Sandwell, planned engagement with faith groups meant this could be countered.
- The Force admit that more can be done.

What is it that the Force expect to see in relation to the effectiveness of policing in relation to licensing?

Are you satisfied that the police are appropriately looking at how the planning processes can be influenced to support reducing the risk associated with the drug economy and alcohol usage?

What can policing do to support the courts to make greater use of treatment orders?

Data suggests that referrals from police to opioid user services are declining. What is the position within WMP?

- Working closely with the local authority to grant new licenses and expedite the removal of licenses.
- Will continue to gather swift evidence re alcohol related issues and provide it to the local authorities for decisions to be made.
- On advanced planning, the focus is heavily on trying to design crime issues when planning applications are being made.
- There is a gap when it comes to houses of multiple occupancy. More work needs to be done in shaping where these are authorised.
- Huge desire to use offender to rehab programme.
- General referrals for post-arrest and post-conviction are going up. No breakdown available in relation to substances.

	<p><i>Are you satisfied that licencing activity is effective in removing licenses from problematic premises? Is there a role of giving the judiciary more confidence that they can use orders because there will be appropriate enforcement of them?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since Covid, seeing increased numbers in the night time economy and increased crime rates. • Where this can be linked to specific premises or issues, action has been swiftly taken. <p>The APCC made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction is linked to criminal havoc in society, whether that be in the home or elsewhere. • The public do expect a robust police response to those involved with organised crime. • Important for the Force and OPCC to make sure the public know you can't police your way out of addiction. • Whether its New Chance or the Offender to Rehab Programme, it is very rarely just addiction to drugs and alcohol. Almost always tied up with additional factors.
	<p>Partnership Presentation</p>
<p>017/23</p>	<p>Criminal Justice System</p> <p>The presentation was delivered by OPCC & Partners and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>Where is the support to get victims back into workplaces? As there is a framework for offenders, consider how this can be paralleled into supporting victims back into workplaces?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetrators are often victims in themselves, which this programme positively affects. • Linking specifically into the victim cohorts is worth us taking back and looking at specifically. • The team will consider possible means of supporting arrangements and support for victims to return to workplaces. <p><i>On the Second Chances Charter, how do we demonstrate that signing up isn't a cost to the business? Instead, can be a way to hire people who will be great employees.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific sections are on the website detailing benefits and support for employers. • Getting businesses to speak about the Charter on the PCCs behalf is the best option.
	<p>Regular Items</p>
<p>018/23</p>	<p>Performance Update</p> <p>The paper was presented by DCC Jardine and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>What activities are the Force undertaking to capture and analyse local public confidence data?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A QR code is given to people who are stop and searched which takes them to a survey with questions regarding the stop and search.

- There is no formal national measure regarding measuring satisfaction, meaning there is no comparator between different forces.
- When doing activity in impact areas the QR code survey is carried out successfully and paper questionnaires are done.

P.27 refers to the national pledge for officers to attend all burglaries. What difference has this made to victims of burglaries?

What is the 7/10 or lower score that 33% of respondents have given in reference to?

Within P.4 it identifies that 25% of homicides are domestic related. No reference on what this figure means or how that's been tackled. Is there anything to give confidence on this?

- High impact of domestic abuse homicide is recognised and more detailed information can be provided in in-depth domestic abuse reports.
- Every survey response is examined to identify themes and individual learning for officers. A lot of the less than 7/10 scores relate to 101 service.
- The personal visits to victims of burglary help ensure that the victim is reassured and lines of enquiry are sufficiently explored. As the desired figures are only just starting to be reached, a full answer on this is not available.

What's being done to increase the number of survey participants?

- Survey used to be sent weeks after the stop & search, meaning the return rate was incredibly low. The Force now get a 10% return rate, this is quite high in comparison to previous data. This has been achieved by sending out the survey much earlier.

Can we break the report down into communities, race & gender moving forward?

- This paper looks at national metrics. That said, looking at the new model and the incorporation of locality, this breakdown can be achieved for future reports.

The trend is a lot worse than elsewhere when it comes to theft of motor vehicles. Are we doing everything we can to ensure operations and tactics on this are effective as they can be?

- A task force has recently been developed in relation to this. Would have hoped that the activity on chop shops and offenders would have made a difference, but the Force haven't experienced that.
- The Force are an outlier when it comes to vehicle crime, but other Forces are starting to catch up. A dedicated resource is kept on this.
- The Force constantly assess the benefit of the tactics employed.

What activities are undertaken when the police attend a burglary that contribute to the reduction?

- Officers reassure the victim(s), and conduct house-to-house enquiries and assess forensic opportunities, if any. Officers will also recognise any patterns, such as a common way of entry.

On hotspot policing, are there any specific engagement activities in an area, or is it primarily about visibility?

- Officers will be in an area for a short period of time. They would do all the activities that you would expect.
- The Force can evaluate the activity as the locations officers have visited and the duration of staying at these locations is recorded.

<p>019/23</p>	<p>Finance Budget Monitoring</p> <p>The paper was presented by Mark Kenyon and the following points were discussed:</p> <p><i>Is there one specific area which will be really difficult to manage in future? How do you suggest we tackle this?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of resources received is not enough for the level of expenditure that must be incurred. • We have budgeted next year for a 3% pay award. If the settlement for pay is more than 3%, this makes financial planning incredibly difficult. • Biggest challenge surrounds the long-term funding of policing and how the funding formula works in practice. We have the second lowest ability to raise precepts as the precept has been historically low. The Force is very reliant on grant. • Would be ideal if the pay award is fully funded when it arrives, as opposed to being made to fund it from what the Force have currently got. The secondary trigger after police officer pay is also police staff pay. This puts the Force under some considerable strain. • The Force are one of the worst off for funding per head basis relating to metropolitan forces. We've also got a low council tax base. Current funding formula penalises WMP £40 million a year. <p><i>The funding formula disadvantaging West Midlands Police has been present for over 10 years. What is being done to change this?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting the launch of a national consultation, setting out initial proposals that will be indicators for a new funding formula. • Every area will in response to the consultation will highlight what indicators are most prevalent in a particular area. • Current understanding of what will be in this list will not include the drug economy. Work being done suggests there aren't easy metrics to understand the level of harm from one area to another. • The consultation will not cover detail on what the transition plan looks like for moving from the existing formula to a new one. • The moment exemplifications will appear, areas which are winners will call for immediate introduction. Areas which are losers will fight it as hard as possible. • Some of the challenges with WMP's budget affect local authorities as well, such as cuts. Police also face the consequences of unfair funding settlements elsewhere. <p><i>What is the mechanism by which you assure yourself that vacancies which are carried are not harming organisational performance/service to the public?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DCC and the CFO ensure that these risks are all assessed.
<p>020/23</p>	<p>Chief Constable Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to see high demands around call centres. Actions have been set out to mitigate these issues. • Been kept very busy with current football events and future plans around football. Plans are also in place around the Coronation. • New policing model sees a heightened focus of local resources under the command of the chief superintendents. This should expand investigative opportunities. • Have the highest number of police officers onboarded in a while, still this is under the number the Force had at the start of austerity. • A non-degree entry route has been reopened.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On top of this, the Force secured some additional resources from the Home Office, going over its recruitment target by 60 officers.• Operation Safeguard has been initiated although no detainees have been seen yet.• Despite the changes going on, increasingly seeing other Forces coming to take a look at activity going on in West Mids. Specifically looking at Integrated Offender Management recently.• Arrest figures have increased by 10-15%.
021/23	SPCB Workplan: There are currently 15 outstanding actions.
022/23	Date of the next meeting: The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 28 th March 2023.