



**Police and Crime Plan Priority:**

**Title:** Safer Travel

**Presented by:** Assistant Chief Constable Mike O'Hara

**PURPOSE OF PAPER**

1. The purpose of this report is to present an overview to the Strategic Police and Crime Board (SPCB) on West Midlands Police (WMP) activity and performance outcomes relating to the topic of roads policing, roads safety and safer travel.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) and WMP Force Traffic sit as one wider Roads Policing Department. The mission of the department is "Working in partnership to deliver safe and secure roads" with 4 key pillars – Preventing harm and saving lives, tackling crime, driving technology and innovation and Changing minds. This strategy aligns with the National Police Chief Council's Roads Policing strategy. While the scope is broad, it focuses on the areas of greatest concern as follows:
  - Collaborating with partners towards Vision Zero
  - Disrupting organised criminality on the road network
  - Providing a pro-active response in support of WMP priorities
  - Maximising the use of ANPR technology
  - Fatal Four offences (seat belts, excess speed, drink/drugs and mobile phone use)
  - Uninsured drivers
  - Supporting national roads policing campaigns

3. To target road harm, the department has a wide-ranging approach. The department reviews its identified road harm locations through collision data to allow effective, geographic and thematic interventions. The investment in a dedicated Road Harm Prevention Team allows the department to build capability across WMP while working with Local Policing Areas (LPAs) to expand schemes such as speed watch. The Chief Constable has recently approved a 66% increase in staff allocated to the team, but it will take several months to recruit and train these officers.
4. The department has a strong approach to tackling organised crime on the roads, supporting force tactical priorities such as gang tensions, organised vehicle crime and serious youth violence.

## PART 1 – ROADS POLICING AND ROADS SAFETY

### **General Performance (including KSIs<sup>1</sup>)**

5. 1051 people have been seriously injured in road traffic collisions in the last financial year, including 55 fatalities. The total number of killed or seriously injured casualties is 3 per cent more than in 2021/2. However, there was a 16 per cent decrease in fatalities compared with the previous financial year (from 66 to 56).
6. There have been monthly variations in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions over the last three years, in line with when CoVID-19 lockdown restrictions were in place and traffic volumes reduced. As restrictions eased in 2021, the number of killed or seriously injured casualties returned to around the average of 80 per month. Nationally, there remains a stagnation of road safety collision reduction since 2010.

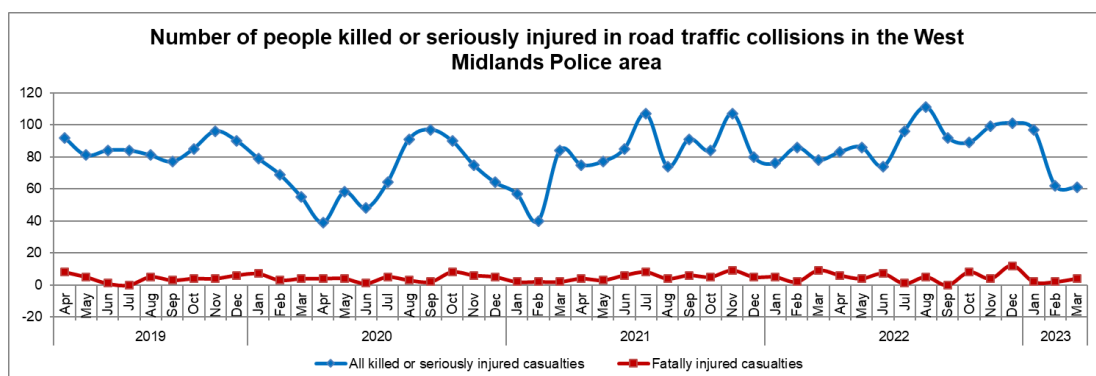


Figure 1. Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions in the West Midlands Police area, April 2019 – Mar 2023

<sup>1</sup> Killed or seriously injured

7. Enforcement activity aimed to reduce KSIs is currently prioritised on 11 routes in the West Midlands. These locations make up 0.63 per cent of the West Midlands Road network but 9 per cent of all KSI road traffic collisions occur on these routes.
8. The Serious Collision Investigation Unit has investigated 98 life changing and fatal road traffic collisions in the West Midlands during this period, with our dedicated Family Liaison Team supporting the families from all 98 collisions.
9. Family liaison is a very important and well considered part of the collision investigation process. In West Midlands, we offer a family liaison service for all fatal and serious injury collisions. An FLO is appointed to the point of contact within the victim's family. The FLO's main responsibility is that of an investigator and gathers information about the victim to aid the investigation. The FLO also provides a BRAKE pack (a Road Safety charity) at the appropriate time and will offer signposting services. In West Midlands we offer a Victim Support service that is funded by the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner. Two victim support workers are employed and will support families of victims involved in fatal and serious injury collisions. This service provides families with extra support and assistance. The FLO will refer any families who are eligible and live in the West Midlands area.

### ***Roads Policing Academy***

10. The fourth Roads Policing Academy (RPA) commenced in March 2023 and tested candidates' operational competence and legislative knowledge. At the centre of the process was a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, with extensive consultation with Staff Networks to encourage applications from female and underrepresented groups in line with the Force's ambition towards fairness and belonging. The RPA process recruited officers for vacancies within WMP Force Traffic Unit and CPMG (WMP and Staffordshire).
11. The process commenced with a paper sift phase with successful applicants being invited to attend an Assessment Centre which included a written exam and practical assessments. Officers who were successful at the Assessment Centre were invited to a structured competency-based interview.
12. When successful candidates subsequently join the Roads Policing Team, they complete a bespoke 8-week course led by the Roads Policing Personal Development Unit. This training plan culminates with the officers becoming fully trained Roads Policing Officers.

This approach provides new officers with the skills, knowledge and confidence required to operate safely and effectively when they join their team.

### **Uninsured Vehicles & Drivers**

13. 8,123 uninsured vehicles were seized by WMP during 2022/23, equating to an average of 677 per month. This is a decrease of 11 per cent compared to the previous financial year. West Midlands Police are in early conversations with the Motor Insurance Bureau (MIB) to form a closer collaboration to increase seizures.

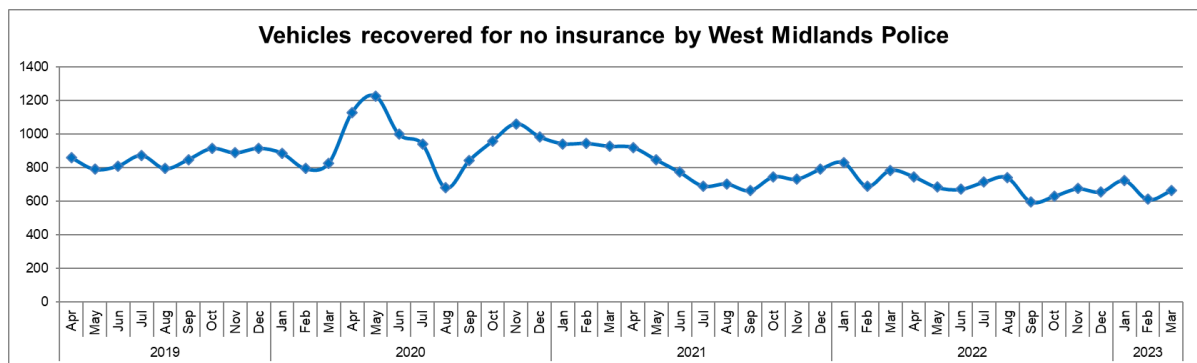


Figure 2. Number of vehicles recovered for no insurance by West Midlands Police, April 2019 to March 2023

14. WMP supported the NPCC 'No Insurance' week of action in November 2022. During this period 160 uninsured vehicles were seized across the WMP area. There will be another initiative in November 2023.

15. Operation Tutelage - West Midlands Police work alongside the MIB to trace those who are breaking the law and order them to get insured. Letters are sent out on behalf of WMP by the national Operation Tutelage team to registered keepers of cars (where information the force holds suggests the vehicle has no insurance).

### **'Close Pass' Operations**

16. 'Close Pass' operations consist of an officer riding a pedal cycle on roads identified as 'hot spots' for collisions involving pedal cyclists, in order to identify offending vehicles who pass within 1.5 metres of them. A colleague in a police vehicle then escorts the offender on to a nearby site. The driver completes an eyesight test and is given education in relation to how to safely share the road with cyclists.

17. Responsibility for conducting 'Close Pass' operations, is held by the WMP Road Harm Prevention Team who are conducting regular 'Close Pass' operations. This initiative has won praise and awards from across the UK and has been implemented by most police

forces nationally. This operation is an important step towards changing driver behaviour and is in line with the new Highway Code, supporting the move to green transport options in our region.

18. 'Close Pass' aims to alter driver attitudes and behaviour, WMP hope that motorists will share what they have learned with others. This year will see a renewed focus on this activity, particularly in light of recent cyclist fatalities in our region.
19. A cadre of Police officer and staff pedal cyclists who can support 'Close Pass' is being developed and maintained in order to enable us to deploy more frequent operations.

### ***Operation Zig Zag***

20. The Road Harm Prevention Team have been worked in collaboration with West Midlands Police Led Prosecutions and Traffic Investigation Office to devise Operation Zig Zag.
21. Operation Zig Zag was designed to protect the most vulnerable road users (pedestrians) at crossing points within the West Midlands. This operation has received national praise for its implementation and featured in the Department for Transport Road Safety Statement 2019.
22. Officers deploy in high visibility at high profile locations, where collisions have historically been high, or are on the rise. An officer uses a speed detection device to identify speeding offences at the vulnerable location with a further officer in high visibility clothing on the crossing as a visible marker for the motorist and to offer education around safer crossing to pedestrians. Everything is in the driver's favour to see the officers and adjust their speed in good time, prior to reaching the crossing. Those who speed through the crossing are stopped and dealt with for Driving without Due Care and Attention.
23. Operation Zig Zag is used to good effect at key locations where KSI collisions have been prevalent and provides positive reassurance to the community that West Midlands Police is taking positive action in problem areas to prevent collisions.

### ***E-Scooters***

24. The council e-scooter trial had been taking place in Birmingham, however there is currently no trial operating since VOI's contract ended.
25. The Road Harm Prevention Team works closely with LPAs, Local Authority, Combined Authority/Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and national partners to ensure a consistent approach is taken Force wide and nationally.

26. The Government were due to publish new legislation in Autumn 2022 regarding eScooters. This has not yet come to pass and as such, there is a general lack of understanding and knowledge by the public about the legalities surrounding eScooters which can be purchased from many online and in-store retailers.
27. As a consequence of the public confusion, West Midlands Police currently adopts an educational position in order to tackle this, with a view to not criminalising our young riders, instead opting to only prosecute those who are committing offences that have aggravating factors.
28. During 2022/23 there were 23 collisions in the WMP area involving e-scooters in which people were seriously injured, compared with 22 during 2021/22. This figure includes one fatality. 12 of the collisions involved a car and an e-scooter. Six involved pedestrians being injured. The rider was at fault in at least 16 of the incidents.
29. There were approximately 180 logs relating to complaints and reports of anti-social use of e-scooters in 2022/23 and around 100 further logs relating to RTC matters<sup>2</sup>. Further to this, there were approximately 608 crimes where e-scooters were mentioned. This includes crimes where e-scooters have been used, stolen or targeted. Approximately 125 were seized in the WMP area.

### **Fatal Four**

#### **Seat Belts**

30. Nationally, 23% of those killed on the roads were not wearing seatbelts. 724 seat belt offences were reported by WMP during 2022/23. This is a 17 per cent increase compared to the previous financial year. WMP supported a 2-week national seat belt enforcement campaign in May/June. 130 offences were reported during the campaign in the WMP area.

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<sup>2</sup> This is based on "e-scooter", "electronic scooter" or "e scooter" being mentioned in the first parts of an incident log. If "scooter" is just listed, it has not been included as it is not possible to determine if it is an e-scooter or not. Therefore the figures are likely to be higher.

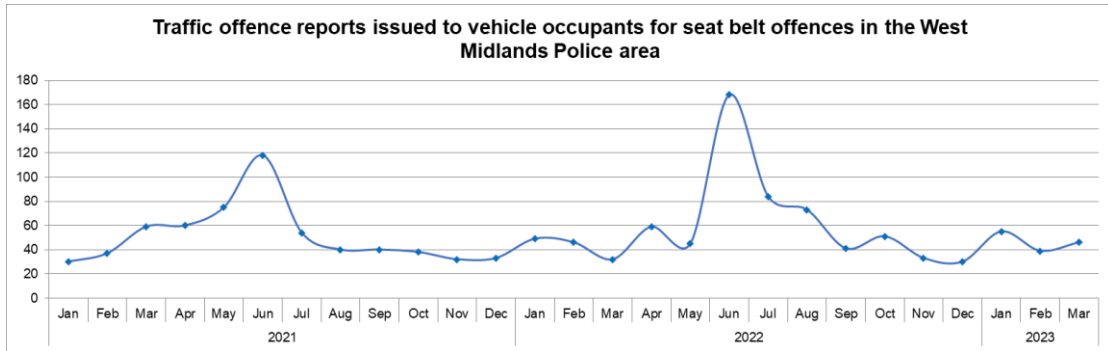


Figure 3. Number of traffic offence reports issued to vehicle occupants for seat belt offences in the West Midlands Police area, Jan 2021 – Mar 2023

### Speed

31. Through handheld speed detecting devices, 2,615 speeding offences were reported by WMP officers during 2022/23 which is in addition to offences detected by automated equipment. This is an 18 per cent decrease on the previous financial year. WMP participated in the national speed enforcement campaign during October, and during the two-week campaign 348 offences were reported.

32. West Midlands Police have engaged in a project to drive greater compliance with speed limits through additional enforcement. Work is currently ongoing to put in place a single Joint Working Agreement across the region in order that this can be progressed as a partnership. Some of the work is commercially sensitive and subject to early consultation and discussions between agencies. The outcomes of this project do work towards the Strategic Police and Crime Plan with respect to carrying out more Average Speed Enforcement, a further report on the project will be taken to OPCC when further progress is made.

33.



Figure 4. Number of traffic offence reports issued for speeding offences witnessed by officers on patrol in the West Midlands Police area, Jan 2021 – March 2023

### Drink and Drug Driving

34. 2,554 drink and/or drug drivers were arrested by WMP in 2022/23, one every 3.5 hours.

This is a 4 per cent decrease compared to the previous financial year. WMP took part in the national drink and drug driving campaigns in August and November/December. The summer campaign resulted in 45 arrests (drug driving) and the Christmas campaign recorded 361 arrests. WMP will be participating in similar national campaigns this year.

35. Drug driving remains an increasing challenge and the prevalence of Nitros Oxide anecdotally appears to be an increasing factor in many collisions that police are responding to. We have recently engaged with the Department for Transport about a potential change in legislation to tackle the impairment that Nitros Oxide causes to drivers.

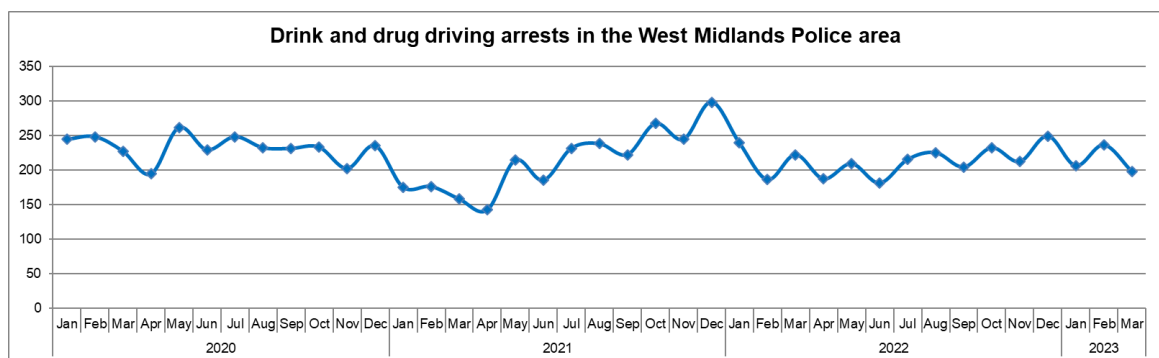


Figure 5. Number of drink and drug driving arrests in the West Midlands Police area, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023

### Mobile Phone Use

36. 1,089 drivers were reported for using a mobile phone whilst driving, or not being in proper control of their vehicle, during the 2022/23 financial year. This is a 21 per cent increase compared to the previous financial year. WMP supported the national mobile phone enforcement campaign in February/March 2023, during which 70 offences were reported. In March 2022 the law changed, making it easier to prosecute people illegally using their phone at the wheel by making almost any use of a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel illegal.

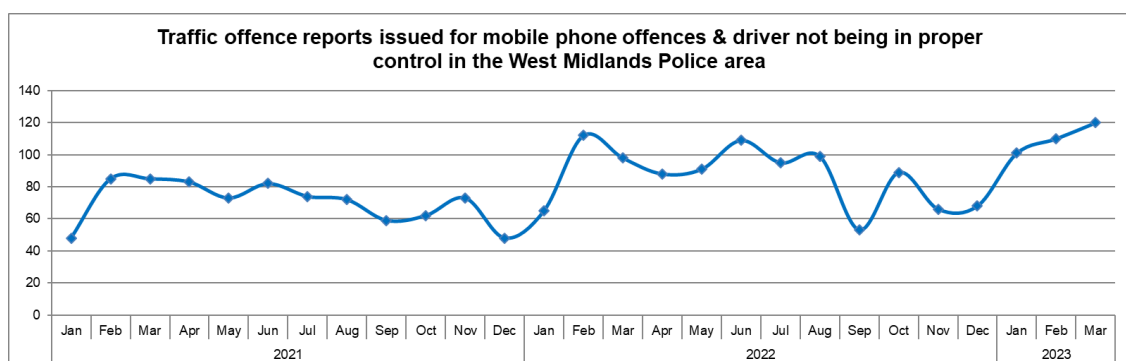




Figure 6. Number of traffic offence reports issued for mobile phone offences & the driver not being in proper control in the West Midlands Police area, Jan 2021 – March 2023

### ***Tackling Serious and Organised Crime on the Roads***

37. Over the last financial year, roads policing officers based in the WMP area have seized criminal assets from vehicles stopped worth almost £15 million, including almost £1.3 million worth of drugs and over £700,000 in cash. There have also been large scale commodity seizures whilst working with organisations such as HM Revenue and Customs, the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit and the National Crime Agency as well as the recovery of high value stolen vehicles as part of targeting vehicle crime.
38. In addition to the recovery of valuable commodities, 99 weapons have been recovered from vehicles stopped by roads policing officers over the last financial year helping to tackle violence associated with serious and organised criminality.
39. Roads Policing officers continue to target burglary and vehicle crime offenders which is part of our core delivery and has been integral to the reductions in car key burglary across WMP.

<b>Seized drugs</b>	<b>Seized cash</b>	<b>Other seized criminal assets</b>	<b>Arrest</b>
£1,255,985	£708,534	£12,2992,758	1,793

Table 1. Roads Policing Performance Data 2022/23

### ***Misrepresented, missing or obscured number plates***

40. 1,828 number plate offences have been reported by West Midlands Police over the last 3 years. This is a 23 per cent increase compared to the previous 3-year period reported on in the 2022 Safer Travel report presented to the SPCB. This is due to a significant increase in offences reported by officers assigned to Operation Hercules (WMP’s street racing enforcement) from January to May 2022 when issuing reports to vehicles with non-conforming registration plates was used as a tactic to disrupt and deter participants and spectators with vehicles bearing illegal number plates. The vehicle reported for number plate offences on 6 occasions in 2021 was reported on a seventh occasion in 2022 but is now displaying a compliant plate. It could be suggested that the law surrounding obscured numbers plates could be enhanced to create a larger penalty for lack of compliance with the law.

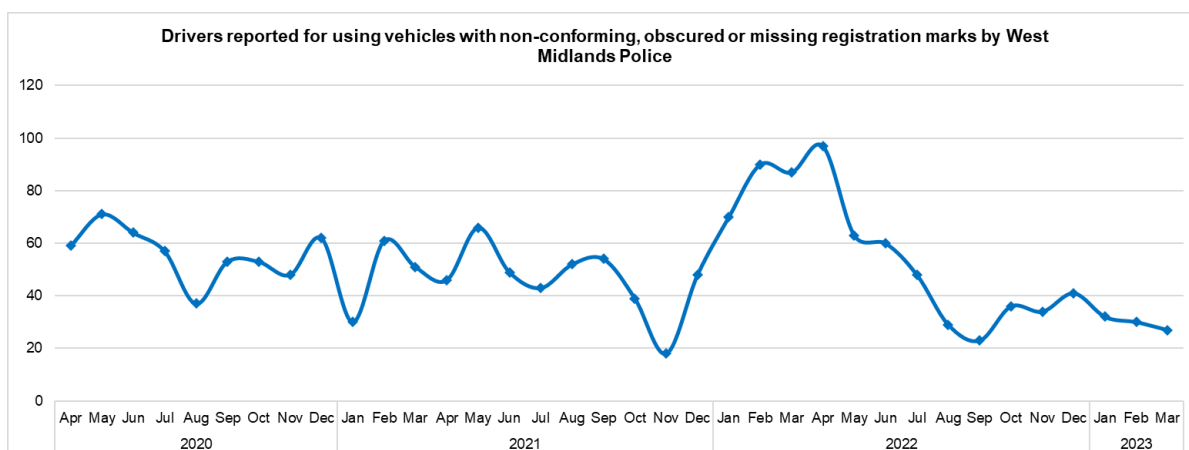


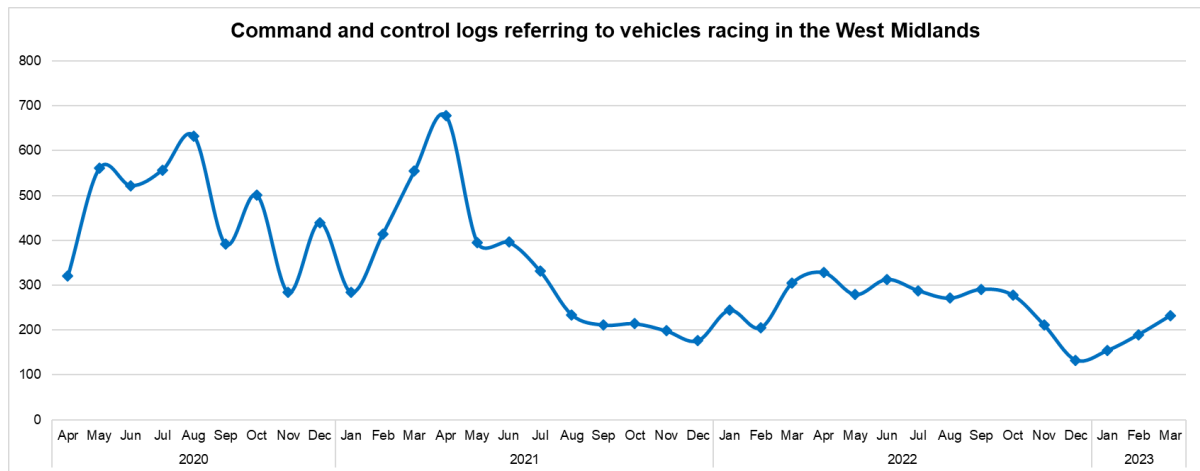
Figure 7. Number of drivers reported for using vehicles with non-conforming, obscured or missing registration marks by West Midlands Police, Apr 2020 – Mar 2023

### ***Illegally adjusted exhausts***

41. Policing illegally modified exhaust systems is an essential measure to address noise pollution and ensure road safety. These modifications, involve altering the original exhaust system of a vehicle to produce louder and more disruptive noise levels. By enforcing laws against such modifications, authorities aim to maintain peaceful communities and protect individuals from excessive noise exposure. Illegally modified exhausts are considered anti-social behaviour, but can also distract drivers and pedestrians, leading to potential accidents. Through diligent partnership, authorities can deter the use of these exhaust systems and promote a safer and quieter environment for everyone. As police we see numerous vehicles that are either remapped or have a non-standard exhaust fitted which produces a loud popping noise.
42. Road Harm Reduction Team are in the process of securing funding to purchase an audio analyser which will allow enforcement to be taken, particularly during Multi Agency Road Safety Operations. With regards to insurance, where officers identify an aftermarket modification on a vehicle, they refer this to the relevant insurance company for their attention. It is then up to the insurance company as to whether they take any action regarding the policy.
43. Birmingham City Council has installed an acoustic camera, recognising the cross over from excessive noise into anti-social behaviour. This is helpful monitoring tool (not enforcement) providing data that will be used to support a broader partnership response.

## ***Street racing***

44. The tactical delivery of Operation Hercules came under Roads Policing in September 2022, specifically the Road Harm Prevention Team now coordinates all Operation Hercules activity. Street racing continues to be a problem across the force and the team work tirelessly to reduce the problem by conducting proactive patrols at key locations on relevant days.
45. The team have attended multi-agency meetings with local Councils and businesses across the Force, addressing community concerns and target hardening locations currently used for street racing.
46. There is now an interim civil injunction in place across Birmingham and the Black Country. The team have made a number of arrests in relation to this and will continue to arrest where operationally feasible.
47. There have been 12,017 reports of vehicles racing in the West Midlands over the last 3 years. This is a 3 per cent increase on the 3-year period reported on in the previous Safer Travel report presented to the Strategic Police and Crime Board. However, during the summer period when there is normally a peak in activity, 2022 saw the lowest reported incidents of street racing since 2019.
48. Approximately 1 in 5 reports of street racing in the West Midlands over the last 12 months relate to activity on the Black Country Route in Bilston, Kenrick Way in West Bromwich and Heartlands Parkway in Nechells. 25 per cent of street racing activity occurs on weekend evenings from 21:00-01:59 with increased activity also on bank holiday evenings.
49. Drivers involved in street racing in the West Midlands are known to travel from as far as Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Essex and Nottinghamshire to engage in this activity and on nights when street racers encounter a robust policing presence in the West Midlands, they are often displaced to locations on other force areas.
50. In partnership with West Midlands Fire Service a diversionary programme is now delivered where a staged intervention approach is taken towards civil interventions for those observing or taking part in street racing activities.



51.

Figure 8. Number of command and control logs referring to vehicles racing in the West Midlands, Apr 2020 – Mar 2023

### **Update on Multi-Agency Road Safety Operation (MARSO)**

52. The Multi-Agency Road Safety Operation (MARSO) gives Local Policing Teams a unique tactic in order to concentrate high visibility policing in specific areas. This operation is led by the Road Harm Prevention Team as a tactic to reduce risk on our roads, by removing the vehicles causing or likely to cause the most harm to other road users, while allowing the Neighbourhood Policing Team to address crime spikes, ASB issues or other crime and community concerns.

53. The MARSO uses traffic motorcycles and marked or unmarked cars to spot vehicles that are in poor condition, while also using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) for any information markers associated with vehicles. Vehicles are then brought onto a static site, staffed by the Local Policing Teams and multiple key partner agencies, who deal with the vehicles and occupants.

54. Key partners include Warwickshire Police, West Mercia Police, Staffordshire Police, Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Environment Agency, West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS), Court Warrants Officers and Licensing Officers. This tactic is only effective because of the work done by our key partners, and it highlights the impact a joined-up approach can deliver.

55. MARSO operations are run on a weekly basis throughout the Force area and on a cross border basis with the surrounding forces.

### ***Car Free School Streets***

56. The Road Harm Prevention Team are working in partnership with Birmingham City Council in relation to their experimental Car Free School Street zones.
57. These Car Free School zones came into force on the 25th April 2022, since this time Birmingham City Council have taken steps to publicise the zones and educate drivers as to the rules relating to them.
58. Working in partnership, Road Harm Prevention Team staff have been attending the zones when they are in operation during weekday morning and afternoons. Alongside Council Staff, Road Harm Prevention Team staff have also provided a high visibility presence in order to educate but also enforce Car Free School Streets if necessary.
59. Whilst at the location officers are also able to detect other offences, failing to wear seatbelts etc. These offences impact on the safety of drivers and vehicle occupants, by dealing with these offences at the same time officers are able to reduce the risk both to vehicle occupants as well as vulnerable road users.
60. The Car Free School Streets Scheme is being extended to other Council areas and the Road Harm Prevention Team staff will also work with our other partners in order to contribute to the success of pedestrianised school streets.

### ***West Midlands Police Volunteers***

61. The Road Harm Prevention Team have taken on a number of community volunteers.
62. These volunteers will be provided with uniform and will accompany regular officers from the team on visits to schools and colleges. Officers from the team will mentor our community volunteers so that they can commence delivering these inputs.
63. Our partners at Birmingham City Council are assisting with updated lesson plans so that any inputs being given are up to date and will increase their chances of being effective. Awareness of e-scooters and e-bikes, along with the dangers associated with them is seen as a priority during these engagement sessions in schools.
64. The Road Harm Prevention Team uses an evidence-based approach towards its day-to-day activity. We will continue to do this in relation to our school inputs. By liaising with our council partners and utilising KSI data, we will identify a top 20 list of priority schools where we can commence inputs, in order to maximise our effect on reducing collisions involving young people.

65. All activity that the Road Harm Prevention Team undertakes is designed to improve the safety of road users, all activity is showcased on all available social media platforms to improve public perceptions and to provide reassurance that positive action is being taken.

### **Safety Cameras**

66. For the financial year of 2022/2023 there were 85,965 offences passed to Central Ticket Office (CTO), these were a mix of speed and Red X offences. This was delivered through a range of cameras, such as average speed cameras on our road network, average speed cameras on the motorway (roadworks), variable cameras and mobile enforcement camera vans.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Apr 22</b>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>Jun 22</b>	<b>Jul 22</b>	<b>Aug 22</b>	<b>Sep 22</b>	<b>Oct 22</b>	<b>Nov 22</b>	<b>Dec 22</b>
<b>Offences to CTO</b>	6873	8084	7586	8666	7309	7565	6448	5314	5717
<b>Month</b>	<b>Jan 23</b>	<b>Feb 23</b>	<b>Mar 23</b>						
<b>Offences to CTO</b>	7177	7940	7286						

Table 1. Offences passed to the Central Ticket Office, Apr 2022 – Mar 2023

67. Motorway camera update - Average speed cameras that were in place on the M6 roadworks are now in the process of being removed from Junctions 4-5 (both directions) and at the moment there is no commitments from National Highways to continue with the roadworks in the short term. This does not affect the long-term commitment to enforcing the speed and red X on the motorway.

### **West Midlands ANPR**

68. We have been granted permission to extend our ANPR network. The location of these cameras has been chosen following a strategic assessment that has been carried out by the force. Full consultations are taking place in the areas that the cameras are being located.

### ***Network Resilience***

69. The CMPG Regional Operations Centre (ROC) continues to work on their partnership with Highways England (HE), ensuring a joined-up approach to incidents on the strategic network. An interoperability airwave channel has been implemented to enable a robust incident management process, preventing delays and 'trapped traffic' utilising CLEAR (collision, lead, evaluate, act, reopen) principles to keep traffic moving.

### **Rollout of moving traffic offence devolution across the force area**

70. At the beginning of 2023, CC Guildford approved Tranche 2 applications from Birmingham, Coventry and Walsall local authorities in order to enforce Moving Traffic Contraventions under the Traffic Management Act 2004. Their applications were subsequently submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) and were approved. The first of these authorities is likely to begin enforcement after September.

71. The remaining Local Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Solihull are intending to apply during Tranche 3. The deadline for these applications to be received by DfT is 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Within all applications is the commitment to work towards the commitments of the Strategic Police and Crime Plan.

### ***Financial Implications***

72. West Midlands Police demonstrate a strong commitment to roads policing and the positive effect this has on road safety. Road's policing officers have a much broader function than the conventional notion of a 'traffic officer' however part of all roads policing officers core role is taking part in road safety initiatives and road safety enforcement activity. Specialist training in these areas is provided. The Chief Constable has recently agreed an increase to the overall number of roads policing officers in WMP.

### ***Equality Implications***

73. All policies relating to Roads Policing are subject to Equality Impact Assessments before being published. This ensures WMP demonstrates transparency and achieves better outcomes for all.

74. In addition, CMPG attends West Midlands Police Cadet schemes to engage young people and obtain feedback regarding perceptions or road policing. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive.

75. Our Intelligence function is currently developing a number of apps to provide greater management information about all elements of Roads' Policing. In particular, we CMPG and Traffic are piloting an app to capture data surrounding vehicle stops that result in the use of S.163 of the Road Traffic Act. This will be reviewed in September 2023, to determine whether this is rolled out force wide.
76. The data from Stop and Search and Use of Force is monitored via daily TRM meetings, monthly Tasking Delivery Boards and is reviewed by LPA Public Scrutiny Boards.
77. CMPG also regularly attend IAG meetings held on each of the LPA areas.

## **PART 2 – SAFER TRAVEL**

### ***Introduction***

78. The Safer Travel team consists of West Midlands and British Transport police officers, community support officers and police staff. They work in collaboration with the Combined Authority who employ a team of Transport Safety Officers, an ASB manager and provide CCTV support.
79. The team consists of operational officers, anti-social behaviour investigators, a police staff crime investigator, education officer, analyst and a communications officer. National Express are also embedded within the team based at Centro House.
80. The team is supported by West Midlands police and their tactical intelligence team, which helps to ensure that seasonal and emerging crime threats are identified and responded to.
81. West Midlands police remain committed to the Safer Travel partnership, a growing collaboration that now includes 7 Transport Safety Officers and National Express, who are embedded within the policing team at Centro House. The Combined Authority plan to grow the number of Transport Safety Officers later this year.

The presence of National Express and the recent introduction of a police staff investigator by West Midlands police, has led to an improvement in criminal and ASB investigations and an increased chance of a positive outcome and justice for victims. CCTV is retrieved quicker than ever before; more suspects are being identified and cross transport mode themes are being identified.



82. The Chief Constable is reviewing additional powers for Transport Safety Officers that if authorised will enable them to deal more effectively with anti-social behaviour and road safety. These additional powers may include:

- a) Provide TSOs with an option to issue fixed penalty notices for behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. To assist this process, Transport for West Midlands have a five-year contract with an external supplier who provide back-office support, that includes dealing with queries in relation to the issue of notices and payment.
- b) Traffic offences (directing traffic) – the power to obtain the name and address of anyone failing to comply with directions.
- c) The power to remove abandoned vehicles – any removal would be requested via the relevant local authority.

### ***Passenger safety***

83. The latest quarterly survey report published by the Combined Authority was in December 2022 and captured 594 bus users, 441 train users and 255 tram users. It is estimated that there are around 18 million bus, 2.5 million train and 500,000 tram passengers per day within the West Midlands. Given the significant numbers of travellers, it should be noted that the survey respondents would equate to less than 1% of each commuter type for any typical day.

84. The data does however provide the Safer Travel Partnership and West Midlands police with 'a guide' as to how the public within West Midlands feel when using public transport.

		% Very Safe/Safe		
		Bus	Rail	Metro
During hours of daylight	Safety walking to stop/station	65	65	62
	Safety at stop/station	64	64	60
	Safety on board	65	63	59
During hours of darkness	Safety walking to stop/station	22	23	36
	Safety at stop/station	21	28	31
	Safety on board	26	25	36
		% Very Satisfied/Satisfied		
During hours of daylight	Presence of staff at stop/station	39	45	43
	Presence of staff on board	44	45	49
During hours of darkness	Presence of staff at stop/station	29	31	44
	Presence of staff on board	35	31	42

85. A more effective tool to assess *actual* public safety is crime, anti-social behaviour, intelligence and vulnerability data that West Midlands police and the Safer Travel partnership team review on a daily basis.

86. As well as using this information to set daily policing activity, the team uses it to set monthly tactical priorities. These are specific to the transport network and do not always mirror the wider geographic priorities of West Midlands police.

87. National Express are a permanent fixture within the Safer Travel team set up at Centro House, providing opportunities to improve perceived and actual safety. Areas of success have been the education of bus drivers in how to identify and deal with vulnerability and the importance of reporting incidents at the earliest opportunity. This has led to an increase in incident reporting and the police's ability to respond at pace.

88. As part of this joint working strategy, National Express have introduced a new scheme whereby they offer to drop vulnerable people closer to home, if the location is along the bus route.

89. As can be seen by the survey data, the Metro is perceived as the safest form of public transport. However, there is a proposal to remove conductors from the network. If this proposal is implemented then it is anticipated that crime and anti-social behaviour will increase, impacting on West Midlands police and the Safer Travel partnership.

## ***Crime and outcomes***

### ***Transport crime***

90. Crime statistics for the whole transport network are presented for the past three years to provide a comparable trend.

91. **Table 1** shows that in 2022/23 bus crime has increased by 39.9% and rail crime has increased by 16.8% when compared to 2021/22 and overall transport related crime increased by 32.3%.

**Table 1: Transport Crime Financial Year Comparison**

Recorded Crime	20/21	21/22	22/23	Trend: 21/22- 22/23 Comparison
Bus Crime	2,337	3,709	5,189	▲ +39.9%
Train Crime	1,099	1,837	2,146	▲ +16.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,436</b>	<b>5,546</b>	<b>7,335</b>	<b>▲ +32.3%</b>

**Notes:** Data sourced from date recorded. April to March.

### ***Reasons for bus crime increases***

92. There are several factors which we believe have led to the bus crime increases:

- A large increase in weapons and drugs offences which are partially linked to proactive operations.
- Victims reporting more crime to West Midlands police, Safer Travel and Transport Safety Officers. One area where this is evident is National Express, whose drivers have received additional training around reporting incidents that they either witness or experience as a victim.
- More third-party reports of crime, that includes crimes being recorded from SeeSay, a method of reporting Anti-Social Behaviour which has refreshed.
- An increase in reporting by the Combined Authority CCTV operators who have received training on how to report.
- More ethically recorded crimes than previous years.
- Increased crime prevention and reporting campaigns.

93. **Table 2** provides a breakdown of crime categories for the bus network.

**Table 2: Bus Crime Yearly Comparison**

<b>Recorded Crime</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>Trend: 21/22- 22/23 Comparison</b>
Arson and Criminal Damage	549	671	1102	▲ +64.2%
Drug Offences	20	39	58	▲ +48.7%
Possession of Weapons	37	92	151	▲ +64.1%
Public Order	462	768	937	▲ +22.0%
Robbery	152	269	379	▲ +40.9%
Sexual Offences	73	159	195	▲ +22.6%
Theft	235	369	595	▲ +61.2%
Vehicle Offences	31	52	66	▲ +26.9%
Violence Against the Person	775	1,282	1,700	▲ +32.6%
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	3	8	6	▼ -25.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>3,709</b>	<b>5,189</b>	<b>▲ +39.9%</b>

**Notes:** Data sourced from date recorded. April to March.

94. 2023/24 has started positively in relation to bus crime, with a 15.8% reduction in April and 21.8% reduction in May when compared to the previous year. This is partly attributed to intensification operations conducted by the Safer Travel partnership, West Midlands police and partners.

95. The Safer Travel team have made changes to their deployment strategy, tactical priority setting and tasking processes. This has so far seen an increase in the number of collaborative enforcement operations and joint working, as well as several notable arrests.

96. **Table 3** outlines a breakdown of crime categories for the rail network.

**Table 3: Train Crime Yearly Comparison**

Recorded Crime	20/21	21/22	22/23	Trend: 21/22- 22/23 Comparison
Public Order Offences	239	321	379	▲ +18.1%
Route Crime	28	30	35	▲ +16.7%
Theft of Passenger	136	250	419	▲ +67.6%
Pedal Cycle Thefts	96	106	180	▲ +69.8%
Criminal Damage	223	260	252	▼ -3.1%
Violence Against the Person	246	437	467	▲ +6.9%
Vehicle Crime	54	64	123	▲ +92.2%
Robbery	32	48	53	▲ +10.4%
Sexual Offences	39	104	64	▼ -38.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>1,972</b>	<b>▲ +21.7%</b>

Notes: Data sourced from date recorded. April to March.

- Vehicle crime is showing as the largest increase in 2021/22, which is attributable to a series of Ford Fiesta thefts that has been resolved.

97. Metro crime has remained incredibly low throughout each year with up to 12 crimes occurring each month.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Incidents**

98. **Table 4** shows that in 2022/23 bus related ASB incidents increased by 11% and rail related ASB increased by 28.7% when compared to the previous year.

**Table 4: Transport ASB Incidents Yearly Comparisons**

Recorded ASB	2021/22	2022/23	Trend
Bus	2951	3314	+11%
Rail	2153	3018	+28.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5104</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>+19.4%</b>

Notes: Rail data provided by BTP.

99. The highest area of ASB on the bus network remains as Rowdy behaviour / Disruptive Passengers / Disruption of service.

100. A possible contributing factor to an increase in recorded ASB is West Midlands police and Safer Travel team campaigns to the public, requesting that incidents are reported. Methods used to publicise the importance of reporting have included social

media messaging, signage across the public transport network, awareness sessions delivered to schools, colleges, community groups and businesses.

101. Like crime, ASB on the Metro is low.

### ***Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions***

102. The West Midlands Combined Authority plan to recruit further Transport Safety Officers in their bid to reduce ASB.

103. Transport Safety Officer tasking is directly linked to the Safer Travel Tactical Delivery Board and there are plans to co-locate the Transport Safety Officers within the Safer Travel team office. This will create more opportunities to share information and deliver joint deployments.

104. Each Local Policing Area within West Midlands police work collaboratively with the local authority and other partners to reduce ASB, target offenders and where appropriate offer alternative pathways.

105. West Midlands police and the Safer Travel team provide valuable education to children to make them aware of anti-social behaviour and using their links with schools, identify pupils that have offended.

106. The Safer Travel team continue to work closely with the Combined Authority and the West Midlands police Design Out Crime team to identify improvements. The newly proposed Dudley bus station is one current area of interest.

107. The Combined Authorities CCTV operators are trained to identify ASB and crime and play a vital role in both identifying an incident and alerting the Safer Travel team via a link radio.

108. West Midlands police are currently exploring ways to provide Combined Authority CCTV operators with an Airwave radio to improve information sharing and the police's ability to respond at pace to catch offenders and support vulnerability.

**Civil Interventions**

109. Incidents are reported through different sources including the Safer Travel website, and by text to the ‘See Something, Say Something’ number.

110. **Table 6** provides an overview and main categories of interventions led by the Safer Travel ASB team.

	2022	2023
Verbal Warning/Advisory letter	778	1659
First Stage warning letter	96	123
Final warning letter	44	15
Restorative Justice meetings	11	14
Other interventions *	4	9
Partner interventions**	8	80
No of incidents reported	2951	3314
No of Cases created	1126	1117
* includes Criminal Behaviour Orders, Community Protection Warnings and Notices, Acceptable behaviour contracts		
** includes sanctions by Schools, Operators and other partners following		

111. Verbal warnings/advisory letters remain the highest method used and in 2023 increased by 54% when compared to the previous year.

112. In 2023 the number of First Stage warnings increased by 24 that is due to a series of incidents that occurred and were resolved at a bus station.

113. National Express continue to support Restorative Justice and to date there is no evidence that any of those that have taken part in Restorative Justice have re-offended.

114. Further work by the Safer Travel team with local schools and other partners has resulted in a growth in partner interventions. A prime example being schools who can then track behaviours and gain the support of parents.

## **VULNERABILITY FOCUS**

115. Hate crime, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and other vulnerability crime such as sexual offences are reviewed and discussed by West Midlands police and the Safer Travel team on a daily basis.
116. Several targeted operations have taken place between West Midlands police, the Safer Travel team and the Combined Authority to prevent these crime types and to locate and arrest offenders.
117. The Safer Travel team form part of West Midlands police's VAWG plan to jointly prevent and detect crime, safeguard victims and bring offenders to justice.
118. As part of this plan, the Safer Travel team secured the support of the Combined Authority in providing additional CCTV cameras at bus stops deemed to be vulnerable, for example in remote locations or cutting back hedge rows that may surround a bus stop.
119. The Safer Travel team continues to work closely with several partners to promote project Empower, a campaign that aims to encourage victims of unwanted sexual behaviour to report to the police.
120. The Safer Travel team now includes unwanted sexual behaviour and their hate crime campaign as standard in all of their assemblies, events and workshops. In the average school year their education officer speaks to around 30,000 individuals in primary/secondary schools, colleges, universities, youth groups and businesses.
121. The team have also conducted targeted sessions with vulnerable women and girls, for example refugees and people with learning or physical disabilities. They have also supported victims of crime in restoring their confidence to use public transport again.
122. The Safer Travel team are currently working with Birmingham Business Improvement District (BID) to support women during the nighttime economy, offering advice on how to be safe when using taxis and public transport. The joint work also promotes the Ask Angela campaign. People who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for



'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help with their situation and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them.

123. The Safer Travel team actively demonstrates the Equality Duty within all areas of daily business and all nine protected characteristics of equality firmly sit within its thinking, processes, procedures and work. The team's ethos is to foster a culture of courtesy, respect, fairness and belonging, and do more than just appreciating the principles of the Equality Act. It's about what we do to enforce them. This includes the importance of challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviour and supporting others through education.

124. Recruitment, development, wellbeing, communication, contribution recognition, decision making, and an understanding of other people's perspectives are just a few areas of focus. As well as general observations and 1-2-1 discussions, supervisors regularly perform performance reviews and gain feedback from others to ensure that expectations are met and a belief in the Equality Duty are maintained. The act and team operations are further supported by the 9 Policing Principles and Code of Ethics that sets out the standards of professional behaviour.

## **NEXT STEPS**

125. The Board is asked to note the contents of this report

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