

**Strategic Policing and Crime Board
23rd January 2024**

Police and Crime Plan Priority: *where appropriate*

Title: Rebuilding Community Policing - Part Two

Presented by: ACC Bell, Supt Martin Hurcomb

Purpose of paper

1. To provide the Commissioner with a report on progress towards the objectives in the West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2025, in relation to Rebuilding Community Policing – Part 2.

Main paper

2. In April 2023, West Midlands Police introduced a new local policing model, that is designed to be responsive to the needs of local people. As part of the new operating model, we have ensured that our people are now locally managed and locally based, to increase the visibility of our teams within the local community and enable them to respond quicker to calls for services.
3. West Midlands Police has recently launched its new Neighbourhood Policing ambition. Over the next 3 months we will turn our ambition into a 3-year strategy that will build on our existing Neighbourhood Policing structure. To help shape this, we will engage with partners and our communities to ensure our vision and understandings are aligned. This work has already started.
4. Currently West Midlands has the following in place to support building community policing:
 - Each Local Policing Area is split into sectors which are based on the geographical boundaries of local council wards with respective supervision, a partnerships

team and a proactive element of neighbourhood policing called the Priority Crime Team.

- The neighbourhood policing Chief Inspectors on each Local Policing Area balances the force priorities against what the local communities are telling us are their priorities to produce a single amalgamated priorities list for each sector. This ensures that the strategic direction and resulting tactical action is clear for our neighbourhood officers and these priorities are refreshed every two weeks in line with tasking and coordination cycles.
- Using Problem Management Profiles (PMP) the local sector Inspector will write a detailed tactical plan against that strategic priority strand. This PMP will direct the tactical response, coordinate work between teams and analyse the outputs against the intended outcomes in real time to ensure that the tactical plan is delivering against the strategic priority. We utilise a Priority Crime Team which is a mix of uniform and non-uniformed specialist assets to deliver proactive policing within each LPA as an additional tactical intervention for any crime type. Visibility as well as any other deployed tactic are monitored through neighbourhood tasking, and we undertake reality testing to ensure that what has been deployed on paper is happening in practice.
 - Our neighbourhood policing teams also work with locally based Intelligence Teams, Local Offender Management Units and partners to identify groups or individuals who are causing us the most harm.
 - Details of our neighbourhood teams are published on our website which includes officer names, team email addresses and social media accounts.
 - The new operating model ensures that each Local Policing Area has a local Corporate Communication person based locally. This has enabled Corporate Communications to work closer with each Local Policing Area to deliver key local news and information via WMNOW and social media platforms. We have used social media to demonstrate to our communities when we have tackled or resolved an issue.

Recruitment Within Uplift Programme, Specifically Within Local Policing

5. The Police Officer Uplift programme concluded at the end of March 2023 with the force provided funding for an additional 1,278 officers (includes 60 temporary funding). At the end of March, the Force police officer strength was 8,067 with an additional 1,376 officers recruited. Therefore, the Uplift target was surpassed by 98 officers.
6. Additional temporary funding was secured for 2024/25 which included the 60 posts from 2022/23 and a further 40 posts. This was further increased in September by a further 75 police officer posts bringing the overall number of funded police officer posts to 8,084 by the end of March 2024.

7. Against this position, police officer strength is currently 7,952 with further recruitment intakes planned through January, February and March 2024.
8. As part of the force's commitment to providing a service that works for our communities 570 police officer uplift posts have been invested into the seven local policing areas. These roles are focused on greater visibility in our communities with particular focus upon the impact areas across the force, responding quickly to incidents and investigating and resolving crime. Table 1 below details the allocation of police officer posts across the force.

Table 1: Allocation of Police Officer posts by Department

New Op Model	Function (old Op Model)	Uplift
Local Policing Area	Local Policing/NPUs	221
	Response	252
	FCID (Volume)	68
	SOCEX (NPU)	29
Major Crime Unit	Force CID (Complex)	111
Public Protection Unit		110
Custody		10
Intel		13
SOCEX (split across non-Local Policing Departments)		79

Strength

9. The change of operating model has to be taken into account when examining the overall change in police officer strength over time.
10. Table 2 shows a comparison of officer strength from the start of Uplift through to the beginning of December 2023. This shows that there has been an increase in overall strength when comparing the sum of the functions in the old operating model that have transferred to Local Policing within the new model.

Table 2: Strength Comparison Over the course of Uplift

New Op Model	Function (old Op Model)	Strength		
		Oct 2019	Apr 2023	Dec 2023
Local Policing Area	Local Policing/NPUs	1,342	3,972	4,092
	Response & FSU	1,458		
	FCID (Volume)	567		
Total		3,367	3,972	4,092

11. The combined approach of investing additional resources through the Uplift Programme and the implementation of the new operating model, which places greater

ownership and capacity of policing into locality and as such community policing, has enabled significant action to 'rebuild community policing'.

12. The additional posts have been invested into a combination of Impact Areas (places showing the greatest need) and key vulnerabilities which affect communities such as Early Help with partners and families, schools intervention, engaging large communities of young people, and Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation (SOCEX).

Community Policing - Impact From Uplift Programme

13. The following examples highlight how and where community policing, as part of the Uplift, continues to support the rebuilding of community policing, targeted in areas where our communities need the most support;

- Work with partners and investment around use of social media, Operation Advance, engagement with and through Cadet schemes and Volunteer programmes.
- Work with partners following significant international events to build upon and enhance relationships with communities especially affected by the conflicts, Ukraine, Russia, Gaza. For example, Birmingham LPA have been conducting on average 100 patrols per day since 7th October at key locations which have been identified as at increased risk of targeted criminal activity due to the current conflict in Gaza.
- Independent Advisory Group (IAG) connection to local communities.
- Police Race Action Plan and engagement with communities.
- Operation Model focussing on the areas that matter to communities and investing in improving these including: answering calls, responding to incidents, investigating crimes, arresting offenders and bringing them to justice.
- Continuing work around problem solving, investment of additional Operation Guardian teams (Eastern and Western) and Targeted Patrols (relating to Serious Youth Violence), Operation Eternity (Funded support for Anti-Social Behaviour, Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) and Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV).
- Further development of Trauma Informed Responses as well as our approach to dealing with individuals presenting with mental health needs;
 - Right Care, Right Person progression.
 - Internal Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) processes.
 - External work with VRP, young persons officers, youth engagement and CIRV.
- Combatting Violence especially relating to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Domestic Abuse and Sex offenders.

- Reducing supply in illicit drugs economy.
 - County Lines work and successes
- Reducing robbery, burglary, vehicle crime and theft from the person (Neighbourhood Crime).
 - Current performance statistics and activities present the successes in this area
- The effective and fair use of police powers.
 - Stop Search
 - Use of Force
 - Training around understanding and learning from these via BWV
- Technology investment.
 - Investment in laptop roll out to LPA staff, increasing visibility and enhance staff awareness of local threats and issues. All response officers now have laptops.
 - Continuous development of Business Insights technology and analysis capabilities to understand problems.

Neighbourhood Policing Strategy 2023 - 2026

14. The wide-ranging work undertaken by the neighbourhood teams reflects the contribution made to the communities we serve. Our Neighbourhood Policing Ambition is aligned to the National Police Chief Council's guidelines, which has a core set of principles aimed at reducing crime. Our ambition is to:

- Deliver an outstanding neighbourhood police service for the people of the West Midlands.
- Enhance community safety by working with our partners.
- Improve public confidence and trust in the police.
- Identify and deliver against local community policing priorities.
- Manage and divert offenders and those at risk of offending.
- Protect vulnerable people.

Neighbourhood Policing Strategy – Core Elements.

15. Our Neighbourhood Policing Strategy outlines our commitment to ensuring that neighbourhood policing is a fundamental part of operational policing within the West Midlands. The approach to neighbourhood policing within the new local policing model already sees an increased number of police officers across all areas of the region, allowing neighbourhood teams to deliver policing locally and to focus on community problems. We will continue to protect neighbourhood policing capacity to ensure delivery of a sustainable response to local issues.

16. There are varying levels of vulnerability and criminal activity across neighbourhoods. Focused policing activity is, and will continue to be, targeted towards the people and places according to the needs of the communities, by taking into account threat, risk, harm and vulnerability, to reduce crime and protect those most vulnerable in society. We do this by identifying the differing needs of communities and targeting activity at individuals that cause the most harm, and places that create the most demand. We take an evidence-based approach to target early interventions aimed at prevention.
17. Analytical capability is essential to the identification of drivers which cause and maintain problems within our communities. Robust analytical capability ensures problem solving activities are based on a good understanding of the causes of problems and are part of an evidence-based approach. We will continue to share data, analysis and practice within force and across the service and with partners. We will also continue to develop skill sets within the neighbourhood teams, specialist policing and support services. We will ensure an understanding of current and future demand to inform resource management and prioritisation decisions.
18. Working closely with other agencies and organisations enables us to develop and identify learning opportunities and to share good practice in relation to approaches and threats. We will continue to do this by supporting the development of a more evidence-based approach and also by developing understanding of costs and benefits of different approaches to inform resource investment decisions.

Training and Development of Neighbourhood Policing Staff

19. West Midlands Police are committed to developing our officers, staff and volunteers, as outlined in the Neighbourhood Policing Ambition 2023 – 2026. This compliments the NPCC Neighborhood Policing Principles and objective to develop and professionalise Neighbourhood Policing training, through a standardised and structured training curriculum.
20. The ambition for 2024 is to develop and deliver a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for all current Neighbourhood staff, which builds on the comprehensive training provided to officers and staff during initial training (student officer/staff pathways).
21. In support and progression of this CPD ambition, WMP continue to work in partnership with Staffordshire University to pilot a 'Professionalising Neighbourhood Policing Programme'. This work is being overseen by a Superintendent and will conclude in February 2024. The evaluation will support a roll out of CPD training within a structured training curriculum. There is work nationally to develop a Neighbourhood Policing Programme which West Midlands Police is at the forefront of leading.
22. In addition, we have also begun to roll out problem solving training to Neighbourhood Policing Teams, which will be enhanced during 2024. All neighbourhood officers, including Sergeants, Inspectors and PCSOs, will receive a two day problem solving training programme.

23. Furthermore, Neighbourhood Policing Teams also have access to local partnership training through community safety partnership and safeguarding arrangements.
24. WMP provides extensive neighbourhood policing training to all new student officers (for all pathways), PCSO's and Special Constables. This provides strong foundations for effective and efficient community policing.

A summary of training and learning objectives for student officers includes;

- a. Understanding the key aspects of community policing and the police role in whole community engagement :-
 - Examine the function of community policing, and key issues relevant to it.
 - Explore a range of community policing contexts in which effective communication can bring particular benefits.
- b. Understand the value of partnerships and community engagement in community policing:-
 - Identify effective partnerships in community policing.
 - Recognise the purpose and value of community engagement .
 - Identify the role of front-line local policing in gathering intelligence that can combat terrorism.
- c. Understanding how to prevent and respond to crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in communities:-
 - Evaluate how crime and anti-social behaviour affects local communities and what constitutes effective and appropriate police action.
 - Prevention and Problem solving.
 - Review the application and influence of evidence-based policing.
 - Definition and rationale for evidence-based policing (EBP).
 - Sources of research and evidence that can be used for policing purposes.
 - Importance of differentiating between types of evidence to inform decisions.
 - 'What works' in terms of policing activities.
 - Potential constraints associated with an evidence-based policing approach
 - Evidence base behind policing approaches.
 - Communicates and engages proactively with communities; including through social media.
 - Students provide an example of an event they have attended or worked where they have positively engaged with their local community.
 - Fosters productive partnerships with community policing.
 - Students provide evidence of working with a partner agency; ideally a statutory one such as housing, education, social care, NHS etc.

Stabilising Neighbourhood Resources

25. There are a significant number of officers in training who are deployed to Local Policing Areas. Based upon the feedback we have received from both officers and the public, in June 2023, the force implemented a new rotational pattern for these officers that reduced the frequency with which they move. Officers in training now remain in a single Local Policing Area for the duration of their probation, which allows them to build better long term relationships with their local communities and colleagues.

26. The force is developing a Neighbourhood Abstraction Policy to ensure abstractions of neighbourhood officers are minimised and the tasking of neighbourhood policing teams is consistent across WMP, in line with the principles of the Neighbourhood Strategy. The road map for delivery of this element of the Neighbourhood Plan is for the abstraction policy to be developed and trialled ready to be implemented by April 2024. Once the Policy is in place the force will begin measuring neighbourhood abstractions with the development of a Qlik App to gain insight into the type and frequency of abstractions influencing neighbourhood policing.
27. As outlined in the Neighbourhood Policing Ambition 2023 – 2026 and specifically within the 'Road Map' which outlines the key activities we aim to undertake during 2024, WMP will define exactly what we mean by 'neighbourhood policing' and define the core responsibilities of a neighbourhood policing officer.
28. Neighbourhood policing in West Midlands provides communities with teams of dedicated, locally based police officers and police community support officers. We seek to minimise abstractions from our neighbourhood teams to ensure that they are able to target their efforts on the issues, places and people that cause the most harm to our communities.
29. The work developed by WMP will compliment and indeed support the NPCC Neighbourhood Policing review and objective to develop a consistent set of principles to maintain capacity within the Neighbourhood Policing environment.
30. As part of the Force operating model review and restructure, workforce planning has ensured the majority of experienced and skilled staff within neighbourhood teams have remained within the locations where they have developed connections with communities. Maintaining this experience and local connection is considered as the foundation for 'rebuilding' and indeed maintaining community policing. This position provides a high degree of continuity within neighbourhood teams, whilst additional officers joining as part of the Uplift Programme bring new ideas and energy to these teams.
31. The Police and Crime Plan was written before the police uplift programme began to return an element of resilience to WMP officer numbers. The target of 464 FTE PCSOs reflected an operating model at that point in time in 2021. Now, three years into uplift we both understand more about how that will work and, we have successfully bid in for even higher uplift figures than we were promised in 2021.
32. Despite the funding for officers retaining an element of conditionality, there is more assurance today of that funding being ongoing than we had in 2021. This additional financial reassurance, combined with the Chief's very welcome new operating model which pushes additional resource out into neighbourhoods, can mean that we can temporarily accept a lower PCSO establishment, whilst retaining an ambition to return those numbers as high as possible in order to provide public reassurance and visibility. So over the period of the MTFP we intend to continue to push for the PCSO establishment to be maintained and increased when and if funds become available.

33. However, the HMICFRS report has publicly identified potential weaknesses which require further support from the PCC role, in order to ensure that the improvement in performance which is already being achieved can be sustained. With this in mind, 30 officers will be recruited in specific areas which will be highly visible to victims of crime as they investigate crimes and support them through the criminal justice process.

Retention of Officers

34. Retention of officers continues to be a key focus for the force, helping to retain experience, deliver continuity of service and achieve the force’s post uplift targets.

35. Over the past 12 months 490 Officer left the force. This equates to an attrition rate of 5.96%, a decrease compared to last year when the attrition rate was 7.02%. The main reasons for leaving over the past 12 months are detailed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Police Officer Leave Reasons – Past 12 months

Reason for Leaving	Total Number of Leavers	% of total leavers
Retirement	203	36.73%
Resignation	192	39.18%
Transfer Out	82	16.73%
Ill-Health Retirement	23	4.69%
Other Reasons	13	2.7%

36. Over the past 12 months we have had 1,411 officers join the force, of these 107 have left. This gives a retention rate of 92.4%.

37. The force has a retention interview process for all officers who are seeking to voluntarily leave the force (excluding those retiring). Every officer is offered a conversation with an independent individual to further explore if there is anything that can be done to retain their skills and experience within force.

38. This retention conversation has been supplemented with the relaunch of the exit interview process in early December for all officers and staff as part of the standard leavers process. This enables individuals to have a conversation about their service and the drivers for leaving with their Line Manger, a HR representative, or independently. Data collected from these interviews will allow the force to identify trends specific to roles, teams and geographical locations.

39. Further initiatives are currently being developed to be launched in 2024 that will enable the force to get upstream and engage with colleagues, to identify, understand and solve potential issues before they get to the point of resignation.

40. Since the start of Uplift the force has recruited 594 new officers from ethnic minority groups. This represents 18.6% of all officer recruits over the period.

41. A Gold group meets on a fortnightly basis supported by a weekly attraction meeting to develop further initiatives to enable the force to attract both the volume of applicants for the additional funded posts and to continue to increase the diversity of the force, working towards the Police and Crime Commissioner's aspiration of recruiting 1,000 new Police Officers from an ethnic minority background by the end of March 2025.
42. All officers in training are deployed to LPAs during their probationary period which increases representation in these areas at a greater rate than elsewhere.
43. This has been made much easier as the strength has increased nearer to the establishment numbers required.

Exploitation

44. Operation LIBERATE is West Midlands Police's response to mitigating risks within the exploitation arena. Three dedicated Exploitation Hubs are in existence within Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton with dedicated resources to target and mitigate exploitation and safeguard the community. The local exploitation hubs facilitate the identification of threat, risk and harm through intelligence analysis which is subsequently disseminated to local officers to make informed decisions regarding safeguarding those at risk, and disrupting organised crime or county lines activity where individuals fall victim to exploitation. Furthermore, a proactive approach in mitigating exploitation linked to missing persons across the LPAs within the County Lines Arena falls under Operation SKYCLASH.
45. The Central Intelligence Team further chairs the Landlord Forum which sets actions with the Local Birmingham SOCEX Team to consider disruption opportunities and understand the threat linked to Adult Sexual Exploitation. This links closely with Operation SANDSTAR which targets Adult Sexual Exploitation and mitigating risks at a number of identified brothels by the Local Policing Teams.
46. WMP contribute to Multi-agency approaches to mitigate the risk and tackle issues to target exploitation. Officers work with Local Authorities, Violence Reduction Partnerships (VRPs) and charities to ensure a collaborative approach is adopted. Officers also use national strategies and toolkits, such as the National Disruption Toolkit and the Clear, Hold, Build framework, to ensure appropriate action is taken and to help prevent recurrences.

Engagement

47. Effective engagement and consultation with our communities is essential to delivering excellent local policing services. Our Local Policing Areas (LPAs) support us in understanding local issues and enable us to work with communities and partners to tackle these through dedicated local policing teams. This dedicated local approach ensures we are accountable to local communities for tackling the things that matter to them most of all. It also ensures that we are open to scrutiny and are transparent in the use of policing powers in keeping all of our communities safe. This policing

approach allows us to arrest and bring to justice, more offenders, tackle anti-social behaviour and disorder and keep our communities safe.

Financial Implications

48. One of the key elements of the operating model change was the focus on Local Policing and creation of Local Policing Areas. The majority of costs in relation to making this change focussed on the physical movement of Police Officers, PCSO's and staff to new locations in the force along with the vehicles and other equipment to enable them to perform their role effectively in these locations. To this end some minor building works were undertaken to enable these changes. The table below summarises the costs incurred in setting up Local Policing Areas:

Expenditure Category	£
Building works and relocations	74,900
IT and equipment	14,200
Furniture and lockers	12,100
Total	101,200

Equality Implications

49. The National Uplift programme conducted an EQIA for the work. An national Uplift Hub has also been constructed, this contains useful information which all forces can access to drive equality and diversity. Content includes;

- Video on what is equality and how to offer equality in the recruitment process.
- Overcoming barriers to applying.
- Adverse impact ratio calculator.
- Using demographics to target your attraction campaigns.

50. WMP also undertook an impact assessment around the uplift, with actions overseen by the Uplift Project Board to increase attraction, representation and to remove barriers.

Equality Assessments

Please refer to **Rebuilding Community Policing - Part 1**

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

Author(s): Claire Bell

Job Title: Assistant Chief Constable – Local Policing