

#### STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

# Tuesday 23rd January 2024

# 1000 - 1300 hrs

#### Attendees:

Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Charmaine Burton	:	Board Member
Claire Bell	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Craig Guildford	:	Chief Constable
Davinder Jagpal	:	Assistant Director - Finance, Contracts and
		Procurement
Jane Heppel	:	Chief Finance Officer
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive
Martin Hurcomb	:	Neighbourhood Policing Superintendent
Pete Gillett	:	Director of Commercial Services
Scott Green	:	Deputy Chief Constable
Simon Foster	:	Police and Crime Commissioner
Tom McNeil	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Wasim Ali	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner

#### Plus, one webcaster, one notetaker and four observers

# **Apologies**

Dr. Cath Hannon	:	Board Member
211 0001111011	•	200.0.000

- 1. The meeting was recorded, and a webcast of the entire discussion can be viewed here: <a href="https://westmidspcc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\_interactive/845143">https://westmidspcc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\_interactive/845143</a>
- 2. The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here:

  <a href="https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/strategic-policing-and-crime-board/agendas-minutes-reports/">https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/strategic-policing-and-crime-board/agendas-minutes-reports/</a>
- 3. Actions arising from the discussion during the meeting are highlighted in bold text.

001/24	Apologies and PCC Update	1
	The Commissioner raised the following points:	Ì

- On 06 December 2023, the Home Secretary approved the Mayor's request for a transfer of PCC functions. However, as a consequence of judicial review, a pre-action protocol letter before claim was written to the Home Secretary, the Combined Authority and the Mayor on 08 December 2023.
- As a result, the Home Secretary launched a public consultation on 20 December 2023. There had previously been no intention on behalf of the Government or the Mayor that a public consultation would take place.
- It's a matter of regret that following legal action, the Home Secretary and the Mayor have belatedly decided to comply with the law and launch an attempt at consultation.
- The Commissioner is committed to complying to his pledge to the electorate, and will
  not hesitate to hold the Government and the Mayor to account, to defend democracy
  and the rights of the people he represents.
- The Commissioner has written to the Home Secretary challenging this flawed and inadequate consultation. A response is awaited.
- The Mayor has declined a public debate with the Commissioner regarding the takeover. The offer remains open.
- It is important that the people in the West Midlands are aware that as matters stand, an election for the role of West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner is due to proceed as planned on 02 May 2024.

# 002/24 Notes of the Last Meeting

The notes of the Board meeting held on 19 December 2023 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### 003/24 Questions from Members of the Board

- 1. Can the Chief Constable please share with the panel the theft from businesses crime figures for over the Christmas period? (Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)
  - Op Advance focused on shoplifting and protecting shop staff.
  - There were 1,934 offences recorded which is a reduction from the November figure which was 2,082, and October which was 2,209. December was the lowest month since May last year.
  - Nationally, shoplifting statistics are around a 33% increase. This is due to increases in reporting. West Midlands are at a 36% increase, 3% above the national mark.
  - The detection rate reached 20% for the first time since October 2020, with 214 arrests.
  - The peak day in December was 06 December 2023 with 97 offences.
  - The lowest three days in the month were: Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Christmas Eve.
- 2. Can the Chief Constable please share with the panel if any work has been carried out to understand the reason why so many complainants feel that they have received a poor service when trying to get updates on their reported crimes? (Asked by Bhupinder Gakhal)
  - The Chief Constable has spoken on a couple of occasions about how important call handling is to people who ring WMP.
  - A year ago, WMP were poor at answering the phone. WMP are now in the top 4 forces. On average 999 calls are answered within 3-4 seconds and this is one of the best in England and Wales.
  - 101 calls used to have an abandonment rate of around 40%. This is now around a 4% abandonment rate.
  - Now WMP are much better at answering the telephone, the focus is very much on the quality of the investigator and the investigation.

- Changing the policing model has changed capacity, but also capability. There are now more officers investigating more crimes – expect to see a trajectory in increased satisfaction.
- 3. I am aware West Midlands Police has worked hard to tackle dangerous street racing in which selfish drivers are meeting to treat our roads like a race track. I know you've succeeded in delivering injunctions in Birmingham and the Black Country, with a number of arrests. However, on a visit I conducted to West Bromwich with police officers, its clear residents are depressed at this ongoing problem. What is West Midlands Police's plan to truly tackle this issue? (Asked by Tom McNeil)
  - Working with local partners around the engineering side of things when it comes to roads and opportunities; average speed cameras and multi-agency enforcement.
  - The Chief Constable has made an investment in roads policing by consistently increasing resources on the traffic of the West Midlands roads more than the motorway.
  - There has also been a creation of a Road Crime team and there is a Harm Prevention team which is mainly motorcycle led.
  - Investment is also being made into dashcam footage which is supported by the PCC
     The Force has increased these investigations which is gaining public satisfaction.
  - In terms of what more can be done; marketing the injunctions, push consistency of average speed cameras around the routes and pushing enforcement to education for longer term success.

Follow up: Should we encourage increased third-party reporting, and still be encouraging 101 calls about this?

Yes, this is certainly something to encourage.

#### **Police and Crime Plan**

#### 004/24

Increased Confidence in WMP: Fairness and Belonging

The report was presented by DCC Scott Green and the following points were discussed:

If diversity and inclusion training is mandatory, why are the completion rates so low? Follow up: What is being done to increase the rate of diversity and inclusion training to be completed?

- The training is mandatory alongside the mandatory training in relation to Manchester arena enquiry, and in relation to fire safety.
- The Force is working to give all mandatory training a push to be completed.
- The full training package is delivered in initial training those within 5 years' service, a third of the workforce, are all trained.

What is done specifically to move black women and men through the ranks to higher positions? What is being done to improve those numbers and is there a timeframe?

- Enthused with newest cohorts, however it takes time to get through the ranks. Time can be seen as the biggest challenge with regards to representation, as it takes time to develop and gain experience.
- Recruitment and retention are key. There is a dedicated outreach team that specifically attend locations to positively endorse the work and provide mentoring. WMP have good internal support mechanisms, particularly when it comes to individuals of a Muslim heritage.
- Overall plan is to keep positive action going, ensure recruitment in the right places, support people that have joined and ensure staff are operationally competent before promoting.

When recruiting for higher positions, do you reach out to different forces and how do you encourage black women and men to apply?

- The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable are in touch with different forces, and both mentor people from different backgrounds in different forces across the country. They also encourage senior officers in this force to be mentored by senior officers outside of the force.
- Linked in to national staff associations and committed to improving this.

How are you making senior positions attractive to black men and women from outside the West Midlands to join WMP?

- For certain ranks, there is a relocation budget. Tend to get most people coming from a local force area into the West Midlands.
- WMP advertise their senior ranks on Police Professional, Police Oracle and Chief's Net to get the widest possible reach.
- Dr. Alison Heydari is coming to review WMP's Police Race Action plan next month from an internal and external perspective.

There is some concern that use of force is being reported and not always being captured which can impact the trust of certain communities. How do you think this has happened?

- Previous Chief Officers decided not to record compliant use of handcuffing. Even in forces where this is recorded, the compliance level is low due to the cultural challenge of getting officers to understand that they have used force.
- This is under ongoing review with the view to start recording compliant use of handcuffing.
- During the custody inspection, HMIC commented that WMP were under recording use of force in custody suites. This has formed part of WMP's Custody Action Plan.
- Seen a significant increase in the recording of use of force in custody, by next month, every member of the custody facility having personal issued body worn video cameras.

At the Stop and Search Commission, the officers that attend present data on compliant handcuffing. Questions have been raised by members of the public as there are much higher levels of data for black arrests. Can you comment on this?

 If you look at disproportionality through the Criminal Justice System through arrests, use of force, searching, WMP are likely disproportionate in use of complaint handcuffing for arrests or search. The issue is that WMP cannot argue whether they are or not because their data set is not complete. This is the driver for doing this work.

There has been some indication that you are less likely to be offered a diversion route if you are from a minority background. Is there a clear focus on ensuring that WMP are using diversion routes fairly? Are WMP keeping analysis on this?

- This has never been raised internally.
- Tom McNeil to provide WMP with information regarding the correlation between minority backgrounds being offered diversion routes for WMP to look into.

The report references issues around specialist departments and recruitment of specialist departments. Given that there has been a focus on the Firearms Operations Unit, how are you going to draw out lessons learnt and apply them to other specialist departments, particularly those that aren't on the student intake?

- ACC's lead on each strand, the main effort around Firearms is ACC O'Hara. Any lessons learnt come back to Chief Officers to think about how they apply to other specialist units.
- There is a good level of representation in PSD which is important for internal and external trust and confidence.

Has a review been completed to look at some recommendations from the past, to implement or see how far WMP have come, particularly in relation to the global minority issue?

- WMP review what has gone before, and particularly look at the lessons.
- The Deputy Chief Constable chairs the organisational risk internally, and they look at lessons from IOPC reports, near misses, health and safety, civil claims and feedback from Staff Associations.
- Part of WMP's success is willingness to change things very quickly; e.g. promotion processes.
- There are deliberate efforts to promote local recruitment.

Could it be argued that some of the fairness and belonging work that needs to be done now, may have been covered or recommended in the past?

- Some of the biggest steps made have been based on the way society has changed and senior police leaders have been more responsive. The Force has never had a race action plan before.
- ACC Matt Ward is a local homegrown talent, who was approached by the Met for a very senior position. WMP have supported this, and it's important to recognise the efforts that go on internally to support staff in their careers.

In November 2023, the Prevention and Intervention team interacted with 435 officers and staff for inputs designed to raise standards of professional behaviour and to be up to standards and call out bad behaviour. Is it possible to clarify what the nature of this interaction was, what the inputs were?

- Inputs may include; student officers when they first join the organisation, targeted inputs where there's a culture emerging in the building or in a department, lessons learnt from PSD investigations.
- The Prevention and Intervention team operates before referring a team or individuals for misconduct. There is the opportunity for this team to intervene, explain the standards of behaviour, and it is designed to prevent referrals.
- The HMIC inspection of PSD gave positive feedback in relation to the work of the Prevention and Intervention team.

Please may you provide us with more information on the annual integrity health check?

- The check is a review of the totality of somebody's personal circumstances, in particular, any change in their personal circumstances e.g. relationships, friendships, financial position. This enables the individual and their manager to reflect and identify any vulnerabilities and make referrals into PSD and the Prevention and Intervention team where necessary.
- When people are taken out of the workplace on secondment, maternity leave etc, WMP perform well.
- WMP are in the minority of forces that complete annual integrity health checks.

The data includes 80% of the workforce in the annual integrity health check. Is there an update on completing this by the end of the year?

 DCC Scott Green to provide the PCC with the updated statistic in relation to completion of the annual integrity health check.

Are there any timescales in connection to recorded vehicle stops data becoming available to all front-line staff and for the public to have oversite and scrutiny through local panels?

 WMP to report back to the PCC with the timescales in connection to recorded vehicle stops data becoming available to all front-line staff and for the public to have oversite and scrutiny through local panels.  This is a pilot, data at the moment is not meaningful. Need to work out the value of the pilot before considering rolling out to the force.

When was WMP's external website launched? What efforts are being made to publicise this and raise awareness in the wider community?

• Force to provide the PCC with further information on the launch of their external website.

Please can you summarise the work being undertaken in relation to the Hate Crime Community Impact Statement and how far this has been developed?

 This has been used previously and is currently being reviewed with a view to being refreshed.

Can you provide further information around the challenges concerning missing people and the need to have the missing people policy refreshed?

 WMP is proud of the work in relation to missing persons. Given the size of our population, the number of missing people and high-risk missing people each day is considerably lower than forces of a similar size.

What is being done to increase collection of protected characteristic data around gender identity and disability?

- This is personal data and therefore completely voluntary.
- Disability is often lower in all organisations as this is very personal data and a matter for all individuals to choose whether to share it.
- Current collection figures are around 50%.

What work is being done to progress the use of equality impact assessments concerning force policies?

- Too many force policies are overdue and the force has too many policies.
- Lots of policies can be brought together under one as opposed to multiple existing policies.
- As each policy is reviewed, they are having an equality impact assessment applied. Confident this will increase in the correct direction.

# 005/24 Rebuilding Community Policing Part Two

The report was presented by ACC Claire Bell/ Supt Martin Hurcomb and the following points were discussed:

With a high turnover of local police officers, is there an approach to ensuring a consistent way of handing over key strategic local relationships to new leaders, or ensuring more officers in the locality are clear about who some of the key relationships are?

- This has been discussed at Local Policing Governance Board. Working hard to ensure the core presentation to the public is always correct, ensuring local team information is up to date on the website.
- The handing over of problems is also important and some of this can be done through documentation and better training.

If an officer has great relationships with members of the community, it would be beneficial if they set up a half an hour meeting with their replacement and the community, to introduce them and ensure they are able to carry on the dialogue. This isn't happening in a number of locations. Is there a way of creating culture of what that excellent handover looks like?

ACC Bell takes the point on board and will keep pushing for this.

Can you provide an explanation on the initiatives being developed to increase retention of experienced officers?

•

- Resignations are not always experienced officers.
- There is a push to ensure exit interviews are done, and recording reasons for resignations for every individual.
- This comes back to the force's vision around employer of choice. Accept within neighbourhood policing that this is an area where WMP can provide better training and make neighbourhood policing more professional.
- The investment in training of neighbourhood policing around problem solving is significant.

One of the police officer reasons for leaving is to 'transfer out'. Please elaborate on this.

- The 'transfer out' is transfer out of the Force.
- WMP also has a lot of transferees in.

Can you give us an example of the 'other reasons' for police officer resignation?

Dismissal.

The new operating model introduced a decision around allocation of resources to individual areas at a given point in time. Is there a mechanism for an ongoing review of whether that's still appropriate? How do you understand where demand is changing over time?

- There are a number of sophisticated measures. A review after six months took place into the new operating model.
- 10 posts were moved from Wolverhampton to Walsall.
- Agreed the methodology was useful, from a portfolio perspective this will be reviewed every six months.

Communities have different needs and expectations. How does the Force get assurance that the right approaches are being taken in the right places to secure engagement with people that policing can work with most effectively?

- This is front and centre of the neighbourhood strategy.
- Description of engagement differs between LPAs. The national police framework offers a framework to measure basic expectation around engagement, this will be in the strategy and form part of the deep-dive taking place.

The emphasis on training and development of neighbourhood officers is very welcome. How are you going to ensure this has a positive impact on neighbourhood teams?

- For student officers, the Force has reviewed all of the neighbourhood policing modules for all different pathways for student officers. The detail in the training is high level and consistent.
- In terms of addressing the gap in student officers and existing officers,
- In February, representatives from all neighbourhood teams will be presenting a SARA plan for a local priority that they have worked through for two months now. These will be evaluated. Firm commitment is to take this pilot into continuous training every year, in addition to problem solving training.
- The difference is that this is consistent training over a period of years as opposed to one off training.

	Regular Item	
006/24	Budget 2024/25	
	The report was presented by Jane Heppel, Pete Gillett and Davinder Jagpal and t following points were discussed:	

What flexibility does the Chief Constable have over allocating funding to PCSOs or police officers?

- With regards to PCSOs, the Chief has ultimate flexibility at operational discretion, and this also applies for deployment and employment of police officers.
- The way some of the uplift grant works is that it's very specific. The Chief does not have discretion on missing this target, or there is a financial penalty.
- Operational deployment is purely a matter for the force. The technical forecasting of the budget becomes very important to be able to set recruitment timelines and pathways which give absolute assurance over headcount numbers.

The paper states that over the period of the MTFP we retain the ambition for the PCSO establishment to be increased if and when funds become available. Are you able to comment on this?

- This remains an ambition of the Force.
- Should future finances be more favourable, the Force would be in a position to take advantages of more opportunities moving forward.

The report refers to £67.2m funding for some force areas which had agreed to recruit additional officers above their original uplift target. Can further information be provided on what those numbers mean for the Force over the last 12 months?

- For the uplift programme, the Home Office approach forces to see if they wish to take on any additional officers.
- The ambition for recruiting additional officers is high but these are decisions for the Home Office. As a result of making those representations, the Force gained 100 officers the first time round and a further 75 after this.
- We are awaiting the announcement to bid for surplus officers this year. This is expected in the next few weeks, and the Force will be bidding again.

Would it be possible to explain to the Board what the consequences would be if the decision was made not to apply the additional council tax precept flexibility?

- The proposals are very welcome to have the additional flexibility to ensure the next financial position is as strong as it can be.
- Recognise the need to show investment as a result of additional precept monies in terms of additional officers and additional staff.

The report references the additional £3 precept flexibility. Could the rationale for the additional £3 flexibility could be explained?

- The Chief Constable wants resource to be targeted to best serve the public and to be better for victims.
- If any changes come to charging, the Force will be able to charge more offences and get justice quicker for victims, and will then be in the very best of positions.
- Additional officers into PPU to cater for demand of monitoring the increased number of people on the sex offenders register. This also addresses some of the HMIC previous areas of concern.
- Additional officers in local policing areas to investigate more local crime.
- Investment with regards to victim services.

There is the potential opportunity to bid for a share of 625 officers nationally. Could the background to this be explained?

- The Force has 800 officers fewer than 2010. This is the biggest gap of any police force in England and Wales.
- Wherever the Met or any other force misses the target, the Chief Constable is determined to take advantage of those posts if they are funded by the Government.
- The PCC expressed his ask to the Policing Minister that the allocation of 625 officers should account for forces that have been disproportionality disadvantaged

in recent times, which should give WMP priority in connection with bidding for these 625 officers. The Commissioner awaits the response of the Government and the Policing Minister.

Explain the financial consequences of the £13 per annum flexibility, for a Band D payer?

- The baseline for paying Band D is £202.55 per annum. The increase would add 25p per week.
- The West Midlands has a very low tax base compared to its size and population.
   Whilst Band D is expressed as the average, in terms of what the average person
   will pay, it's much lower than that and most people will be paying the Band A or B
   rates. This means an increase of less than 20p per week.

Can further background on what is informing the use of reserves be provided?

- Reserves are used as a last resort.
- It is encouraging that by 31 March 2025, the Force will be almost £10m better off. This is due to a focus on savings during 2023/24.

The Commissioner encouraged residents of the West Midlands to respond to precept consultation. The closing date is 02 February 2024.

# 007/24 Engage Update

# The report was presented by DCC Scott Green and the following points were discussed:

With some of the improvements to the online child harms work and packages, and addressing the backlog, is the Force confident that in addressing a backlog, cases are not being closed prematurely?

- The dashboard shows hundreds of outstanding offenders, which is accurate, however, warrants have been conducted at these addresses and devices have been seized and are being analysed. Therefore, this individual is still a suspect, as the evidence is being analysed. However, the harm has been reduced because WMP have conducted the enforcement activity.
- The focus now, is when intelligence is received, that this is being progressed in a timely manner. This is being tracked every month.

With some of the new resources being moved to the PPU to address some of the issues raised in the HMIC report, where are resources coming from? What degree of compromise is being made here?

- This is to do with the policing model and ensure its balanced and affordable, and resourced to priorities.
- As units are reviewed, efficiencies have been realised. Where efficiencies have been identified, the Force has been able to re-invest.
- The key challenge is to ensure movement of resources is absolutely sustainable. Follow up Are you confident about the systems in place for assessing whether balance of resources needs to change in the future?
  - Some of this is professional judgement. The Force has a view from HMIC on resourcing within PSD as a result of the pilot.

Is the Force doing dip samples, reviewing investigation plans and scrutinising supervisor reviews as part of qualitative data to ensure that as well as improving compliance, quality is not being impacted and is also improving?

- QATT is an in-depth assessment that covers all areas of an investigation including victim focus, suspect management, investigation standard and supervisor review.
- Once there is more data on this, it can be brought back in a future paper.

Follow up - As a consequence of the 1500 assessments completed to date, has any disparity in performance been identified across policing areas and is there a mechanism in place to ensure best practise is captured and translated from one LPA to another?

 This is very immature data, all data that comes in goes through the gold group that ACC Bell chairs through Operation Vanguard. The Force will start appointing good practise in the areas that need to improve.

Are the 'positive outcome rates' in relation to victim-based crime, pure criminal justice outcomes or do they incorporate out of court disposals?

• Outcome rates tracked here are outcomes 1-8.

Can you give an example on what outcomes 1-8 would include?

- Charges, cautions, what is a 'detected' crime, where there has been some outcome.
- Doesn't include outcome 22 or outcome 16, where there may be evidence but a victim is reluctant to support the investigation. Also, doesn't include domestic violence prevention notices.

Could you outline the work that has been done with partners to ensure buy-in from partners and stakeholders around the work that has been done to address the challenges around MARAAC across the West Midlands?

- A new Superintendent with a background in vulnerability and social care has been brought in to take oversight of the highlighted problems. This followed a review of all the posts that previously supported this work.
- The work has had support from all local authorities. This increased work has meant
  a position has been reached where this is not a backlog, but a normal workload that
  should be expected, and is within the guidelines of Safe Life Matters which is the
  guidance HMIC would use.

Is there some further information that can be given around HMIC criteria to remove the Force from Engage?

- This is entirely down to the Chief HMI's discretion.
- The key word is sustainability. Demonstrated that these issues are being dealt with.
- WMP have shared learning with HMIC and await their response accordingly.

Is there a worry we may inadvertently be incentivised to pursue outcomes HMIC count in their data set, and confident we are not being pushed to do something that isn't always the desired outcome?

- WMP are confident they make the right decisions for victim and suspects in those circumstances.
- These are not HMIC's rules, the Home Office sets the framework.

# Dos/24 Policing Governance The Chief Executive delivered a verbal update regarding the governance of West Midlands Police. Chief Constable Update The positivity of WMP's trajectory has been recognised by the Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the Force has received good feedback on the plans. Officer numbers are continuing in grow, and there has been positive feedback about PCSOs who have become police officers and posted back into their original neighbourhoods.

- Call handling changes are implemented and all call handling and dispatch are now located at the C3 building in Aston. This has made a clear significant impact on national league tables and improved the service provided to people who phone the police.
- Force Contact recruitment events have taken place, and there are currently around 8-10 apprentices lined up.
- The Police Constable degree apprenticeship will be delivered at Tally ho. The Force will become an employer provider.
- The College of Policing has adopted WMP's programme as the non-degree entry route into policing.
- ONS stats are due to be published on Thursday. Since changing the policing model, for emergency responses WMP's average response time is about 12 minutes which has improved by 2 and a half minutes. This is a significant achievement at a time of great change.
- Grade 2 responses average just under an hour. This time last year, it was over 2 hours.
- The importance of the medium-term financial plan was emphasised, a number of conversations have taken place around the Estate strategy.
- Sergeant John Price, who runs WMP's Digital Forensics Unit, has been awarded the Kings Police Medal in the New Year Honours.
- Performance for burglary, robbery, theft from a person and homicide continues in the right direction and is above that of most similar forces.
- Number of rapes charged has more than doubled in the last 12 months.
- WMP's overall charge rate has trebled with the expectation of this to increase further.
- WMP have been congratulated for their progress in Op Biotas, and have shared learning.
- There was recent disorder at the football at Aston Villa, the police response was exceptional and provided significant public reassurance.
- Number of charges for firearms offences, new model is supporting this with major crime teams. Recently detected a series of armed robberies at post offices.
- A very concerning murder took place over the weekend. Two juvenile arrests have been made. This is a live operation and WMP cannot comment further at this time. Significant resource has been put behind this incident.
- Resources of partners is a concern, particularly Birmingham City Council. When it
  comes to spending on young people, it's likely to have an impact on the Force. The
  Chief Constable has signalled full support to partners, in doing whatever we can to
  ease the position wherever possible.
- The area has experienced a series of bomb hoaxes at schools, this is really
  disruptive. An arrest was made yesterday in the local area. The Chief Constable
  wishes to send out a strong message that WMP will actively pursue all lines of
  enquiry on such offences.

#### 010/24 | SPCB Workplan:

- a. SPCB workplan for noting
- b. SPCB Actions and Further Lines of Inquiry

There is currently 1 action outstanding that will remain open until the Change programme concludes.

# 011/24 Date of the next meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

There will be an additional SPCB meeting dated 26th March 2024.