



west midlands  
police and crime  
commissioner

## STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Notes of meeting held on Tuesday, 6 January 2015  
in Committee Room 6, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham

- Present: Jamieson, David – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Abbott, Cllr Faye – Board Member  
Connor, Brendan – Board Member  
Foster, Cllr Judy – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner  
Hannon, Cath – Board Member  
Mosquito, Cllr Yvonne – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Nazir, Cllr Mohammad – Board Member  
Sawdon, Cllr Tim – Board Member
- In attendance: Cann, Gary – Assistant Chief Constable  
Courtney, Jacky – Chief Executive  
Garry Forsyth – Assistant Chief Constable  
Foulkes, Carl – Assistant Chief Constable  
Hickman, Fiona – Governance Manager  
Sims, Chris – Chief Constable  
Smith, Lisa-Marie – Director of Legal Services  
Thompson, David – Deputy Chief Constable  
Wilkin, David – Director of Resources  
Williams, Mike – Chief Finance Officer
- Observers: 4

### 001/15 Opening Remarks

001/15

The Commissioner welcomed members of the public to the meeting and wished everyone a happy, successful and prosperous new year.

He expressed his concern for the two police officers who had recently been injured in the line of duty by a motorist. It served to remind everyone how police officers put their lives on the line every day. It was also a reminder about the perils of drink driving and safety on the roads. He had written to the injured officers and he asked the Chief Constable to keep him up to date on their recovery.

**002/15 Conflicts of Interest** **002/15**

None.

**003/15 Apologies** **003/15**

Apologies had been received from Ernie Hendricks and the Force's Director of Resources, David Wilkin.

**004/15 Notes of the Last Meeting** **004/15**

The Board approved the notes of the meeting held in public on 2 December 2014 and noted that the follow-up paper on the use of force would now be taken at the February meeting.

**005/15 Public Questions** **005/15**

No questions from the public had been received.

**006/15 Questions from the Board on matters not on the agenda** **006/15**

The question that had been submitted to the Chief Constable was circulated and was as follows.

Would the CC explain what action he has taken to deal with the failures in WMP relating to immigration checks as identified by the Chief Inspector of Immigration and Borders, and how such breaches of procedure occurred? *(Asked by Brendan Connor)*

The Chief Constable's response was that the Chief Inspector of Immigration and Borders, John Vine, had published a number of reports but he assumed that the question was about a recent report about immigration checks [*An inspection of Immigration Enforcement activity in London and the West Midlands (Operation Nexus)*]. The comment that the Chief Inspector had made in that report was about how infrequently some forces were checking detainees against immigration databases. The West Midlands Police had not been singled out in this report. However, the Force had created an electronic fix to carry out its checks. In November, the Force was checking 55% of detainees. The number would be higher in December and would not be an issue in future. The Chief Constable could offer reassurance to the public on this single issue.

Mr Connor confirmed that his question did indeed refer to the Operation Nexus report. Whilst he appreciated that the report covered broader issues than police custody arrangements, he considered that the effect of the report was to leave a sense that all was not well with the Force's custody arrangements. Was there any evidence that could be given to the public to give them more confidence in the custody arrangements? Would it be worthwhile inviting HMIC to look at the Force's custody process to provide this assurance? The Chief Constable indicated that he would not have a problem with such an invitation but he did not consider that this was an area of vulnerability for the Force. There was already in place a level of scrutiny around detainees in court processes, solicitors visits, and the Commissioner's own custody visiting scheme. The HMIC had a programme of inspections and would be looking at custody at some

stage.

**007/15 Preliminary Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Proposals  
2015/16**

**007/15**

Before handing over to his Chief Finance Officer, the Commissioner took the opportunity to say a few words about funding. The preliminary figures were largely what had been expected but the total budget had been further 'top-sliced' with the West Midlands losing an extra £5m. The total cash reduction was in the region of £23m. The way in which the funding formula was applied meant that the West Midlands was disadvantaged by approximately £43m per year. There was clearly an element of unfairness when compared to the funding provided to other forces such as Surrey which did not have the same level of serious crime problems that the West Midlands and other metropolitan areas had. He would continue to campaign about the unfairness issue. In the meantime, he would get on with working within the budget. In that regard, the Police and Crime Panel would be considering the WMP budget and precept at its 19 January and 2 February meetings. He intended to increase the precept but not to a level that would trigger a referendum. It was thought that the trigger for a referendum would be around a 1.99% increase but this had yet to be confirmed. The Police and Crime Panel had the power to veto any proposed level of Precept and had a provisional meeting scheduled for 16 February should this situation arise. The proposed increase in the level of Precept would help ensure that the Force would be in a position to continue to meet its commitment of recruiting 450 police officer.

The Chief Finance Officer then introduced the report and made the following key points:

- The existing financial strategy had taken account of the previous Commissioner's concerns about reaching a 'tipping point', the Force's workforce profile, and the level of reserves available to support spending.
- The existing financial strategy allowed for the recruitment of 450 police officers, started to address the 'tipping point' concerns, and included the prudent use of reserves over the medium term.
- The details of the provisional grant were set out in the report and were as had been expected. The existing financial strategy would therefore remain the same.
- The day after the provisional grant had been announced there had been another offer of a council tax freeze grant equivalent to a 1% rise in the precept. It was not clear, however, if the grant would be perpetuated beyond 2015/16. The Commissioner would not be taking up the offer.
- The Commissioner had consulted the West Midlands local authority leaders just before Christmas about the preliminary budget and they had been broadly in agreement with the strategy.

- The proposed budget figures were only draft because there were still some unknowns, for example, the council tax base figures for the West Midlands.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion noted the following points.

- In the lead up to the general election the main political parties were indicating that the reduction in police funding would continue. The issue of the unfairness of the funding formula damping arrangements therefore would continue to be important.
- The review of the funding formula was in progress and the Chief Constable believed that a new approach might be coming soon. However, with budgets falling as fast as they were, it was unlikely that there would be a redistribution of funding at the same time because it would put a strain on the system. In any case, the WMP medium term financial plan was good, the work with Accenture was progressing well and the Force would need to be self-sufficient to live within its budget.
- If a referendum were triggered over a proposed precept increase, the costs of running the referendum would be minimal if it coincided with a general or local election. However, it would mean that the Commissioner would have to notify two precept figures: one at a higher level and one at a lower level. The local authorities would have to have to issues bills at the higher level. If the referendum were lost, they would then have to reissue bills at the lower level. This would incur significant costs to the Commissioner and was not an approach that the Commissioner wished to take.
- There was a requirement for the Commissioner to consult on the proposed budget and precept and that public consultation had started shortly after the provisional funding had been announced. To date 165 people had provided feedback, two-thirds of whom supported a precept increase of 1.99% or more even if it would trigger a referendum.

The Commissioner took the opportunity to thank everyone involved in working on the budget.

#### **008/15 Variations to the Police and Crime Plan**

**008/15**

In the Commissioner's introductory remarks to the item he explained that a draft copy of the Plan had been circulated to Board members and the Force. He indicated that he had taken a fresh look at how the Plan was presented. It had been substantially reduced in size and more of the material referred to in Plan would be accessible to the public online. There was a thread running through the Plan about economic development. The contribution that the police made to economic development was not new but had now been identified as a major theme in the Plan.

Jonathan Jardine then introduced the report and highlighted paragraphs 7 and 8 which set out the strategic themes and new priorities, and the structure of the Plan. The timetable for the

production of the Plan was running largely in tandem with the timetable for the budget. Both would be considered formally by the Police and Crime Panel at their 2 February meeting.

The Board considered the report and the draft Plan and during the discussion noted that:

- A brief summary would be included at the beginning of the Plan.
- Quantitative and qualitative measures and targets would be included in the Plan. In that regard, the Commissioner did not wish to create disappointment by setting them at a level that would be unachievable. He would discuss realistic measures/targets with the Force. It was interesting that the government was saying that the fall in the level crime showed that policing was coping well with reduced budgets. However, the types of crimes that were traditionally policed were reducing. There was the matter of the many hidden areas of crime with low levels of reporting and the whole issue of internet and cybercrime that might lead one to question whether it could be said that crime had really reduced?
- The reference to 'self-reliant citizens' in the Plan could be misconstrued. The wording would be reviewed.
- The Chief Constable had some concerns about the inclusion of the performance framework with Accenture in the Plan. That framework had been developed as a payment arrangement. The purpose of the Plan was different. He acknowledged, however, that there was inevitably an overlap.
- The draft Plan would be circulated more widely later in the week and would be published as a draft for the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 2 February.

**009/15 Chief Constable Update**

**009/15**

The Chief Constable raised two matters:

- The two injured police officers that the Commissioner had mentioned at the beginning of the meeting. That had been the most significant incident that the Force had dealt with over the Christmas period.
- The funeral for Lord Knights which had taken place on 5 January. Several chief constables and other colleagues had attended and paid tribute to Lord Knights. It had been a very fitting send off for the architect of the West Midlands Police. The Commissioner echoed the Chief Constable's words, noting what a remarkable career Lord Knights had had. It was good to remember people who had given so much public service.

Tim Sawdon asked the Chief Constable about the recent incident at Warwick University and whether any charges had been brought yet.

**ACTION The Chief Constable was not sure of the details and would let Mr Sawdon know outside of the meeting.**

The Chief Constable indicated that he had no matters to raise at the private meeting which was to follow the public meeting. As there was nothing else on the private agenda, the Commissioner, cancelled the private meeting.

|        | <b>Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings</b>  |        |
|--------|--|--------|
| 064/13 | ACC Operations Portfolio Update  | 064/13 |
|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>ACTION. The Force and the Commissioner would explore whether it would be possible for a representative from the West Midlands Police to attend the regional NPAS board meetings as an observer.</b></li> </ul>           |        |
| 070/14 | Decisions: Victims Services  | 070/14 |
|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION Alethea Fuller would provide Board members with the information about how the Ministry of Justice were currently monitoring how the money was spent and whether they were getting value for money.</b></li> </ul> |        |
| 009/15 | Chief Constable Update   | 009/15 |
|        | <p>Tim Sawdon asked the Chief Constable about the recent incident at Warwick University and whether any charges had been brought yet.</p> <p><b>ACTION The Chief Constable was not sure of the details and would let Mr Sawdon know outside of the meeting.</b></p>  |        |