



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

Date of meeting 28th September 2021

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Regular item

Title: Emergency Chapter Report – By exception

Presented by: T/Assistant Chief Constable Mike O'Hara

Purpose of paper

1. Provide an update on the efficiency and effectiveness of the West Midlands Police (WMP) response to the COVID-19 national emergency.
2. To update regarding the organisational health of WMP response to the COVID-19 national emergency.
3. To provide assurance that WMP understands crime demand during the COVID-19 recovery period, and plans in place to respond to this.

Background

4. The Force is monitoring local infection, hospitalisation and death rates to inform the approach to COVID-19. There are now very limited enforceable regulations in relation COVID-19 and this is reflected in the reduction in enforcement figures (see below).
5. The SCG is no longer sitting. It has been agreed that the group could be re-convened if and when required. The SCG decided that at this stage of the pandemic there was no longer a requirement for exceptional arrangements to co-ordinate partnership activity.

COVID-19 RECOVERY – CRIME PATTERNS

6. Overall, the COVID-19 recovery phase across the West Midlands is not causing any new or unexpected patterns of crime.

Predicted Three-Month Demand and Crime Pattern

7. Overall crime levels have continued to increase - July was the highest month recorded since 2004 with 31,504 offences. The increased crime levels have been predominately due to significant increases around recorded domestic abuse and harassment offences that now make up one in every five recorded crimes. Interventions are in place to ensure high crime data accuracy, which have contributed to the recording of increased levels of low level harm crimes. The relaxation of restrictions has seen significant increases in demand over the summer. Reopening of the Night Time Economy (NTE) especially in Birmingham City Centre has seen levels of violence with injury peak at higher levels than pre COVID-19.
8. The summer demand plan was implemented between 12th April 2021 and 5th September 2021, which sought to support the management and response to increased levels of calls for service.
9. Traditionally the return of students in September and October has increased demand and plans are in place to prevent crime and disorder associated with this. The return of darker nights will see an increased focus by WMP on serious acquisitive crime (SAC). The build up to Christmas and potential return of festive markets and NTE (having been cancelled last year) will also be a key area of focus. The Glasgow Climate Change Conference in late October will see significant policing requirements from the Force.

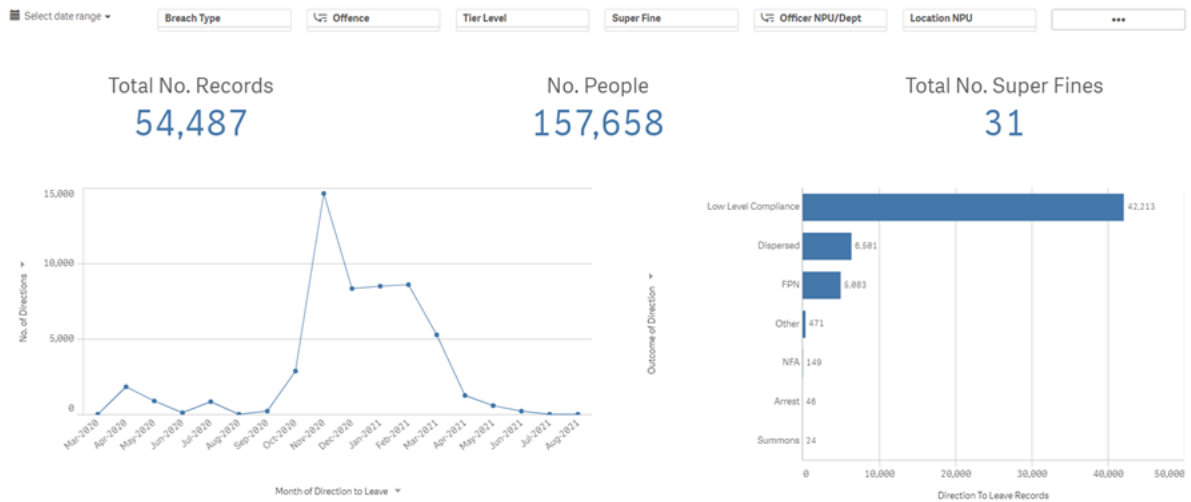
Predicted Six-Twelve Month Demand and Crime Pattern

10. If the restrictions remain lifted then we anticipate over next the next 6-12 months demand should stabilise and return to normal levels. The longer-term trend is that recorded crime is increasing and is becoming more complex.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS

11. Directions to leave can result in a number of outcomes, which include: dispersal, fixed penalty notice (FPN), summons and arrest.
12. There has been a decline in the use of enforcement of COVID-19 powers since restrictions were lifted in March 2021.
13. There has been a total of 54,487 directions to leave between March 2020 and August 2021, which is an increase of 200 since the last paper submitted in mid June (see figure

1 below). Since restrictions ended on 19th July 2021, 3 FPNs have been issued for breaching self isolation following quarantine from 'red' listed countries.



14. Of the 54,487 directions to leave given, 12% were dispersed, 9% were issued fixed penalty notices or summons and 46 people were arrested.
15. Our baseline for assessing disproportionality is against 2011 census. It is acknowledged that more recent estimates show that the demographics and population of the West Midlands is far more diverse than in 2011.
16. A total of 5083 (an increase of 51 since July 2021) FPNs have been issued to date; 48% to white people, 25% to Asian people and 19% to black people.
17. 79% of FPNs were issued to 18-39 year olds (47% above the 2011 census data); 25-39 year olds have received 39% of FPNs and 18-24 year olds have received 40% of FPNs.
18. There have been 31 (an increase of 1 since July 2021) super fines issued since the legislation came into place.

IMPACT OF, A) COVID-19 RELATED SICKNESS ABSENCE, B) SELF-ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS, AND C) THE NATIONAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME, ON WMP

19. The impact of self-isolation upon operational effectiveness has been significant at times, and pressure has been felt both locally and nationally.
20. Business continuity plans have been activated to minimise operational impact, and appropriate COVID-19 measures implemented to control spread such as deep cleaning, testing, and isolation.
21. However, in order to increase operational effectiveness, for designated roles, the Force adopted an internal Test and Release Scheme alongside The National Police Chiefs

Council (NPCC) Exemption Test and Release Scheme from 24th July - 15th August 2021, the aim of which was to release pressure on services where absence could otherwise lead to a significant risk of harm to the public.

22. From 16th August, in line with the Government changes around self-isolation for fully vaccinated individuals, the isolation figures have reduced and WMP expect that they will remain low. Further exploration of Daily Contact Testing (DCT) is being undertaken in line with NPCC and Public Health England (PHE) guidance to give flexibility to facilitate a return to work as appropriate to ease operational demand as and when required.

ASSESSMENT WMP HAS MADE OF THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS AND STAFF BELIEVED TO BE SUFFERING FROM LONG COVID-19.

23. WMP's Occupational Health team have established specific long COVID-19 clinics to support the recovery of those colleagues suffering from long COVID-19 or the long-term impact of a COVID-19 infection. The clinics closely resemble the support available through NHS routes, in that they are holistic and consider the clinical, physical and psychological recovery of the individuals. The clinics have been well received and subject to positive feedback from those colleagues who have attended. The number of individuals suffering from long COVID-19 fluctuates as individual diagnoses change and as individuals make a recovery. At its peak, there have been more than 60 colleagues referred into the clinics.

CURRENT WMP APPROACH COVID-19 RELATED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) RULES FOR OFFICERS AND STAFF

24. WMP's approach remains the same in regards to the supply of PPE as we continue to provide dedicated support. There is national guidance on Police PPE published by Operation Talla under the National Police Coordination Centre (NoPCC). This sets out three levels of PPE arrangements, broadly described as "minimum, standard and enhanced". The current recommendation is that the force should follow standard arrangements, and this effectively continues the same requirements for PPE that were in place before the final stage of the roadmap and had been required for much of the pandemic. It is likely these arrangements will remain in place until spring 2022. There has been some relaxation of the social distancing rules within police buildings, to allow more officers and staff to work within WMP buildings. There has been some restoration of some force events such as awards ceremonies and senior leadership conferences.

Requests have been made for extra PPE for the airport staff due to the incoming arrivals from Afghanistan. The health and safety team are supporting with this.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLER QUARANTINES *(to include number of absconders from West Midlands sites, number of offences recorded in quarantine sites and the nature of these, noting any offences where the perpetrator is identified as a member of security staff)*

25. WMP continue to provide a dedicated resource for the enforcement of the international travel regulations and the policing of Managed Quarantine Facilities (MQF), provided by the Managed Quarantine Service (MQS), on behalf of the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).
26. Between 14th February 2021 and 26th August 2021, a total of 38 persons have absconded from MQF located within the WMP force area.
27. Between 14th February 2021 and 26th August 2021, a total of 141 calls for service have been recorded at Birmingham Airport's direct red list terminal, or at one of the MQF within the WMP force area. Of these;
 - 16 incidents have resulted in a crime recorded; 5 of these crime reports listed staff, security or other contracted personnel as the offender
 - 3 incidents were in relation to officers attending to make an arrest in relation to matters that took place outside of the MQS process
 - 114 incidents were classified as non-crime/information only and 8 incidents were in relation to safeguarding a person within the MQF

LARGE SCALE AND LOCAL VACCINATION CENTRES

28. WMP's position remains unchanged.

LARGE TESTING FACILITIES

29. WMP's position remains unchanged.

LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM, STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION GROUP AND RECOVERY CO-ORDINATION GROUP OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

30. WMP's position remains unchanged.

COMPLAINTS AND MISCONDUCT MATTERS RELATING TO WMP OFFICERS AND STAFF HAVE ARISEN THAT CAN BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

31. There have been no further conduct cases related to breaches of COVID-19 since the last paper dated 20th July 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Impact of COVID-19 on the 2021-22 budget

32. The finance department has identified and reported actual and future planned costs associated with COVID-19 across the force since March 2020.

33. The table below shows expenditure on COVID-19 from April to 31 July 2021 and includes a forecast of expenditure to 31 August 2021 during which time the force expects to continue to support enforcement patrols and support the re-opening of the NTE in our city centres:

Category	2020-21 actuals (Apr-March) (£'000's)	2021-22 actuals (Apr-July) (£000's)	2021-22 est. for August 2021 (£000's)	Total 2021-22 expenditure Inc. estimates (£000's)	Comments
PPE	6,089	0	30	30	Most PPE continues to be supplied from national order. The estimate for this year is for products not supplied by this order.
Officer and Staff pay costs	717	21	8	29	Staff costs for OCC Health staff supporting long term COVID-19 impacts.
Overtime pressures and enforcement work	3,031	733	290	1,023	Actual costs are for overtime worked between April and June. Estimates are for

					enforcement work in July and August.
Temporary staff	596	0	0	0	Temporary staff used last year to support CJ and PPU. Work being done to support outstanding cases in CJ and PPU is now being done in duty time and overtime.
Other non-pay	1,566	215	80	295	Costs include decontamination, clinical waste, enhanced cleaning regimes vehicle hire and continued costs to police buildings to make them COVID-19 secure.
Home working (laptops and devices)	338	3	40	43	Cost includes mobile devices and SIM cards for mobile data in laptops.
Total	12,337	972	448	1,420	

Key points to note:

34. The overall cost of COVID-19 to the Force was £12.34m in 2020-21. Income was received during the year to reimburse the force for PPE, lost income and enforcement patrols. The force carried forward £1.5m of this income to 2021-22 to continue to support enforcement patrols until the summer. Therefore, expected spends in this year of £1.42m are affordable within the funding of £1.5m available to support these costs.
35. Expenditure on non-pay costs includes enhanced cleaning, decontamination costs and additional clinical waste provision. The budgets for these items within the facilities department have been increased for the first half of 2021-22 as it was anticipated that

these costs would continue into this year. WMP will continue to review these costs during the year and address any budget pressures as they arise.

36. COVID-19 had a significant impact on force income in 2020-21 with total losses of £3.25m recorded. The Home Office provided a mechanism for forces to receive up to 75% of their income losses subject to an overall 5% deductible for budgeted income. As a result, the force successfully claimed £2.29m lost income for the last financial year. The loss of income for 2020-21 principally related to Birmingham Airport, roads policing and vehicle recovery, events policing (football) and from criminal justice processes. Some losses of income have continued into 2021-22 particularly in relation to the airport and events policing and WMP will continue to report these losses in monthly returns to the Home Office. It has not yet been determined if forces will receive any support for income losses in 2021-22.

37. WMP identified areas where the force made savings as a result of reduced demand in some areas. Overall in 2020-21 the force made savings of £1.38m on fuel, business travel and accommodation compared to the prior year. It is anticipated that some of these savings will continue in 2021-22 as the demand and supply of some services changes. WMP will review these savings as part of regular budget monitoring across portfolios and incorporate long-term savings into the Zero-Based Budget (ZBB) work being doing by finance this summer.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Information concerning the payment of FPNs by WMP

Super fines (£10K Fines) issued:	31 (August 2020-July2021)
Discontinued/ Dismissed by the CPS/Courts:	2 NFA 7 Discontinued by CPS 2 Withdrawn 10 WMP have not progressed due to incorrect fines being issued/does not meet legislation 1 reduced to £1000 fine by WMP
Successful	3
Pending trial	1
Pending PCD/Charge	5

Non 10K Fines issued	3216
Paid	1509 (December 2020- July 2021)
Non-Paid	1563 (December 2020-July 2021)
Discontinued	690 (December 2020-July 2021)
Awaiting trial	4

38. WMP are not able to provide the demographics of people who are challenging these fines. This information has been requested from the Criminal Records Office (ACRO), however, at this time they do not have capacity to provide data.

NEXT STEPS

The board is asked to consider this paper.

Authors: Chief Superintendent Lee Wharmby, COVID-19 Chief of Staff; Keith Trivett, Senior Accountant; Stuart Gardner, Senior Intelligence Manager; Sharon Dyer, Assistant Director of Shared Services; Chris Thurley Assistant Director of Business Partnering; C/Supt Andy Beard, COVID-19 Silver Command; Sergeant Daniel King; Managed Quarantine Coordinator / Airport Police Neighbourhood Team Supervisor; C/Supt Harvi Khaktar, Head of Criminal Justice; Vicky Wilson, Prosecution Manager