

STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Tuesday 27 September 2022 - 1000 – 1300 hrs

Attendees:

Simon Foster	:	Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC
Wasim Ali	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive, OPCC
Alethea Fuller	:	Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC
Mark Kenyon	:	Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Cath Hannon	:	Board Member
Vanessa Jardine	:	Deputy Chief Constable
Andy Beard	:	Head of Force Contact
Andy Parsons	:	Head of Force Response
Toni Williams-Long	:	Director of POD
Darren Ralph	:	Assistant Director Diversity and Inclusion
Gareth Morris	:	Superintendent
Matt Ward	:	Assistant Chief Constable
Daryl Lyon	:	Neighbourhood Policing Chief Inspector
Nikki Penniston	:	Head of Delivery, OPCC
Caroline Ryder	:	Partnerships - Long Term Contractor, OPCC
Charlotte Killeen	:	Staff Officer

Plus, one webcaster and four observers.

Apologies:

David Thompson	:	Chief Constable
Tom McNeil	:	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Nicky Brennan	:	Victims Commissioner
Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Charmaine Burton	:	Board Member
Caroline Marsh	:	Assistant Chief Constable

1. *The meeting was recorded, and a webcast of the entire discussion can be viewed here: [SPCB September 2022 - Tuesday, 27th September 2022 at 10:05am - West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)*
2. *The reports referred to throughout this meeting can be viewed here: [SPCB September 2022 - West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner \(westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk\)](#)*
3. *Actions arising from the discussion during the meeting are highlighted in bold text.*

077/22	Item 1 - Apologies and PCC Update: Apologies were noted from Chief Constable David Thompson, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Tom McNeil, Victims Commissioner Nicky Brennan and Board Members Bhupinder Gakhal and Charmaine Burton.
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	<p>The Commissioner made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Commissioner remembered her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2nd. Her passing on 8th September 2022 was truly the end of an era. The Queen dedicated her life to public service and the people and communities of our country, and was a symbol of stability in an everchanging world as our longest reigning monarch. The Commissioner attended a series of events to mark her reign; the Commissioner concluded these events outside Lloyd House with the Chief Constable and other members of staff for a two-minute silence on 19th September to mark her Majesty's passing. - Secondly Operation Unity, West Midlands Police's Commonwealth Games security operation, is the largest single operation for the Force which included 3,000 officers and members of staff, including 1,700 officers via mutual aid through other police forces to keep us safe and secure. Operation Unity required a significant amount of planning to ensure a safe, secure and friendly Games were delivered this summer. The Commissioner scrutinised these plans before and throughout the Games both publicly and privately to build and promote public trust and confidence. By all accounts, Birmingham and the West Midlands delivered a successful Games; policing playing a major role in this. As with all major events, there are matters to review. In the upcoming months, the Commissioner will take a report on the Games to SPCB. - Since the previous Board Meeting, a new Prime Minister has taken office and appointed a new Home Secretary and Policing Minister. The Commissioner congratulated the individuals on their new posts in Government, however advised that the previous administration manifestly failed to deliver for the West Midlands. We need the new administration to deliver, and firstly face up to the acute financial challenges that West Midlands Police are undertaking. Secondly, to level up and reinstate our 1,000 missing police officers and finally to provide fair funding for West Midlands Police.
078/22	<p>Item 2 - Notes of the Last Meeting:</p> <p>The notes of the Board meeting held on 26 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.</p>
079/22	<p>Item 3 - Questions from Members of the Public</p> <p>There were no questions from members of the public.</p>
080/22	<p>Item 4 - Questions from Members of the Board</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can West Midlands Police publish the outcomes of hit-and-run collisions – in terms of how many drivers are successfully identified, and what prosecutions are brought? <p>(Asked by the Commissioner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Deputy Chief Constable has completed work in relation to this question, and obtained the statistics for the last three years. - The Force have focused on hit and run collisions that have caused the most serious injury. From 2020, there were 12 such hit and run collisions across the West Midlands, with 7 convictions, 3 outstanding matters, 1 offender not traced and 1 subject to no further action. - In 2021, the number decreased to 10 incidents. - So far this year, there have been 6 serious collisions. 5 are awaiting the court process and 1 conviction. - Convictions are a matter of public record, although the Force do not presently publish a year to year comparative basis of the figures as they require a degree of understanding and rationale. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Can the Chief Constable detail the progress being made by the Force in relation to the ongoing implementation and improvement of the Connect System? This includes dealing with

duplicate records, producing reports to the Home Office, linking victims to perpetrators and the assessment of the benefits of the system allowing officers to input information once and without having to return to a station to do so.

What are the key benefits that have come from the Connect system compared to what we had before?

(Asked by the Commissioner on behalf of Tom McNeil)

- The Connect System went live in April 2021 in West Midlands Police, replacing 9 outdated legacy information management systems.
- All relevant back record conversion took place into the new Connect System from the previous 9 systems; 200 million items of data were transferred across systems.
- Currently, 5 of the legacy systems have been switched off.
- The rationale behind the Connect System is focused around the majority of police information being situated within one place and to ensure staff are aware of victim needs and history of repeat offenders, for example.
- The system is particularly helpful for Neighbourhood Policing Teams, in particular to problem solving and crime prevention work.
- 86 million records have been submitted into the system. The uploading of the remaining data and the live data is taking place at present, with a target date of completion for the end of this year.
- The Force are also completing regular data updates on the police.uk system.
- In February 2022, there was a joint targeted area of inspection, with two key findings as a result. The findings included links between connected individuals are present and correct, and that multiple records against the same person are reduced. Actions in relation to these findings are ongoing.
- Renewed training is taking place for response staff to ensure the system is fully utilised.
- There will be regular updates and automation to prevent manual mitigation to prevent outstanding issues.
- 3 bespoke development apps have been produced around warrant, briefing and crime updates which adds value to the front-line officer when accessing records. A fully integrated mobile app is due to be introduced in June 2023.

Police and Crime Plan

081/22 Item 5 - Access to Police Services:

This paper was presented by Andy Beard and Andy Parsons and the following points were discussed:

Could the Force advise if tracking repeat callers is an issue? If so, what are the actions to mitigate repeat callers?

- Repeat callers were initially an issue, as the Force needed to collect meta data that is obtainable, particularly when callers dial 999. This information is now available.
- There is not a definitive answer for this at present, and therefore the Force are continuing to evaluate the data to gain a further understanding.
- The Force have also tried to create parameters within the call lab to understand what is defined as a repeat caller.
- It is important to understand the drivers behind repeat callers.
- Towards the end of 2021, it was assumed that some of the repeat callers were from wider partners. The volume the Force suspected was not the case, with ambulance been the exception.

This is an area the OPCC are paying close attention to, with a number of reports and maintaining ongoing oversight. A key issue appears to be around resources meeting demand, however as an overarching comment it also seems to be the difficulty of this aggregating quantitative data against the quality of the service and the effect that is achieved. We would welcome additional commentary on assessing what is the quality of the interaction that is taking place. Are there ways to understand in an organisation like West Midlands Police, what happens as a next step as a result of the quality of interaction?

- This is a real challenge for West Midlands Police.
- Given the nature of the emergency police response, the Force expect a different level of service delivery at different times throughout the week due to the context in which the officers are operating.
- The measures identified within the report are mostly quantitative, however the Force are keen that they have more qualitative measures.
- There are internal processes that can be implemented, however the experience of the public and the service they receive here is paramount. It is important the public understands and accepts the pressures the Force are under, and focus on if staff have done what they have needed to at that time of service rather than timings.
- Feedback of the public receiving the service must be collected.

How will West Midlands Police action this and capture data? What is the methodology?

- The Force do send automated surveys to members of the public from Contact staff in an attempt to gain immediate feedback, oppose to sending surveys weeks after the interaction took place. This can be directly attributed to the individual who dealt with the member of the public.
- At present, staff performance is based on response time oppose to the level of customer service whilst taking the call.
- The level of customer satisfaction is made increasingly difficult due to call waiting times.
- The Force are looking to develop a number option method, whereby each number correlates with a certain type of matter. This will ensure members of the public are through to the right channels.
- It is also important this level of service is also ensured when the matter reaches investigation levels.

Paragraph 4 and 5 indicate that additional staff at peak times allows for increased calls of service to be taken. This is then linked with triaging internal management and operational roles. What has changed to cause a focus upon these roles?

- Emphasis is placed on what the Force would like Force Response supervisors to do.
- Clarity surrounding roles also allows for increased accountability.
- Roles are different to what would be recognised 20 years ago, due to enhanced technology and processes.
- The triage could be classified as a new role, as it is a force response supervisor that is experiencing front line police responses.

This comes back to resourcing. Could the Force clarify the introduction of the two inspectors aligned to each of the five shifts?

- The Force are applying resources to times expected to be the busiest.
- Anything that comes into the Force of a critical nature will be picked up in the first instance.

Where have the additional staff come from?

- Resourcing decisions are made constantly.
- Uplift officers contribute to resourcing decisions.
- Force Contact is an area off need at present and therefore requires additional resource at this time, evident from risk-based decisions.
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Live Chat was introduced as a way to pick up 38% of demand. Can you provide confidence around the Live Chat system?

- The Force are currently looking to enhance the system.
- A number of Forces have adopted similar approaches.
- WMP use "Bobby" as a communicative tool which is a robotic system, taking away approximately 38% of simple and straightforward calls to the 101 line.
- Information has exemplified that there is a desire for members of the public to use the Live Chat service.

The Commissioner concluded that according to the College of Policing in 2015 it was estimated that nationally none crime related incidents accounted for 83% of all command and control calls that come into call centre staff. In addition, the Commissioner recognises the impact of the significant rise in overall call demand that according to the available BT data for November 2021 to April 2022, West Midlands Police has the highest rate of call demand per 1000 of population of all police forces. The Commissioner has no doubt this is a consequence of a chronic failure of Government to invest in policing and central preventative public services. This is a mistake, counter productive and creates a false economy. It has left our overworked and unfunded police service having to pick up the piece, and this state of affairs is set to be exasperated as a consequence of the cost of living crisis.

The Commissioner welcomes the actions taken by West Midlands Police to address these challenges in relation to recruitment, establishment of the support desk and the efficiency review. The Commissioner will be subjecting this action to scrutiny with a view to ensuring there is an improvement in service.

082/22

Item 6 - Fairness and Belonging:

This paper was presented by Alethea Fuller, Toni Williams-Long and Darren Ralph and the following points were discussed:

Regarding the regional panels, can you please provide information relating to the similarities and difference across the region, and how people with lived experience can contribute to this work?

- The work undertaken regionally has not yet been broken down by area to display similarities and differences.
- A presentation was provided at the last meeting, exemplifying data that has been brought together across the 11 justice boards in terms of disproportionality.
- The next step is to consider the 11 individual justice services to gain a better understanding of what the best practice is regarding responding to disparity.
- The OPCC use the lived experience panel within any work undertaken within the West Midlands, including the delivery of projects for example.
- The lived experience panel can provide key issues the OPCC should be focusing upon.
- Probation are undertaking a lot of work in relation to lived experience.

If I was an individual who wanted to contribute to this process, who would I contact?

- This area is still up for debate and development.
- There is an opportunity to widen the scope of attracting people with lived experience.

It has been mentioned previously that the Force conducts exit interviews when staff leave, what are the Force learning from these interviews and what measures are been implemented to limit people wanting to leave the Force? Secondly, what have the Force learnt from the work of young black people in relation to the social media influencer piece?

- In terms of the attrition piece, the Force are offering and completing exit interviews as standard practice.
- Over the past 12-18 months, focus has been placed upon student officers as the Force work hard encouraging people to join the Force, in combination with the large cost of training.

- A student welfare team has been developed within Learning and Development who look after students and their welfare.
- Numbers are small in comparison to others, and also against the large amount of recruitment undertaken.
- The academic work is challenging, and the Force are working with the University to offer additional support to these students.
- Intervention methods include flexible working and student academic support.
- The rising cost of finance has caused a loss of a small number of individuals.
- In terms of the social media influencer piece, the Force are collaborating with an external provider around the views of young black people around policing. The initial view has been more positive than expected.
- This is a longer piece of work, aiming to build legitimacy within the community.
- Within the upcoming months, the Force hope to see different results which will enable us to focus our work around recruitment and communities.

The agreed target for recruitment between West Midlands Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner is that we seek to recruit 1,000 officers from Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic groups out of the 2,800 that we need to recruit in order to deliver the uplift. Are the Force able to provide an update in terms of numbers against this target, and if we are not achieving this at the moment what actions are being taken to drive the progress against this target?

- As of last week, figures were at 386 of the 1,000 officers has been achieved.
- There is significant work still to take place, with a focus upon community-based policing.
- The Force are aware 40% of people join the police after speaking with a police officer, and therefore the Ambassador Scheme is to be refreshed.
- An online work experience programme may also make a difference within schools and colleagues to increase understanding of policing.
- The key is early engagement.

In relation to racial disparity within strip searching, what are they key issues identified and what are the solutions to this? Secondly, in relation to the online assessment centre, what is an adverse impact and how is this dealt with? Could an example be given?

- The Force are in the process of working collaboratively with academics to consider pilots for this work.
- At present, the Force are trying to encourage all departments to look at disparity across all areas of business.
- Custody has made large improvements in better understanding disparity during strip searches. The first part of this is identifying what the disparity is, and then what action can be taken to close the gaps between disparities.
- The online assessment centre was developed by the College of Policing in reaction to the pandemic, when the Force were unable to bring people together.
- The College measure any adverse impact from all forces and all candidates. The Force are looking to ensure that no group is impacted adversely. For example, the Force would consider all candidates and how they are performing within the assessment centre. This is then broken down into males and females, and also ethnic groups and all other protective characteristics.
- There is far less impact on any group through the online assessment centre than the previous assessment centre which was face to face.
- The Force advised they would collate specific information defining what the disparities include, along with examples of what has been identified and the solutions to be shared with the Board.

The number of strip searches outside custody blocks have increased.

- The Deputy Chief Constable has received a full briefing in relation to juvenile strip searching.
- Work has been ongoing for three to four months, mapping overtime the number of juveniles' strip searched along with the number of occasions an appropriate adult is or is not present.

- Performance data is also been produced against each custody officer who authorises a strip search, along with the rationale and results.
- It has been agreed that the authority levels for authorising a strip search has increased to chief inspector level to add a further degree of oversight.
- The Force advised data an update can be shared with the Board in due course.

Relating to the entry routes into specialist departments, there appears to be a vagueness in the language used and it would be valuable to be more specific regarding the potential and actual entrants are equivalent to the overall intake entering the Force. There is little confidence that these entry routes are available for a broader range of candidates.

Opportunities are given to officers and staff in relation to their preferred goals. There is not a sense that staff are given enough time to learn the trade as they go. Is there an encouragement to slow the process down to allow staff to learn the information and trade they need?

- Multiple entry routes are available for individuals, including the degree holder entry route and police constable apprenticeship.
- A student representative day has been held to showcase the jobs and careers paths on offer to students, aiming to increase understanding of the breadth of opportunity available.
- Contextually, the Deputy Chief Constable leads on a piece of national work aiming to increase diversity, particularly within the firearms unit. There are a number of workstreams looking at various areas such as culture, equipment, training and leadership.
- The Force have commissioned a large nationwide survey with the University of Liverpool. We are imminently awaiting an update on these results.

In terms of the entry routes highlighted in Paragraph 14, are the Force aware of what Police Now are offering that appears to be more attractive as an entry route to ethnic minority groups?

- 38.9% is of 18 people, and is therefore only a small group.
- Police Now recruit nationally on behalf of forces, and their ability to attract and recruit those with degrees of 1st or 2:1's is significant.
- This is also offered as a leadership programme at a post graduate level.

Police Now statistics suggest that 28% or £39% of recruits have left. Could you provide a reason for the high attrition rate?

- Police Now is a short programme, and the Force hope that once the individuals have completed their programme they join the force. This is not always the case. Further information to be provided to the Board.

Is training around diversity and inclusion already a matter of standard practice or is a new programme been implemented?

- The diversity and inclusion training is already in place.
- The Force are looking to ensure that diverse assessment panels are in place.
- Benchmarking will be introduced to ensure everyone is assessing at the same standard.

The Commissioner ensured that action is been taken to ensure that the principles of diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, fairness and equality are always a priority for West Midlands Police. The Fairness and Belonging Strategy exists to ensure that these principles are applied in practice, whether in relation to the people it deserves or the officers and staff that work within it. We recognise that communication and engagement is essential if the strategy is to remain relevant and up to date. We are intending to launch a consultation with the aim of hearing from people about what further action they think is required. We will engage with the people of the West Midlands to understand that further challenge and change is required in order to build trust and confidence in our police service. This will be led by Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Tom McNeil, who is keen to engage challenge and find solutions.

083/22	<p>Item 7 – Reducing Violence:</p> <p>This paper was presented by Matt Ward, Gareth Morris and Nikki Penniston and the following points were discussed:</p> <p>There is a mention of a new serious youth violence strategy, could an explanation be given the differences between this strategy and the previous strategy? How do we the work that took place during the summer was impactful, and how was this measured? Further, distraction items for young people in custody was also discussed in the report, advising it has stopped individuals from self-harming. Could an update be provided on this matter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serious Youth Violence Strategy remains in consultation, and aims to drive down areas of high harm and threat. The strategy considers what each department can deliver around each element. - A performance dashboard has been created to consider summer trends. - In terms of additional data, there are a whole host of outcomes that can be used to produce toolkits for the rest of the region whilst preparing for next summer also. - The distraction packs provide the opportunity to regulate young people whilst in custody. - Anecdotes have been shared in relation to the distraction packs; these can be discussed within a future meeting. <p>Action: The findings of trends and data over the summer period are to be presented at a future meeting.</p> <p>Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Wasim Ali commented that the Youth Commissioners would be interested to engage with this piece of work.</p> <p>There are increasing requirements to find match funding for the activity. What are the operational and practical implications with the requirement for match funding in current and future years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a historic requirement. - As the police uplift increases, so does the requirement for additional resources to focus on this issue. - This is a push from Government in essence to ensure police are investing in such matters. - The funding formula is recognised as an area that does not act in the Force’s favour. <p>How does this play out within the Violence Reduction Partnership?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The VRP have been successful in attracting match funding for specific projects. - Whilst this is a challenge, it is also an opportunity to gain commitment across the sector for a whole range of partners and key stakeholders to projects. <p>The cost of living crisis will impact on vulnerability. What actions are the Force taking to mitigate this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is clearly a role for Government to address the broader issue. - The programme of work around schools and primary prevention is critical at this stage. The risks around exploitation, reduced opportunity and reduced income are fairly acute and we will see these challenges play out in the upcoming months. - It is important to draw together sources of funding. - The Serve model is also a key element.
Partnership Presentation	
084/22	Item 8 - Violence Reduction:

This paper was presented by Nikki Penniston, Caroline Ryder and Daryl Lyon and the following points were discussed:

Whether someone is a victim or offender is dependent on where the individual is in the criminal justice system. In respect of working upstream, does the system allow for repeat victims, who potentially could be offenders, to be drawn into resources available and is there a specific intention to assist victims who cannot get into the system due to traumatisation?

- Evidence shows that people who have offended are also likely to be a victim.
- The purpose is to realise the trauma and search for an existing footwork, such as living in a gang location or a family member subject to a referral, is enough for engagement.
- The programme has a broad reach to those we are looking to engage with.
- The triage and engagement process look to identify the people who would be involved and affected.

The Troubled Families Project took place previously, with little to show for it. Are we confident this programme will not face the same fate?

- The Force assured they are completely confident.

Is there an opportunity to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce?

- This has been mentioned previously and will be picked up in due course.

Could the Force please elaborate on the evaluation exercise and the extent this will impact on other areas within the West Midlands? How does this integrate with existing partnerships?

- They are going to embed and evaluate within the programme. This is intensive but an in-depth process.
- Regular dialogue is occurring with the evaluator for monitoring and updates.
- We want to understand the long-term impact of the programme, along with the cost savings for areas such as policing, social care and schools.

The Commissioner commented that it is the first duty of Government to keep its people safe and secure and over the past decade there has been a serious breach of this duty. The Government recklessly defunded our police services, undoubtedly contributing to the rise in violent crime. The prevention and reduction in violent crime is a top priority for the Commissioner as detailed within his Police and Crime Plan. We need robust operational policing to tackle violent crime, and those who are intent on causing harm to others. Policing cannot tackle crime alone, we also need prevention, intervention and to address the underlying causes of crime. The Violence Reduction Partnership, West Midlands Police, OPCC and the Commissioner are committed to action to protect people against violence and to save lives.

Regular Items

085/22

Item 9 - Finance and Budget Update:

This paper was presented by Mark Kenyon and the following points were discussed:

Is there any expenditure regarding civil suits against the police, and if so, have any trends been identified relating to this?

- No trends have been identified at present.
- The OPCC have routine meetings with the Head of Joint Legal Services on a quarterly basis. There is significant assurance around this process.
- The Force seeks council advice. In relation to civil claims, we haven't been made aware of any increases however can research further into this outside of the meeting.

	<p>Could further clarity be provided in relation to the police uplift programme, and the expectation the Force has going forwards alongside the financial implications?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Force are on track to achieve their uplift target of a headcount of 7,900 officers before March 2023. - It is a requirement for the Force to maintain this level of headcount across the financial year. Police office numbers cannot vary from this amount. - Savings and efficiency must be targeted in other areas, as we cannot vary police officer numbers. <p>The Commissioner commented that significant rises in inflation are increasing pressures on the Force's budget, driven by rises in energy and fuel bills. The Government's police grant settlement does not maintain the baseline funding the Force requires to operate on a day to day basis to deliver an efficient police service. It is clear that West Midlands Police need a fair funding settlement from the Government. The Commissioner will do everything he can to protect services, however the current financial challenges will lead to very difficult choices.</p>
086/22	<p>Chief Constable Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Deputy Chief Constable provided the update on behalf of the Chief Constable. - An incident of disorder broke out under Sandwell Neighbourhood Policing Unit last week, which was a dispute between Hindu and Muslim communities. The Force believe this was in relation to a speaker that was invited to speak at temples across the region. This has led to significant concerns and the groups clashing as result. Thankfully, this did not break out into serious disorder. Community work is been undertaken to address this and the Force are monitoring the situation. There is a 9-day Hindu festival taking place until the 4th October, which could lead to further increased tensions. - Pride took place last weekend, and the parade passed through successfully from a policing and community perspective. - The Conservative Party Conference takes place in Birmingham between 2nd and 5th October. During the course of the conference, it is anticipated 10,000 delegates will be visiting. This is a significant policing operation with a number of security and venue services taking place. Mutual Aid officers will be supporting this. There is no intelligence to suggest any serious outbreaks.
087/22	<p>Item 11 - SPCB Workplan:</p> <p>There are currently 9 matters that remain outstanding.</p>
088/22	<p>Item 12 – Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>The next Strategic Policing and Crime Board will take place on Tuesday 25th October 2022.</p>