

## Accountability and Governance Board 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Minutes of Meeting

These minutes provide a summary of key points raised during the meeting.

1	<p><b>Attendance</b></p> <p>Arron Cullen (Strategic Performance Manager)          Claire Bell (Assistant Chief Constable)          Jane Heppel (Chief Finance Officer)          Jonathan Jardine (Chief Executive)          Paul Drover (Chief Superintendent)          Pete Gillet (Director of Commercial Services)          Simon Foster (Police and Crime Commissioner)          Thomas Joyce (Chief Superintendent)</p> <p>1 webcaster, 1 note taker and 3 observers</p>
	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Constable Craig Guildford</li> <li>• Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green</li> <li>• Deputy Chief Executive Alethea Fuller</li> <li>• Deputy Police &amp; Crime Commissioner Wasim Ali</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Notes of last meeting</b></p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were approved.</p>
3	<p><b>PCC Update</b></p> <p>The Commissioner provided a general update which covered the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Chief Constable Craig Guildford retired on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2024 and is no longer a serving police officer, however he plans to make an application to re-join as Chief Constable on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2024. He is taking part in the national Retire and Re-join Scheme which allows officers who have served for 30 years to resign and take a break of at least a month and be reinstated at the same role. There is no cost to the taxpayer and is a scheme put in place to retain committed and effective staff in post. The scheme is supported by the National Police Chiefs' Council, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and College of Policing. If serving officers were not to take part, their pension entitlement would begin to irrationally depreciate. Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green is currently the acting Chief Constable. The PCC is supportive of this move and advised that the statutory process must now be respected and</li> </ol>

	<p>matters are aimed to be concluded on this matter at the Police &amp; Crime Panel confirmation hearing which will take place on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December.</p> <p>II. National statistics released on October 24<sup>th</sup> show that safety in the West Midlands has continued to improve with crime reducing, arrests increasing and victims receiving improved support from the Police. The data from the Office for National Statistics, covers the period July 2023 to June 2024 and shows significant reductions in crimes. Total crime reported was reduced by 10% and there was a decrease in serious youth violence including knife crime. The reductions in crime are very welcome, however we must never become complacent as one victim of crime is too many.</p> <p>III. The PCC has joined a major new Government task force reducing knife related robbery. The initiative will focus on what further action can be taken by police and partners. Thanks to the work of the Violence Reduction Partnership, West Midlands Police and partners, there has been a 13% reduction in youth related crime.</p> <p>IV. On the 6<sup>th</sup> November, road safety partners launched the road safety action plan 2025-30 with the intention of delivering on a challenging and realistic 50% reduction of those killed and injured on the roads of the West Midlands. Collisions are not just unfortunate, they are unacceptable.</p> <p>V. Last week, the PCC launched a campaign to give residents of the West Midlands their chance to help combat dangerous and reckless driving. Record, Report, Result features billboards and advertisements across the region as part of Road Safety Awareness week and forms part of Operation Snap which gives the opportunity to submit footage of anyone committing an act of dangerous driving, such as using a mobile phone. This is one of the PCCs priorities. The PCC urged anyone with relevant footage to share it with the Police to help reduce the numbers of those killed and injured on the region's roads.</p>
4	<p><b>Chief Constable Update</b></p> <p>The update was provided by Assistant Chief Constable Bell:</p> <p>I. ACC Bell shared the Force's update with regards to Craig Guildford's retirement in addition to the PCCs comments.</p> <p>II. Last week West Midlands Police had its best week for responding to calls for service for both emergency and priority response calls, 73.1% and 61.6% respectively. With Birmingham's move to a new district model it is hoped that the improvement in relation to open call logs will continue.</p> <p>III. This month's focus for Op Advance is Violence Against Women and Girls. The joint endeavour better the Public Protection Unit and all Local Policing Areas will see VAWG related activity taking place in public spaces.</p> <p>IV. Following the international football break, Aston Villa will be playing Juventus.</p> <p>V. Birmingham will be moving to a new district model in the near future, this has been delayed slightly due to technical issues.</p> <p>VI. Preparation for the Christmas period and Frankfurt market are moving well.</p> <p>VII. Operation Silent Night will start in December.</p> <p>VIII. There will also be enhanced evidence review facilities available at custody blocks during this operation to ensure investigative possibilities are maximised.</p>
5	<p><b>Questions from AGB members</b></p> <p>There were no questions receive from Members for this meeting</p>
6	<p><b>Performance Update</b></p>

	<p>This item was presented by Arron Cullen, Strategic Performance Manager. The following discussion took place:</p> <p>Paragraph 2.3 details the Uplift target of 1200 to replace those officers lost between 2010 and 2021. The Uplift returned 1200, but it is noted that the figure stated is 1376, is it possible to explain how this was possible as the national police allocation was for 1200?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Force has been proactive in not just hitting the target but where possible exceeding it, this was helped by funding provided through the precept.</li> <li>• In addition, the Home Office made it possible to bid for additional officers where other forces were unable to hit the target.</li> </ul> <p>Paragraph 2.5 speaks about the establishment number for PCSOs being set at 464 but this is currently at 308.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In part one of the rebuilding communities' paper in January 2024 the target of 464 was a reflection in time. In year 3, assurances around funding meant that there were more police constables but not funding for PCSOs.</li> <li>• 300 is the appropriate level for PCSOs at the moment.</li> <li>• The medium-Term Financial Plan continues to maintain and increase the PCSO establishment.</li> <li>• ACC Bell and the PCC both commented on the huge value of the work carried out by PCSOs.</li> <li>• There is mitigation in place, a number of PCSOs joined the service as regular Police officers and they were allowed to work in local communities. The added benefit of their knowledge of communities cannot be understated.</li> <li>• The new operating model increased the number of officers and staff placed and working locally.</li> <li>• There is an agreement to maintain at least 300 PCSOs in place with a constant recruitment in place. This has meant a rolling programme and open recruitment process. The pipeline looks reasonably healthy, without pushing.</li> </ul> <p>What are the issues with numbers and the inability to maintain numbers around special constables?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Constable numbers are currently lower than the benchmark.</li> <li>• Volunteering has seen a downturn since the pandemic.</li> <li>• This is being seen nationally. There is a plan to increase numbers of specials until April 2027.</li> <li>• There needs to be more awareness of retaining specials as this can be a pipeline for regular constables.</li> <li>• Work is taking place to bring a more local operation model in line with Force's. A final report to agree these changes is awaiting sign off. The report allows the roles of special Chief Inspectors and senior officers to be advocates for the volunteer service.</li> </ul> <p>Subscription increases to WMNow of 9.9% are welcome. If a member of the public is thinking of subscribing, what are the benefits which would make their subscription worthwhile?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement and communication with their Local Team and also the ability to be involved in two-way dialogue with community are key.</li> <li>• The digital offer, for many, is how they wish to communicate and get their information.</li> <li>• The Force want local communities to be active in their area to share info.</li> <li>• If a member of the public wants to understand what's happening in their local area, WM Now allows this.</li> </ul> <p>To what extent is the relative levels of engagement measured around WMNow, what responses do you get? What do we know about the demographics of users, are there any communities of interest?</p>
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- The demographics of users is not known at this time but can be reported back.
- One of the challenges for neighbourhood policing is around how to measure engagement.
- WMNow offers one method of communication and engagement performance. It is an independent measure and automated so it is easy to use and draw a conclusion from.
- At the moment, increased signups are being prioritised.
- The process is being audited by the Joint Audit Committee, more actions may come out and help the engagement move forward.

Last week, the Home Secretary made two announcements around Anti-Social Behaviour. Firstly, renewing the pledge to Respect Orders and secondly to extend the powers under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act, removing the need for a warning to seize vehicles. There is an increase in incidents reported to West Midlands Police for ASB, particularly in Walsall and Wolverhampton, what is driving that?

- Though there is an increase in numbers in Walsall, it is not believed to be an increase in ASB but more to do with how the crime is logged.
- ASB is obviously a significant issue for communities.
- A HMIC report has just been received, a preliminary update on recommendations has been submitted, a number of which are being worked through.
- For all LPAs, ASB is a priority. Operation Eternity, funded by the Home Office, has seen hot spot patrols across the most persistent ASB areas. The patrols are monitored in terms of compliance.
- Work continues to take place across all LPAs with partners around Community Safety.
- The Force are committed to training 1500 local policing staff in ASB problem solving, currently the number stands at 500.
- It is worth noting that the Force respond better in emergency and priority calls to ASB than most other forces.
- Walsall has suffered with significant violent issues in the last 12-18 months, these were single incidents but they did leave legacy issues. There has been an increased Force activity as a result and Walsall will have the largest number Section 60's across the region. This presence in the area will also contribute to the increase of Stop & Searches and arrests.

Is there an intelligence profile for what might be driving this and what are the actions to address them?

- The work of the Violence Reduction Partnership with the LPA Commander has helped around the Strategic Needs Assessment following the death of Bailey Atkinson.
- There has been a Deep Dive undertaken to understand what bought about such a significant incident in the area which ended with the loss of a life and arrests of many young people.
- Each incident is looked at and assessed by the team to understand the drivers behind it.

Paragraph 4.6 mentions that Walsall has seen an 89.9% rise in theft and increases in knife crime in the area too. This is similar in Wolverhampton but not reflected in other areas. I know there have been significant concerns expressed in Walsall by local councillors and think it is only right for the PCC to seek assurance on their behalf that these matters are responded to as a matter of urgency.

- In relation to knife offences, the number of knife offences are also linked to possession offences. This can be due to having more officers on the street using Section 60 powers. A number of Section 60's have been signed for Walsall, very few have been signed for other regions.
- Shoplifting has seen an increase, this has been caused by events such as the cost of living crisis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Walsall the ratio of offences reported when attending is higher than in other places. Walsall teams are being proactive in encouraging people to report incidents. Teams are more confident in recording retail crime and the Force are starting to see criminal behaviour orders where there are persistent shoplifters.</li> <li>• Walsall is not on board with the Offender to Rehab programme at this time, which is a frustration. Working is taking place with local partners to offer encouragement.</li> </ul> <p>Are an adequate share of resources allocated to the Walsall LPA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, although issues in Walsall are more persistent. Following an agreement with the Chief Constable, a review will take place yearly to assess demand.</li> <li>• There has been very good performance to date. Issues which hit the media shouldn't detract from the good work being done in reporting crime and offenders being brought to justice.</li> <li>• With the performance review, demand in Walsall is higher than usual. Reductions in knife crime is evidenced though there is still a higher rate of robbery and shoplifting. A lot of this is down to advance reporting.</li> <li>• The Offender to Rehab programme would offer a real opportunity to individuals.</li> </ul> <p>The recent annual crime survey for England and Wales indicates West Midlands Police scores below the national average, but the Survey is from March 2023 which predates the new operating model and the many improvements made around 999 and 101 and improved response times, arrest and outcome rates. How does WMP measure trust and confidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a problem with the reliance on the national survey. There is an ongoing piece of work to scope how to get local measures in place.</li> <li>• It isn't possible to say for certain what the level will be. Trust measures from call answering and attendance at incidents have both seen improvements. The work that has taken place should add up to show an improvement, there just needs to be some work done to work out the methodology of measuring it.</li> </ul> <p>There have been some significant and welcome improvements in median response for emergency and priority calls, With compliance with the Service Level Agreements 67.3% and 65% respectively, a member of the public may enquire why this is not 90%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further improvements have been seen with Birmingham, there has been a move to a district model and command is in place to improve performance further around the Median but primarily the SLA. Progress has been seen already.</li> <li>• A lot of these relate to choices and understanding that there is a need to be at an incident long enough to do a good job.</li> <li>• There is a mature approach to the measure, there is further that this can be taken but it must be done with quality control with victims at the heart of the decisions being made.</li> <li>• The headline figure is disproportionate due to Birmingham's change in model which may have added an additional 10% to the Force level. It is an improving picture.</li> </ul> <p>There was a 10% decrease in crime in the West Midlands in the year ending June 24. What would you say is driving that reduction in crime?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the change in Home Office counting rules, every force should have seen a decrease in reporting numbers. The reality is, you can never fully account for changes in crime recording as it varies. At the moment reductions are 30-50% more than offsetting.</li> <li>• As more officers arrive into the organisation and patrol numbers increase, further reductions should be seen, though not at the same rate as last year.</li> <li>• There has also been seen a reduction in harm caused, there are a number of offences that reduce based on a confidence measure, such as shop theft. Lots of checks and balances are carried out to keep this in mind.</li> </ul>
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<p>The recent Coventry counts dead women event was part of a campaign to eliminate male violence against women and girls. Trust and confidence plays a part in this data, the counter may be that there is a significant amount of under reporting, especially where DA and VAWG is concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an underreported crime, and we should always be mindful of this. Calls for service against how many crimes are recorded will show balances that can be scrutinised and questioned. Also scrutinise speed at which reporting and prioritising.</li> <li>• VAWG is a priority for West Midlands Police. There have been improvements in performance, more DA offenders are being arrested and the Force are seeing outcomes improve.</li> <li>• Arresting a perpetrator has to have a positive effect. Work continues with partners to ensure that all learning is taken from DHRs.</li> <li>• To offer reassurance about under reporting, the outcome rate is now 9.6% across the board.</li> <li>• Work done through Operations Soteria and Vanguard have had an effect. It has led to a better understanding of what victims are sharing.</li> </ul> <p>With regards to serious youth violence knife admission data, there is the potential for a strong data set indicating the likelihood of knife related violence involving young people, how much confidence do we have in that data set? Are we seeing a 20% reduction in hospital admissions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Force has seen reductions in recorded data and also reductions in serious youth violence over the last 12 months.</li> <li>• The data is received from the NHS which goes through scrutiny before sharing. It is positive to see that NHS data is going down.</li> <li>• There is an agreement with the NHS that should any young person present with an injury they will call the police. Examples such as this are in place to safeguard individuals.</li> <li>• Unlike other crime types which may not be reported, where a knife has been used, it would be unusual not to be reported and recorded.</li> </ul> <p>A key part of the Justice System is to bring offenders to justice and there have been significant improvements. What is meant by a positive outcome and has been driving the improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome codes 1-8 are how the Home Office and police forces have measured themselves for a number of years in a positive outcome. Outcome 22 is interesting as HMIC see it as a positive outcome through the Home Office won't describe it as such which is a problem for the Force at the moment.</li> <li>• The increased capacity has helped, Staff have been equipped to investigate better. To make further improvements, there is a need to continually build the confidence of staff. The Force are also working on the digital abilities of staff.</li> <li>• At a recent Force Performance Day, the importance of getting a positive outcome was highlighted to ensure it is known why a Victim is reporting.</li> </ul> <p>Serious Youth Violence has decreased by 13%, there are positive outcomes around serious youth violence of 11.7%, the hospital admissions data represents an 18% reduction in knife and sharp weapon admissions and also decreases of 7.7% of knife crime albeit in the areas of Wolverhampton and Walsall. There have also been reductions in recorded firearm offences of 25.2% across the West Midlands. This is quite a significant trend, what is driving this trend?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The answering of calls and attending incidents and higher arrest rates have all contributed. The valuable contributions of partnerships such as the Violence Reduction Partnership cannot be overstated.</li> <li>• The complex safeguarding work undertaken should also be noted. This has improved massively over the last 5-10 years.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploitation Hubs in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton have also helped with County Lines issues.</li> <li>• Evidence led prosecutions in relation to attempted murder have had an effect, the Major Crime Team have a high outcome rate in this area.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Community Policing</b></p> <p>This item was presented by Claire Bell, Assistant Chief Constable. The following discussion took place:</p> <p>Community Policing is referred to as a foundation stone or building block of policing. What is the ambition when it comes to Community or Neighbourhood Policing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ambition is to have a model across the Force which allows engagement with communities, that understands priorities and is able to respond and in doing so, use problem solving methodologies which are sustainable working with local, regional and national partners.</li> <li>• Neighbourhood policing response should lead to the reduction of crime and disorder.</li> <li>• There are 3 components which the Force always rely on in strategy: firstly, that communities are engaged. Secondly, a sophisticated and mature approach to solving problems and finally, bringing to bear powers and skills to reduce crime.</li> </ul> <p>When speaking with Neighbourhood teams there is a recurrent theme across the West Midlands about frustrations about capacity and the core role of community policing officers to be accessible and reassuring. There is a sense amongst many that there are too many demands on their time, such as abstractions and supporting elsewhere, how would you respond to this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recognised that it is not as clear for staff in neighbourhood teams what their roles are. It is sometimes necessary to have to draw on the collective resources of the Force to drive improvements.</li> <li>• A greater clarity around the mission for staff and their roles individually and an ability to see and measure will help operate the same truths together. The public do expect police to use their warrant to arrest offenders.</li> <li>• There is empathy for the staff about the confusion. Their contributions are being made but it is recognised that there is a need to bring further clarity.</li> </ul> <p>The Priority Crime Team is a mix of uniformed and non-uniformed staff. How does that priority crime team work and what does it consist of?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team sits under the command of a sector inspector. There are duties across the day, they ensure a team covers early and late shifts over 7 days.</li> <li>• They work in relation to current threat and harm, proactive patrols and look to generate intelligence, conduct stop and searches.</li> <li>• The team are extremely proactive and they work along with local intelligence and Offender Management teams.</li> </ul> <p>Corporate communications staff are based locally now. Does this gives extra facility to engage in proactive work via comms and social media?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This move has made a huge difference. Analysis takes place to help to learn what the public wish to hear about.</li> <li>• There is a blend of LPA and Ward sector level info shared, there are public engagement officers on each LPA so communication is coordinated locally. This is an improvement since the introduction of the operating model, local ownership and buy in on an individual level is clear when you speak to people.</li> </ul>

	<p>Referred to as Neighbourhood policing strategy, the Force are embarking on a redesign and this is going to be governed through the Force Change Board. What is envisaged as part of the redesign?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plans are a natural part of the journey of the new operating model. There were some elements of the old model lifted and moved to local places.</li> <li>• The foot hasn't been taken off the pedal with regards to neighbourhood policing, refinements are being addressed around the clarity of role.</li> <li>• The purpose of the redesign is a predominantly internal one, to capitalise on local communication such as single online home and engagement plans.</li> <li>• There are no resources intended to be leaving the LPAs.</li> </ul> <p>The paper refers to analytical capability. How does this add value and makes differences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intelligence teams are all locally based. By definition they work closer with neighbourhood policing teams to provide daily or weekly tasks.</li> <li>• The Guardian team, with GRIP funding over the last 12 months, have invested in an analytical support centre.</li> <li>• To have accurate information and evidence assists with being a problem-solving force.</li> </ul> <p>With regards to training and development for neighbourhood staff, the college of policing are currently piloting a neighbourhood policing pathway, There has been a collaboration between West Midlands Police and Staffordshire University on the same thing, what is the difference?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustratingly, this is a slow piece of work that was never nailed down because it is hard to define into a set period of time.</li> <li>• It was investigated to see whether West Midlands Police should be a pilot force, the timing wasn't right due to the Engage status, due to the commitment involved.</li> <li>• There is a need to balance the time staff have in training with how much they are out facing the public.</li> <li>• By next year, should be in a good position to receive the training.</li> </ul> <p>There is a reference to Engagement plans which all Local Policing Areas are required to complete. Have all LPAs provided these plans and how are they making a difference and improving communication between communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All LPAs have produced the plans, and they are available internally. External sharing is paused until approval has been given by Joint Audit Committee to ensure governance in place.</li> <li>• A plan doesn't change anything, but culturally it evidences the Force's commitment.</li> <li>• The engagement plans were taken and adapted from Humberside Police. Time will tell on the difference that they will make.</li> </ul> <p>There is a lot of effort invested into the visibility dashboard, are there any early indications as to how successful this investment is?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All data has its limitations, originally bought in to show in community meetings, it was pioneered by a Chief Inspector in Birmingham, demonstrating to BIDS how visible staff were in areas.</li> <li>• The Force wish to scrutinise further with a suite of measures looking at productivity alongside visibility, positive outcomes and investigations.</li> <li>• Neighbourhood policing is a team effort, visibility has a role to play.</li> <li>• The way in which the data is presented shows how visible their team are. The mapping function is useful as it shows how visible they are and where they are allowing the opportunity to move officers to areas that need it if required.</li> </ul>
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	<p>In terms of contributions from Schools Intervention &amp; Prevention Officers and Early Help officers, how many are available and operating in communities. What is the strategic allocation of these resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools Intervention &amp; Prevention Officers are secondary school based whereas Early Help officers are primary age focussed. The roles are across all LPAs.</li> <li>All of the work undertaken is very committed. It is hard to measure what is done and therefore defining whether the numbers are correct is complex.</li> <li>There is a balance to be found between prevention and discharging policing responsibilities, and taking calls to service too.</li> <li>One of the things recognised was the work done by problem solvers with young people – should they be in all schools or just some? There are good relationships in place, though there is still a need to ensure that the work is adding to the school offer to reduce vulnerabilities and issues.</li> <li>There is work taking place with the Cadets to get some teams operating in establishments and integrating into schemes to broaden the reach and not move from Young People.</li> <li>Currently there are 60 officers across the LPAs in the roles.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to Right Person, Right Care, phases 1-3 have been implemented with Phases 4-5 due to be implemented soon. Are there any updates?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The remaining phases were implemented last week.</li> <li>A national peer review in relation to the earlier phases has been requested. It is hoped that the peer review will prove helpful to identify improvements.</li> <li>There is a meeting next week to look at how to focus on Phases 1-2 to ensure that the principles are being maximised and staff are appropriately attending incidents.</li> <li>Phases 4-5 will be trickier. There is a lot of work and energy taking place within the partnership. This went live last week so it is too soon to say how the work is progressing.</li> <li>Week 1 is about getting the system up and running, there was a day when the number did not work, though nothing was broken.</li> <li>There is an escalation system in place which is something that can be bought back to the Board at a later date.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Accountability and Governance Board will take place on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024.</p>
	<b>CLOSE</b>