

Accountability and Governance Board

Notes of the Meeting

Tuesday 24 June 2025

1	<p><u>Attendees:</u> Wasim Ali (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC) Harjeet Chakira (Policy Manager, OPCC) Paul Drover (Assistant Chief Constable, WMP) Simon Foster (Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC) Alethea Fuller (Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC) Scott Green (Deputy Chief Constable, WMP) Craig Guildford (Chief Constable, WMP) Edward Hunter (Policy Intern, OPCC) Jonathan Jardine (Chief Executive, OPCC) Natalie Queiroz (Victims Advocate, OPCC) Sally Simpson (Chief Superintendent, WMP) Steve Taylor (Chief Inspector, WMP)</p>
2	<p>Notes of last meeting</p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were approved, and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) confirmed updates received regarding all actions arising from the meeting on 27 May 2025.</p> <p>It was noted that Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green is recorded in both the Attendees and Apologies for 27 May 2025. DCC Scott Green attended for the first 30 minutes of the meeting, and the notes of the last meeting have been rectified to show this.</p>
3	<p>PCC Update</p> <p>The Commissioner provided an update which covered the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. West Midlands Police (WMP) has a dedicated CCTV database that members of the public and businesses can register their details on. The database contains a list of people who have supplied their own CCTV footage to the police, if they happen to record evidence that may be helpful to solve a crime in their area. The Commissioner was pleased to announce that so far, 25,802 people and businesses in the West Midlands region have registered their CCTV and doorbell footage with WMP. The organisation that maintains the registry tells us that this is the largest CCTV database in the world. This is a tribute to our communities, who are clearly doing all they can to keep their area safe and bring offenders to justice. The Commissioner urges members of the public and businesses who have CCTV to register with the database. II. After a decade of underinvestment in policing and our wider criminal justice system that saw WMP lose 25% of its police officers, and still have around 700 fewer police officers in 2010, despite many other police forces have more police officers than in their force histories, the spending review announced on the 11th June is a significantly challenging outcome for policing. The 1.7% real-terms average annual increase for policing over the spending review period 25/26-

	<p>28/29 is welcome, but will place further pressure on the budget, particularly to deliver on the government neighbourhood policing guarantee and its mission to halve violence against women and girls, youth violence and knife crime. The PCC welcomes the £12.2million investment already received that has enabled the recruitment of 150 additional neighbourhood police officers, and the further investment in the wider criminal justice system, including counter-terrorism policing and courts, probation and prison services. The PCC will be considering the detail set out in the spending review, carefully reviewing existing financial plans, and awaiting the outcome of Force level allocations of funding that will not be available until December 2025. The PCC is committed to working with the Chief Constable of WMP and Government to ensure we are able to build on the progress that has been made and deliver on the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, and the commitment to prevent and tackle crime, rebuild community policing, prevent and tackle violence, improve road safety and keep the people, families, businesses and communities of the West Midlands safe and secure. The PCC continues to call for the return of the almost 700 fewer police officers and fair funding for WMP.</p>
III.	<p>The PCC welcomed the announcement by Government of the National Crime Agency-led national operation and the statutory public enquiry into abhorrent, non-recent, group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation. Both WMP and the PCC cooperate and support the national operation and enquiry in any way possible. This includes compliance with all relevant recommendations set out in the national audit. WMP is already working with Operation Hydrant, the policing operation that operates non-recent child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, to identify all cases that require further action. There have been deeply concerning and deplorable past institutional failings on the part of local councils, policing professionals, the Criminal Justice System, elected representatives and Government to effectively safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of vulnerable girls and to bring offenders to justice. These failings have led to victims themselves being criminalised instead of protected and it is essential that children are seen as children. The proposed national operation and enquiry provides an opportunity to build on the recommendations of previous investigations and enquiries, including the seven-years-long independent enquiry into child sexual abuse, published in October 2022, and importantly, to deliver justice for victims and survivors. To prevent and tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation, joined up work is essential across all public, private and voluntary sector agencies and mandatory training, so that everyone working with children can identify signs of abuse and exploitation, and where possible prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation. This must include better data sharing, greater professional curiosity, and strengthen laws to protect children from dangers online. To deal with non-recent and recent cases, we need effective detection, investigation, disruption and enforcement. We must ensure the victims are listened to, believed, safeguarded and protected. Victim's concerns and reports must be acted upon. Victims and survivors must have access to high quality services to access essential help and support they need to cope and recover. A national police chief council analysis, published in January 2024, found that group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation accounted for 5% of all identified reports of child sexual abuse and exploitation. We must ensure that our collective response regards all victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation, whether group-based or other, otherwise there is risk of continuing to fail victims. WMP, partners and wider criminal justice services need sufficient resources to address the threat posed. The PCC welcomes the Government acceptance to fully commit to resourcing the implementation of the national audit recommendation over multiple years. As set out in the 25-29 Police and Crime Plan, the PCC expects WMP to focus on bringing offenders to justice whilst safeguarding and supporting victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The PCC expects WMP to play its part in continuing to address the national threat posed by child sexual abuse and exploitation set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement. The PCC is committed to holding WMP to account, working with the Chief Constable to ensure the Force uses all powers available to them to</p>

	<p>prevent and tackle all child sexual abuse and exploitation, safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of victims and survivors, and ensure that offenders, whoever they are, are held to account, face the consequences of their abhorrent crimes and are brought to justice. That commitment is absolute, unconditional and non-negotiable. The PCC encourages victims and survivors to come forward if they have not already done so. There are three aims that must guide and inform all further action. Firstly, the rights and welfare of victims and survivors must be the top priority at all times throughout this process. They must be listened to, believed, safeguarded and protected. Secondly, all offenders must be held to account and face consequences and be brought to justice. Thirdly, public bodies, organisations, professionals and elected representatives who fail in their duties to safeguard and protect vulnerable girls must be held to account to ensure that this will not happen again. The PCC endorses the conclusion of the national audit that all victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation are entitled to full and swift implementation of the 12 recommendations, decisive leadership and a collective determination to fix past failings and build a strong approach for the future.</p>
4	<p>Chief Constable Update</p> <p>The Chief Constable, Craig Guildford, provided an update which covered the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The Chief concurs with the PCC's observations on the spending review in terms of its overall disappointment. WMP are making plans accordingly and await further details later this year. II. There is a police reform white paper this summer that will include proposals from the Government to reform the police service nationally, which WMP look forward to reviewing. Over the summer, changes to probation and the recall arrangements for individuals will place additional pressure on multi-agency teams, but the biggest demand will be on probation colleagues. III. The number of roads policing prosecutions and enforcements has trebled. There has been positive local media coverage of the activity undertaken. Arrest figures continue to rise. Since the last update, Bournville has opened and there have been updates to custody suites in Coventry Willenhall, with an average of 200 people through cells last week. Consequently, file quality hit nearly 70% last month, which is a remarkable turnaround. IV. Performance reviews show that crime levels continue to fall. There has been a visit to the control room and performance remains strong. The Metropolitan asked WMP to undertake a review of their approach to call handling and contact, which was concluded last week. V. West Midlands hosted a visit for Sir Andy Marsh from the College of Policing, focusing on digital forensics, Andi-Esra technology and workflow through the system, looking at the volume of work compared to the number of resources. VI. Last week saw the conclusion of sentencing for an incident in Walsall that involved 8 people who received 120+yrs imprisonment for a violent disorder and conspiracy to commit a Section 18. The Chief praised the investigation and the sentencing that reflects the level of offending in a public place. VII. Neighbourhood Policing Week of Action is currently taking place, with a big operation on e-bikes. Enforcement activity has taken place in Birmingham and will be rolled out in different urban centres across the West Midlands. VIII. Last week, Officers encountered a male who assaulted three officers who have now been released from hospital. This underlines the levels of aggression that are faced daily. IX. The Chief welcomed new PCSOs, who will be posted into neighbourhoods in due course. X. Last week, a team of international pickpockets were sentenced for several offences. The sentences were of a custodial nature to reflect the level of seriousness of their crimes.

	<p>XI. Operational activity continues at pace. WMP are at the forefront of dealing with people expeditiously through the custody process. The quality of files is improving and the Chief welcomes the next set of performance data.</p>
5	<p>Questions from AGB members</p> <p>Question 1: Recruitment Update (Asked by DPCC Wasim Ali)</p> <p>Can the Chief Constable provide an update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The plans to recruit the additional 150 neighbourhood police officers B. The plan to recruit an additional 20 PCSOs C. The timetable to re-deploy the 139 existing officers into neighbourhood policing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 150 neighbourhood officers have been budgeted for and training is in place. Recruitment remains strong on all pathways. The Chief is hopeful that by the end of September, the Force will be in a strong position whereby the 150 new posts will release experienced constables and sergeants into neighbourhood policing roles. The Chief is committed to the neighbourhood policing guarantee and updating the website of local identified ward-based officers. There are several recruitment intakes planned throughout the year that will be deployed to neighbourhood policing. In addition to 150 new posts, WMP are redeploying 139 officers to broader aspects of neighbourhood policing by the end of September. The Chief remains compliant with the neighbourhood policing guarantee. <p>Question 2: School Engagement (Asked by Victims Advocate Natalie Queiroz)</p> <p>What plans and developments are in place to ensure regular engagement between police officers and schools, and what is the latest update on the Police and Crime Plan commitment to provide a named police officer for every school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two aspects to the changes being made. Firstly, dedicated neighbourhood officers will be red circled to minimise abstraction and maximise presence in their local ward. Secondly, every school will have named dedicated local officer and school officers to provide partnership and prevention. More resources will be put into the areas that need them, allowing for officers to be surged into areas when needed, working closely inside schools with teachers as part of the curriculum. There are no plans to reduce these numbers as this service provides fundamental support. Whilst WMP cannot afford to allocate one officer per school, the Chief remains committed to making a positive difference on a local basis with the available resources. <p>Question 3: Comprehensive Spending Review (Asked by DPCC Wasim Ali)</p> <p>Given what is known to date, what impact will the Comprehensive Spending Review, published on 11 June, have on policing in the West Midlands?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMP has 700 less officers than in 2010. The Police are an important part of society, and the police service needs additional money to invest in its future, both nationally and locally. Locally, there are 700 fewer officers and a settlement that is not as good as hoped for, which is reflected within WMP and other Forces. The impact is anticipated as it relies on decisions around local precepts, which are not taken usually until the end of the year. WMP precept starts at a position of one of the lowest of any police force in the UK and has a difference of around £40million compared to other Forces, which equates to a lot of staff. Fundamentally, this is disappointing and there will be a local impact. WMP have a proven track record of delivering savings and there are increasing pressures as a business to make cuts. The Chief will focus on non-pay areas and work closely with the PCC around decisions for estates and infrastructure for longer term benefits. This will encourage collaboration as a larger organisation to provide services to smaller police forces and generate additional surplus. The financial impact is yet to be measured but is anticipated December 2025–February 2026.

6	<p>Right Care Right Person</p> <p>The item was presented by ACC Paul Drover. The following discussion took place:</p> <p>What action is taking place to address challenges around data, and is there a timeline in place to ensure positive outcomes in the work to improve the data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMP now create their own baseline data with the information that has been presented. The single biggest challenge is ensuring accuracy in the call handling coding. The 'Concern for Safety' is a broad term that covers more than mental health. Work is ongoing to refine the data to specifically consider Right Care Right Person to improve precision in reporting. The 'Concern for Safety' header and closures will be changed to become more specific to Right Care Right Person, but due diligence is still needed. This will assist in the total performance overview by classifying logs correctly in the first instance. Whilst data could be more accurate, trends are still visible across the board. This information forms part of a dataset that is reviewed bi-monthly with partners and local police leads to track trends and reviews. Robust reporting in Quarter 2 is expected, as is a challenge around partnership data in determining outcomes of patients. Currently, the highest dataset is 'unknown', but work is ongoing to prove the accuracy of partnership data. <p>Was there any expectation that calls would increase or decrease following the implementation of Right Care Right Person?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calls from A&Es and mental health facilities were expected to decrease as awareness on the role of the Police grew. The challenge for concerns for safety is a broader issue outside of Right Care Right Person and includes all concerns for safety calls. The Force are not expecting a significant reduction and note the accuracy of paragraph 7's concern for welfare calls reducing. <p>Section 136 detentions have not reduced. Is this a training issue in utilising Section 136 in circumstances where not appropriate? Is there a need to access the 24/7 helpline to address this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an ongoing training issue and there are incidents of non-compliance with own policies and approaches. There is always a need for more training. The 24hr support system is being used consistently and there is also a vulnerability desk available to support officers. There is a robust offer of support across the board for officers in difficult situations but there are individual officer challenges in receiving recourses. Officers do not always have the ability to contact healthcare professionals in instances where there is an immediate risk of harm, as it may not be practical to access these circumstances when implementing Section 136 of the Mental Health Act. There is ongoing training, but there will always be occasions whereby seeking advice prior to enacting the Power is not appropriate. <p>Is there any prospect of reducing the use of Section 136 to ensure better conversion rate? The paper references a continuously low conversion rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better decisions made at the front line are ideal, but not all situations where Section 136 is evoked lead to better care. The initial aim was on the reduction to police resources and time spent through better training. A more mature workforce and better training will lead to this becoming proxy rather than principle. <p>How are WMP holding partners accountable for instances where police were called due to service failings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a continued partnership relationship where feedback-issued workshops are created. This is a constant strain, but WMP should be holding partners to account. Strategic groups will look at issues, escalations and challenges, particularly where a handover has taken over 24-hours. This work forms a report for partners, and accountability is embedded into the approach. In incidents of criticality and ongoing issues, there is the ability to have live conversations via the vulnerability desk and through partners to deal with risks in live time. Themes are
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	<p>presented to Integrated Care Board (ICB) strategic groups monthly to have conversations to influence future workshops.</p> <p>What specific risks have been logged on the Force risk register following the NHS restructuring, and how are these being managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a specific risk for funding, provision of service and available accommodation across the ICBs, which sits within local policing and reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable. This remains an ongoing discussion, particularly regarding accommodation challenges. <p>How are staff across the system being trained to ensure the implementation of Right Care Right Person responsibilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a programme of training and communication. To raise awareness, a threshold policy and flowchart was created that had training inputs included. Data and performance are now being considered to review incidents. <p>How will preparing for potential legislation changes affect Right Care Right Person, and what might these include?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The suggested changes were a driver for the need to maintain a strategic working group. The anticipation is that police stations will not be a suitable place of safety. Legislation will be used to identify where workloads and demands will be needed, to ensure a reduction for the need of Section 136 detention under Right Care Right Person. The white paper will have more impact on the individuals detained, which will impact the areas of business. The governance board for the strategic working group has been agreed and will work together to provide the correct services for communities. <p>Further work is needed to agree KPIs and Data Sharing Agreements. What is the timeframe for this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to data and performance timeframe, timeliness and police resources will form part of this discussion. There will be challenges in obtaining partnership data. There is no reason why the policing aspect cannot be implemented now, and by Quarter 2 partnership work should be taking place. <p>The restructuring of the NHS and ICB's will create a need for risk management. Have partners committed to continue to deliver services as changes occur?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICB will continue to work in support of this regional group because they want to, although they are not required to. Mutual decisions, support and assistance are at the forefront of the partnerships and work as solutions to some of the biggest challenges being faced. Commitment is present and value is clear as this regional group is imbedded in the Board governance. <p>The absence of consistent outcome data is the biggest vulnerability. Is anybody looking at outcomes? Is there national awareness of this vulnerability in the programme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is recognition of this work but there are challenges in obtaining the data in a way that can be reported. There is ambition and appetite, but creating a system to put that in place is challenging. It has been recognised at a national level that data is not where it should be. There are conversations taking place nationally around partner understandings of data sharing and the Data Protection Act, particularly as sharing information on patients is restrictive. There is the potential to have a system understanding of the demand across the whole system to identify outcomes. Currently, there are different understandings at different levels, for example policing understandings and healthcare understandings. This is a national issue being raised at a national level. Current focuses are on having one true outcome. <p>Have there been any recommendations nationally or elsewhere that are relevant to the implementation of Right Care Right Person?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge is often that recommendations have been highlighted as Right Care Right Person but are not linked directly to Right Care Right Person and are instead
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	<p>in relation to other processes. Details of specific recommendations are unknown, but some reports that have been highlighted in West Midlands were preimplantation of Right Care Right Person. Right Care Right Person is trying to make the system abide by the mental health code of practice and offer the right care for patients, so if the system does this correctly, there should be an improvement.</p> <p>Is the decision by officers to exercise the Section 136 power on an individual detained in custody awaiting a place of safety still an issue or has it been improved by RCRP? What is the effect of the legislation change that forbids a police station being used as a place of safety if an individual has been detained under Section 136 whilst in police custody?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is understanding of the differences in a PACE prisoner and a patient detained under Section 136. This has been embedded across all custody blocks and magistrates' courts, mental health strategies and standard operating procedures. There is now the ability to distinguish treatments for a suspect of crime or an individual with mental health concerns. This allows for bail to receive necessary care and balancing against the severity and criminal aspects of the incident. The detention against Section 136 and PACE running in parallel has been abolished and replaced with clear guidance on how individuals should be dealt with through the Criminal Justice System. There are three pathways to assess how to identify needs, provide appropriate support and determine any criminal justice action needed. These are used in each incident to assess the appropriate route. <p>How long has that process been in place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 months <p>Historically when considering risks on policing of individuals in a mental health crisis, there has been evidence of disproportionality issues at the point where the individuals needs have become acute in their crisis. Is data related to ethnicity and disproportionality recorded in this area? Have any trends been noted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National data does paint this picture at the 2nd stage for detention of an individual, however the data that WMP are provided does not show a level of concern. It is important not to discourage officers who are detaining people under Section 136 if support is needed. Levels of further detention are showing outside of policing powers in decisions made by professionals in relation to further detentions beyond Section 136. <p>Is ethnicity, gender, age data available through use of the powers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically in relation to Section 136, yes. Force spreadsheets do go into those specifics. <p>Paragraph 10 notes that partners have been calling more frequently for assistance with mental health transportation. Is WMP aware of any reasons why calls for transportation have increased since the implementation of phases 3 and 4, as this seems counter intuitive? What action is being taken to resolve the issue of messaging servicing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is primarily down to decision making of officers that results in a course of action taken by the team to raise the awareness that the automated response is a catch all for category 2 call systems. WMAS do respond much faster than the anticipated 5-hours, usually in around 13 minutes. <p>How are case review information captured, shared and distributed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a case review process with partners. There is a point of escalation on a case-by-case basis which allows for incidents to be dealt with in live time. Information sharing is now in place, WMP review cases going through the system and look at the specific 24-hour handover times, feedback is provided to ICBs who also feedback which forms part of the structural governance in meetings and allows for escalation of individual cases.
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	<p>Data shows that there is a reduction in average time spent with Section 136 patients. What work is being undertaken to deliver further reductions, and what confidence is there that this is going to deliver against the 1-hour target?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMP continue to see the time coming down, although this is not consistent across all areas. Coventry are already at the 1-2-hour target and the Black Country are at 4.5-hours. Availability of provisions and accommodation in Birmingham remain a big issue. However, there are still situations where handovers are being delayed until the patient is considered medically fit. Practice improvements are needed to assist in the reduction to meet a consistent 1-hour target across the board. <p>What are the wait times in Birmingham compared to other areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Times are significantly higher at 10.5-hours average, compared to 1-hour in Coventry and 4.5-hours in the Black Country. <p>Are there active plans in place or further support than can be offered to combat this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are plans in place and there are still efficiencies and improvements that can be made, however WMP are primarily focusing on the number of beds available. ICB continue to advocate for the improvement and supply of beds. There is still a reduction in time and handover that can be done whilst discussions around facilities and beds continue.
7	<p>Police and Crime Plan Update</p> <p>The item was presented by Harjeet Chakira, Edward Hunter and Jonathan Jardine. The following discussion took place:</p> <p>Is it proposed that WMP will be the only referral source for the New Chance Scheme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the moment, yes. <p>Page 5 shows a graphic indicating a significant increase in demand. Is demand stabilising or increasing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been a significant increase over the last few months due to changes within how WMP refer into the service. OPCC are hopeful that it will stabilise, and that the new model will pick up the increased levels, but the trajectory of referrals will continue to be monitored. <p>What are the timescales for the implementation of the 2025 New Chance contract?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timescales are imminent. There is currently an ongoing standstill period but there will be an announcement of the new provider soon. <p>Once the data on the Victims Code of Compliance is obtained, what will WMP have in its foresight? Will it be one code-one right, or will all codes and rights be considering together? How fast do WMP envision the action plan will be created?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative data of all crime is measured against a compliance-driven model. Parallel to this is Vanguard, which has run alongside the compliance model to improve the quality of the totality of WMP's approach to investigations. WMP have shaped monthly audits to carry out a qualitative assessment of investigations. The outcome of this has showed compliance in writing investigation plans, but focus is shifting towards looking at the quality of those investigations. Regarding the Victim Code of Compliance, WMP will start with measuring available data to assess capabilities and risk of human and system error. This will shape audits driven through Vanguard to look at their quality. HMIC has delivered verbal feedback that compliance of victim-needs assessments has improved. The next phase will be to look at the qualitative aspect assessments to improve overall standards. WMP will take a two-pronged approach to consider data and quality, and both will be managed through a monthly performance day. It is currently too early to focus on one area, however the approach to the management of all performance data will be to focus on metrics and then quality. The Chief recognises that the Victims Code is applicable to all partners and does not want to put all the focus of the

	<p>Victims Code on WMP, as all partners have a shared responsibility. Therefore, a balanced approach will be sought.</p> <p>Will the specific rights that apply to WMP be considered individually or collectively?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMP need to consider what is received first and then review accordingly. Where possible, WMP will take a collective approach. <p>Regarding the PCC having a more active role in reviews, please explain the proposed consultation and what is expected to raise awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is still in its infancy; a conversation has taken place with the Engagement Team to explain what the work is and why awareness is needed. Internal comms campaigns have previously been undertaken but have proven to have not been enough. The Engagement Team will more actively promote the work rather than putting the onus on the public. <p>It is vital to involve partners to increase their awareness and create a standardised process to ensure they are involved in the entirety of the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The statutory duty is not for the PCC to host or deliver the case review but to provide both its promotion and an avenue for victims to attend and facilitate appeals processes, rather than the initial delivery of the case review. <p>Police Officers remaining in neighbourhood policing is a constant priority to communities and the Abstraction Policy is a core part of protecting local policing. How confident is WMP of this working in practice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will come into force when changes are implemented, and confidence will then be measured. WMP work hard to protect the time of designated Neighbourhood Officers, and this is set against WMP being the second largest police force in the country with 700 less officers than in 2010. The Chief is confident in reaching the proposed aims and will report back once the change is complete.
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