

Accountability and Governance Board

Notes of the Meeting

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Attendees:**

Wasim Ali – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC  
Simon Foster – Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC  
Alethea Fuller – Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC  
Peter Gillett – Director of Commercial and People, WMP  
Scott Green – Acting Chief Constable, WMP  
Jane Heppel – Chief Finance Officer, OPCC  
Davinder Jagpal – Service Director – Finance, WMP  
Jonathan Jardine – Chief Executive, OPCC  
Jennifer Mattinson – Temporary Deputy Chief Constable, WMP  
Natalie Queiroz – Victims Advocate, OPCC

**Apologies:**

No Apologies were received.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) advised that there will be no PCC update, Chief Constables (CC) update or Accountability and Governance Board (AGB) member questions today to give additional time to discuss the Operation Parkmill paper.

The PCC and The Acting Chief Constable (ACC) acknowledged Holocaust Memorial Day and the importance of marking this occasion and remembering and honouring victims and survivors on this day. The PCC and representatives from WMP attended a number of events throughout the week.

Notes of last meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 were agreed as accurate and no action arose from these.

**Operation Parkmill**

**The PCC provided the following introduction:**

I acknowledge, recognise and understand the significant strength of feeling that is shared by many people, including myself, in connection with matters arising from the decision of the Birmingham City Council Safety Advisory Group dated 16 October 2025, based on the recommendation of West Midlands Police, to ban away fans supporting Maccabi Tel Aviv, from attending the football match against Aston Villa on 6 November 2025 – and that includes our Jewish community and people and communities in the West Midlands - whether or not they agreed with the ban or they disagreed with the ban.

My immediate response to that decision was to call for a review and the convening of a Special Safety Advisory Group Meeting, at the earliest possible opportunity, to reconsider the decision.

It is not my intention to rehearse all that has happened since the decision of the 16 October to the present day, because many, if not all of you, will have been following what has taken place. However, I refer to the most recent and significant events that include:

- The Home Secretary's announcement in the House of Commons that she no longer had confidence in the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police.
- The publication of the HMIC letter setting out the preliminary views of the Chief Inspector of Constabulary – it is worth noting that this does not constitute the final report and the Chief Inspector's views might therefore develop or change.
- My immediate commencement of preparation of the process that would have enabled me to dismiss the Chief Constable.
- The retirement with immediate effect of the former Chief Constable - and I will say more on the subject of retirement or dismissal at the conclusion of this agenda item.
- My appointment of former Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green as the Acting Chief Constable.
- My referral of the former Chief Constable to the Independent Office of Police Conduct and the IOPC exercise of its power of initiative and WMP's referral, relating to WMP officers to independently investigate and determine if any officer or staff member may have a case to answer for misconduct.

The IOPC will now undertake a full assessment of the evidence, and gather more where necessary, to establish if any of the officers may have breached police professional standards in relation to duties and responsibilities.

The areas relevant to the IOPC's investigation will include: the quality and accuracy of the information provided by West Midlands Police to the Safety Advisory Group, particularly that provided on the 24 October 2025; the use of AI for the purpose of obtaining intelligence for inclusion in the report; consideration of the record keeping, or lack of, by individual officers; and the assertions made about the consultation with local Jewish community groups.

I welcome the apology that has been provided by the Acting Chief Constable on behalf of West Midlands Police, that I know he will want to repeat today.

We await the outcome of the Home Affairs Committee Report, that is expected in February. The Acting Chief Constable and I have already met on 5 occasions, to discuss the actions that the force must take to re-build trust and confidence, including addressing the significant matters identified in the letter from HMIC.

We are committed to working together, to prevent and tackle crime, bring offenders to justice, promote the rights and welfare of victims and ensure the safety and security of the people and communities of the West Midlands.

I am looking forward to hearing from the Acting Chief Constable, in connection with the plans he has as part of Operation Strive. The strategic aim of Operation Strive will be to restore the trust and confidence that the public have in West Midlands Police and learn the lessons from how the force responded to the fixture. Acting Chief Constable Green is taking personal responsibility for this operation as the Gold Commander. This is essential, because without trust and confidence in our police force, it is not possible to ensure that policing is with the consent of the people or to have an effective and efficient police force. Acting Chief Constable Green will be updating us on the objectives and detail within Operation Strive during the course of the meeting.

However, one of my statutory duties is to hold the Chief Constable and West Midlands Police to account, on behalf of the people who have elected me - and that is the primary purpose of today's Board.

Part of the process that is required, if trust and confidence is to be re-built, is for WMP not only to be held to account, but to be seen to be held to account. The HMIC process is of course important however, it is a national body. The HASC is of course important. However, it sits in

Westminster and no West Midlands MPs sit on it. Today is about local democratic accountability and local democratic accountability matters.

WMP must acknowledge with candour the significant concerns and shortcomings that have been laid bare in recent weeks.

WMP must confront and face up to the significant concerns and shortcomings that have been laid bare in recent weeks.

WMP must identify, understand and take ownership of the significant concerns and shortcomings that have been laid bare in recent weeks and the harm this has caused to West Midlands Police as an organisation. More importantly, it has caused harm to the people and communities that it exists to serve.

On 8 December, I requested West Midlands Police to prepare a report to my Accountability and Governance Board today. That request set out 41 questions for the Force to answer. That Report has been published on my website and is before the Board today.

As a consequence of the referrals that have now been made to the IOPC in connection with the Chief Constable and other officers, I understand there will be some matters in connection with which it might not be possible for WMP to provide full and frank answers, so as not to prejudice the IOPC investigation.

I am also mindful that I am the Appropriate Authority in relation to the former Chief Constable; my role in connection with any disciplinary proceedings that might follow; and the need not to prejudice any ongoing investigation.

Please rest assured I will be putting as many questions and raising as many concerns as I am able to do in the time available.

**The ACC provided the following introduction:**

Commissioner, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to update yourself and attendees today on the immediate actions I have taken since you appointed me as Acting Chief Constable just over a week ago.

Like yourself, I would like to pay my respects today, remembering and rightly honouring victims and survivors on International Holocaust Memorial Day. There will be senior representatives attending several commemorative events taking place across the West Midlands this week.

I would like to start by reiterating my full and sincere public apology that I gave on day one of my appointment. The failings identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, in their preliminary views reported to the Home Secretary, in relation to our planning, policing and subsequent response to the Aston Villa versus Maccabi Tel Aviv football match, are damning.

A direct impact of our actions has been a loss of trust and confidence from the public of the West Midlands. More specifically, I know we have damaged our relationship with individuals and Jewish communities – locally, nationally, and internationally. It personally saddens me to hear of the damage this has caused to our relationship with the public.

Last Tuesday, I listened to members of the public reflect upon the personal impact that the events of recent weeks have had on them, the upset people have felt and strength people have shown through these difficult times. I praise the resilience and courage of these individuals and thank them for their honesty and candour in sharing their experiences with me.

Our response to criticisms of the force, including our reaction to the Home Secretary's statement to Parliament, has been too defensive.

I am committed to West Midlands Police learning from these events, but most importantly, taking immediate action. This will be focused on repairing the damage which has resulted in the loss of confidence the public and diverse communities have in us.

The public losing confidence in policing, undermines the core principles of British Policing. We will now work tirelessly to restore that trust, ensuring that we work with the public to prevent crime, policing without fear or favour.

Recognising the significant impact recent events have had, I, (upon taking the position of Acting Chief Constable) declared this a critical incident for the force to ensure the absolute due focus and attention we need to afford this.

I am greatly aware that the public perception of how matters concerning West Midlands Police's planning for this fixture have been veiled in ambiguity and potentially inaccurate information. I am therefore unequivocally committed to ensuring I come here today being as clear and transparent as I can.

To demonstrate this transparency and accountability, on my first day in office as Acting Chief Constable I directed that a voluntary referral be made to the IOPC. Subsequent to this referral the IOPC have decided to use their 'power of initiative' to call-in the matter and independently investigate to determine if any officer or staff member may have a case to answer for misconduct. Information relating to the planning, policing and response have on occasions developed at pace and therefore individuals may well have provided details based on what they knew at that point in time.

Having requested the IOPC investigation, I am very mindful that there may be matters which at this time I am not able to comment on to avoid the risk of any prejudice to that investigation. There may also be details which become apparent as a result of the IOPC's detailed investigation which I am not privy to today.

Neither Temporary DCC Mattinson or I were engaged operationally or in any of the relevant decision making in connection with this matter other than our liaison with the IOPC, we will both therefore provide fresh perspective and eyes.

Commissioner, your Accountability and Governance Board is an integral part of your role in the PCC publicly holding the force to account. Both the Temporary Deputy Chief Constable and I will do our utmost to assist you and bring transparency to these matters for the benefit of the public both you and I serve.

I know that the actions of our force have negatively impacted on the trust and confidence the public of the West Midlands have in us. And this is something of significant concern to me. Moving at pace during my first week in post, I have already met with a number of people, including many individuals from the local West Midlands Jewish communities and the Policing Minister. To all, I have again reiterated my apology for the damaging impact events have had and had positive discussions on how, as a force, we will now strive to restore the trust and confidence of the public. Last week we launched Operation Strive which will be the overarching policing operation to coordinate the force's effective response to drive forward the action and changes needed.

This will be a wide-reaching initiative with a number of workstreams of activity. A full and comprehensive action plan is now being developed for how this will be delivered by Temporary DCC Mattinson.

This work will focus on growing our cultural competence, ensuring open dialogue, building authentic connections with people, investing in community relations, and ensuring each and every member of our workforce is accountable and cognisant of biases while being bold role models for equality. This work will also incorporate a range of welfare and support measures for our officers and staff.

It is important to remind the public that we are a force that is performing extremely well. Our officers, staff and volunteers have collectively worked really hard to get West Midlands Police to

the place it is today as being one of the best in the country for responding to the public, reducing crime and bringing offenders to justice.

This week we expect to see the latest release of national data and this will reinforce just how well the force is doing. I have directed the workforce to focus their attention on continuing to improve our service to the public, striving to be the very best we can and doing even more to protect the public, as this is rightly the service they deserve.

This remains all about us doing the right thing, aligned to the Code of Ethics, showing courage, respect and empathy and providing the very best public service we can, without fear or favour. I am passionate about keeping people safe, this is why I joined as a police officer three decades ago. I want to always be proud of the privileged position I hold as a serving officer and I want each and every member of our workforce to feel that pride too. This only comes from knowing we are delivering a service that the public are proud of and that they have trust and confidence in.

During the coming days and weeks West Midlands Police will continue to rapidly progress a range of work under Operation Strive.

We will continue to focus on protecting the public of West Midlands and improving our services, as we have done relentlessly during recent years.

I look forward to providing you, Commissioner, and the public with regular updates on our successful progress of this.

Thank you again for this opportunity to update you today.

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**The Operation Parkmill Paper was then presented by: Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Jen Mattinson**

The following conversation took place:

- An elaborate command structure is established under the title Operation Parkmill. That includes: Gold, Silver, Bronze Commanders. Experienced and accredited staff with thematic responsibilities with the involvement of the Operation Planning Department.
- WMP has extensive institutional experience of planning and preparing for major events. The APP was to be adhered to. With Public Order Public Safety and POPS Advisers having benefited from the College of Policing course: with mentoring and CPD.
- The National Decision Model: College of Policing 10 Principles of risk and 6 Core Principles of Public Order. To review and adjust to response and threat assessment.
- The National UKFPU risk assessment Matrix to inform decision making.
- And yet – despite this elaborate structure - ultimately the system fails: The purpose of today is to consider some of the reasons WHY it failed so catastrophically, from the commencement of the Operation on 1 September 2025 leading to the HMIC Preliminary Letter dated 14 January 2026.
- On 2 September one of the first actions that takes place is for WMP to request team information from the National Football Intelligence Partnership through the UK Football Policing Unit – that appears to be a pack with the MTA Team Overview. What would that have consisted of? Was it received? Would it include any intelligence about the team's fans and previous public order related matters? Was any regard had to this? If not, why not?

[It is common practice for those involved in the planning of fixtures of this nature, to seek intelligence from a variety of sources, the person who requested this intelligence is detailed within it and this information is likely to form part of the IOPC investigation, therefore it would be unwise](#)

as the person who made the referral to the IOPC for me to comment on what was in the documentation.

- The minutes of the very first Op Parkmill Gold on 16 September speak of the Gold Commander having a low risk appetite for a repeat of the disorder seen at the AVFC v Legia Warsaw match in 2024. Did this low risk appetite - and the experience of the Legia Warsaw match, prompt WMP to become too risk averse in its approach to the fixture? Are you satisfied that the Gold commander had the relevant training and experience?

All public order gold commanders are trained by the college of policing and assessed on whether they are occupationally competent at the end of the training, to then be operationally competent they would shadow experienced gold commanders and receive a further assessment. All substantive gold commanders in this force are trained accredited and additionally WMP has significant experience of policing both high profile football matches and European football matches. I am satisfied that both gold commanders involved are trained and accredited. Regarding the comments made by the gold commander at the SAG meeting it would be unwise and unfair to comment any further given the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- Was there any known suspected terrorist threat relating to the fixture? If so, who was the target and what was the suspected motivation of those involved? Was action taken to identify and mitigate that threat?

All major events in the UK carry an underlying risk of terrorist threat, I am unable to comment in the public domain on intelligence into counter terrorism. This will be looked into further by HMIC and potentially will be covered in the IOPC investigation.

- Early intelligence reports include reference to local people “arming” themselves in preparation for the fixture. What did WMP take that to mean in terms of scale, level of threat and with what purpose were people arming themselves? Was the intelligence actionable? Was anything done to pursue further lines of enquiry to identify the source of this intelligence, identify them, investigate the threat and consider an arrest and charges? If not, Why not?

I have seen both appearances by the officers at the public affairs committee, and this was a question which was asked there and will therefore form part of the IOPC investigation. Whilst it is my intention throughout this board to answer every question with as much transparency as I can, commenting on this could prejudice the IOPC investigation. It would be unwise, unfair and inappropriate for me to enquire into those matters whilst this investigation is ongoing and therefore cannot comment on that at this time.

- I now turn to the HMIC Preliminary Letter dated 14 January. I had no prior knowledge as to the contents of this letter; I first had sight of it on 14 January. It identifies what it refers to as concerns and shortcomings. It is my intention to take WMP through these.

The HMIC report states:

- To be clear, I have found no evidence to support a view that antisemitism played any part in WMP stating that its preferred tactical option was to reduce to zero the ticket allocation to Maccabi Tel Aviv fans.
- However, in respect of any individual officers, the evidence I have seen doesn't point to their actions having been influenced by political interference, antisemitism, any other lack of impartiality, or malign intent
- Turning to the concerns and shortcomings, at Page 3 the Chief Inspector states: However, I am concerned that in some respects, the force either didn't fully appreciate – or its response didn't demonstrate that it appreciated – the extent to which national and international context would lead to far-reaching consequences if the fixture and wider associated events

were not policed effectively. I am not convinced that the force fully considered the consequences of its preferred tactical option. It focused on reducing the risk of short-term disorder and long-term damage to local community relations due to the presence of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. It lacked the necessary foresight to recognise the long-term, global consequences.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? And what is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

I acknowledge that the impact of WMPs actions has damaged the relationship with the Jewish Community. I have spent some time speaking with the community and listening to their views and the impact is very clear. I accept the content of the letter in its entirety because it is about organisational failure. Although there are many areas within the planning where our duties under the equality act were considered, WMP did not conduct an equality impact assessment. Had we have done so it is much more likely that we would have considered these impacts both locally, nationally and internationally. Going forward it will be mandatory for these assessments to be carried out in these situations.

- At Page 3 The Chief Inspector states:  
It is also clear that WMP sought and obtained additional information about other Maccabi Tel Aviv fixtures. But I note that WMP spoke only to Dutch police. It appears that the force didn't speak to policing counterparts in other jurisdictions where Maccabi Tel Aviv had more recently played European fixtures.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

WMP should have spoken to as many teams and nations who hosted MTV as possible, we didn't make enough attempts to do so and we are building this into our response which will form operation Strive to ensure that this doesn't happen again. An immediate change which has already been implemented is that all meetings with law enforcement colleagues from other countries will be recorded going forward.

- At Page 4 The Chief Inspector states:  
However, on 10 October 2025, the WMP gold commander at that time wrote a letter to the Chair of the SAG. That letter contains some statements that are inaccurate. It also contains a lack of balance regarding the behaviour of different groups in Amsterdam. It appears that on 24 October 2025, the silver commander – with approval from the most senior level of the force – repeated these inaccurate statements in a written report to the SAG. That report also contains further inaccuracies.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

I accept on behalf of WMP that organisationally the force overstated some of the evidence as HMIC has pointed out. I have made the decision to refer some of the senior officers involved to the IOPC. Therefore, it wouldn't be wise or fair on the transparency of the investigation for me to comment further on that.

- At Page 4 The Chief Inspector states:  
The force's 16 October 2025 oral briefing didn't repeat the inaccuracies of the 10 October 2025 letter, and it didn't include the same lack of balance. It also didn't introduce the further inaccuracies that appeared in the 24 October 2025 report. But those inaccuracies would of course have been in the gold and silver commanders' minds when they decided to recommend the force's preferred tactical option.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

Our reporting to the SAG is word documents, I have not enquired into these matters as it wouldn't be appropriate to do so during the ongoing investigation. There will be an organisational learning review, we will be much clearer and more prescriptive on what information we share with SAGs and ensuring documents are protectively marked. We also await the HMIC findings and will act on this information when we have it.

- At Page 4 The Chief Inspector states:  
In this letter, I conclude that there was an imbalance in the weight of evidence that WMP presented to the SAG in respect of the previous behaviour of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. I have formed the view that confirmation bias, in relation to the anticipated behaviour of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans and the potential disorder their presence might cause, influenced both the content and strength of assessments WMP gave to the SAG.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

Organisationally I accept the overstating of the evidence which HMIC have pointed out. To be clear the comments were not around conduct, only organisational advice. There is work ongoing already which will form part of Operation Strive regarding information provided to SAGs. I won't comment on the individual officers or their judgments as it would be unfair to do so due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- At Page 5 The Chief Inspector states:  
However, I am concerned about the accuracy of the written report that WMP gave the Chair of the SAG for the meeting on 24 October 2025.

These inaccuracies included the following:

- "The most recent match Maccabi Tel Aviv played in the UK was against West Ham United in the UEFA Europa Conference League group stage on 9th November 2023"
- "The police response saw 5,000 officers deployed over a number of days"
- "Over 200 [of the 2,800 Israeli fans who travelled to the November 2024 Ajax fixture] were linked to the Israeli Defence Forces"
- "The day before the [Ajax] fixture saw approximately 500–600 Maccabi fans apparently intentionally targeting Muslim communities"
- "[The 500–600 Maccabi fans] tearing down Palestine flags"
- "[The 500–600 Maccabi fans] committing... serious assaults on Muslim taxi drivers"
- "[The 500–600 Maccabi fans] throwing innocent members of the public into the river"
- "Several [Dutch police] officers were injured during the sustained confrontation"

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

Regarding the match between MTV v West Ham, we know that that match did not take place and that information came from AI, this formed part of the initial referral to the IOPC, so that matter is now being investigated by them. Once this information was brought to my attention, on my first day in office I turned off use of CoPilot until further notice.

In relation to the 5000 officers, that is the professional summary of one of the commanders involved and I won't comment further on that due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

Regarding all the other points, we do know there was disorder at that fixture. However as previously stated I do accept that the evidence was over stated by WMP.

- At Page 6 The Chief Inspector states:  
Also, the 10 October 2025 letter from the WMP gold commander to the Chair of the SAG refers to Maccabi Tel Aviv fans at the Ajax fixture "setting fire to Palestinian flags". From our interview

with the Dutch police, and from a letter from the Mayor of Amsterdam to the city's municipal authority, we understand that there was only one report of a person attempting to set fire to a single Palestinian flag.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

At a systemic level the way that we are going to be recording interactions going forward specifically with law enforcement colleagues' overseas answers this. Because we have done the voluntary referral to the IOPC and they are now conducting their investigation it would be unwise in terms of the transparency that the public require from the investigation and unfair on the officers involved to comment any further.

- At Page 6 the chief inspector states:  
My conclusion is similar to that of Lord Mann, who in his evidence to the Home Affairs Committee on 1 December 2025 said that the problem in Amsterdam had been "greatly exaggerated".  
Regardless of any misunderstanding about what the Dutch police said, I have concluded that WMP overstated the extent to which the disorder at that fixture was attributable to the Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters. All of this leads me to conclude that confirmation bias, in relation to the behaviour of the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, played a part in the way WMP reached its preferred tactical option, and the strength with which it presented it to the SAG.  
In these circumstances, banning away supporters was a wholly exceptional decision. The recommendation to the SAG should have been subject to greater challenge and consideration within WMP.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

The Chief HMI and his team have had access to a lot of documentation and have had the opportunity to speak with the commanders involved. Because of the ongoing investigation I have not done that myself, it would be unwise of me to do so. I have not seen anything to disagree with the comment that organisationally WMP overstated evidence. Operation Strive will be addressing all of those systemic failures. Had WMP completed the equality impact assessment, engaged with the OPCC and members of the Jewish Community at an earlier stage some of these issues would have come to light much sooner. Going forward this will be the approach.

- At Page 7 the Chief inspector states:  
I have further concern about the way WMP handled intelligence material. In respect of the written report that WMP gave the SAG on 24 October 2025, I have found that:
  - not all the information and intelligence in the report had passed through the force's dedicated intelligence structure; and
  - the intelligence bronze commander wasn't involved in the report's preparation.
  - As a result, the force didn't properly validate all the material it subsequently relied on. This is of significant concern, given that the SAG intended to use it for a wholly new consideration of the risk. The Chair of the SAG had asked that information made available to the SAG be "robust and capable of carrying the weight which may be placed on it". I am especially concerned about the way WMP handled sensitive intelligence when it created and disseminated the 24 October 2025 report.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

Organisationally, yes, it is accepted.  
WMP polices 3 million people, record around 900 crimes a day and arrest around 5000 people a month. The force is performing well and has robust intelligence structures. The link between public

order policing and our intelligence systems is not where we want it to be. This is part of the work that is taking place under Operation Strive in order to ensure improvement in this area.

- At Page 8 The Chief Inspector states:  
I have also found that there were further shortcomings in WMP's approach to planning for and responding to the Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv fixture. These shortcomings are in four fundamental areas:
  - Lack of effective local community engagement
  - Imbalance in communications
  - Poor record keeping and retention

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

I accept there has been a lack of community engagement and having met with the local Jewish community last week I am absolutely clear that better local engagement is essential and that will be part of our learning for Operation Strive.

During the meeting we received positive feedback from many members of the community but I was clear in my request to judge us not on what we are saying but on our actions.

Organisationally there are areas we must improve on around record keeping and retention and this again will form part of a comprehensive plan which will sit under Operation Strive I will not be commenting on the record keeping of individual officers involved as it wouldn't be fair to do so given the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- At Page 10 The Chief inspector states:  
Given the wider context in which the fixture took place, and the additional complexities that WMP was evidently aware of, I am concerned that the force didn't set up a sufficiently robust command structure during the planning phase. As I have set out, the consequences of not doing this led to shortcomings in intelligence handling, ineffective engagement with the local Jewish community, poor record keeping, and an imbalance in the force's communications.  
The shortcomings in the command structure were also apparent in the force's decision not to declare a critical incident, even after public concerns mounted. This is contrary to authorised professional practice.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

My professional judgement is that that comment refers to the effectiveness of the command structure rather than the actual design of the structure so I won't comment on that as it is an area that will form part of the IOPC. As I was not involved in the operation I cannot comment on the decision to declare a critical incident at the time however on my first day in office I declared our response to this matter a critical incident.

- At Page 10 The Chief Inspector states:  
Declaring a critical incident may also have prompted the force to explore special grant funding at an early stage. It is clear that WMP initially considered a range of tactical options to mitigate the risks associated with travelling Maccabi supporters, many of which were included in a report by Lord Mann. However, during the planning stage, certainty of such funding may have prevented the force from discounting the widest range of tactical options and allowed it to more fully explore the range of mitigations.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

I declared a critical incident on my first day in office. I have been speaking with the OPCC and The Home office to see if that special funding is something we could look, it is a complex matter and I think this should be paused to await more detail from HMIC.

- At Page 10 The Chief Inspector states:  
The evidence I have seen so far suggests that these shortcomings are symptomatic of a force not applying the necessary strategic oversight and not paying enough attention to important matters of detail, including at the most senior levels. These things are surprising. Senior officers told us that they had recognised the fixture's wider significance. However, I am concerned about an apparent lack of foresight in respect of the predictable repercussions of a number of their decisions, including, but not limited to, the force's recommendation to reduce the ticket allocation to zero. In this respect and others, my view is that the force could and should have prepared more effectively.

Is that accepted? If not, Why not? What is being done at a systemic level, to ensure that there is no repetition?

On my first day I asked the IOPC to consider if there were any conduct matters to consider for senior officers at WMP. It would be unwise and unfair for me to comment on this while the IOPC investigation is ongoing.

- It has been widely asserted that the risks posed by those who wanted to target MTA fans and the team were the greater risk. It has been asserted that WMP downplayed this risk in its messaging to reduce the risk of increasing local tensions. Is that true and would WMP continue to justify that or would WMP accept that was a mistake?

I accept on behalf of WMP that our engagement with communities, particularly the Jewish Community could have been better, I also accept that communication within WMP was not where it should be. I cannot comment more specifically due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- Is it reasonable to suggest that WMP was fixed on reducing the public safety risks associated with the fixture – which came from a variety of sources – and saw a ban on the attendance of away fans as a way to influence the only variable they could meaningfully control – which was the absence of the away fans from the match?

Having myself been a public order commander for many years and across four different police forces I know that in policing any football match where there is potential for disorder the challenge is to both identify risks and then police them. In relation to this fixture, it is clear that some of the intelligence information was inaccurate and this will be addressed by the HMIC and IOPC.

- How will WMP ensure it appropriately redacts intelligence material before it is shared with partnership groups, such as SAGs?

WMP have acknowledged that some of the information that was sent to the SAG had not been protectively marked and had not been put through the correct intelligence structures, these processes will be reviewed to ensure that information shared is correct marked and suitable redactions are made.

- What steps can be taken to reduce the risk of confirmation bias arising in the future?

We will add more discipline and rigor to the structures that inform decision making and to ensure the broader cultural competence of the organisation. We will be providing bespoke training for the entire WMP workforce on antisemitism. Some of the organisational judgments which have been made demonstrate that there is a gap in the organisation regarding this.

- Regarding the meeting with the Dutch Police on 1 October 2025 and the Ajax v MTA fixture in November 2024
- On 1 October as part of the planning process, the Head of the Football Unit, who was also one of the three Bronze Public Order Public Safety Commanders met with the Gold, Silver

and Bronze Commanders from the Dutch Police, that had been responsible for the policing of the 2024 Ajax v Maccabi TA football match in Amsterdam via MS Teams.

- There are a number of problematic matters that arise from this meeting. Let me summarise my concerns: It states in the Op Parkmill Order of Events document: A meeting of this nature would normally be attended by the Football Unit, however due to this being a unique event, it was the intention of WMP that Gold, Silver and Bronze Commanders would attend.
- However, at the time, the Silver Commander was deployed abroad as Head of Delegation for another fixture and the Gold Commander had other operational commitments, so only the Bronze Commander attended, who is also the WMP Head of Policing Unit.
- According to HMIC on 1, it has not been able to establish exactly what the Dutch police said or how the WMP attendee interpreted it. This is because: a) the meeting wasn't recorded; b) relevant documentation and interviewees' accounts vary; and c) the WMP attendee told us he made a handwritten record of the meeting, then converted it into an email (which we have reviewed), and then disposed of the handwritten record.
- So, we no longer have the contemporaneous notes – because they were disposed of, following the preparation of an email – that was prepared 8 days after the meeting - on 9 October. It is said that the email summarises the outcome of the meeting. However, the outcome of the meeting on 1 October was immediately briefed to the Gold and Silver Commanders, by the Bronze Commander following the meeting.
- The reason why the meeting on 1 October is important is because, according to the UK FPU Peer Review, it is following the information arising from the meeting with the Dutch Police on 1 October, that the working assumption – that was up until then that the away fans will attend – now changes to a working assumption that there will be no away fans attending.
- It is referred to in the Peer Review Report. "This was a 'tipping point' for WMP Silver in respect of the intelligence picture that had been developing up to this point?" "The Dutch intelligence brief marks the shifting point in terms of assessing the threat." The intelligence from the meeting is assessed by Commanders as 'highly relevant.' This is the single largest WMP operation in 2025 – it has been assessed as high risk – BUT a key shifting point is to be based on this meeting and the record of the outcome of the meeting.

I note that WMP now concede that: This MS Teams meeting should have been recorded. Would that be usual practice? And that the information received from the Dutch Police should have been appropriately assessed and managed through existing intelligence structures. Why did neither of these happen? What are WMP intending to do to ensure this does not happen again?

It was not usual practice for these meeting to be recorded however we have put in place that this will be required for all meetings going forward.

- However, there are other concerns. There is only one WMP officer present – it had been intended there be three. Is that not a problem? If the meeting had been attended by the Football Unit only in the usual way, how many WMP officers/staff would have attended?

The plan was for all three people to be in the meeting, but what we can learn from this is that the best way to ensure we have an accurate record of the meeting would be to record it.

- HMIC say the meeting was conducted in English? Were there any language issues? How long did the meeting last?

WMP have not been made aware of any language issues, the length of the meeting will no doubt be asked of the bronze commander who was in the meeting as part of the IOPC investigation.

- No-one attends to assist with taking notes. Is that not a problem, because as well as conducting the meeting with three other people – and presumably asking questions - the officer must take a contemporaneous note at the same time? What is the usual practice with meeting such as this?

Normal practice would be for the Silver Command and head of The Football Unit to meet and have a verbal conversation and take notes as they see appropriate. What we have learnt from this is that recording would be the most robust way of having an accurate record of the meeting.

- There is no attempt to write to the Dutch Police to confirm the outcome of the meeting. No attempt to agree a Note or Memorandum of the meeting. Or ask the Dutch Police to confirm their views in writing?

It would be unwise and unfair to comment on the actions of that officer today due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- As is referred to in the HMIC letter - the importance of record keeping is explained in several parts of the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice. I have had cause to raise this issue with the former CC albeit in a different context – but it did concern a high-profile case. It has also been referenced in joint internal audits. I want to read from a letter that I sent to the former CC on this matter in August 2025.
- Finally in view of there being multiple findings within the IOPC review of failings in relation to record keeping in connection with accounts provided by officers and decision making, regarding safeguarding and bail conditions the CC should remind all officers and staff of the utmost importance of effective and thorough record keeping for the benefit of victims, the investigation of crime, and WMP officers and staff themselves, the former CC responded that codes of practice were in place to ensure officers and staff understood their legal duties and responsibilities in this area.

Are you satisfied that officers do understand their duties in this area?

Broadly the answer is yes, this force is performing really well across a range of metrics. All based on the actions of WMP officers on the front line. In order to be effective, they keep records and record evidence to the best of their ability. However, I accept that organisationally record keeping is not where it needs to be.

- Surely, this needed to be the best possible version of the outcome of that meeting there could be, particularly because this was an overseas force, that you would not have had a pre-existing or ongoing relationship with? But that did not happen.
- Given the importance of this meeting, does WMP accept that more should have been done to absolutely verify its accuracy, in view of the weight that was to be placed on the information obtained at this meeting?
- For instance, once it became clear that that Dutch Police information was the tipping point that would lead to a non-away fans decision, why was a written account of (a) the intelligence; and (b) the policing response not sought from Dutch Police?

I accept that WMP record keeping organisationally is not where it needs to be, we have already taken the decision that meetings of this nature will always be recorded going forward. I cannot comment on the steps being taken regarding specific individuals due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- Both the Policing Minister and I wrote to the former CC seeking confirmation as to the accuracy, credibility, reliability and provenance of the intelligence received from by WMP from the Dutch Police. The CC wrote to the Policing Minister and the ACC Gold Commander wrote to me stating that the CC was satisfied as to the credibility and reliability of the intelligence received from the Dutch Police. Do I understand it that WMP no longer stands by this assessment of the intelligence?

I accept the points made in the HMIC report regarding the overstating of evidence. Because I was not part of the operation I don't have the answer to the other part of that question. It would not be

appropriate for me to investigate this whilst the IOPC investigation is ongoing and therefore, I can't comment.

- Some intelligence was clearly provided by Dutch Police verbally in the meeting. But what information was provided that enabled WMP to assess the credibility, reliability, veracity and provenance of that intelligence? Or was it simply based on an interpretation or understanding of what the Dutch Police Officers had said?

I wasn't at the meeting and it wasn't recorded so I cannot comment on that. The former CC shared his view of this with the Home Affairs Committee but I have not spoken to the officer involved about it as it would be unfair and unwise of me to do so due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- UKFPU describes not speaking with Israeli police as "a missed opportunity". Should more have been done to engage with the Israeli police? While you have described the efforts to engage, which did not meet with a response, could this have been escalated via the Israeli Embassy?

Organisationally WMP should have consulted as broadly as possible with all those organisations and law enforcement colleagues both across Europe and in Israel to get a broader assessment of the club and its fanbase. In the future WMP will be doing this for all European fixtures where we have teams visiting Birmingham. I cannot comment on the decision making of other officers due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- It would appear that Israel does not have a National Football Information Point, as most, if not all European countries do? However, this does not appear to be established until 7 October – the day of the first SAG? Why was this, and an alternative means of obtaining relevant information from Israeli police, not established earlier, in view of it being good practice? Was there a pre-visit by the Israeli Police to the host Euro Team? Is this something that needs to be addressed at UEFA level?

The actions around this form part of the IOPC investigation so I cannot comment on that. There is going to be a debrief by the UK Football Policing Unit, WMP will support the review and will be guided by that.

- Regarding the hallucinatory AI-induced 2023 West Ham fixture, it was HMICFRS, not WMP, that found the fictitious West Ham match was the product of the AI tool Copilot. Does WMP accept that this is illustrative of a failure to ensure that there were adequate oversight and management of the use of AI within WMP?

In relation to the referral that I made to the IOPC we were very specific about the way AI is being used therefore I cannot comment on the use of AI in any way as it forms part of that investigation by the IOPC and WMP professional Standards department. On my first day in post I paused all use of AI.

- Given the importance of ensuring the effective, lawful and responsible use of AI tools in policing, how was it that members of the senior leadership team within WMP did not know that Copilot was routinely being used by Force Intelligence?

I acknowledge that AGB is an important part of your role in holding WMP to account and I understand and appreciate the importance of the questions. We want to approach this with candour and transparency however for the reasons already stated I cannot comment on AI in any way .

- Notwithstanding the confusion relating to the AI intelligence, what weight was placed on the intelligence relating to the West Ham match? Did it make any difference to the risk assessment and policing options?

All information and intelligence that forms part of the planning of a football match should form part of the judgements made.

- Since the (hallucinated) information concerned a West Ham fixture, why was there not liaison with the Met Police to seek intelligence about the fixture and its policing? Surely, just as the Amsterdam match was seen as highly relevant, this should have also been a highly relevant inquiry given that it was a relatively recent fixture, in the UK?

Particularly given that, on the face of the AI generated intelligence, there had apparently not been any difficulties arising from the behaviour of the away fans. Is the failure to enquire further another example of confirmation bias?

WMP in the planning of fixtures of this nature should engage with as many clubs, if in England and Wales, or law enforcement agencies where possible and ensure that those meetings are properly recorded and that the information coming from these meetings goes into the correct intelligence structures. As previously mentioned, I am unable to comment on AI or the decision making of the officers involved due to the ongoing IOPC investigation.

- What confidence does WMP have that there are no other AI induced hallucinations that have influenced operational decisions beyond this fixture and football policing? What action and due diligence are WMP implementing to proactively check this?

The starting point was to stop use of AI completely until we have clarity on what has happened on this occasion and we have policies and procedures in place. This work will take place under Operation Strive.

- Regarding Information and Intelligence to the SAG on 24 October 2025, on the 17 October, the same day that matters have become a focus of national and international interest, there is an official transfer of Gold Command, due to the then Gold Command being on a period of annual leave on the 17 October, the same day that matters have become a focus of national and international interest. Surely, that was the very worst possible time for there to be a transfer of the Gold Command? Would it not have been better to have had continuity in the command structure at that time? At a critical time in the planning a new Gold Commander has to step up having not been part of the preparation and planning process up until that date. Surely, that is not going to be conducive to facilitating the effective and efficient management of this policing operation?

The first Gold Commander was on annual leave overseas, so we needed another Gold Commander in place.

- MTA announced on 20 October it would not accept away fans tickets. Given this announcement, why was a further SAG, with a remit to reconsider the decision dated 16 October, convened on 24 October 2025? Because even if the SAG had revised its decision and decided to allow away fans – at that stage they were not attending anyway - so what was the purpose of the SAG on 24 October?

The SAG is run by Birmingham City Council, I don't know who requested the additional SAG meeting.

- At the SAG Meeting on 16 October, was the decision to ban away fans an agreed decision or was there any disagreement or opposition from anyone else on the SAG?

Due to the ongoing IOPC investigation, I have not enquired on this matter but as far as I am aware from information already in the public domain, it was a unanimous view of the SAG.

- Equally, at the SAG meeting on 24 October, was the decision to ban away fans an agreed decision or was there any disagreement or opposition from anyone else on the SAG?

My broad understanding from information already in the public domain, it was a unanimous view of the SAG.

- Would you accept that, at a SAG, the other members of the SAG are reliant on the police's summary of police-held intelligence and the police's assessment of risk.

Each local authority has their own SAG structures. However, I believe that in this circumstance the voice of WMP at the SAG would have been influential.

- There is reference to the usual practice being that SAGs proceed based on verbal briefings – is that the case – and if so – is that not a rather casual basis on which to proceed? Surely, it would be better for written briefings to be provided? I appreciate that the SAG does have a written report from the Gold Commander on 16 October – and there is a written report on 24 October – but that appears not to be the norm? Would it not be preferable for there always to be written reports?

That would be for Birmingham City Council to decide, but as a member of the SAG we could share our view on that and welcome the HMIC review on all SAGs. My own professional view is that standardised terms of reference and a consistent approach to record keeping and reporting would be beneficial.

- The HMICFRS report is critical of intelligence briefings provided to that SAG on 24 October 2025. It says that it repeated previous inaccuracies and added new ones, it says the briefing was approved by, what the Chief Inspector refers to as "the most senior level of the force".
- There are questions to be asked concerning the role that the former Chief Constable had in the preparation or approval of the intelligence briefing for the SAG on 24 October 2025. What the role of a CC would normally be in these circumstances? What materials or resources were available to the CC to test the intelligence summary?
- There are questions to be asked regarding the process via which the briefing for the SAG on 24 October was signed off. Why was it that the intelligence briefing was not cleared by the Intelligence Bronze and whether this would usually happen? Do WMP want to offer any comment or response to any of these questions?

No, due to your referral of the former CC to the IOPC, it would be unfair unwise for me to comment on those matters.

- In view of my referral of the former CC to the IOPC, I do not intend to press you for any further comment or response, however, are you satisfied that the briefing presented at the SAG on 24 October could genuinely be described as the basis for a "a wholly fresh consideration of the issue" as was the intention of the Chair of the SAG?

Given all of the matters already discussed and the acknowledged use of AI I could not say on behalf of the organisation that all of the documents were wholly accurate.

- Was the SAG in a position to provide a fresh consideration of the issue in view of the inaccuracies, errors and exaggerations that HMICFRS found in the WMP briefing?

I wasn't present at either SAG and due to the ongoing investigation, I have intentionally not seen the minutes or watched the footage, but I do accept the earlier points about the quality of information and intelligence provided by WMP.

- After the Prime Minister's intervention on 16 October and the public interest this resulted in, to what extent, do you think, WMP became increasingly focused on justifying its recommendations to the SAG on 24 October, rather than critically assessing and scrutinising them, particularly given the errors, inaccuracies and exaggerations that have been identified? Was this an example of the defensiveness that the Acting Chief Constable referred to when providing his apology?

The totality of the WMP approach has failings in it which is why I have apologised. I am determined that we will learn from these failings and overcome the matters that we have faced, with the priority being to restore trust and confidence from the public, the actions of individuals will be for them to explain during the IOPC investigation.

- Given the level of public interest, why did WMP not give more attention to ensuring the robustness of the intelligence relied upon to date, and the accuracy of the report for the 24 October SAG?

Organisationally, records could have been better and intelligence structures could have been better. HMIC will provide further comment on that, and we will learn from this and make improvements going forward.

- The former Chief Constable has suggested that some of the debate concerning the intelligence assessments was more about "nuance" than inaccuracy. Is it not the case that every "nuance" described was in the direction of amplifying the risk that the MTA fans presented? Was this not a pattern of exaggeration and an example of what the Chief Inspector refers to as confirmation bias?

I accept that WMP overstated evidence presented, with an example of that being presenting evidence on a football match that didn't take place.

- Had the resources available to WMP play a role in the decision making of WMP in reaching its recommendation to the SAG on 16 October? If so, what was the consideration?

It is clear from information already in the public domain that this did form part of the force's judgment.

- After the Prime Minister's intervention on 16 October and the discussions with HO and the offer of additional resources, what was the position of WMP, as far as working with government to secure the attendance of the away fans? If MTA fans had decided to attend, what would the policing operation have looked like? What action was taken to consider mounting such an operation? Was that something that was capable of being achieved?

The next day there was a piece of work drafted to see what it would look like if we were to accommodate and the total cost would have been £5 million, but then MTV said they would be declining tickets anyway, so this became academic.

- After the Prime Minister's intervention on 16 October, WMP commissioned a review by the UK Football Policing Unit on 20 October. That review refers to the first SAG on 7 October that resulted in a starting position that there will be no away fans at the match. The collective decision was that the safest option was to have no away supporters attend. It is stated the police position was that this was a preference, amongst other matters, the review stated that it was the belief of the Review Team that the intel picture was sufficient to justify a risk grading of HIGH. At the SAG on 7 October, the position had been accurately and openly conveyed to the partnership who reached a reasonable decision based on the likely behaviour of away supporters.
- What was the impact of this Peer Review Report on WMP's assessment of whether it had made the correct decision or not? Did the UKFPU review provide WMP increased confidence in its decisions to date, validate its position and lead to an insufficiently robust approach to continuing to evaluate the intelligence assessment?

I haven't read that report as I wasn't involved in the policing of this fixture, but some of the intelligence that WMP shared with the FPU would have included reference to the West Ham Vs MTV fixture which didn't take place, it would also have included information on the conversations with Dutch Police which wasn't recorded. The fixture was recorded as high risk from the start using a well know, tried and tested risk assessment matrix and it remained high risk throughout. I think

it is fair to say that the information WMP provided to the FPU included intelligence which we now know not to be accurate.

- Although the Peer Review appears to address the SAG Meeting on the 7 October, it does not appear to address the SAG Meeting on 16 October, why is that? After all, that was the decision that was now in question?

I have not seen the report, but I look forward to being able to come back in the future to give you, and the public, those answers when the enquiries are completed and we are able to talk about it in more detail.

- On Monday 20 October, and following disorder at a match in Tel Aviv at the weekend, MTA announced that it would not accept away tickets for the fixture, even if they were offered. This reduced the risks and complexity associated with the fixture.
- Was WMP in any way aware of or consulted about that decision, before it was announced by the club?

Apologies I don't know the answer to that.

- What impact did this announcement have on WMP planning? Did this announcement lead WMP to be less rigorous in the approach to the intelligence assessment and decision making when preparing for the SAG on 24 October?

Having not being involved in the command structure and not being at the SAGs I don't know what impact that had. Of course, it had the opportunity to change the risk, what was clear throughout was that the fixture remained high risk regardless of the attendance of the MTV fans.

- According to a timeline I have seen: On 20th October 2025, UKFPU provided WMP with an Ajax v Maccabi post-match report detailing groups involved, numbers and key incidents that occurred before, during, and after the match. This appears to be highly relevant. Why was the UK FPU only sharing that report at this stage? What did it say?

I have not received that and the UK FPU would need to answer to when it was shared and the rationale for that.

- Was that report then checked and cross referenced with the record of the meeting with the Dutch Police on 1 October – and other intelligence - if so, with what outcome? If not, then why not? Was it incorporated into the report for the SAG on 24 October? If not, why not?

One of the key points for the IOPC investigation is the SAG meeting, so this is a matter that the UK FPU will be able to answer in time but we would not be able to comment on this in order to not prejudice the IOPC investigation.

- On 21st October 2025, UKFPU shared with WMP a mayoral report dated 11th November 2024 from the Mayor of Amsterdam regarding events of Ajax v Maccabi. This appears to be highly relevant. Why is the UK FPU only sharing that report at this stage? What did it say?

That is a question that the UK FPU would need to answer.

- Was that report then checked and cross referenced with the record of the meeting with the Dutch Police on 1 October – and other intelligence - if so, with what outcome? If not, then why not? Was it incorporated into the report for the SAG on 24 October? If not, why not?

The information that WMP has was briefed into the SAG, but we cannot comment on the extent and the fullness of that because we were not part of that command structure but the investigation will reveal what was shared and how it was shared.

- At what point were WMP aware of the Dutch Inspectorate and Justice Report? Was this a report that WMP became aware of as a consequence of its own research – or was it brought to the attention of WMP from other sources? If not, then why not? Was that report then checked and cross referenced with the record of the meeting with the Dutch Police on 1 October – and other intelligence - if so, with what outcome?

This goes into the detail of what was shared at the SAG. This is one of the specific terms of reference for the independent IOPC investigation and therefore we are unable to comment on it.

- Regarding the attendance of MTA “Ultras”
- At the Home Affairs Committee on 1 December 2025, Lord Mann gave evidence that by 16 October 2025, it was known that the MTA “Ultras” would not attend the fixture. He said, “The Maccabi ultras—the so-called Fanatics—were not coming.”
- My AGB report request follows up this issue: “Did [Lord Mann], or anyone else, convey this intelligence to WMP, the UKFPU, or any other body at any point prior to the Home Affairs Committee hearing on 1 December 2025?”
- The AGB report states, “It was always our planning assumption that the away fans travelling to the UK would include the sub-section referred to as the “Ultras”. On the 20 October 2025, MTA formally announced on their website that they would not accept any away ticket allocation.”
- Page 6 of the UKFPU report, completed on 20 October 2025, states, “The suggestion of the club was that the Ultra group would not seek disorder with the local Muslim community and many of the risk group were afraid to come to Birmingham. However, in the absence of police reporting the veracity of this statement is difficult to assess.”
- In a letter to the Home Affairs Committee dated 5 January 2026, Lord Mann writes, “I rang Chief Constable Guildford in early September, proposing an early kick off and highlighting my concerns and had other text and phone interactions. Chief Constable Guildford informed me of the police advice to have no fans on October 8 or 9.”
- There are therefore questions to be asked that include:
- Whether by 20 October 2025, WMP and UKFPU were aware that there was a “suggestion” that attendance by the Ultras might be less of an issue than anticipated.
- Whether WMP is able to say who made this “suggestion”? And to whom was this “suggestion” made?
- Whether WMP are able to say whether Lord Mann or anyone else conveyed this intelligence to WMP, the UKFPU, or any other body at any point prior to the Home Affairs Committee on 1 December 2025?
- Why was the “suggestion” that the MTA Ultras may not attend either, a) followed up to determine its “veracity”, or b) reported to the SAG on 24 October 2025?
- Whether the former Chief Constable conveyed to WMP colleagues the substance of his conversations with Lord Mann? If so, did these discussions include anything about whether the MTA Ultras were coming?
- Assuming Lord Mann had provided this information, what steps would / should have been taken to confirm its veracity? If there were credible evidence that the “Ultras” were not attending, might this have altered the risk assessment?
- Do WMP want to offer any comment or response to any of these questions?

Commissioner, given that you refer to messages and contact between Lord Mann and the former CC, in view of your referral of the former CC to the IOPC it would be both unwise and inappropriate for me to comment at all on any of those matters.

- In view of my referral of the former CC to the IOPC, I do not intend to press you for any further comment or response.
- The former Chief Constable briefed the Home Secretary, the Leader of Birmingham City Council and Lord Mann on the change in circumstances and planning after the meeting with the Dutch Police, between 8-10 October, but not me. Paragraph 36 of the Policing Protocol requires: The Chief Constable is expected to ensure that their PCC is regularly informed of

their decisions and operational activity in a timely manner so that the PCC can hold the Chief Constable to account for the totality of policing within their force area, including the operational delivery of the police service.

- That absence of proactive briefing by the Chief Constable is referred to in the HMIC preliminary letter. Do you accept that was a significant omission on the part of the former CC? Can you confirm that you will ensure you proactively brief me on matters of this level of public importance in the future, as required by the Policing Protocol?

I have been in post for 7 working days, and you and I have met 5 times during that period not only to address the matters raised here but also our ongoing commitment to serve the West Midlands. We meet once a week as standard and this will continue, as will WMPs commitment to attend this board.

- The Home Office, Home Secretary and Ministers are key partners and stakeholders.
- What impact will the statement in Parliament on 14 January, in which the Home Secretary stated she no longer had confidence in the former CC, have on the relationship between WMP and the Home Office?
- Will it be harder, easier or make no difference to you working with Home Office officials and ministers as a result of the statement?

I won't comment on the Home Secretary's comments on the former CC but she did not say that she had lost confidence in this current chief officer team, the force or most importantly the officers and volunteers on the front line. It will have no bearing on the working relationship between us.

- The debate about the fixture has had negative impacts on both the Jewish and Muslim community and the wider general public in our region. How much damage has been done to community relations, and relations between the police and the public?

3 million people live in the West Midlands, it is the honour of my working life to have been asked by you to be the acting Chief Constable of this police force and lead the 12000 officers, staff and volunteers who serve the public of the West Midlands, so it would be inappropriate of me to comment on what those 3 million people think. What I am clear on is that we have damaged our relationship with a number of communities, in particular our Jewish Community which is why, on my first day in post, I was determined to meet with our Jewish communities which gave me the opportunity to listen to what they had to say. Their candour, bravery and honesty were commendable and I am truly grateful to all of the people who shared their views and the information we have taken away from this will assist us in designing our plans. We have also damaged the confidence of other members of the public and we will work tirelessly to restore this. On behalf of WMP I take responsibility for our failings, but I never want that to take away from the fact that across a number of metrics this police force is performing really well.

- WMP covers one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse areas in the country and in many respects WMP has an effective track record of engaging with communities across the West Midlands. It is therefore all the more incomprehensible that WMP's local public engagement on such a sensitive event failed. What went wrong?

We should have engaged earlier and more actively, listened more, particularly to our Jewish communities and done an equality impact assessment. What went wrong specifically will be a matter to be looked into as part of the IOPC investigation and this along with HMIC report and the Home Affairs Committee report will give us the actions that we need to take going forward.

- At the Home Affairs Committee, it was asserted that WMP engaged with (rather than "consulted") local community groups and mosques as part of the preparations for the fixture. As part of this engagement was WMP aware of any racism, antisemitism or extremism in this engagement and if so, would it be challenged by WMP?

My expectation as Acting Chief Constable is that all of our staff, officers and volunteers would challenge those things wherever they saw it. The purpose of the police is to protect and serve the

public, and police officers have extraordinary powers but those powers need to be used with the trust of the public.

- WMP have emphasised the need to remember that officers were motivated by ensuring public safety and were doing their best. The former CC has said that he wished to protect them from unfair criticism. However, is there a risk that this approach is perceived as a wish to deflect any criticism, and a failure to be willing to learn from mistakes?

It's not appropriate for me to comment on the views of the former CC. I will not comment on the actions of any individual officers as I don't want to impact on the ongoing IOPC investigation however, my intention is that organisationally WMP will learn from these mistakes.

- Does WMP usually conduct Equality Impact Assessments on a per-event basis, for example - a football fixture, a protest?

No, there is an expectation that we should consider our duties under the equity act and authorised professional practice under public order says that we should display duties under the equality act by conducting equality impact assessments. We don't routinely do that, we police 100s of football matches every year most of which are very low key. However, in this circumstance it's clear that it would have been helpful for this to have been done and going forward the DCC has, this week, instructed that we will do equality impact assessment at all public order events.

- The PCC then read two extracts from his current Police and Crime Plan published in March 2025
- I expect WMP to comply with the public sector equality duty, embedding equality at all levels of the force, including the use of equality impact assessments to evaluate policies, procedures, practices and decisions.
- I expect WMP to regularly review the impact of local, regional, national, and international conflicts on community tensions and understand how these tensions can manifest locally. WMP will remain a trusted source of information, proactively address tensions and combating disinformation and misinformation that could escalate them.
- I welcome your comments and commitments to using equality impact assessments more effectively going forward.
- I would put it to you, that had a dedicated Equality Impact Assessment been carried out, it would have ensured a structured process to consideration and decision making, that would have made it more likely WMP would have been alerted to ensuring engagement with all communities – including the local Jewish community – and would have ensured earlier and more effective engagement.

How could such a sensitive local issue not have been considered via a dedicated Equality Impact Assessment? Would WMP ensure matters were done differently in the future? If so, how?

My view is that an equality impact assessment should have been completed, it will be for others to articulate why this did not happen. As A/CC I am fully cognisant of policing protocol and I give you my assurance I will pay due regard to your Police and Crime plan. In my former role of DCC I have overseen an almost 100% change in the forces position in relation to the equality impact of every policy in the force. I recognise and accept the points that you make and due to the diversity in the West Midlands we do see the impact of global tensions manifesting themselves on our streets. We have policed many of those events effectively and I assure you that we will use equality impact assessments at all public order events where it could help our decision making.

**The A/CC provided the following concluding comments:**

I started my first day in office with a sincere and public apology for the impact that our decision making has had, I approach this role along with my temporary DCC with candour and transparency and want the force to learn from these events. The 12000 officers, staff and volunteers of WMP are out there every day serving and protecting the public and are doing so in an effective way which is one of the many reasons why the force came out of engaged status so quickly. But to be clear the findings of HMIC are damning. I am grateful to the members of the Jewish Community who joined me last week and shared their thoughts on these events but also their broader experiences. I am fully cognisant of the impact that some of our activities have had on some of our other communities I have upcoming meetings with. My immediate response as A/CC was to start the preparation for Operation Strive, part of that was a total reset for the force starting with our public apology. Operation Strive will coordinate our response and recovery from these events as we seek to rebuild the trust and confidence the public of the West Midlands have in us. I am taking personal responsibility for this as the Gold Commander, and I have appointed the temporary DCC as the silver commander. We will work tirelessly to restore the trust and confidence that the public have in us, and I will provide a full update to the PCC on the objectives of the operation as the work progresses.

**The PCC confirmed that the following actions will follow from this agenda item:**

- My team and I will identify all of the matters arising from this agenda item and we will follow up on them
- I remain committed to the implementation of my Police and Crime Plan
- I will continue to hold WMP to account, with particular reference to the matters that we have discussed today, and that includes ensuring that Operation Strive is fit for purpose and is implemented.
- I will also work with the Acting Chief Constable and WMP in connection with re-building trust and confidence and our many other common aims and objectives
- I will be commencing an extensive and wide-ranging process for recruitment of a Chief Constable.
- I will consider and respond to the HASC report that is expected to be published in February
- I will consider and respond to the final HMIC Report that is expected to be published in the summer
- We will identify any action that is required following the publication of those two reports
- I will continue to co-operate with the IOPC investigation and deal with any matters that arise from that
- I will continue, as I always have done, my extensive and wide-ranging programme of community engagement across the West Midlands

**The PCC finally addressed the subject of allowing the former CC to retire by summarising the position set out in law by parliament:**

- A PCC has no power to prevent a CC from retiring.
- A PCC cannot simply sack a CC, a PCC can call upon a CC to resign or retire, before doing that the law requires a PCC to follow a clear process set out in law by parliament. This is not a matter of best practice or discretion for PCCs, it is a set of mandatory requirements and legislation that has been passed by parliament.
- The powers in section 38 of the police reform and social responsibility act 2011 are exercisable subject to the provisions of schedule 8 of that act and regulation 11a of the

police regulations 2003. The PCC must obtain the views of HMIC in writing and must have regard of those views. He must give the CC a written explanation of the reasons of why he is proposing to call for his retirement or resignation. He must notify the relevant Police and Crime Panel he is proposing for the CC to retire or resign and must provide it with a copy of the reasons given to the CC. He must give the CC the opportunity to make representations about the proposal. He must consider those representations and provide them to the panel. If he still proposes to require the CC to retire or resign, he must advise the CC and the panel that this is his intention, providing a written explanation to both and HMIC. The panel must, within 6 weeks, make a recommendation to the PCC as to whether or not he should call for the retirement or resignation, before doing so the panel may consult HMIC and must hold a scrutiny hearing at which the PCC and the CC may make representations. The PCC must consider the panel's recommendation. Only then may the PCC make his final decision to call upon the CC to resign or retire. The PCC may accept or reject the recommendation of the panel and notify them of his decision.

- If the PCC does not follow that process a PCC would be acting unlawfully and any decision would be quashed by the high court if the CC challenged it. The CC would also have been likely to bring an injunction claim to remain as the CC and my office would be liable for his legal costs.
- PCCs and Mayors must act in accordance with the law as prescribed by parliament.

### **Policing Precept and Budget – Jane Heppel, Chief Finance Officer**

The PCC introduced this item by noting the paper proposes the level of precept to be set from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. It does not contain information about the medium-term financial plan or the detailed operational budgets for the Force. This is because the Home Office have not issued sufficient information for such plans to be prepared, having chosen to release a single table of information on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025, which gives only a single figure for the core grant settlement for the West Midlands.

The PCC raised concerns regarding funding cuts for West Midlands Police and explained that a public engagement survey has been launched regarding how much local council tax the people of the West Midlands would like to invest into local policing. However, even if a decision is made to invest the total amount available, the force will still be facing cuts of at least £29.5 million in 2026/27.

Whilst this settlement is only provisional, with the final settlement not due to be announced until the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026, the PCC called for the government not to impose these cuts on policing in the West Midlands, and instead return the 520 police officers and deliver fair funding to our region.

If an agreement is reached on the level of precept to propose, and subject to the PCC having due regard to the outcome of the public engagement survey, the Police and Crime Panel will vote to accept or reject that precept on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February.

This item was presented by Chief Finance Officer, Jane Heppel. The following discussion took place:

Which grants are yet to be heard about for next year?

- The grants which are causing the most planning concern with information still pending are the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) hotspot, which is under £4 million, and the Violence Reduction Partnership's (VRP) funding. VRP funding was initially provided for 3 years, but since has been updated on an annual basis. There is also £7 million worth of funding for county lines and counter terrorism, and ROCU funding is normally confirmed around this time of the year.

How are stakeholders and partners impacted by the uncertainty around the Violence Reduction Unit funding?

- It is unknown what will happen post March, which is leading to a lack of workforce abilities, with the VRP losing experienced staff as they are unaware whether they will have a position post March.
- While the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) means partners have a responsibility, one key issue is that the VRP are leading on this work, therefore, the partnerships across the region are under pressure.
- Organisations rely on VRP funding, meaning referrals and work are ceasing across commissioned services. Short term annual funding results in lack of ability to plan and commission longer term, which has a significant impact on the voluntary and community sectors.
- There is evidence to show the VRP is working, with a 12.6% reduction of serious youth violence and 18% reduction in knife enabled violence in the region, and there is a statutory responsibility.

What reviews have been undertaken of the effectiveness of the VRU and what would happen if this funding was removed entirely?

- Reviews are ongoing, and part of the VRP grant conditions are to undertake evaluations to understand the effectiveness, which are uploaded to the VRP website. As mentioned, the reductions portrayed in the figures provide evidence for its effectiveness, but due to funding being provided on an annual basis, the effectiveness and long-term planning of projects which are known to work are undermined.
- Short term funding, and the lateness of communications is having an effect on structures and effectiveness.

How will the introduction of year 2 funding and a target of 107 new neighbourhood officers' impact on neighbourhood policing?

- The Force always welcomes new officers; however, the effective funding per officer equates to £28,500, which is not near the total of the annual cost of a police officer. Therefore, affordability needs be considered. It is important that the funding matches the actual costs.
- West Midlands Police can afford 75 additional officers, but there would be a requirement to redeploy 32 from other duties and into neighbourhoods to reach 107.
- Whilst there is still £3 million to fund officers in the upcoming financial year, there is a need to consider the long terms effects of the allocation into 2027/2028.
- Annual salaries will also need to be paid for the extra officers, and efficiencies and savings may have to come from other parts of the business.

Can we afford the investments in cyber security, artificial intelligence and Robotic Process Automation (RPA), given that they are coming at the expense of losing 32 police officers?

- West Midlands Police can afford necessary investments into these areas as they should be considered an investment towards improved operational service to communities or financial savings/productivity gains for staff. They will also enable the Force to deliver on broader digital capabilities.
- Investment into RPA has delivered cumulative gains of £10 million in efficiency savings and productivity gains, therefore, it is important to invest in these areas.
- Before Christmas, a comprehensive priority-based budgeting exercise was undertaken, which was fully funded by savings identified in other areas of the organisation.
- The reduction of 32 officer is due to the grant not providing enough funding and it is important to balance budgets, which the Force have a good track record of and will continue.
- In terms of investment in capabilities, apart from RPA, a solution to support non-emergency call handling have developed. This has improved frontline handling of telephone calls to 101 and has freed up time for call handlers to improve services on 999 calls. Performance is being improved operationally, and it is important to continue achieving this.

The revenue budget is balanced partly by using £6.1m of reserves. How can we generate further ongoing savings over the medium term, as this approach is not sustainable in the longer-term? How will we close this gap in the future?

- The approach taken is to use some reserves, and what has been proposed for next year is consistent with the approach adopted for this current financial year and the 2 previous. The intent is to be able to create flexibility in year to contribute to effective budget reserves to ensure a smooth introduction of ongoing annual savings. Therefore, the proposal of £6.1 million enables the Force to do elements of this. There will be consideration when the final settlement is announced around whether it is the appropriate amount or whether a variance up or down is required.
- At the heart of strong financial planning, the Force can create sustainable permanent budget savings, bringing them in in planned way to ensure organisational continuity.
- A further round of priority-based budgeting will be carried out for 2027/2028 in all areas of the force to ensure there is the appropriate level of investment, therefore, planning is already underway for 2027/2028.
- The Force's strong track record for delivering balanced budget and over exceeding savings target is continually worked on, however, the late notice of elements of future funding brings some additional pressures.

The PCC asked JH to summarise, between now and the Police and Crime Panel, all steps up to and including what will be taking place between now and then, and the aims and objectives, that will be set out for Panel a week on Monday.

JH advised the White Paper was received on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, and work will be required to understand the direction of travel for some funding streams. There is hope the settlement will provide clarity on the grants that are pending, and that they will match the previous year or other previous years. JH will continue to work to set balanced budgets to support the PCC with making a decision and formally delegating to the Force. The Police and Crime Panel should find the paper on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February helpful to support the PCCs precept proposal.

## **CLOSE**

Next meeting to be held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026