



## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE BOARD

24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**People and Resources**  
**Presented by: Alex Godden**

### *1 . Police and Crime Plan*

This paper will provide an overview of how the Force is having regard to the targets set in the Police and Crime Plan regarding its people and resources. The paper will cover details on Visibility, Wellbeing, Diversity, Strategy and Development of Officers, Staff & PCSO's

#### **Visibility:**

#### **Increased numbers of neighbourhood Police Officers and PCSOs in Local Policing Areas**

The 2025-2029 Workforce Plan delivers against an increased number of Police Officers, PCSOs and Specials in line with the Neighbourhood Guarantee. It is focused on delivering an additional 150 officers, at the mid-year point we had delivered an additional 40 officers over the baseline, and we are on target to deliver the uplift by March 2026. We are keen to maximise any additional funding opportunities from the Home Office and our recruitment and training plan can deliver numbers above the main target if allocated additionality.

#### **Neighbourhood Police Officers remain in their roles for as long as possible**

All new officers are posted into Local Policing Areas for the 2 years of their probationary period. They are deployed in-line with the priorities of the LPAs, however over the course of the year Local Policing have consistently been resourced at above 99% of their establishment (i.e. less than 1% vacancy factor). PCSO numbers have been consistently strong with a vacancy factor regularly below 3% in the past 12 months. In July 2025 we implemented a new '2-year rule' for all newly substantive officers meaning they remain in the department they are posted to for a minimum of 2 years before applying for other roles across the force, except in exceptional circumstances. This will mean that we increase stability in departments with newly substantive officers consolidating their knowledge and skills before moving on to new roles.

As part of the new modernised neighbourhood policing model, every ward now has officers that have taken on the newly defined Dedicated Neighbourhood Officer (DNO) role. All officers undertaking these roles will be in post for a period no less than two years and all officers are made aware of this prior to undertaking the role. ACC Local Policing has directed that there is to be no vacancies held in DNO roles at any time

across force. Where officers may move due to promotion, progression, retirements etc. the DNO role will be immediately filled as a priority post.

**Officers and PCSOs are deployed tactically to maximise and sustain their presence and visibility in the most high-need local areas.**

Using data and analysis, key areas have been identified across force as Targeted Guardian Patrol within Local Policing. In addition to being present on foot patrol in those locations and undertaking stop and search activities to prevent knife crime, officers are required to actively engage with the public, outlining why they are there and updating on local events and issues.

**WMP to increase the number of volunteers fulfilling specialist roles, including that of Special Constable.**

Against a backdrop of onboarding a significant increase in officers attracting and recruiting Specials has been challenging. Overall numbers have decreased this year however, the workforce plan for 2026 to 2029 increases the overall number by 180 from a March 2024 baseline. Despite overall number of Specials being lower than average the total number of hours completed by Specials has remained high with the number of hours completed in October 2025 being 6% higher than October 2024, this indicates that the Specials that we have are more active.

We continue to explore specialist volunteer roles across force, currently developing volunteer roles in the Mounted Unit and Forensics.

**Wellbeing:**

**WMP officers and staff must have modern, effective equipment appropriate to a diverse workforce to perform their roles safely, effectively and efficiently.**

The Occupational Health (OH) and Wellbeing team have had some early conversations with the WMP uniform team relating to the uniform and equipment options available to those working for WMP. We are supporting work already underway, to ensure that Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is both efficient and effective. Better data capture from management referrals, is ongoing within OH to ensure that any changes are delivering the required change and promoting safety for all. The Women in Policing association are also heavily involved in conversations associated to the uniform issued to female colleagues. Feedback has indicated some have experienced health challenges relating to the fit of PPE, and for female colleagues this is the focus of the changes being made.

**WMP to invest in continued welfare, well-being and professional development of police officers and staff**

WMP continue to invest in the welfare, wellbeing and professional development of its officers and staff through a broad programme that reflects both national and local priorities. The force places emphasis on preventative approaches to mental and physical health, this is supported by extensive occupational health provision, access to psychological support services, early-intervention pathways and specialist trauma support for those exposed to distressing incidents. WMP promotes a culture that encourages openness around mental health and aims to reduce stigma by integrating wellbeing into daily supervisory practice and leadership expectations. The force has dedicated wellbeing leads and trauma-informed practice boards. Wellbeing initiatives range from lifestyle and financial wellbeing advice to peer support networks, chaplaincy engagement and partnerships with national services such as Oscar Kilo.

Access to professional development is fundamental to building skills, capability and professional confidence across the organisation. Within the Learning Delivery framework, officer and staff welfare and wellbeing are embedded as core priorities, recognising the direct link between wellbeing, performance and sustainable operational effectiveness. This is delivered through:

- Embedding Wellbeing from Entry to Leadership – including new recruits’ training, as well as reinforced at key career transition points, including promotion.
- Operational Excellence Programme – Newly Promoted Sergeants and Inspectors Programme, designed to strengthening operational competence through high-quality, ensuring supervisors are equipped to support their own wellbeing and that of their teams.
- The “golden thread” of wellbeing awareness and early warning is also reinforced through related learning inputs, including Supporting staff through Professional Standards Department investigations. As well as post-incident management and aftercare procedures.
- Supervisor and Manager Development Programme – aimed at first line leaders includes a dedicated module focused on supporting and maintaining welfare and wellbeing. Objectives include; Creating and sustaining a psychologically safe working environment. Building confidence and resilience in oneself and others.

In response to the most recent national engagement and wellbeing survey results, WMP has commissioned a wider Learning Needs Analysis. This resulted in the introduction of structured, wellbeing-focused CPD for CI’s and Insp, and police staff equivalents, commencing in January 2026.

### **WMP to deliver against the Police Covenant prioritising the physical and mental health of the workforce and ensuring trauma-informed training for frontline supervisors**

Under the national training framework (driven by the Covenant, and implemented by the College of Policing), new training has been rolled out for all new police recruits, highlighting mental health, trauma support, diet/nutrition, sleep, and physical fitness.

WMP’s own “Right Person, Right Care” emphasises improving training and leadership for operational officers to safeguard mental-health and public-safety outcomes. Circa 500 frontline officers and staff have been trained in “Trauma Informed Practice,” delivered by Barnardo’s.

### **Well-being programmes will support WMP officers and staff investigating high-harm offences and those who experience violence on duty**

Those exposed to violence, serious crime scenes, or high-risk investigations are covered by a targeted welfare offer, we have adopted Op Hampshire and use this as the force response to ensure all staff and officer welfare needs are met when they are assaulted, including tracking “high frequency teams” that are repeatedly victims of assaults and using that data to inform resource deployment and risk management. Officers/staff who are assaulted are entitled to welfare follow-up: medical care, OH referral, trauma support, and workplace adjustments e.g. temporary reduction in duties, recovery time.

### **Appropriate support for leavers and the families of officers and staff**

WMP provides a range of support to families of officers and staff, and to those who are leaving WMP. For families, support is most visible during and after critical incidents, when WMP offer

assistance that often extends to dependents when appropriate. Trauma support practitioners, including TRiM-trained staff, help families understand the possible emotional and psychological effects of trauma and advise on coping strategies. In cases of serious injury or death, a dedicated Family Liaison Officer is appointed, acting as the main point of contact and ensuring that families receive clear information, guidance and emotional support. WMP also helps families navigate complex processes such as compensation, pensions, benefits and entitlements and maintains connection through pastoral care, memorial support and engagement with charities such as Care of Police Survivors (COPS) and the Police Dependents' Trust. Those retiring are offered pre-retirement courses that cover financial planning, pension information and lifestyle changes.

The force conducts exit interviews and welfare check-ins for all leavers, giving individuals the chance to share concerns, reflect on their experience and request additional support. This combined framework of wellbeing, trauma support, pastoral care and structured transition helps uphold the organisation's commitment to the Police Covenant and to the long-term welfare of both its workforce and their loved ones.

### **Diversity:**

#### **WMP will recruit, retain, progress and support Black officers, building a diverse and representative workforce**

Training and progression are central to this approach, our Learning Delivery Framework includes a dedicated strategic pillar focused on fostering an inclusive development culture, ensuring fair and equitable access to learning opportunities and embedding inclusion across all programmes. This framework is specifically designed to reduce barriers to progression and ensure development pathways are transparent, accessible and supportive. Complementing this, the Leadership Delivery Framework incorporates a Talent and Inclusion Gateway, which enables the identification and targeted support of officers from underrepresented groups through the Talent Management Board. This gateway provides access to national and internal development opportunities, including the College of Policing Aspire programme, internal positive action initiatives and locally agreed inclusion priorities, enabling Black officers to access tailored support at key transition points in their careers.

The Race Action Plan workstream, led by ACC O'Hara continues its focus upon black and black heritage officers and staff. Recruitment, retention and progression are key measures within the 'Investment' strand and work continues to progress in this area. In the 2024 attraction campaign we targeted promoting careers in WMP to Black and Black Heritage communities. It takes time for applicants to work through the selection and onboarding processes, but we have seen some improvements in the new recruits from Black and Black Heritage backgrounds over the course of the year. In the 6 months from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> May we had 12 Police Officers start with West Midlands Police from Black and Black Heritage communities in the 6 months from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 this increased to 18. We are continuing to engage with a range of marketing agencies that have experience with engaging with Black and Black Heritage Communities to promote careers in WMP. Our Outreach Delivery Plan targets all our outreach recruitment activity on improving representation and recruiting a workforce that is representative of our communities with a specific focus on Black and Black Heritage candidates

#### **Work to recruit, retain, and support officers from diverse communities, ensuring WMP reflects the people and communities it serves, creating a more inclusive and representative workforce**

Overall, force representation continues to increase, this has been the trend since 2019 with an increase of 4.4% over the period. This can be seen in the table below:

Staff Type	Ethnic Minority Group %						
	Nov-24	Dec-23	Jan-23	Jan-22	Jan-21	Jan-20	Jan-19
Police Officer	14.2%	13.9%	13.7%	12.9%	11.9%	11.0%	10.5%
Police Staff	19.8%	18.3%	17.7%	17.1%	16.0%	15.3%	13.7%
PCSO	14.4%	12.9%	11.8%	11.1%	12.2%	13.6%	13.7%
Specials	30.7%	31.0%	29.2%	27.2%	30.0%	29.1%	27.0%
Force Total	16.3%	15.6%	15.3%	14.6%	13.7%	12.9%	11.9%

The proportion of officers from ethnic minority groups on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 was 17.7%, the proportion that were from Black heritage was 3.49% and the proportion that were female was 37.2%. In the past two years, 20.7% of our Police Officer joiners have been from ethnic minority groups, 4.6% have been from Black and Black Heritage backgrounds and 39.7% have been female, rates more than the current demographics of the Police Officer workforce.

WMP has launched its new Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy in December 2025, to achieve our mission to provide a service that works for local people, engages with our communities and is an employer of choice, we must create a representative organisation that demonstrates the highest level of integrity, fairness and respect towards each other as colleagues and the public we serve.

The Strategy is carefully designed to incorporate the focus of the College of Policing and NPCC "Culture and Inclusion Strategy" but using a model of cultural competence to deliver effective and lasting change. It has ten strategic objectives, five people focused (internal) and five communities focused (external), supported by several measures which will allow us to capture impact and progress. It also has six pillars for progress; gender, race, religion, LGBTQ+, Neurodiversity and Disability, and our Race Action Plan, each led by a Force Executive Team member to ensure that diversity and under representation is considered in its widest sense. Our governance structure has been revised, and we are utilising a comprehensive data pack to generate discussion and drive action, working closely with our Staff Networks and Associations.

One of our inclusion initiatives is the Step-Up Programme which provides targeted leadership development for police constables from underrepresented groups who were unsuccessful at their most recent promotion process. This focused intervention offers tailored support, coaching and development opportunities, helping individuals to strengthen leadership capability, build resilience. Success rates are monitored through all promotion processes; in the past 12 months officers being promoted were representative of the overall workforce.

In the 2025 Inspector process, 38% of all officers promoted to Inspector were female and 9% were from an Ethnic Minority Group. The success rates for females was 60%, which was significantly above the average success rate of 49%; the success rates for ethnic minority groups was 50% which was slightly greater than the average success rate.

In the 2025 Sergeant process, 39% of all officers promoted to Sergeant were female and 12% were from an Ethnic Minority Group. The success rates for females was 71%

which was above the average success rate of 67%; the success rates for ethnic minority groups was 66% which was slightly lower than the average success rate.

### **Development & Strategy:**

**WMP to undertake workforce planning, to ensure the right resources and skills are available to meet demand, enhance efficiency and deliver effective outcomes.**

WMP has a 10-point delivery plan for its workforce planning and governance strategy to address the specific requirements aligned to the Police and Crime Plan. It also ensures alignment with national requirements and opportunities ranging from officer uplift, College of Policing guidance, NPCC direction and key benchmarking. It ensures a focus on integration and collaboration of any short- and medium-term financial planning including digital, estates and capability strategies. On a more tactical level the approach focuses on ensuring maximised operational capacity, capability and resilience at its core, maximising service to the public and ensuring the force can deliver its overarching vision.

Through workforce governance and planning WMP ensures it has a robust understanding of current and projected demand, uplift requirements, promotional processes and the critical continual fluctuation of workforce establishments. Detailed assessment of current workforce capability, including specialist skills, leadership capacity, and future skill gaps is continually assessed and understood. Significant work has been undertaken in respect of Detective capability with the total number of detectives required across force quantified and a recruitment and training plan that closes the gap.

Workforce Governance provides a critical holistic force overview to ensure there is an accurate assessment of establishment, vacancy factors, requests to recruit and posting information. Continually forecasting joiners, leavers, abstractions, and internal movements providing assurance processes to maintain establishment versus funded strength. Using a single version of the truth via integrated QLiK dashboards, practical user applications and analytical insights, Workforce planning give assurance to the forces and drive a culture of self-serve where possible to deliver greater efficiency and overall impact.

The workforce planning document directly informs training department planning by identifying current and forecasted workforce requirements, enabling targeted decisions on where training resources are deployed and which learning and skills priorities must be developed. This is reinforced through regular attendance at portfolio boards and close working with business leads. Core specialist skills are identified as KPIs and are tracked to provide assurance of capability and capacity. The external training budget is a critical enabler in the process, allowing specialist and hard-to-replace skills, that cannot be delivered in house.

**Agile and flexible force that can embrace change, with strong recruitment practices and succession planning to develop future leaders**

This is delivered through strong recruitment practices and structured succession planning to ensure continuity in critical roles and the development of future leaders. Local People Development Boards routinely review critical roles, skill gaps and emerging risks, with local HR teams providing direct support to develop and maintain effective succession plans. At a force-wide-level, the Force Talent Strategy provides a coherent framework for the identification, development and progression of talent, with the Talent Management Board holding accountability for talent pools and overseeing the development of future leaders to meet current and future organisational needs.

**Clear people strategy focused on all necessary policing disciplines, including science, technology and innovation to attract and train the right talent while retaining experienced WMP officers and staff to ensure capability and resilience**

Technology enabled learning is embedded within training delivery, including the use of innovative approaches such as virtual reality within the new recruit's programme. The force actively keeps pace with emerging technology and specialist operational requirements, including the rollout of new Taser devices, with associated training and accreditation. Innovation in learning design is well embedded, enabling efficient, engaging and agile learning that supports career-long development, retention of experienced officers and staff, and readiness to meet evolving policing demands.

There has been a refocus on better understanding turnover and attrition over the past year.

Say & Stay was relaunched in January 2025 which gives any officer or police staff the opportunity to speak to an independent person. The aim is to understand their reasons for considering leaving the force and to put interventions in place to improve retention

Our Attrition and Retention Strategy identifies the key workforce retention priorities for the force and explores the preventative actions that can be deployed to minimise the organisational impact. The Board reports directly to the Strategic People Governance Board which includes Chief Officers.

From November 2025 exit interviews have been standardised across force and refocused to better help us understand the reasons people leave WMP. Questions have been designed to have alignment with the national wellbeing survey so that we can make comparisons across engagement tools. Offering an exit interview to all leavers is now mandated with local HR receiving reports of leavers so that they can schedule interviews.

Mechanisms to capture lessons learned from operations, HR processes, misconduct panels, and staff feedback will be critical to deliver and evidence organisational learning. Incorporation of HMICFRS findings and NPCC national guidance and annual reviews of workforce strategy against outcomes and environmental changes will also be important to ensure workforce planning impactful.

**WMP will continue to be an accredited Living Wage Foundation employer**

West Midlands Police continue to be an accredited Real Living Wage employer, as such we will always pay equivalent to, or greater than the RLW rate as determined by the living wage foundation, supporting colleagues in the lowest pay scales. This usually requires a twice annually review of pay rates and pay scales.

2. *Achievements and Challenges*

The main achievements delivered in the last 12 months relate to the progress realised since the implementation of the People Services structure in November 2024, these include:

- Establishment and delivery of new Reasonable adjustments policy and review panel
- Implementation of the OH OPAS2 system upgrade
- Tighter control over absence management procedure due to local HR ownership

- Uplift maintenance target achieved and on track to deliver growth target by Mar 26
- Reduction in appointment wait time and HR being embedded into OH process

When reflecting on Challenges, the following continue to be worked through and managed:

1. Maintaining ongoing high Recruitment volume delivery across whole Onboarding process
2. Retention of officers and numbers of restricted officer numbers
3. Wellbeing of Inspectors through to senior officers due to operational demand
4. Planning and achieving training demands without interrupting service delivery and training of new recruits
5. HR admin and IT sophistication challenges

### 3. Actions undertaken to address challenges

1. Mitigation in place to deliver but this will always remain a high priority
2. Plan in place through the Attrition & Retention board with expected progress over the next 12 months, delivered through Local HR and Workforce leads
3. CPD and focused support in place for early 2026 for these ranks
4. Regular collaborative working across People Services directorate and continuous approach to service delivery
5. Planned staged review of HR admin processes to streamline wherever possible

### 4. Future Work

The force is progressing the procurement of a new learning management system (LMS), recognising current gaps in provision and the significant organisational and learner benefits that a fit-for-purpose LMS will bring in supporting learning, skills acquisition and visibility of capability across the force in a modern, data-driven way. Ongoing investment in the training estate at Tally Ho further supports effective learning and tactical delivery, providing appropriate facilities for specialist and operational training.

### 6. Financial Implications

The People services SLT have worked hard with Finance colleagues to support the balanced finance picture for 26/27 finding efficiencies in External training budgets and officer entry routes.

### 7. Legal Implications

There are no current legal implications in consideration of the details outlined in this paper.

### 8. Equality Implications

Our HR policies and processes ensure we deliver our requirement to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty

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