STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD
3 February 2015

Questions from the Board on matters not on the agenda

Given the recent reported experience of Essex Police (*The Daily Telegraph* 23 December 2014) in seizing licensed firearms from holders suspected of being involved in domestic violence could the Chief Constable:

(a) give an assurance that West Midlands Police relate data on firearms certificate holders to incidents reported to the police?

(b) indicate how many holders of firearm certificates there are in the West Midlands?

(c) indicate what number of confiscations of firearms have taken place in the last two years within the West Midlands?

(To be asked by Brendan Connor)

Officers seize 220 licensed guns

A police force has removed 220 guns from licensed firearms holders suspected of being involved in domestic violence in an attempt to prevent murders.

Essex Police's action followed a number of incidents in which lawfully held guns had been used in domestic-related murders or other incidents.

Recent high-profile cases include that of Christopher Parry, 50, who killed his estranged wife, Caroline, 46, in Newport, South Wales, last year.

Concerns were also raised over Derrick Bird, who shot 12 people dead in June 2010 in Cumbria.

Derek Benson, Essex Deputy Chief Constable, said his force had checked if any licence-holder had been responsible for domestic abuse, even if they had not been arrested or found guilty.

Of the county's 24,500 licence holders, 777 were visited to check their suitability as weapon owners, 24 had licences revoked and 26 surrendered them, leading to the seizure of 220 firearms.

One licence-holder challenged the decision in court but Basildon Crown Court upheld Essex Police's decision.

Inspector Neal Miller said officers focused on the highest risk cases and visited holders to check their suitability.

He added: "When firearms were removed, some victims then felt able to disclose further details of domestic and sexual abuse because they were reassured we were taking action."