

Title: Preparing for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
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1. Purpose of paper

1.1 This paper is an update on the ongoing planning for Operation UNITY, the policing of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. It follows previous papers submitted to Board members in 2019, 2020 and 2021; the latest report was presented in January 2022.

1.2 This report will update on:

- Review of Safety & Security Strategy and programme governance
- Latest programme developments
- Latest assessment of strategic risks & issues

2. Reviews of Strategy & Governance

2.1 The Commonwealth Games Safety & Security Strategy underpins the policing and security plans for the Games. It sets out the shared aims and objectives of all security partners and our joint approach to mitigating security risks whilst maximising legacy opportunities. It also sets out the roles and responsibilities of all security partners before and during the Games.

2.2 Version 2 of the strategy was approved by partners in May 2021. It was always envisaged that a final review of the strategy would be undertaken in Spring 2022 to ensure that it remained fit for purpose in the months approaching the Games. This review is currently ongoing and will be completed by April 2022.

2.3 In addition, the next few months sees a transition from programme management to operational planning and Games delivery. Some of the existing security governance structures are being reviewed and refined to reflect this transition. This will include reviews of meetings' terms of reference, attendance and frequency with an increasing focus on command and operational delivery and a reduced focus on assurance and audit.

3. Programme Developments

3.1 Since the last Board report the following programme milestones have been achieved:

3.2 **Queen's Baton Relay** – The Queen's Baton continues to travel safely around the nations and territories of the Commonwealth on its International Leg with West Midlands Police continuing to provide intelligence support. The National Leg of the relay is due to commence in June and planning continues with police forces across the country supported by the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC); a national briefing, hosted by West Midlands Police, has been arranged for the end of March. The West Midlands Police led Queen's Baton Relay team, who will accompany the Baton, and the Baton Bearers, as they traverse the United Kingdom, have commenced their specialist training. The Queen's Baton arrives in the West Midlands region towards the end of July and will be managed through all four regional forces through a joint Games command, with two regional Silver Commanders now appointed.

3.3 **Venue Risk Assessments & Plans** – West Midlands Police and the Organising Committee have confirmed Games sites, events and key venues. All risk assessment processes have now concluded, albeit they are living documents which can and will adapt to reflect any changes in information or intelligence. All police venue commanders have been appointed and are in

the process of finalising detailed venue operational plans and building relationships with the Organising Committee venue managers. West Midlands Police will support test events at the Alexander Stadium and Sandwell Aquatic Hub in the coming months.

3.4 Readiness Testing & Exercising – Testing and exercising for the Games continues at pace with numerous live and table top exercises undertaken by Security partners between January and March. Further readiness testing, including two major test events, are planned between April and June. In addition, all security partners are undertaking an assessment to satisfy ourselves that the extensive testing and exercising programme appropriately addresses the relevant threats identified in the risk assessment processes.

3.5 Staffing & Resourcing – following the cancellation of rest days and embargo on annual leave for police officers, planning is ongoing to post up to 1,300 West Midlands Police officers every day to specific Games roles and notify them of their tours of duty. In addition, we are identifying up to 320 existing members of police staff to take on new logistical support roles during Games time.

3.6 Police Mutual Aid & Military Assistance – Police mutual aid requests have been finalised and submitted to the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) for up to 1,700 mutual aid officers required each day of the Games. Close liaison continues through extensive engagement with NPoCC and regular briefings to regional forces. Following learning from last year's G7 and COP26 operations, national arrangements are being progressed to agree standardised pay and conditions for all officers deployed on mutual aid. HM Government has approved a West Midlands Police request for military support during the Games. This includes contingency support to supplement private contract security arrangements if required.

3.7 Finance & Procurement - The joint Security Budget, managed by West Midlands Police on behalf of all security partners, continues to be closely scrutinised. The latest HM Government led budget review was held on 1 March 2022 with the final report and recommendations awaited. Whilst current financial forecasts continue to project opportunities for savings within the Security Budget it is noticeable that procurement costs for vehicles,

accommodation and food are beginning to show significant increases in line with wider increases in costs of living. This is likely to be reflected in future forecasts.

3.8 Legacy Benefits & Community Engagement – The Operation UNITY Engagement Team continues its impressive work regularly engaging with communities, schools, universities and youth groups across the force area to promote the Games messaging. Work is ongoing to recruit a cohort of community volunteers to support the policing logistical operation during the Games and leave a legacy of new active citizens willing to take on future roles working with West Midlands Police such as Street Watch.

4. Strategic Risks & Issues

4.1 Risks are identified across all security partners via an integrated risk register as well as strategic and tactical intelligence assessments. The current strategic risks and issues are being managed through multi-agency governance include:

4.2 **National Threat Level** – The UK national threat level continues to be closely monitored and the planning team are actively supported by the national counter-terrorism policing network and the UK intelligence community. The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) reduced the national threat level in February 2022 from 'Severe' to 'Substantial'. The security posture for the Games remains proportionate to the threat level.

4.3 **Impact of CoVID-19** – whilst the ending of all CoVID restrictions within the UK is to be welcomed, the global scale of the Games means that future CoVID planning assumptions continue to be closely assessed. In accordance with the latest advice provided by partners, the safety and security operations continues to plan for a Games which will operate within a 'new normal' with full athlete and spectator attendance and no social distancing measures.

4.4 **Concurrent Events** – The Operation UNITY planning team continue to monitor and assess the potential impact on the Games of concurrent events such as the Jubilee celebrations, the early start of the football season due to

the FIFA World Cup and, more recently, the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine. In addition, the planning team continue to work closely with the West Midlands Police's BAU Gold Command to ensure that West Midlands Police remains able to deliver a safe and secure Commonwealth Games as well as continuing to prevent crime, protecting the public and helping those in need across the wider West Midlands.

4.5 Recruitment of Specialist Staff & Procurement of Specialist Services

– The recruitment of a multitude of specialist security staff to deliver the Games continues to be closely monitored. Since the last report, good progress continues to be made on recruiting to a number of vacancies. Assurance processes are in place to monitor the successful delivery of contracted safety and security services such as private contract security staff and venue stewards.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The Board is asked to note this report.

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