



ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE BOARD

17th December 2024

**Preventing and reducing Crime:
Burglary / Robbery / Vehicle Crime / Business Crime / Cybercrime and Fraud
Presented by: DCC Scott Green**

Cover Report

Police and Crime Plan

1. This paper will provide an overview of crime trends and strategies being pursued by WMP to address acquisitive crime, which have an economic impact including fraud, cyber-crimes, burglary, robbery, business crime and vehicle crime.
2. The West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 set objectives to reduce acquisitive crime, cyber-crime and fraud and business crime. The paper will describe the work that has been done to address these objectives.

Acquisitive Crime

Achievements

3. WMP continues to see reductions across all areas of acquisitive crime with a YTD reduction of 10.6%. Robbery has decreased by 12%, residential burglary by 16%, theft from the person by 25% and vehicle crime by 6%. Localised crime meetings, led by Detective Chief Inspectors allow local teams to focus on 'hotspot' areas and the locations affecting the lives of local communities the most. Each Local Policing Area (LPA) has dedicated acquisitive crime delivery plans (4P Plans) which are designed to engage key partners and communities in our approach to tackle offending. The change to the operating model allows for greater accountability across teams.
4. Though Operation Vanguard (the forces approach to improving investigations) the force continues to drive improvements across the investigation spectrum. The increased focus in this area has allowed for victims of acquisitive crime to see improvements not only in the policing response, but also the secondary investigation. Senior officers continue to conduct reviews of these crimes, in order to drive standards. The improvements in the quality of investigations have improved outcomes as well as providing intelligence and evidence to tackle series offending.
5. The force continues to improve outcome rates across all acquisitive crime offences. In 2023/24 the YTD outcome rate was 4.9%. 2024/25 YTD outcome rate is 7%. The outcome rate for robbery for example has increased from 9.3% in September 2023 to over 13% in September 2024. For the year ending July 2024, we were second within our Most Similar Groups (MSG) for positive

outcomes for robbery. The local policing model that was introduced in April 2023 has been key to these improvements, with investigation teams being aligned to geographical areas, working closely with neighbourhood officers. All of these resources are tasked through effective local processes in order to bring more offenders to justice.

6. Physical attendance at residential burglaries allows for better victim engagement, but allows officers to assess scenes for forensic opportunities, whilst carrying out a better quality of initial investigation – through the identification of CCTV and witnesses. This has been a contributing factor in relation to improving our victim experience, but also identifying early opportunities to fast track enquiries to help identify suspects at pace and in turn improve outcomes

Challenges

7. The recent release of prisoners from His Majesty's Prisons has been an additional pressure in the fight against acquisitive crime. A number of prolific offenders have been released, they will require additional focus from policing teams to ensure they are managed back into the community.
8. Theft of Motor Vehicle continues to be the majority of vehicle crime offences at 45% YTD, followed by theft from motor vehicle at 41% and vehicle interference at 14%. The West Midlands has a deep history in vehicle manufacturing meaning there are the skills to access, strip and dispose of vehicles readily available for crime gangs to exploit. Wider national and international factors affecting the supply of vehicle parts also continues to drive this criminality. Limited punishment at court of vehicle crime offenders, provides limited deterrence to offending.

Actions Undertaken

9. In response to the early release of prisoners, local offender management teams have been bolstered and wider neighbourhood policing resources engaged, to ensure that those offenders who have been released early are robustly monitored and managed. Local tasking meetings are being used to focus on those individuals that are most likely to cause harm.
10. The force continues to look at innovative ways to work with car manufacturers to tackle these issues, learning from successful pilot work in forces such as Greater Manchester Police and Police Scotland who are both now seeing reductions in offending.
11. In relation to robbery, all LPA's have a 4P plan to manage the risk, and part of that is focused on intervention and education. A large proportion of victims are under 25, so there is a focus on messaging in education establishments and innovative messaging via apps. There is a gold group, chaired by an ACC to ensure that all opportunities to reduce offending are being explored.

Future Work

12. Along with six other police forces, WMP has been invited to contribute to a newly formed Government taskforce to improve understanding of Knife Enabled Robbery (KER). It is likely therefore that there will be an increased focus on KER over the next 12 months.
13. Further work with car manufacturers such as JLR to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to tackle offending / prevention.

14. Work with West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WMROCU) to tackle organised criminality, especially in relation to vehicle theft and the export market.
15. Continued focus and use of facial recognition to aid in identification of unknown suspects.
16. Continued improvement and training in relation to the investigation of conspiracy offences, through training and mentoring to maximise positive results for victims of crime.

Cybercrime and Fraud

Achievements

17. Implementation of new diversionary pathway training to assist in preventing re-victimisation of vulnerable victims. These are individuals who initially identified as suspects, however during the investigation were found to have been exploited. Identifying victims and disrupting offending activity, outcome rates have increased from 7.7% year ending March 2023 to 11.7% year ending March 2024.
18. Intelligence led prevention approach to capture those demographics where there is reduced levels of reporting. Analysis of offences such as romance and courier fraud have identified trends and patterns in offences against the LGBTQ+ and elderly community. Changes to engagement plans have allowed staff within the Economic Crime Unit to reach vulnerable victims who would otherwise not have reported incidents to the police.
19. WMP is one of the first forces to utilise new legislation under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023. The team have successfully frozen crypto assets with a view of recovering the contents of the 'wallet'.

Challenges

20. With the developments in modern technology, cyber and fraud offences have become borderless offences where perpetrators reside in other countries and remotely target UK victims. This creates significant challenges in bringing offenders to justice.
21. Under reporting of crime leaves significant intelligence gaps and an incomplete offending picture. This is particularly true with businesses due to perceived negative press.
22. Fraud and cyber are an expanding area of criminality, and advancements in technology such as the dark web and crypto currency have made investigations significantly more complex.

Actions Undertaken

23. Training in relation to Economic Crime and Cybercrime is being professionalised through the introduction of an academy.
24. Internal partnerships are being created with LPA's so that fraud and cyber criminality can be quickly identified.
25. Bespoke training is being delivered to areas of the business that are more likely to come across technology enabled criminality such as Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation (SOCEX) and Sex Offender Managers (SOMs).
26. The team continue to work with WMP's IT& Digital department to ensure that the force is cyber secure.

27. The ECU are currently working with Birmingham Business Forum to ensure that the message is clear that they can work with the police when they have been victims of crime.

Future Work

28. Creation of a Prevent Eco System (a cyber Multi Agency hub). So far, Birmingham University and other higher education establishments, board of governors for schools, school safeguarding leads and Birmingham Local Authority have agreed to participate in developing the project. The aim is to highlight individuals on the verge of cyber enabled criminality.
29. Work with the Colmore Business Improvement District (BID) to engage and educate the businesses including solicitors' firms who may find themselves suffering a cyber breach.

Business Crime

Achievements

30. Offending to Recovery (O2R) continues to be a positive programme that is being rolled out across the force, following the initial successful pilot across Birmingham. Wolverhampton LPA went live in May 2024 and Dudley LPA went live in September 2024. Work continues with Local Authorities across the other LPA's to explore opportunities to introduce the O2R programme. Through the creation of the Business Crime Co-ordinator and the Business Crime SPOC's across the LPA's, relationships with the business crime community both locally and nationally has greatly improved. As a result of this, a pilot approach in Wolverhampton City Centre working with the National Business Crime Solution (NBCS) has seen a reduction in offending by 30% when comparing September 2023 and September 2024.
31. WMP is actively participating in the Retail Crime Advisory Group (RCAG) which is focused on implementing the National Retail Crime Strategic Delivery Plan.

Challenges

32. There has been a sharp increase (volume) in shoplifting that has been seen across the UK. WMP is no different and the volume of reporting v's the capacity to investigate is a challenge. While the increase is a challenge, it should be noted that the positive outcome rate for shoplifting has increased, and as a result, businesses are more likely to report offences to us.
33. WMP has invested in Axon Digital Evidence Store to manage all digital evidence. As part of this, there is an ability to email or text a link to a member of the public or business for them to upload any photographs or video of the offence or offender(s). There are however potential missed opportunities to bring offenders to justice when reports are being filed pending receipt of CCTV, which subsequently is not being sent in.
34. Reports relating to the same offender are not always managed by the same Officer in Charge (OIC) and this reduces the chances of a positive outcome. Some LPA's are linking these offences and taking them to CPS at once which is increasing the chance of a positive outcome.
35. There is a risk that the focus is on retailers resolving the problem of retail crime however there is an important role of Offender management to suppress the rise in retail crime.

Actions undertaken

36. WMP has a dedicated Business Crime Lead at Superintendent, supported by a nominated business crime Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on each LPA. Alongside those roles are the Design Out Crime Manager and a dedicated Business Crime Co-ordinator. This structure is designed to develop relationships with the business sector and gather understanding of the challenges faced by businesses in the West Midlands as well as linking in with national groups such as NBCC.
37. Submission of evidence by businesses has greatly improved, through the use of the Axon Digital Evidence Store. Work is now in progress through Op Vanguard (the forces response to improving investigations) to ensure that reports are not being filed too quickly and all lines of enquiry are being followed. This work will also ensure that wherever possible linked offences are allocated to the same OIC.

Future Work

38. WMP has recently introduced a system called CCTV Registry that will further support the identification and retrieval of CCTV opportunities. Work is on-going with the force lead for CCTV registry and the Business Crime team within WMP to onboard local businesses.
39. Creation of a reporting guide for businesses to improve the quality of reporting from businesses and therefore allowing police to focus on the investigation and following lines of enquiry.
40. There are a small number of offenders responsible for a large proportion of crime. Therefore, work needs to be done to link offenders to those offences to maximise criminal justice opportunities.
41. WMP continue to work with the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) to participate in Project Pegasus that was introduced in Sussex that is designed to improve information sharing between police and retailers (further information can be found [here](#)).

Financial Implications

42. For a number of years, WMP has received government funding for Operation Guardian, the WMP response to tackle Serious Youth (under 25) Violence. It is known that under 25 violence is intertwined with robbery and KER in general. There is uncertainty as to whether this funding will continue and therefore WMP is exploring opportunities to continue the work that is being done.

Legal Implications

43. There are no known legal implications at this time.

Equality Implications

44. There are no known equality implications at this time.

Author(s): **DCC Scott Green**
Job Title: Deputy Chief Constable