



Accountability and Governance Board

Notes of the Last Meeting

Tuesday 17 December 2024

These minutes provide a summary of key points raised during the meeting.

1	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Arron Cullen (Strategic Performance Manager, OPCC) Alethea Fuller (Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC) Craig Guildford (Chief Constable, WMP) Jonathan Jardine (Chief Executive, OPCC) Kim Madill (Chief Superintendent, WMP) Nikki Penniston (Head of Delivery, VRP) Scott Green (Deputy Chief Constable, WMP) Simon Foster (Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC) Wasim Ali (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC)</p>
2	<p>Notes of last meeting</p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were approved.</p>
3	<p>PCC Update</p> <p>The Commissioner provided a general update which covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. On 09 December 2024 the Police and Crime Panel re-appointed Craig Guildford as Chief Constable under the national Retire and Re-join scheme. The PCC acknowledged the notable achievements of Mr Guildford including the positive impact on 999/101 calls and an overall reduction in crime by 10%. The PCC looks forward to working with Mr Guildford following his re-appointment on Monday 16 December 2024. II. The PCC has urged Government to fairly allocate officers to police forces impacted by funding cuts. The PCC noted the disproportionate police funding formula and number of officers in WMP compared to smaller Force areas. The PCC reiterated the need for WMP to have sufficient resources to serve and protect the people of the West Midlands. III. The PCC and the Mayor produced a joint-letter to the Government requesting that all money raised from fixed penalty notices should be retained by their regions to re-invest in roads policing and making the roads safer.
4	<p>Chief Constable Update</p> <p>The Chief Constable gave an update which covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. the investment in the Road Crime Team has led to expanding resources and optimising the team.

	<p>II. acknowledged the benefit of work by the mayor and PCC to retain finances from fixed penalty notices.</p> <p>III. The Force will utilise technology (such as additional safety cameras, hand-held devices and ANPR), run operations against persistent offenders, and increasingly invest in education on raid crime.</p> <p>IV. highlighted the positive overall performance of the Force as crime rates continually reduce. Current crime reduction rate in WMP between 10-12%. Arrest rates have doubled, and there will be a new custody suite opening in 2025. There have also been improvements in call response rates, a reduction in call abandonment rates.</p> <p>V. technology is being used to improve performance i.e. Andi Esra within the control room to evaluate and prioritise vulnerable calls, engage team approach to resolving issues and responding to calls.</p> <p>VI. Each Policing Area has a dedicated radio channel to positively impact performance, communication and officer attendance at incidents in impressive times.</p>
5	<p>Questions from AGB members</p> <p>Question 1: Night Time Economy (Asked by DPCC Wasim Ali)</p> <p>What plans and preparations do WMP have in place with local authorities and licensed premises to ensure our Night Time Economy (NTE) is safe and welcoming across Christmas and New Year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Silent Night is underway and will run until new year to ensure a safe night time environment. • The number of Officers on duty during the Christmas/ New Year period will not increase. However, Officer visibility will increase and Operation Advance will ensure consistent foot patrols with partners to address vagrancy. • The Force is working with licensing partners and licensees across the city to improve safety, alongside the safe space at Arcadian. • The Force is continuously reviewing and testing licensed premises ensuring campaigns such as <i>Ask Angela</i> are positively enforced. • Special Constables are provided with additional training to ensure security staff in city centres and at Christmas Markets have appropriate levels of training/ awareness. • A key priority is to ensure that is the night time economy is vibrant and safe. <p>Question 2: Drug and Drink Driving (Asked by DPCC Wasim Ali)</p> <p>How will WMP and partners address the threat posed by drug and drink driving over the Christmas, New Year, and Winter period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a national Christmas campaign to address the threat posed by drug and drink driving in the festive period. • The campaign is organised by the Roads Policing Team and incorporated into Operation Advance. • Previous campaigns have resulted in impressive arrest/ success rates. • WMP also invest in an awareness campaign highlighting the consequences of drug/drink driving as a deterrence. • Furthermore, WMP to embrace technology advancements with provision in place to avail themselves with new equipment i.e. advanced breathalyser devices.
6	<p>Preventing and Reducing Crime; burglary/ robbery/vehicle crime / business / fraud Presented by: DCC Scott Green</p> <p>This item was presented by Scott Green, Deputy Chief Constable. The following discussion took place:</p> <p>How does the profile of frequent drug offenders (inform how police tackle and prevent shop theft?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a serious issue of shoplifting in the West Midlands.

- The ability of Officers to attend incidents more promptly results in more arrests.
- Local Policing Models have created great connectivity between officers and local businesses resulting in more reporting of shop theft and better outcomes.
- Some offenders repeatedly commit theft to fund drug addiction. The Force works in partnership with services commissioned by the PCC to ensure diversionary offers are in place.
- High levels of prison population mean that prolific offenders cannot always be taken off the street.

What would WMP identify as the drivers behind reduction in acquisitive crime?

- Operation Ruby was initiated 18 months ago, to lead the response to robbery.
- The Force has strengthened basic actions i.e. increased patrols in areas of high robbery rates and tracking number of outstanding suspects and their prosecution process at weekly meetings.
- Presence of local command teams have resulted in a reduction in residential burglary and higher report rates

Paragraph 7 itemises particular challenges for WMP. What can be done to better deal with theft from and theft of a motor vehicle?

- More resources would provide the best solution to motor vehicle crime.
- Vehicle crime is still a priority however there is currently no vehicle crime task force as it is included in the operating model.
- The Force is working with partners to better educate the public on ways to minimise risk of this crime i.e. not leaving valuables on display and conducting preventative patrols.

Under Operation Vanguard what actions are taking place to improve operations in the West Midlands and what more can be done?

- Operation Vanguard will remain a key priority for the next few years to professionalise investigations across WMP.
- To ensure continuity, a number of officers review closed investigations every month to evaluate the process and outcomes.

Is WMP complying with the national Commitment around physical attendance at residential burglaries?

- Yes, the Force is complying.

Can WMP provide reassurance for members of the public who may be concerned about the release of prisoners?

- The issue is creating pressure on police resources as well as partners in probation, and local authorities.
- release of offenders with no accommodation and the financial pressure this has on local authorities is proving contentious
- The Force works closely with probation to monitor re-offenders and ensure relevant individuals will be re-arrested.
- The Force supports individuals integrating into society and promoting rehabilitation.

What additional steps have been taken to ensure businesses are confident in reporting cybercrime and fraud?

- The crime unit works directly with businesses to encourage reporting of all cybercrime.
- The Force works to collect evidence and signpost to appropriate authorities.

What work is underway to provide information to the public on cyber fraud?

- The Force works collectively and publicly to promote awareness on fraud citing the work of Action Fraud and the National Crime Agenda
- All mobile fraudulent communications should be forwarded to telephone number 7726.

How are WMP addressing the issue of securing security footage?

- Police are working hard to provide methods for people to upload security footage.
- Police are arranging appointments with business/ individuals to collect footage.
- The digital evidence store and CCTV repository is empowering people to remotely upload their CCTV and ensure immediate access to footage police officers.

What additional measures have been implemented to address knife related robbery?

- There has been a significant reduction in knife crime across the West Midlands following the inclusion of knife crime in Operation Guardian and the deployment of experienced officers.
- Knife assisted robberies are increasingly committed by juveniles, requiring police to work on offender management in consultation with the CPS. Timely intervention has provided positive results, enabling decisions to be made while individuals are still in custody.
- Police are also seeking to improve education on the consequences of knife crime at Primary level.

What preventative measures are in place for individuals identified on the verge of cyber criminality?

- Diversionary activity for cybercrime is being viewed in the same way as referring individuals into Prevent.
- The challenging nature of this work was noted, including instances where preventative measures have failed.

Is the Academy working well, and what is the intended operation?

- The academy is functional.
- The role of the academy is to upskill and train financial cyber fraud investigators and local policing officers, with a secondary focus on handling communications with members of the public affected by cybercrime.

What are the diversionary pathways for preventing re-victimisation and what can be done to bring more offenders to justice?

- There is no singular pattern to cybercrime, therefore to address this problem education of the public needs to be persistent and high profile, specifically for those most vulnerable.
- To bring more offenders to justice police are improving professionalism and promoting the importance of reporting cyber fraud.
- It is important to be aware of modern slavery and the scope for money mules and cybercrime.

Provide further information on the national business crime solution pilot in Wolverhampton City Centre?

ACTION: This information was not available and a written response will be provided for the Commissioner

When will the Axon digital evidence store be initiated, will there be an evaluation, and is the item being promoted across the region?

- The Axon digital evidence store is active and continuously being promoted by police, especially at appointments with businesses to retrieve footage.
- Officers are encouraged to show individuals the system and promote usage.
- WMP does not currently have plans to evaluate this item due to its straightforward nature.

Despite all work in the area retail crime is an outlier in West Midlands, why is this? The persistent nature of retail crime as an outlier is linked to deprivation and addiction, and the vast temptation involved in retail crime.

What is the impact of the offender management programmes funded by the PCC in Coventry?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information was not readily available during the meeting. <p>How is the Force assessing public?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many areas the fear of crime outweighs the reality of crime. Following the policing structure re-organisation every local area has a dedicated media person to tailor policing and policing messages to the local area. <p>Work is underway between the Force and the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) on vehicle crime, with a focus on conspiracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the ROCU is focused on organised vehicle theft and the export of vehicles out of the West Midlands. Conspiracy is vital to investigating the organised crime groups/ structures that utilise funds from vehicle theft to finance other criminal activity. Numerous conspiracy charges have successfully resulted in multi-year prison sentencing.
7	<p>Reducing Violence Presented by: Nikki Penniston and CS Kim Madill</p> <p>This item was presented by Nikki Penniston, Violence Reduction Partnership Head of Delivery and Kim Madill, Chief Superintendent. The Following discussion took place:</p> <p>What difference and value has the Serious Violence Duty added since its implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The duty has enabled the VRP to expand current partnership working, enabled the creation of local strategic needs assessments (SNAs), and the production of an overarching regional strategy. Amendments are expected to the serious violence duty and the VRP is advocating for more specific detail on the roles of authorities i.e. Fire Authority. <p>Which 3 factors that have contributed to significant reductions in violence noted in paragraph 2.2?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to complete detailed analysis and guide focus areas is invaluable. Passion and recognition from policing that they are doing everything in their power to prevent knife to help young people, victims and communities. Focus on supporting prosecutions, securing evidence to ensure prosecution. Prevention across the area is consistently introduced to children and young people at an early stage, and sustained. <p>Is the guardian task force adequately resourced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work that is conducted with the allotted resources is great and split across north, east, south and west. More resources are always ideal however this is for the Chief Constable to determine. <p>Following the creation of the SNAs how will you be able to assess delivery of training with regards to disproportionality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRP funded anti-racist training, contextual safety planning, community development and an online platform tracking misogyny and VAWG. An additional request has been received regarding neurodiversity which the VRP will be launching in early 2025. All boards recognise that there are issues with disproportionality that will be incorporated into the new offers. Metrics are currently being evaluated and developed into 2025 plans to measure across all of the local areas. <p>What are the key lessons learnt from VRP interventions and how can these be shared across other areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of evaluations are publicly available on the VRP website. YEF toolkit navigator schemes are high impact and engage a large number of young people.

- Engagement is positively impacting individuals who may have previously been missed by other services. Key learning included enabling capacity for intervention as well as presence of youth workers.
- The core focus is consistency to ensure items funded now will have longevity and can make a meaningful impact.
- VRP referenced the My Tomorrow Campaign and Change Makers programme promoted through a new communications lead.

What steps have been taken to expand the My Tomorrow campaign and Change Makers programme?

- Focus on creating a continuous stream of narrative including lived experiences, stories, and social media.
- Ensuring the campaign is tailored on specific communities to engage these individuals and telling their stories i.e. football focus.
- Next year young leaders will lead the way across the region in promoting and scaling up the Change Maker peer-to-peer programme.

How does the VRP plan to integrate trauma informed approach across all stakeholders to address root causes of violence?

- VRP have worked with Barnardo's for 5 years and fund trauma informed training. Milestones include launching the trauma informed learning and development framework for regional adoption, and the publication of the trauma informed toolkit.
- In 2025 keen to ensure local training offers incorporate trauma informed and enhance training on response to trauma.

What challenges are being faced in implementing knife crime policies effectively, specifically, in cases where victims are disengaged?

- Victims of knife crime often find it challenging to connect with police.
- Priority is given to sourcing evidence and sustaining prosecutions to support victims and communities and incorporated this into training around knife crime policy.

How have delays in interventions for young people arrested been addressed to ensure reachable moments are maximised?

- Knife crime policy is focussed on making swift outcomes and engaging with young people in custody as a successful reachable moment.

How are the child first principles integrated into operational practises to ensure early intervention opportunities received?

- Police are working to establish these principles and comparing to other forces to ensure consistent opportunities.

What steps are being taken to engage in localities including faith alliance strategies to provide safe spaces and counteract violence?

- The VRP has an established faith alliance group and a an active/ engaged steering group.
- Following the publication of the faith alliance regional strategy a series of safe spaces have been created/funded.
- Safe spaces operating in key areas across the region with future plans to ensure these spaces are more sustainable and ensure that more individuals have access to them.
- A recent steering group reviewed current impact of the safe spaces and yielded positive results. Conversation now taking place to upgrade and expand these spaces.
- Additional leadership programme funded for faith leaders.

Are the initiatives referenced in the paper working to reduce violence, specifically as the serious violence reduction orders and offensive weapons homicide reviews?

- It is difficult to obtain serious violence reduction orders. There are 71 individuals with serious violence orders known to the Force.
- The pilot went live in April 2023 and finishes in April 2025, totalling 35 stop and searches.
- Obtaining the orders takes a lot of work across the criminal justice system and are not necessarily resulting in additional arrests
- 11 Offensive weapons homicide reviews located in Coventry and Birmingham. 3 reports have been finalised and returned to Home Office for publication with recommendations, 7 to be submitted to strategic boards and 1 item not yet concluded.
- Recommendations submitted regarding exempt accommodation without legislation, immigration status and right to remain.
- The Force is keen to continue with offensive weapons homicide reviews however, funding is required to continue this pilot.

What is the effectiveness of identifying habitual knife carriers for intervention, and provide any further information on the wider cohort of habitual knife carriers.

- The cohort of individuals carrying knives is smaller than often perceived.
- Habitual knife crime carriers are identified through intelligence which informs stop search and/or for officers to have conversations with these individuals (and parents). WMP perceive the process to be effective and have noted individuals identified and interacted with on the subject have not flagged on the system again.
- All prevention and services provided are voluntarily entered into by the young people.
- Safeguarding referrals are available through the multi-agency board's child protection plans.
- Interventions include commissioned items from the VRP (liaison held with local navigators), and local council voluntary services i.e. sports provision and cadets.

What connectivity has there been between VRP/ WMP that would aid a safer travel plan for young people?

- The VRP funded the Step Together national pilot to provide safer travel for children in the early hours after school. Despite no funding to sustain the pilot many areas self-funded.
- VRP keen to re-evaluate learning from the Step Together pilot and held conversations with the Home Office to discuss opportunities to expand the scheme.
- Many of the routes from Step Together investigated the links to bus routes and other modes of travel for young people.
- VRP actively working on this area and linking in with the My Tomorrow Campaign, advertising on public transport.

During the audit of knife crime policy, what required changes were identified?

- was a lack of recognition by all officers of the importance of identifying every knife crime opportunity as core moment for intervention implementation.

Identify timescales and substance of the expected review of school's intervention and prevention officers. Additionally, what has informed the shift from secondary to primary schools?

- WMP have school's intervention and prevention officers across all local areas sitting within partnership team.
- Following a review of the activity of these teams WMP identified inconsistency. WMP are analysing this information to inform a set of universal principles for the that can be utilised across all regions and align with the neighbourhood policing strategy aims.
- WMP keen to ensure that during school holidays the intervention and prevention officers are located in community areas to ensure consistent support.
- Following engagement with the family of victims WMP understands that some intervention/ prevention can be received too late. Resultantly WMP are shifting focus to primary to attempt to ensure timely prevention.

How would you advocate for continuity of funding from the Home Office?

- Inconsistency in funding for VRP has caused levels of uncertainty.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRP at a level where relationships with partners are prosperous, projects well routed and impactful, regional plans and ambitions created, funding is imperative to sustain this work. <p>CC commended the work of the VRP and Chief Superintendent in this area and asked the following 2 questions.</p> <p>Is there provision in place to ensure that service places are available for the most vulnerable/ needy following uncertainty of funding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRP confirmed that informal discussion has taken place notifying providers of the positive nature of discussions to ensure providers are included in the conversation at all time and ensure immediate action once funding confirmed. <p>Is there are any indication of the level of reductions that key partners may face?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRP reiterated their action to retain consistent communication to ensure immediate continuation of services once funding confirmed and limit any staffing cuts,
8	<p>Police and Crime Plan Presented by: Arron Cullen, Strategic Performance Manager</p> <p>A presentation was shared by Arron Cullen, Strategic Performance Manager. No questions were raised following this item.</p>
	<p>Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 28 January 2025, 10:00 – 13:00</p>
9	CLOSE