



## Accountability and Governance Board

### Agenda

Tuesday 26 May 2026

1	<p><b>Attendees:</b></p> <p>Wasim Ali, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster, Police and Crime Commissioner Alethea Fuller, Deputy Chief Executive Pete Gillett, Director of Commercial and Financial Services Scott Green, Acting Chief Constable Jane Heppell, Chief Finance Officer Jonathan Jardine, Chief Executive Nigel Johnston, Head of Corporate Change Mike O'Hara, Assistant Chief Constable Andrew Parsons, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Natalie Queiroz, Victims' Advocate Keith Trivett, Head of Finance Business Partnering</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <p>Richard North, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable</p>
2	<p><b>Notes of last meeting</b></p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were approved.</p>
3	<p><b>PCC Update</b></p> <p>1. The PCC has welcomed the launch of Operation Fearless on Soho Road and Handsworth Triangle as part of ongoing action to prevent and tackle crime and antisocial behaviour and violence across local communities. Operation Fearless was initially funded through investment of nearly £1million by the PCC from Proceeds of Crime. The Operation begun work in the area on 13 May, bringing visible policing and partnership led enforcement activity to one of Birmingham's busiest and most vibrant neighbourhoods. A dedicated team of around 20 officers will work alongside partners including Trading Standards, housing teams, the Soho Road Business Improvement District, West Midlands Fire Service, Immigration Enforcement, HMRC, the Gambling Commission and the Local Community Safety Partnership to address the issues that matter most to residents, businesses and visitors. Operation Fearless has shown that it can make a difference by preventing and tackling the crimes that cause the greatest harm, including drug crime, violence, organised criminality and antisocial behaviour. The Operation involves listening to local communities,</p>

	<p>taking strong enforcement action against offenders who are taken into police custody and found to be addicted to drugs and alcohol.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Arrest Referral Service will continue and expand following the PCC's £1.3million investment. This involves WMP working in close partnership with treatment services, probation services and courts. Evidence-based interventions are proven to reduce reoffending and help break cycles of addiction and crime. Specialist drug workers based directly in police custody suites have supported and referred thousands of people into treatment at a critical, reachable moment. The team provides vital harm reduction advice and signposting support around housing and mental health. Prevention and rehabilitation sit at the heart of my police and crime plan. Initiatives such as the Arrest Referral Service are central to reducing the crime and harm caused by illegal drugs whilst delivering value for the public purse. Custody can be a critical turning point in someone's life and the Arrest Rules Referral Service meets people at that moment and offers real support. By enhancing this service, we're giving more people the chance to access treatment, address addiction and rebuild their lives, reducing crime and harm for everyone in the West Midlands.</li> <li>3. Vehicle theft across the West Midlands has fallen by 15.5% over the past two years. 12,196 vehicle theft offences were recorded in 2025, down 8.8% from 13,375 in 2024 and a significant reduction from 14,441 in 2023. This demonstrates a sustained downward trend in vehicle crime across the region. The newly published Vehicle Theft Index 2026 provides further insight into the vehicles most frequently targeted by offenders. This progress reflects the determined action of West Midlands Police working alongside partners and local communities to tackle vehicle crime, target offenders and protect the public.</li> <li>4. Communities across the West Midlands are set to benefit from a major £1.4million investment aimed at tackling crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and reoffending. Funding allocated by the PCC will support 60 projects delivered through Community Safety Partnerships spanning all seven local policing areas. This underlines the PCC's continued commitment to prevention, early intervention and partnership working, and ensuring resources are targeted where they will have the greatest impact, protecting the most vulnerable, supporting victims and addressing the root causes of crime.</li> <li>5. The PCC has launched nominations for the 2026 Outstanding Citizens' Awards, following the overwhelming success of last year's ceremony. The awards aim to shine a light on the everyday heroes across the region, those who go above and beyond and keep their communities safe, support victims of crime and act as positive role models for others. This year's event is being held in partnership with Birmingham Live. It follows a momentous 2025 ceremony at the Brasshouse Community Centre in Smethwick, where extraordinary individuals were recognised for their bravery and selflessness. The 2026 ceremony will take place at the Coventry Boys and Girls Club in Coventry city centre on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September, following the club being named runners up in the Outstanding Community Project category last year.</li> </ol>
4	<p><b>Chief Constable Update</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There has been high overall demand for policing over the weekend as a result of the Bank Holiday, half term, the conclusion of the football season, and warm weather.</li> <li>2. WMP are grateful for investment by the PCC into the original Operation Fearless Team. This has now been moved to Soho Road. WMP are in the</li> </ol>

	<p>process of creating a second Operation Fearless Team to move resources around the West Midlands area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. On 1<sup>st</sup> May, WMP supported staff at the Utilita Arena, with 13,000 people attending a Peter Kay show. Security staff took the decision to evacuate the premises, and WMP supported with this evacuation. A suspect has been charged and remanded in custody. A structured debrief will be commissioned with partners to ensure that any necessary lessons can be learned.</li> <li>4. Arrests have been made following an assault in Bourneville involving individuals putting up flags on street furniture. Inquiries are ongoing.</li> <li>5. There was a significant policing operation regarding the Europa Cup Final. Thousands of people watched the event in Birmingham, and WMP worked with partners the following day, including Aston Villa, and Birmingham City Council, to oversee the victory parade</li> <li>6. There has been a change in posture for WMP following the threat level moving from substantial to severe, following the decision of His Majesty's Government based on a JTAC recommendation.</li> </ol>
5	<p><b>Questions from AGB members</b></p> <p><b>Question 1: Preparedness for the Crime and Policing Act 2026 (asked by Natalie Queiroz, Victims' Advocate)</b></p> <p>What steps have West Midlands Police taken to commence implementation of matters set out in the Crime and Policing Act 2026? For instance, dedicated criminal offences for cuckooing and the online facilitation of child sexual exploitation and abuse, and the introduction of respect orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Crime and Policing Act 2026 is a major legislative overhaul, expanding on a number of police powers, introducing new offences regarding anti-social behaviour and retail crime, and addressing corporate criminal liability. It overhauls some policing integrity systems and introduces 70 measures aimed at local crime, public disorder, and corporate misconduct. The act received Royal Assent last month.</li> <li>- Policing is assessing the implications of the act, and WMP are in regular dialogue with the College of Policing to look at the guidance they will put out in relation to the areas highlighted. This is currently awaiting a response. A review is ongoing of the Code of Practice guidance for frontline officers to ensure they are able to utilise relevant products when they come up. The Right to Know workstream is being undertaken by a Detective Chief Inspector in PPU, assisting with Home Office research.</li> <li>- WMP are ready to proceed but are awaiting further guidance on CCE and cuckooing. These areas are being researched and developed by the PPU to look at the impact on children and agree the next steps.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question 2: Outcome of Operation Applegreen (asked by Wasim Ali, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner)</b></p> <p>What was the outcome of Operation Applegreen, focused on the policing of the 2026 local elections? Are West Midlands Police able to share any successes and lessons learned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There were local elections across all seven local authority areas, with 1,255 polling stations and seven counting venues. There were 33 seats contested by 1,947 candidates. The operation involved a gold, silver and bronze structure. There were 22 planning meetings, beginning in February, and</li> </ul>

intelligence reporting was updated fortnightly initially, then moving to weekly, and daily in the final week.

- A number of recent events have contributed to community tensions which have had the potential to influence behaviour, such as immigration, asylum hotels, flag raising, conflict in the Middle East and the change in security state. Over the last few months there has been an increase in protests and counter protests, and media coverage, leading to online and offline candidate harassment and intimidation, requiring enhanced security planning in some areas. There were some high-profile individuals standing as candidates.
- On May 1<sup>st</sup> there was a full evacuation of the Utilita Arena as a result of a bomb hoax. Security evacuation plans, and plans around the security of ballot boxes, were out in place as a result. There were a number of intelligence logs related to planned protest and/or disorder.
- Aston Villa played in the semi-final of the Europe Cup on the same evening as the local elections, and eight polling stations were within the vicinity of the ground, requiring additional support from local policing.
- A Red, Amber, Green risk assessment process is in place for all polling stations. There were 947 Green, 268 Amber and 37 Red stations. There were also 3 stations in the new category: Red Plus. This upper tier of polling stations had full police presence due to being within Synagogues or Mosques or linked to Jewish or Muslim communities.
- As a result of the security state change, a CTSCO report considered pre-existing security measures and other recommendations which were incorporated into the silver plan.
- Overall, the threat level was medium for the local elections and WMP resourcing was proportionate. On 7<sup>th</sup> May, there were 12 sergeants and 56 neighbourhood officers dedicated to local elections, and 2 sergeants and 24 neighbourhood officers were dedicated to the count the following day.
- The Defending Democracy Team initiate contact with all existing councillors and potential candidates, but take-up is usually low. 22 specific briefings were delivered to 148 candidates, amounting to just 7.6%. the team retained oversight of all Operation Bridger and Operation Ford crimes and stood out as a region in terms of quality, grip and knowledge.
- In relation to crime and electoral malpractice, 33 total crimes were recorded, relating to anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and other matters. 20 electoral malpractice offences were picked up by the Economic Crime Team working nationally.
- There were meetings with partners prior to the elections, including with the PCC and Mayor.
- Work with Corporate Communications around information disorder guidance was useful, and misinformation and disinformation was rectified quickly. Direction on the security of count venues was well received.

**Question 3: Preparedness for the upcoming PEEL inspection (asked by Wasim Ali, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner)**

What steps have West Midlands Police undertaken in order to prepare for the upcoming PEEL inspection, due to take place in July 2026?

- In the performance year 2023/24, a new framework was introduced to improve preparedness for HMICFRS inspections. There is a regular and ongoing self-assessment in relation to each area of criteria and a monthly focus is conducted of outstanding recommendations, areas for improvement and causes of concern. This is managed through a monthly board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable to consider the self-assessments. With

	<p>representation from the OPCC via the Chief Executive, and HMICFRS themselves. this board is also attended by all Chief Officers, including ACCs who are responsible for outstanding recommendations, areas for improvement and causes of concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WMP assesses itself against the criteria of good which is published by HMICFRS, to interpret where the force would land in each area. The Deputy Chief Constable holds a monthly one-to-one with the HMICFRS FLO. The Acting Chief Constable also meets with the HMICFRS FLO once every three months and has also met with the HMI. To discuss overall preparedness.</li> <li>- At the last PEEL inspection, the force was placed in engaged status, with a number of areas being deemed inadequate. Based on self-assessment, the force hopes to be at least one grade higher in every area. Measures have been put in place and WMP hope that the assessment will show that progress is being made but acknowledge that there is still work to be done.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Performance Update</b></p> <p>Arron Cullen presented the Performance Update paper, providing an outline of performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan. These priorities include rebuilding community policing, preventing and tackling violence, improving road and travel safety, protecting victims and witnesses, and building public trust and confidence in policing. The report can be viewed here: <a href="#">AGB-26.05.26-Agenda-Item-6-Performance-Update.pdf</a>.</p> <p><b>Action: FET to consider which factors have contributed to the 16.2% reduction in VAWG and follow up with Natalie Queiroz.</b></p> <p><b>Action: ACC O’Hara to get back to Jonathan Jardine with an answer regarding whether the severity of road traffic collisions is changing, and to formally commission a review on this.</b></p>
7	<p><b>Change Programme</b></p> <p>Peter Gillett, Nigel Johnston and Keith Trivett presented the Change Programme paper, including providing an outline of the role of the change portfolio in delivering the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. The report can be viewed here: <a href="#">AGB-26.05.26-Agenda-Item-7-Change-Programme.pdf</a>.</p>
8	<p><b>CLOSE</b></p> <p>Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 10am.</p>