



**Agenda Item 13b**

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE  
25 June 2026**

**Risk Management Update (Strategic)**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members of the committee with oversight of the strategic risks for the Chief Constable.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 With risk maturity, understanding and confidence improving in West Midlands Police, the Risk Team have introduced strategic risk as a governance level in addition to corporate and departmental.
- 2.2 Strategic risks represent our potentially longer-term chronic risks and may have larger and more widespread impacts for the force and our ability to achieve strategic objectives.

**3 CURRENT OPEN STRATEGIC RISKS**

**FUNDING GRANTS**

**MEDIUM**

*Ceasing or shortfalls in grant funding would mean that the force would need to source funding from the core WMP budget or the activity in the area(s) may need to reduce or cease.*

*This is a force strategic risk for all grants – please refer to tracker attached in documents.*

*If values are agreed for the current year the risk remains for future years and each grant may have caveats in relation to the funding which we will need to work through on a case by case basis.*

- 3.1. Tracker kept by finance to monitor any grants and funding required inclusive of unbudgeted grants. This is shared with the risk team, and updates are provided quarterly throughout the year.
- 3.2. Known movements for next year and any grants that we've received funding confirmation continue to be monitored through the tracker. The force is aware that County Lines grant has been reduced by 25% in 2026-27, however this has been mitigated by reviewing and reducing the non-pay budget whilst funding some posts from force budgets to maintain the current services. There is also a reduction in the ROCU grant of £205,000 for this year. The ROCU grant reduction has a few options for mitigation which are currently being discussed by the regional forces.

**INFORMATION DISORDER****MEDIUM**

*There is a risk of our communities' trust and confidence in WMP being negatively impacted, heightened community tensions and potential social disruption (i.e. protests) fuelled by information disorder. There is a further risk that comments left under such posts can fuel the spread of information disorder.*

*Risk due to current capacity & capability of WMP's ability to embed and implement new APP national guidance and 6 steps*

- 3.3. Discussed at the April Risk and Organisational Learning Board, agreed that the wording of the risk needs to reflect the national direction, risk title amended from misinformation, disinformation or non-factual reporting to information disorder. Risk description also now reflects WMP's ability to embed the new APP and national guidance reflecting the need to have the right capacity and capability in force to embed.
- 3.4 WMP have recently reviewed the social media policy, aligning the social media hate crime trigger plan to take a more preventative and proactive approach, this also seeks to address mis, dis and mal information relating to members of our workforce.
- 3.5 Work also looks to continue developing a new Social Media delivery plan for 2026, aligned to WMP's Force Communications Strategy, looking at how we develop corporate channels.

**COMMUNITY TENSIONS AND POLITICS****MEDIUM**

*There is a strategic risk of increased public protest, disorder, unrest, or community tensions, arising from local, national or international events that become politicised within communities. Such events often influence the WMP force area both directly and indirectly and can emerge with little or no warning. These events have the potential to create or exacerbate community division, inflame tensions, driving hate crime, influence policy and challenge policing legitimacy.*

- 3.6 Since the last update the threat level has been risen. Weekly updates have been provided on activity undertaken and engagement with community.
- 3.7 POPs resilience was reviewed at April Performance Day and no significant gaps were identified.
- 3.8 Additional work continues to increase PSU commanders on response and is due to be reported back into July performance panel. Command hub is developing to ensure learning and CPD from protests and public order is fed into relevant commanders.
- 3.9 Intelligence is continually reviewed and fed through to operations

**NET ZERO AMBITION****MEDIUM**

*Risk that WMP is unable to achieve Net Zero 2035 in line with its publicly stated ambitions, due to the capital investment requirements and in particular the cost of heat decarbonisation and building fabric improvements. The accelerated deployment of energy reduction projects and low carbon technologies required to achieve this ambition will also need dedicated resources and governance arrangements which are not currently in place. Whilst there are no current requirements for the public sector in England to report progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions it is anticipated that this will change with Government mandating reporting in the future in order to ensure national targets are met.*

- 3.10 Funding discussions to be held for LED lighting, heating upgrades, engineer resource, fleet transition and electric vehicle infrastructure, in addition to requesting endorsement for expenditure of existing funds on heat decarbonisation plans.

3.11 Recommendations also include implementation of Solar PV at sites where refurbishments are carried out or where any viable funding opportunities arise. Investors in the Environment carried out an audit of WMP's Environmental Management System in April 2026 and have awarded WMP 'Green' status, which is the highest possible award.

<b>INTERNAL ELECTIC VEHICLE (EV) INFRASTRUCTURE AND ULTRA LOW EMISSION VEHICLE (ULEV) STRATEGY FOR FUTURE FLEET TRANSITION</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
<p><i>Phase out internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2035 and shift to EVs presents a risk for our fleet management strategy, as the current fleet consists of 1884 vehicles of which 80 are full EVs.</i></p> <p><i>Presently, the infrastructure to support an all-EV fleet internally is inadequate.</i></p> <p><i>The market for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will include options beyond just electric vehicles, including hydrogen and other alternatives, we cannot assume that the EV infrastructure will be the sole future solution for fleet needs.</i></p>	

3.12 Linked to Net Zero Strategic ambition and update as above.

3.13 Proposals and paper is being taken to the Finance Governance board to present recommendations for investment. Furthermore, there is agreement for work to be developed into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

<b>ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
<p><i>Failure to adopt AI innovations recognised as best practice in policing</i></p> <p><i>Over reliance on AI, impact on core service delivery should we become dependent on AI to complete tasks.</i></p> <p><i>AI producing biased or harmful outputs, as well as unfair decisions being made supported by AI</i></p> <p><i>Legal challenges in relation to accountability for any harm caused by AI systems either by generated content or bias/outputs</i></p> <p><i>AI outputs can be skewed by 'data poisoning', where incorrect entries are included in data sets which trains the AI to produce inaccurate outputs, this can also be harnessed by malicious actors through cyber attacks.</i></p> <p><i>Skillsets of officers and training to effectively use AI</i></p>	

3.14 The force has a Generative use of AI policy, that has been widely consulted on both internally and externally.

3.15 The opportunities linked to the use of AI are acknowledged. Where opportunities are identified, IT&D utilise the WMP AI Framework that allows decisions to be made and govern AI responsibly. A register is maintained by IT&D and there are force governance structures in place to support this.

<b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE STRAIN (CPS, COURTS, PRISONS, PROBATION)</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
<p><b>**NATIONAL RISK/ISSUE**</b></p> <p><i>The consequences of the current court strain may have/ having a potential negative impact on the force in terms of performance, offender management, securing justice, outcomes as well as dissatisfaction, trust and confidence and our service to the public.</i></p> <p><i>Detainees remanded to court are being kept in police cells for longer than necessary due to the lack of cell space in the West Midlands remand courts, largely at Wolverhampton Magistrates and Birmingham Magistrates. This results in custody staff looking after these detainees for longer and reduces the police cell availability. Depending on the police demand, the courts then cannot accept that demand and so police are left with detainees.</i></p>	

- 3.16. The Sentencing Act 2026 will impact on the number of individuals that the court can remand to prison, the anticipated result will be less demand going into the HMPPS estate. The Sentencing Act has only been in place for just over a month, we are yet to understand the impact of this on police remand decisions.
- 3.17. Issues are most acute in the Black Country, options are currently being explored around the feasibility of moving remand court from Wolverhampton to Walsall, this will slightly increase cell space for remand prisoners. There will also be a contingency to use other court cells to provide virtual hearings into the remand courts.
- 3.18. A strategic meeting is in place to review and discuss this and forms part of a sub group looking at demand vs capacity, there is also a sub group focusing on prioritisation and HMPPS productions.

<b>CYBER SECURITY</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Failure or breach of some or all of the force IT&D hardware or systems.	

- 3.19 Cyber Security remains a priority for the force. A recent 3rd party Cyber Security audit shows some limited areas for improvement, but overall, showed the force as prepared as it reasonably could be. In addition, IT&D have recruited a Cyber Security expert, with plans to also recruit into another post soon. Those roles will focus on prevent and how the force can respond, should an attack occur.
- 3.20 The force continues to liaise regularly with the National Monitoring Centre, who also help and advice with any suspicious activities. Further internal Phishing emails are also planned, to help highlight the messaging across the force, that attacks can occur by officers and staff clicking erroneous links in emails etc. This allows us to target susceptible users with additional training.

<b>SYNTHETIC DRUG TRAFFICKING AND SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Synthetic drug trafficking in WM may expand, potentially with increasing interest in experimenting with synthetic opioids and precursor chemicals imported from China (i.e. Fentanyl). New tech-savvy OCGs in WMP may use AI to explore opportunities to develop new synthetic drugs OCGs may continue to adopt new and further advanced technologies to either shield criminal activity from WMP or facilitate certain crime types. WMP may lag in terms of technology, skills, evidence, investigations or capacity to counter the criminal use technology	

- 3.21 Drug Strategy is currently being drafted, the focus will be to split this into 4 key work themes encompassing prepare, prevent, pursue, protect, with a view that a force lead will be allocated to each strand.
- 3.22 The force has a County Lines Taskforce which continues to investigate lines of enquiries on drugs in the force area with reporting into housebuilder. Further work is being undertaken to address any details about deaths that may have occurred on force area.

**4 CLOSED RISKS**

- 4.1 In the last quarter, no risks have been closed.

**5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Committee to note the contents of the report and any associated appendices.

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**