

WPD has partnered with the University of Birmingham and West Midlands Police in a unique feasibility study aimed at combatting metal theft.



Peter Lowe, WPD's Security Co-ordinator explained: "The aim of this study is to test if it is possible to positively trace copper by cross-matching stolen copper cable, conductor and earthing against samples of copper left at the scene of a theft.

This project involves university professors in Environmental Nanoscience, who study materials on the scale of nanometres. They will analyse whether copper has unique properties originating from the ore and the initial manufacturing process. Once the analysis is complete, blind testing will be undertaken to match control samples.

Additionally, they will assess the properties of Verdigris, which occurs when copper oxidises. Initial tests indicate that verdigris contains unique properties that give a unique

identity to the cable based on its age and location. This has great potential for police forensics as the verdigris easily transfers on to anything or anyone it comes into contact with.

Peter, along with members of the Tipton Training Centre, hosted members of West Midlands Police Forensic team and the University of Birmingham to help them understand more about the electricity network and the challenges faced from metal theft.

The results of the feasibility study are expected later in the year and, if positive, could result in a wider project involving other affected parties such as Network Rail and BT.

<https://news.pplweb.com/news-releases?item=137270>