

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 April 2026.

PRESENT: Mr J Moreland (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Blakemore, Cllr P Cole, Ms H de Jong, Mrs S Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr H Perkin and Cllr R Wells.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Paul (PCC's Chief Executive), Mr R Phillips (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC) and Mr N Wickens (Head of Governance & Performance, OPCC).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer – Overview and Scrutiny).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

56. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

1. Apologies were received from Mr Sandher, Cllr A Birch, Cllr D Croxton, Cllr P Feacey, Cllr T Murray, Cllr C Nolan, Mr P Webb and Cllr L Wright.

57. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting

(Item 3)

1. There were no Declarations of Interests.

58. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 5 February 2026

(Item 4)

RESOLVED: Members agreed that the minutes of the meeting which took place on 5th February 2026 were an accurate record and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

59. Winter of Action Initiative

(Item B1)

1. The Police and Crime and Commissioner, Mr Matthew Scott thanked the Panel for their expressions of sympathy and condolence for PC Bradley Corke, a brave and courageous officer who died on duty while attending an emergency call. Mr Scott also expressed his condolences to PC Corke's family and friends and wished a speedy recovery to PC Lewis who was also involved in the accident.

2. Mr Scott said that the government's Winter of Action Initiative (WoAI) built on the Safer Streets Summer Initiative (SSSI) that ran across England and Wales from 30 June until 30 September 2025.
3. It was a national initiative that ran in over 600 town centres and other areas from 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026, and was designed to sustain the momentum achieved over the summer while adapting to the specific winter pressures in town centres, such as festive events and increased footfall in retail areas and the night-time economy.
4. The high-level priorities for the WoAI were:
 - Tackling retail theft, abuse of retail workers and organised criminality, with a clear focus on prolific offenders and partnership with retailers.
 - Addressing street crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB) by maintaining visible patrols and using enforcement and preventative measures.
 - Promoting a safer night-time economy by tackling alcohol-related disorder, violent assaults and spiking.
5. In Kent, 31 town centres and retail areas were targeted for WoAI activity after being identified as most likely to experience a seasonal increase in footfall, and predicted increase in retail crime, street crime, ASB, and night-time economy offences.
6. The work around Project Vigilant which aimed to disrupt predatory behaviour in the night-time economy through both visible and covert resources was very important. Other crucial activities included those to counter spiking and regular checks of taxi licencing.
7. The Commissioner praised the work and contribution of the Special Constabulary, who he said had gone above and beyond in the line of duty to support local policing.
8. He also highlighted the invaluable county-wide engagement with, and contributions of, community safety partnerships and the British Transport Police.
9. The Commissioner said that, between the Safer Summer Streets and the Winter of Action initiatives, policing activity had continued and the Force was now preparing its resourcing plan for the summer months.
10. In answer to a question about the causes for the rise in shoplifting incidents, Mr Scott said that Pegasus - which was the national retail and police partnership - had been trying to understand it for some time. They believed that, in the majority of cases, it was drug related although there was a significant organised crime element too.

RESOLVED: that the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel **note** the report.

60. HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 – An Inspection of Kent Police
(Item B2)

1. The report was presented by the Police Crime and Commissioner, Mr Scott. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was the organisation responsible for independently assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services to make communities safer. The PEEL inspection programme was HMICFRS' regular assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales.
2. There were a number of changes to the PEEL inspection programme from PEEL 2023-25. These included:
 - a transition of the Victim Service Assessment to the Quality Service Review
 - the addition of the custody inspection programme
 - the inclusion of fraud inspection activity
3. The latest Kent PEEL inspection report was published on 9 April 2026 and the PCC informed the Panel Chair and Vice-Chair of its publication on the same day.
4. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is, and made graded judgements in eight areas of policing. There was no area of Kent Police's effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy that was graded 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.
5. The Commissioner expressed satisfaction at the force's 'good' grading in preventing and deterring crime as well as the quality of its leadership and force management, and was pleased to the way it had developed a diverse and inclusive workforce graded 'outstanding'.
6. However, the Police and Crime Commissioner also noted the inspection had identified eight Areas for Improvement (AFIs):
 - The need to record officers' rationales when using force and increase supervisory oversight
 - The expansion of independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force
 - The need to attend calls for service in line with internal targets
 - The consistent assignment of correct crime outcome types
 - Ensuring that officers take appropriate action and work with multi-agency partners to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people

- Having a consistent approach to the identification and response to locating and safeguarding missing people
- The need for effective governance for all fraud offences
- Ensure sufficient capacity to effectively review and support fraud investigation.

7. The PCC believed the overall assessment of Kent Police was positive, as it showed the progress that had been made over the past two years. Neighbourhood policing, which the Panel had supported, was providing communities with a visible and accessible presence, and the contact centre was now one of the best performing in the country. The force also had strong governance, and effectively supported its workforce. He said for the first time in three PEEL inspections, Kent had not received a grading of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.

8. However, he also acknowledged there were still areas that required improvement and that he would monitor and scrutinise them through established accountability mechanisms, including the quarterly Performance & Delivery Board, which was open to Panel Members and the public.

9. In answer to a question, Mr Scott said that the Strategic Prevention Command was working to improve partnership working with local authorities and other organisations, including for example the NHS to ensure mental health related incidents were dealt with appropriately.

10. The Panel's Vice-Chair asked whether the Commissioner could provide a verbal update at the meeting in July on the plan to address and improve the 'Responding to the public' area which was judged 'Adequate'?

a. The Commissioner confirmed that he would provide a verbal update.

RESOLVED: that the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel **note** this report and **agree** to a further update at their December 2026 meeting.

61. Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel (Item C1)

1. The report, which was presented by the Panel Officer, Mr G Romagnuolo, summarised the Panel's activity over the previous year. The report focused on the meetings' substantive items, Questions to the Commissioner, oversight of complaints against the PCC and the Panel's budget.

2. The Panel unanimously approved the report.

RESOLVED: that the Panel **approve** the draft Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2025/26.

62. Work Programme

(Item C2)

RESOLVED: to **note** the Work Programme and **contact** the Panel Officer with any items they would like to add to it.

63. Notes of the Performance & Delivery Board meeting held on 26 November 2025

(Item D1)