

## AGENDA

### KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Dear Panel Member

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the **KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** will be held in the **Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone** on **Thursday, 23rd April, 2026, at 10.00 am** when the following business will be transacted

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Gaetano Romagnuolo on 03000 416624

#### Membership

Councillor Peter Feacey	Ashford Borough Council
Councillor Connie Nolan	Canterbury City Council
Councillor Richard Wells	Dartford Borough Council
Councillor Lynne Wright	Dover District Council
Councillor Mike Blakemore	Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Councillor Deborah Croxton	Gravesham Borough Council
Mr Paul Webb	Kent County Council
Councillor Stuart Jeffery	Maidstone Borough Council
Councillor Eddie Peake	Medway Council
Councillor Perry Cole	Sevenoaks District Council
Councillor Hannah Perkin	Swale Borough Council
Vacancy	Thanet District Council
Councillor Des Keers	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Councillor Astra Birch	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Councillor Teresa Murray	Co-opted member – Medway Council
Mrs Sarah Hudson	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mr John Moreland	Co-opted member – Liberal Democrat Group
Mr Maxwell Harrison	Co-opted member – Reform UK Group
Ms Heddie de Jong	Independent Member
Mr Gurvinder Sandher	Independent Member

## **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

- 1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- 4 Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 5 February 2026 (Pages 1 - 6)

### **B - Commissioner's reports requested by the Panel/offered by the Commissioner**

- B1 Winter of Action Initiative (Pages 7 - 12)
- B2 HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 – An Inspection of Kent Police (Pages 13 - 16)

### **C - Panel Matters**

- C1 Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel (Pages 17 - 22)
- C2 Work Programme (Pages 23 - 24)

### **D - For Information**

- D1 Notes of the Performance & Delivery Board meeting held on 26 November 2025 (Pages 25 - 30)

## **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

**Wednesday, 15 April 2026**

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**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, 5 February 2026.

PRESENT: Mr G Sandher MBE (Chair), Mr J Moreland (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Blakemore, Cllr P Cole, Cllr D Croxton, Mrs H de Jong, Cllr P Feacey, Mrs S Hudson, Cllr S Jeffery, Cllr D Keers, Cllr C Nolan, Mr P Webb and Cllr R Wells.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr D Paul (PCC's Chief Executive ), Mr R Phillips (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC) and Mr N Wickens (Head of Policy Coordination & Research, OPCC).

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

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**31. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item A2)*

1. Apologies were received from Cllr A Birch, Mr M Harrison, Cllr T Murray, Cllr E Peake and Cllr H Perkin.
2. As this was the first public meeting for new Independent Member Mrs H de Jong, the Chairman welcomed Mrs de Jong to the Panel.

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

*(Item A3)*

1. Councillor Feacey confirmed that he was the Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre and Trustee and Chairman of the Repton Connect Community Centre.

**33. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 16 December 2025**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED Members agreed that the minutes of the meeting which took place on the 16 December 2025 were an accurate record and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

**34. Draft Refreshed Police & Crime Plan and Precept Proposal 2026-27**

*(Item B1)*

1. The report was presented by the Police Crime and Commissioner, Mr Matthew Scott.

2. Mr Scott said that the Plan was less than a year old and that there were no significant changes in the refreshed version. He discussed the data from his Annual Policing Survey which indicated that over 90% of respondents supported each of the four pillars of the Plan. A substantial number of the respondents were also in the under 18 category as a significant amount of work had been put into liaising with local schools who now shared the survey with pupils.
3. The Rural Policing Team had also conducted their Rural Crime Survey and received over 800 responses. The survey showed that issues around antisocial behaviour were particularly important to rural communities; the key issues reported were fly tipping, nuisance vehicles and property theft.
4. Mr Scott said a further 65 officers had been deployed within Neighbourhood Policing in 2025-26 in order to improve visible policing within Kent's town centres.
5. There was a slight reduction in the number of people who had experienced antisocial behaviour, although there was still a significant number who were not willing to report it.
6. He explained that his Plan remained focused on delivering his manifesto commitments to cut crime, support victims and build trust. The priorities centred around four key areas:
  - Protecting People
  - Protecting Places
  - Protecting Property
  - Productive Partnerships.
7. As outlined in his Plan, 'Protecting People' centred on tackling violence against women and girls, serious violence and gangs, providing support to victims of crime and building trust through integrity.
8. 'Protecting Places' focused on making communities safer - including town centres and rural communities, and promoting public contact with the police.
9. 'Protecting Property' acknowledged that retail crime and burglary remained key issues, although the number of burglaries in the county had decreased substantially over the last few years.
10. In terms of 'Productive Partnerships', the Criminal Justice Board, which the Commissioner chaired, would focus on reducing the courts' backlog and improving victims' experience of the Criminal Justice System.

11. In response to a question, Mr Scott explained that he promoted regular campaigns to encourage people to report crime. His Retail Crime Board engaged directly with retailers and the police in order to afford retailers an opportunity to provide feedback on policing in the county and discuss opportunities for collaborative working.
12. There were also campaigns around reporting via 101, the non-emergency police contact number in the UK, used to report crimes or issues that did not require an immediate police response. Kent Police now had one of the top performing force control rooms in the country because of the investment and effort that had gone into it.
13. In reply to a question about the funding formula, the Commissioner said that there was finally going to be a review which was planned to take place after the proposed creation of a new National Police Service and merger of police forces.
14. With regard to the Policing Precept proposal for 2026-27, Mr Scott said that the Government had not yet finalised the detail of all relevant funding streams and that some of the detail was still not clear. Nonetheless, he was confident in the accuracy of the figures that had been provided to the Panel.
15. The Commissioner said he was proposing an increase in the precept of £15 a year, or 5.6% for a Band D property alongside a savings requirement of £2.9m. This was the maximum precept allowed under the referendum principles.
16. In response to a question about the increase, Mr Scott explained that his decision had not been taken lightly. While he was determined to make policing in Kent more efficient and effective, the increase was essential in order to mitigate the Force's increasing funding pressures. While the Core Police Grant from the Government had increased, 80% of the budget was expenditure on employees and it did not include any funding for pay awards. Overall budget pressures in 2026-27 amounted to £30m.
17. A Member asked about the annual pay increase in the budgeted figures.
  - a. Mr Scott explained that police officers receive an increment every year for the first seven years of their service. As many Kent police officers had less than five years' service, that represented a substantial budget pressure that had to be factored into the medium-term plan, hence some of the bigger challenges around savings. On promotion there was a three year increment programme as well which needed to be taken into account.

RESOLVED:

- That the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel support the refreshed version of the Commissioner's Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029.
- No member of the Panel voted to veto the Commissioner's proposal to increase the police precept for 2026-27 by £15 per year, or 5.6% for a Band D property, equivalent to £1.25 a month, or 4.1p per day.
- That the Panel Officer draft a report for the Chair's approval that will be sent to the PCC.

### **35. Questions to the Commissioner**

*(Item C1)*

1. *The Home Secretary has promised faster response times by setting new targets for 999 calls, together with greater accountability. Can Kent Police meet, or continue to meet, these and other targets without increased funding?*

**Cllr Mike Blakemore**, Folkestone and Hythe District Council

- a. In response to this question the Commissioner said that the targets which the Home Secretary had advised she was going to bring in would be 15 minutes for an immediate incident in an urban area and 20 minutes in a rural area.
  - b. Mr Scott provided assurance that Kent was under the 20 minutes across both urban and rural areas at the moment, although there was still room for improvement and the force was looking at how it could respond even quicker.
2. *We have been advised that the additional income from raising the precept would be used primarily to meet the running costs of the force, rather than being linked to specific arising local needs or improvements. Given this, how does the PCC justify proposing the maximum allowable precept increase, and what assurance can be provided that future budgets will be planned in a way that enables the force to be run sustainably without regularly requiring additional contributions from the community?*

**Mrs Heddie de Jong**, Independent Member

- a. In reply to this question, Mr Scott said that one of the key challenges around police funding since he had been in his post as Commissioner was that there had been an increasing expectation that the gap in national funding would be filled by local taxation. There were cost pressures in the region of £30 million which meant losing police officers and staff if the funding gap was not addressed.
- b. He said that he had been lobbying central government to change the way policing was funded because he believed that the shift in burden from central to local level was neither fair nor right.

RESOLVED: to note the responses to the questions.

### **36. Work Programme**

*(Item D1)*

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

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**To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel**

**Subject: Winter of Action Initiative**

**Date: 23 April 2026**

**Introduction:**

1. 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. As members may recall, a paper summarising the SSSI and specifically Kent Polices' activity was presented at the 14 October 2025 Panel meeting.
2. The WoAI ran in over 600 town centres and related areas across England and Wales from 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026. It was designed to sustain the momentum that was achieved over the summer while adapting to seasonal pressures in town centres - busier retail activity, festive events, increased socialising, and heightened risks of shop theft, crime and disorder as part of the nighttime economy, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) – guided by local intelligence and partnership insight.
3. The high-level priorities for the WoAI were:
  - Retail crime: Tackling theft, abuse of retail workers and organised criminality, with a clear focus on prolific offenders and partnership with retailers.
  - Street crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB): Maintaining visible patrols and public confidence, using enforcement and prevention to address persistent issues.
  - Night-time economy safety: for example, tackling alcohol related disorder, violent assault, spiking, and VAWG.Within these, the approach could be tailored to address the most pressing local issues, based on evidence and consultation.
4. The initiative encompassed a wide range of activities including that considered good practice in delivering crime reduction outcomes, such as high visibility patrolling and police enforcement. There was a focus on community engagement, including communication with the public and outreach in conjunction with local authorities and charities, as well as youth engagement through education and diversionary activity. There was also a focus on retail crime, including engagement with retailers and the targeting of prolific offenders.
5. The Initiative was a nationally coordinated, locally designed and delivered programme, led by Police and Crime Commissioners and Deputy Mayors. It was supported by the Home Office in partnership with Chief Constables and other essential local partners such as councils, schools, health services, business, transport and community organisations.
6. As with the SSSI initiative, no additional funding was provided for this activity, and the expectation was that it would form part of business as usual, building on existing local relationships and evidenced best practice.

**Kent Police activity:**

7. While the Home Office needed to understand where forces were targeting activity, the criteria for selecting geographical locations was wider than for the SSSI.
8. 31 town centres and retail areas were identified across Kent where it was anticipated a seasonal increase in footfall was likely to lead to local issues, including predicted increases in retail crime, street crime, ASB, and night-time economy offences. They were as follows:

North Division	West Division	East Division
Gravesend	Tunbridge Wells	Canterbury
Chatham	Maidstone	Riverside Retail Park
Chatham Dockside Outlet	South Aylesford Retail Park	Folkestone
Sittingbourne	Tonbridge	Ashford
High Street, Sheerness	Sevenoaks	Ashford Designer Outlet
High Street, Rochester		Dover
Temple Hill, Dartford		Ramsgate
Preston Street, Faversham		Dumpton Park Drive, Ramsgate
H/stead Valley Shopping Centre		Herne Bay
Bluewater Shopping Centre		High Street, Deal
High Street, Brompton		High Street, Hythe
		High Street, Whitstable
		High Street, Broadstairs
		High Street, Margate
		Northdown Road, Cliftonville

9. Attached as Appendix A is a paper prepared by Kent Police that summarises activity in support of the WoIA. This was presented and discussed at the PCC's [Performance and Delivery Board](#) on 25 February 2026.

**Recommendation:**

10. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report.

Chief Constable's Report  
to  
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board

**WINTER OF ACTION INITIATIVE**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

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Introduction

A nationwide crackdown on crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) this winter was launched as police, councils and businesses united to protect shoppers, retail workers, and Christmas revellers. To keep communities safe over the busy Christmas period, police used hotspot patrols, quick visible enforcement, and locally tailored approaches, working closely with businesses and community groups to clamp down on shop theft and street crime across hundreds of town centres. The Winter of Action builds on the Safer Streets Summer initiative, which took place in almost 650 town centres and resulted in over 16,000 arrests and fines nationally, mostly for shop theft and ASB.

This report will focus on the winter action by Kent Police and will detail how the Force delivered sustained enforcement, strengthened partnerships and generated significant reductions in harm across the county, focussing on ASB, serious violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG), retail crime and public safety.

Tackling ASB and Serious Violence

Kent Police intensified hotspot policing, focusing resources on hotspot areas with higher levels of violence, knife crime and ASB. Officers conducted thousands of proactive patrol hours, ensuring a visible presence across town centres and transport hubs. The Force has seen a reduction in both serious violence and knife crime, with a 6.2% fall in volume of offences and a 9.0% decrease in associated harm between the rolling years of December 2024 and 2025. This reduction has also been noted within all hotspot areas which have the greatest concentrations of high harm relating to serious violence and knife crime, with a 5.5% reduction in volume and 1.4% in harm for these crime types. Some examples of this include:

- Dover street drinking intervention enabled 35 entrenched individuals to be identified, offered support and where necessary dealt with by enforcement measures including 22 preventative orders. Key premises linked to ASB were closed, reducing persistent issues and most of the identified offenders are fully engaging with support services.
- Across Tonbridge, nuisance vehicle ASB has been a persistent priority. This has been effectively addressed through joint enforcement activity under the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). The combined efforts of police and the council have enabled robust action against those identified at vehicle 'meets'. As part of this activity, 56 Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and 27 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued by the council, with a further nine FPNs issued over just two days in January, alongside vehicle seizures and the issuing of Section 59 notices. Positive press releases have been issued to reassure the public about the proactive joint enforcement taking place.
- Gillingham hotspot patrols delivered 561 hours of targeted patrols supported by knife arch deployments, traffic enforcement, and proactive licensing checks, helping to suppress violence, disrupt offending patterns, and increase public reassurance in a challenging hotspot area.
- In Ashford, risk offenders received CPW, CPN, and acceptable behaviour agreements (ABA) notices. The Shop Safe programme was relaunched successfully and the updated PSPO addressed issues with e-scooters and catapults.
- Significant Special Constabulary contribution, seizing 25 vehicles and issuing more than 60 traffic offence reports (TORs), showing a strong and sustained enforcement presence. Over a single weekend in mid-January, they added a further five vehicle seizures and 10 TORs, reinforcing their crucial role in maintaining pressure on persistent offenders.

- Major multi-agency operations including:
  - Operation Ratchet (Canterbury/Whitstable): 18 stop searches, six drug arrests, weapons and vehicles seizures, POCA cash seizure and stabilisation of drug-related harm.
  - Operation Sunbeam (Canterbury): 30 stop searches, 10 crime reports, and a reduction in violence against the person.
- High impact North Kent operations led to arrests, the seizure of two off-road bikes, including a high value £4,000 vehicle, alongside the submission of multiple intelligence reports and multiple drug and weapon recoveries. A drone-supported intervention also enabled officers to arrest a high risk PWITS suspect, recover 26 bags of cannabis, and seize eight illegal e-bikes and e-scooters, demonstrating fast time disruption and strong investigative impact.
- Intelligence, early intervention and education enabled the Community Safety Unit (CSU) and the Road Safety Unit to prevent a mass nuisance vehicle gathering at Cyclopark, ensuring a peaceful outcome for residents.

### Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

VAWG remains a core operational priority. Kent Police strengthened its safeguarding footprint through a combination of proactive patrols, targeted enforcement, community education and environmental crime prevention measures. Some examples are detailed below:

- Project Vigilant and Op Pilot deployments disrupted predatory behaviour through covert and uniform deployments in the night-time economy.
- Op Outlet in response to concerns delivered 360 patrol hours, 16 stop-searches, and 10 arrests.
- Spiking-prevention and taxi-licensing checks were conducted extensively during the Christmas and New Year NTE period as part of Op Shanty. For example, in Folkestone, patrols checked 38 taxis across five taxi ranks, delivered safeguarding awareness information, reinforced spiking awareness and VAWG prevention advice. Five licensing breaches were identified and dealt with robustly.
- Op Makesafe visits were conducted in 10 hotels to ensure safeguarding compliance and additional training provided where necessary.
- Ask for Angela messaging was reinforced across licensed venues. For example, in West Division officers visited 17 premises in Sevenoaks, Edenbridge, Swanley and New Ash Green. All venues demonstrated a foundational understanding of the initiative, with around six requiring further engagement and additional signage.
- Over 1,000 young people across Thanet received VAWG education and the White Ribbon Ambassador Scheme is expanding to 39 schools countywide.
- Walk & Talk engagement events across the county yielded real-time safeguarding interventions, including arrest of a knife suspect linked to an aggravated burglary.
- Dover CSU, acting on feedback from VAWG Walk and Talk surveys, designed, delivered and supported events including inspirational confidence-building talks and practical self-defence sessions, working alongside the NHS and local partners. These activities empowered participants, increased awareness of safety resources and reinforced strong community partnerships.
- Environmental improvements included improved lighting, CCTV repositioning and community safety pods.

### Community Engagement and Partnership Work

Partnerships amplified Winter of Action impact. Joint work with councils, transport operators, retailers, volunteers and local safety groups enabled stronger interventions. Some examples are detailed below:

- The Maidstone CCTV trailer initiative successfully strengthened partnership working between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Police, enhancing public safety and tackling ASB and VAWG in high-risk areas providing visible reassurance and improved safety during the busy Christmas period.
- Rochester Christmas Markets and Dickens Festival: 230,000 visitors supported by over 1,000 policing hours with only two arrests.
- Joint deployments with British Transport Police increased visibility and disrupted travelling criminality.
- Youth diversion activity included gaming buses, school inputs and community events tackling knives, e-scooters and catapults.

- Joint work between council and Medway CSU improved CCTV coverage across Gillingham with seven new cameras and repairs to existing infrastructure. The ongoing collaboration with beat officers is enhancing system reliability and resulted in enhanced local investigative capacity and public reassurance.
- Joint operational work included Op Leoside (food delivery driver offences), all-out days in Margate and Ramsgate hotspot zones leading to arrests, TORs and vehicle seizures.

### Retail and Business Crime

Kent Police maintained a determined focus on tackling persistent offenders, protecting frontline retail workers, and supporting local businesses. Some examples are detailed below:

- Weekly joint patrols with One Maidstone Street Ambassadors and Maidstone Borough Council staff disrupted active shoplifters during Christmas period. Banning orders have also been used regularly by the Business Improvement District (BID) to reduce offending. Beat officers issued 35 Community Resolutions, conducted 135 stop-and-searches, and submitted 257 intelligence reports in the town centre during the Winter of Action period.
- Solved shoplifting increased 7.5% in Sevenoaks and Swanley with proactive engagement and DAMS sign-ups as well as banning notices for repeat offenders.
- Maidstone saw a 24% reduction in retail crime in December supported by joint patrols, proactive engagement with retailers and targeted enforcement.
- Selecta DNA has been successfully rolled out, providing a powerful boost in tackling persistent shoplifting and ASB. Retail partners in Swale, Chatham, Canterbury and Maidstone have been equipped with forensic marking sprays and product-marking kits, supported by officers using UV torches and enhanced evidence-gathering tools. With clear messaging in shops and custody suites, the initiative is helping target repeat offenders and deliver visible reassurance to businesses and the public.
- Operation Odin addressed shoplifting in Canterbury and Whitstable, leading to arrests and charges for prolific offenders and increased scrutiny of repeat offenders through monthly Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) meetings.
- In Dover visible police uplift tackled business crime, resulting in 11 shoplifting arrests (covering 26 offences), 2 robbery arrests and increased reporting due to improved CCTV and encouragement of retailers.
- In Ashford town centre, 51 stop searches and multiple arrests including the detention of a persistent thief were carried out during this period.

### Summary

The Winter of Action delivered measurable, sustained and widely felt results across Kent. Through high-visibility patrols, decisive enforcement, targeted safeguarding and strong partnership working, Kent Police reduced harm, protected vulnerable people and strengthened confidence across communities.

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**To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel**  
**Subject: HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 – An inspection of Kent Police**  
**Date: 23 April 2026**

**Introduction:**

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not use data in isolation to assess performance and progress. Instead, he also considers other sources of information including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. HMICFRS is the body responsible for independently assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services to make communities safer. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence. Its recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.
4. This paper provides an overview of Kent Police's HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 Inspection, and also outlines how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account.

**Background:**

5. The PEEL inspection programme is HMICFRS' regular assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales.
6. Kent Police was last inspected as part of the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme; the report was published on 17 November 2023.
7. By making better use of the breadth of HMICFRS inspection evidence and enabling a broader and more comprehensive understanding of force performance, the continuous assessment model used in the previous cycle of PEEL inspections has continued to be used in the 2025-27 cycle.
8. The PEEL programme is reviewed at the end of each cycle to consider changes in the policing landscape and findings from other inspections. Lessons learnt from the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme have therefore informed HMICFRS' development of the 2025-27 methodology.
9. Changes from the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme are:

Transition of the Victim Service Assessment to the Quality Service Review

HMICFRS no longer conducts a separate crime data integrity audit. Instead it dip samples crime recording and reports on the findings in the relevant question areas. It has also expanded its audit to cover fraud, safeguarding and the effectiveness of problem solving.

As part of this, the name of the Victim Service Assessment process has been changed to the Quality Service Review, to reflect the alteration in the scope of the activity being completed. Read the [Quality Service Review](#) methodology.

### Addition of custody inspection programme

HMICFRS' rolling custody inspection programme has become part of the PEEL programme. The methodology has been reviewed and also updated to align with the PEEL methodology. This will increase the frequency of custody inspections from every six years to every four years as they will be carried out every other PEEL cycle. Police forces will be awarded a graded judgment for custody.

### Addition of fraud inspection activity

As part of the assessment framework, HMICFRS has introduced the inspection of police forces' response to fraud. All forces will be inspected for their response to fraud and awarded a graded judgment.

### Managing suspects and offenders no longer included as a core question

HMICFRS is not inspecting management of suspects and offenders. Instead it will report separately in a national spotlight report as inspection findings suggest nationally directed change is required to make the necessary improvements.

10. HMICFRS sets core questions for each assessment and these form the PEEL assessment framework (PAF). However, the content, structure and focus of the questions does not remain the same for each cycle, and for 2025-27 they are as follows:

- How good is the force at leadership and force management?
- How good is the force at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace?
- How good is the force at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification?
- How good is the force at preventing and deterring crime, antisocial behaviour and vulnerability?
- How good is the force at responding to the public?
- How good is the force at investigating crime?
- How good is the force at safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm?
- How good is the force at managing fraud?
- How good is the force at providing a safe and lawful custody environment?

11. HMICFRS gathers evidence about each force so that it can answer the core questions. Police forces are subsequently graded 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Adequate', 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate' for each core question (unless stated otherwise).

12. The [full PAF for 2025-27](#) sets out what is required for a force to receive a 'good' grade in each of the core questions.

13. It is important to note that because of an increased focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes, changes to the aspects of policing inspected and the addition of new areas, HMICFRS state:

*'It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections.'*

### **PEEL 2025-27 – An inspection of Kent Police:**

14. On 9 April 2026, HMICFRS published Kent's inspection report – the [full report](#) can be viewed on their website. The PCC informed the Panel Chair and Vice-Chair of its publication the same day, with Members notified on 10 April.

15. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is, and made graded judgements in eight areas of policing.

16. The findings follow 12 months of evidence gathering including document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and reviews of investigations, and subsequent outcomes. The report does not take account of any developments or action carried out since the evidence gathering period.

17. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Leadership and force management	Police powers and public treatment		
	Preventing and deterring crime	Responding to the public		
		Investigating crime		
		Safeguarding children and adults		
		Managing fraud		

Grade definition				
The force has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance	The force has demonstrated substantially all the characteristics of good performance	The force has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but HMICFRS has identified areas where the force should make improvements	The force has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance and HMICFRS has identified a substantial number of areas where it needs to make improvements	HMICFRS has causes for concern and have made recommendations to the force to address them

18. As Member’s will note, there is not a single area of Kent Police’s effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy that was graded ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’.
19. It is pleasing to see HMICFRS graded the force ‘good’ at preventing and deterring crime, while its leadership and management was also recognised as ‘good’. In addition, as an organisation which recognises its officers and staff are its greatest asset, it is rewarding to see the way it has developed a diverse and inclusive workforce was graded ‘outstanding’.
20. The public of Kent should also be assured that officers’ use of police powers, the way they treat and respond to the public, how the force investigates crime, safeguards the most vulnerable and manages fraud investigations were all deemed ‘adequate’.
21. Particularly pleasing to see recognised was:
- the ability of neighbourhood policing teams to identify community problems and develop effective plans to tackle crime and reduce antisocial behaviour;
  - the work to prevent knife crime among young people which has been shared nationally as good practice; and
  - the force’s diversionary learning interventions for children involved in low level criminality, which focus on understanding the law, the impact on victims and making better choices for the future.
22. Kent Police’s forward thinking approach to volunteers and special constables was also praised, with HMICFRS acknowledging how training, support and development opportunities have helped build one of the largest and most engaged special constabularies in the country. The force has over 800 volunteers and specials who are supported in roles that match their skills and aspirations, with accredited training aligned to regular officer standards. This not only boosts morale and retention, but also strengthens operational capability, improves engagement with hard-to-reach communities and delivers value for money.

23. Despite the positive assessment and HMICFRS identifying a number of areas of innovative practice, the force also received eight Areas for Improvement (AFIs) as below:
- The force needs to record officers' rationales when using force and increase supervisory oversight.
  - The force should expand its independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force.
  - The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its internal targets.<sup>1</sup>
  - The force should make sure that it consistently assigns the correct crime outcome type.
  - The force needs to make sure that officers take appropriate action and work with multi-agency partners to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people.
  - The force needs to have a consistent approach to its identification and response to locating and safeguarding missing people.
  - To fully understand how fraud affects its communities and the response needed, the force needs effective governance for all fraud offences.
  - The force should make sure it has the capacity to effectively review and support fraud investigation.
24. The force is therefore not complacent and is now focused on the areas where it can improve. Officers and staff at every level are committed to providing the best service possible to the communities of Kent.

### **Holding to account:**

25. The PCC considers the overall assessment of Kent Police as positive, evidencing the progress that has been made over the past couple of years. As reflected in the commentary and gradings, the force has, and continues to improve the service that it delivers to residents and businesses across the county.
26. The investment in neighbourhood policing, which the Panel has supported, is paying dividends with more neighbourhood officers than ever providing communities with a visible and accessible presence, and the contact centre is now one of the best performing in the country. The force also has strong governance, supports and develops its workforce to an outstanding level, is making greater use of preventative orders, and has increased positive outcomes for victims of crime.
27. However, the PCC also acknowledges that in order to make the service better for the public there are still some areas for improvement. Whilst the force has already started to address these, the PCC will monitor progress through established accountability mechanisms, including the quarterly Performance & Delivery Board.
28. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust](#) Police and Crime Plan, as well as policing generally in the county.
29. The 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity and will regularly include updates on progress against the AFIs.
30. Progress updates will also be reported at the [Joint Audit Committee](#) and the PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular one-to-one meetings and provision of bespoke briefings.
31. The PCC would like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service which they demonstrate every single day in trying to do their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime. He would also like to commend them for all that they are doing to cut crime, support victims and build trust.

### **Recommendation:**

32. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their December 2026 meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the inspection took place, the force has improved its response time to emergencies as the 26 February Performance & Delivery Board papers show.

By: Gaetano Romagnuolo – Panel Clerk  
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel, 23 April 2026  
Subject: Draft Panel Annual Report – 2025/26  
Classification: Unrestricted

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### **Summary:**

Preparation and publication of an Annual Report by the Panel is a legal requirement under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel is asked to consider and approve the content of the 2025/26 Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

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## **Draft Annual Report**

### **Introduction**

1. This report summarises the work of the Panel between February 2025 and February 2026. It follows annual reports that have been produced every year since the Panel was established in November 2012. The objective of the Panel is to scrutinise and support the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in Kent and Medway.
2. The Panel performs a ‘checks and balances’ role to monitor the performance of the Commissioner regarding his priorities for Kent Police. These are set out in his Police and Crime Plan ‘Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust’ (2025-29). The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties, in particular in the way he holds the Chief Constable of Kent Police to account.
3. The Panel consists of 18 elected members from local authorities across Kent and Medway and two additional co-opted independent members. The current membership of the Panel can be viewed here: [Membership of the Panel](#).

### **Meetings**

4. Between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026, the Panel met formally 5 times. [The meetings’ agendas and minutes](#) are available to view. In January 2026 the Panel also received one briefing from the Chief Constable which covered the Kent Police Pledge, the findings of the latest HMICFRS PEEL Inspection, the latest crime figure in Kent and the performance of Kent Police

against a number of indicators. In the same period, the Panel met informally with representatives of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to discuss the development of the 2026/27 Precept Proposal.

## **Panel's business**

5. The Panel met its statutory duty in February 2026 to consider, and make recommendations on, the Commissioner's refreshed 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' Police and Crime Plan (2025-29) as well as his proposed Budget and Precept. The Commissioner attended to present his proposal and answer questions from the Panel. The Panel supported the Plan and Precept Proposal.
6. The key points from the 2026/27 Budget and Precept Proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) were:
  - A proposed increase in the precept of £15 a year, or 5.6% for a Band D property, equivalent to £1.25 a month, or 4.1p per day.
  - A council tax for an average Band D property of £285.15.
  - An increase in Government funding of £12.9m.
  - Projected savings gap of £2.9m for 2026/27.
  - Cost pressures of £30m including, £16.4m for pay awards.
7. The Panel noted that the Kent PCC remained among the ten lowest PCC council tax preceptors in the country.
8. As required, the Panel reported on the Commissioner's Plan and Precept, and the Commissioner provided a written response – both reports are available here ([Published Reports and Recommendations](#)).
9. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2024/25, which it considered at its meeting on 14 October 2025.
10. Between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026, the Panel received a number of reports which covered topics including:
  - HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2023/25 – the Panel received a report on the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2023/25 and an update on Kent Police's progress in addressing the findings from the Inspection. The Commissioner continued to hold the Chief Constable to account for performance. The Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board continued to focus on identified areas for improvement.

- Contacting Kent Police - this paper provided an update on Kent Police's performance in managing public demand within the Force Control Room (FCR).
- Safer Streets Summer Initiative – this was a government initiative aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in town centres across England and Wales. It ran from 30 June until 30 September 2025 and involved over 500 town centres and high streets. The initiative focused on visibility, prevention, and enforcement, aiming to reduce criminality, shop theft, street crime and ASB.
- Holding the Chief Constable to Account – the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Kent Police, including the priorities he has set in the Police and Crime Plan. This report provided a summary of the governance arrangements, and formal and informal mechanisms, that were put in place by the PCC to discharge his duties.
- Crime Prevention - this report outlined Kent Police's approach to crime prevention and highlighted some of the work the PCC supported in this area.
- Criminal Justice System update – this paper provided an update on the outstanding local court caseload, the reasons for it and the actions taken to tackle it.

11. "Questions to the Commissioner" continued to be a regular item at each meeting. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's willingness to answer questions which were submitted to him in advance. This agenda item continued to provide a greater opportunity for Panel members to discuss issues with the Commissioner that did not form part of his formal reports. Topics included: measures to tackle anti-social behaviour, shoplifting, sexual offences, law enforcement and technological advances to tackle crime.

## **Complaints**

12. The Panel maintained oversight over formal complaints made against the Commissioner under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012. Between February 2025 and February 2026, no complaints had progressed to a Complaints Sub-Committee hearing. The annual report providing details on the number of complaints received against the Commissioner will be submitted to the Panel later in the year.

## Commissioner's decisions

13. The Commissioner published the following decisions during this period, which were considered and noted by the Panel:

- Decision OPCC.D.036.25 - Chief Constable Appointment: Retire and Rehire Scheme

## Panel terms of reference

14. The Panel's terms of reference require these to be reviewed annually. It is considered convenient to do this at the same time as the Panel reviews its work over the past year. Minor wording changes, clarifications or consequential amendments to address changes in law or external arrangements may be made from time to time by Officers, subject to review by the KCC Monitoring Officer. No significant changes to the terms of reference are proposed at this time for the Panel's consideration and approval. The full terms of reference can be found by following this [link](#).

## Panel budget

15. The Panel's terms of reference also require the Panel to review its budget on an annual basis. Finance for the Panel's work comes from an annual Home Office grant of £71,700. The expenditure incurred is predominantly on staff support to the Panel but also relates to subscriptions to relevant membership bodies and payment of co-optee members' allowances and expenses. The outturn for 2025-26 was £66,190 (compared to £46,700 in 2024-25 and £35,850 in 2023-24).

16. The main reason for the increase is that, in response to communications from the Home Office in the previous two financial years highlighting that Kent's claims were significantly below the grant funding available, KCC's Finance team conducted a review of administration costs in 2025/26. This resulted in an increase to Kent's staffing recharge against the grant, which more accurately reflected the true time and cost of KCC Officers in supporting the Panel and completing the necessary grant monitoring/returns.

17. While meeting all statutory obligations and undertaking appropriate work, the Panel has contained its costs well within the existing Home Office Grant, demonstrating that Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel continues to deliver good value for money.

## Conclusions

18. Panel Members remain focused on supporting and scrutinising Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to key policing and crime issues in local communities. The Panel reviews and agrees a future work programme at each meeting. This ensures transparency and the delivery of the Panel's function in a timely way.
19. Meetings of the Panel have continued to be webcast to promote public engagement. The Panel welcomes the positive approach taken by the Commissioner in responding to questions as well as the standing invitation to all Panel Members to attend the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meetings.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

To consider and approve the draft Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2025/26.

Contact:

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## Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

### Work Programme – 23 April 2026

**21 July 2026**

Election of Chair	Statutory Requirement	PCP
Election of Vice-Chair	Statutory Requirement	PCP
Caring for Victims	Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner	PCC

Standard item at each meeting

Questions to the Commissioner

Items to note at each meeting

Commissioner's Decisions

Performance and Delivery Board minutes (if available)

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# MEETING NOTES

Title: Performance & Delivery Board

Date and time: 26 November 2025 @ 10am

Venue: Clift Room, Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone

Attendees: **Office of the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner**

- Matthew Scott – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
- David Paul – Chief Executive (CE)
- Rob Phillips – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

**Kent Police**

- Tim Smith – Chief Constable (CC)
- Peter Ayling – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The PCC welcomed the CC and his team. He expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.</li></ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Notes of previous meeting – 16 September 2025</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record, and the following action updates noted:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provide an update on the findings from the Divisional Policing Review Post Implementation Review – update received out of meeting.</li><li>○ Provide update on Empowering Leaders and Reducing Bureaucracy project – update received out of meeting.</li><li>○ With regards to new offence of ‘Sharing or threatening to share intimate photograph or film’, provide further detail on volume involving victim and/or offender under 18 years of age – Between 01/10/202 and 30/09/2025 there were 348 recorded offences. Of those, 109 (31.3%) had one or more persons under the age of 18 recorded on the report.</li><li>○ Provide update on work to increase revenue from NDORS programme – update received out of meeting.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>3i.</b>	<b>Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust</b> <i>Police &amp; Crime Plan performance and delivery: July to September 2025</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For the purpose of this report, the data reflected the rolling year (RY) comparison October 2024 to September 2025 vs October 2023 to September 2024, and quarter (Qtr) comparison July to September 2025 vs July to September 24.</li></ul> <p><b>Protecting People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While noting a reduction in victim-based crime (VBC) for the RY and Qtr, the CC highlighted increases in business robbery and rape offences. He further reported that the VBC solved rate had improved - 1.5% for the RY and 1.8% for the Qtr - supported by greater use of Community Resolutions.</li><li>• The CC reported a reduction in violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse (DA) incidents, alongside an improved solved rate.</li><li>• The CC advised that rape and serious sexual offences had increased for the RY. However, noting a reduction in serious sexual offences for the Qtr, he advised the Force Performance Committee had reviewed and found no particular concerns.</li><li>• Highlighting reduced levels of DA for the RY and Qtr, the CC also noted a small decrease in victim satisfaction rates (RY) but advised it was being closely monitored.</li><li>• Referencing the increase in knife crime for the Qtr, the CC advised the number of offences in July was high. He explained analysis had found no standout reason but noted contributing factors likely included the weather and a seasonal increase in outside activities.</li></ul>

- The PCC asked about action being taken to address the increase in rape offences. Noting that levels remained below that of 2022/23 and a recent increase in adult rapes associated with DA, the CC also observed that the victim satisfaction rate suggested a growing confidence in reporting. He emphasised the Force's commitment to tackling offending, highlighting that resourcing challenges had been resolved and ongoing training for frontline officers would continue to ensure an effective first response.
- The PCC asked how the Force was performing against the Op Soteria criteria. The CC stated it was performing well, advising 119 of the 138 recommendations had been implemented to date, including enhancing the skills of RASSO investigation teams, delivering the sexual offence training package and adopting detective pathways. He added that a continual professional development programme was in place for Sergeants and Detective Inspectors responsible for reviewing and supervising investigations.
- The PCC asked about the impact of the Divisional Policing Review Investigations Module on the solved rate for RASSO. Reporting a 7% solved rate for the RY, the CC reaffirmed that resourcing challenges had been addressed and referenced the previously mentioned training for frontline officers. Acknowledging the solved rate had decreased compared to last year, he noted it was still above the previous two years and reinforced his commitment to ensuring the Force had the best investigative response.
- With regards to the rape victim survey, the PCC asked for detail on the level of participation. Paying tribute to their bravery, the CC advised that 260-270 survivors were surveyed each year. For the RY, he reported that 94.5% felt they had been treated with dignity and respect. Noting this was a 2.7% reduction on the previous RY and a reduction for the Qtr, the CC reaffirmed the Force's dedication to ensuring all victims felt respected. He also provided the following breakdown:
  - October 2023 - September 2024: 237 individuals felt they were treated with dignity and respect, 7 did not and 0 responded that it was partially correct.
  - October 2024 - September 2025: 256 individuals felt they were treated with dignity and respect, 4 did not and 11 responded that it was partially correct.

### **Protecting Places**

- The CC highlighted the Force Control Room's sustained strong performance, particularly in reducing 101-call attrition and managing increasing volumes of digital contact.
- Referencing increases in ASB for the RY (9.3%) and Qtr (24.8%), the CC explained this was in part due to changes in recording practices and represented a truer picture. He advised the increase and the Force's response was being monitored through the Force Performance Committee.
- Acknowledging the data on rural crime was limited, the CC proposed a contextual update suggesting it would be more beneficial. The PCC agreed and requested that the Force and OPCC explore outside the meeting.
- The CC reported a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads in the RY. Noting an increase for the Qtr, he explained the data was continuously monitored and highlighted a high volume in August.
- The CC advised of a seasonal focus on drink and drug driving in the lead up to the Christmas period.
- The PCC requested an update on delivery against the five Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee measures. The CC confirmed:
  - Every Neighbourhood had named officers that were searchable and contactable via the Kent Police website.
  - Every Neighbourhood had three policing priorities also searchable via the Kent Police website.
  - Kent Police's dedicated lead for ASB was Supt Rob Marsh.
  - Every district had a system to respond to neighbourhood queries within 72 hours.
  - Roll out of the College of Policing's Neighbourhood Policing Pathway was actively underway.
- Referencing the impact of changes in recording practices on ASB, the PCC requested more detail. Noting that prior to 27 October reports from Single Online Home were not correctly integrated into Force statistics, the CC advised the impact was across all ASB categories. As a result, he reported that July 2025 saw a 31% increase but emphasised the issue had been resolved and importantly there were no service failures.
- The PCC asked what steps were being taken to tackle the illegal use of e-scooters. Summarising countywide activity, the CC highlighted Medway where 120 section 59 notices had been issued and a dedicated day of action in Ashford. Overall, he reported the Vehicle Recovery Team had seized 414 e-scooters in the RY and confirmed enforcement activity was ongoing.

### **Protecting Property**

- The CC reported a reduction in residential burglary for both the RY and Qtr, noting the positive impact of Ring doorbells on home safety. Acknowledging the decreased solved rate, he advised it was a priority for the Force Performance Committee.

- Reporting an increase in shoplifting in the RY and Qtr, the CC noted that it reflected national trends. Despite the increase, he advised of a robust police response and highlighted the solved rate which had increased by 2.5% for the RY and 2.3% for the Qtr.
- The CC reported a substantial increase in business robbery, highlighting a recent change to the Home Office Counting Rules.
- The CC reported reduced levels of vehicle crime alongside an increased solved rate, and a reduction in personal robbery offences.
- The PCC asked if the Force understood the reasons for the decrease in residential burglary solved rate. The CC advised changes to workforce structure and the nature of criminality were contributing factors but emphasised the Force's continued robust response and use of the National Intelligence Model to tackle crime series.
- The PCC asked about Force support for Safer Business Action Week. Confirming all districts were involved, the CC noted activity focused on areas with high crime, high footfall and nighttime economies. Over the course of the week, he reported there were 94 arrests, 90 positive disposals and officers provided ~55 days of dedicated patrol hours.

### **Productive Partnerships**

- The CC reported a 27% increase in Section.136 detentions for the Qtr, and a 3.4% increase in the RY. He also advised of an increase in concern for welfare incidents for the Qtr
- Reporting a reduction in missing persons/absconders from care settings, the CC highlighted extensive ongoing work with health partners to ensure incidents were correctly resourced in line with Right Care Right Person (RCRP).
- Amid heightened national focus on RCRP, the PCC sought assurance that the principles and guidance were being applied correctly. The CC expressed his confidence in the Force's approach, explaining they were acting cautiously to avoid gaps in service and to ensure appropriate partner engagement. Noting this may increase the volume of incidents responded to, he emphasised that safeguarding vulnerable people was the priority ahead of reducing demand in the longer term. Recent compliance checks had found 85% of staff met the required knowledge standards, with work ongoing to achieve full compliance.
- The PCC asked about the impact of the government's early prisoner release scheme and cases of prisoners being released by mistake. With regards to the former, the CC advised there was a good working relationship with Probation, but the start of the scheme saw a surge in demand which senior leaders and MOSOVO teams managed effectively in terms of meeting statutory obligations. Whilst it had stretched resources, the CC emphasised Kent Police were managing the current demand, although additional resources would be required should the scheme continue long term. Noting nationally there were reports of prisoners being released by mistake, the CC said he understood the rationale for the scheme [early prisoner release], but it was probably contributing to mistakes being made which was creating additional demand for some police forces.

#### **Action**

- Explore development of contextual update on rural crime outside of meeting.

### **3ii. Prevention**

- Emphasising that prevention was fundamental to delivering the priorities within the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, the CC said it underpinned everything the Force did and noted almost every operational team undertook activity that in some way reduced and/or prevented crime and ASB.
- The CC highlighted the Strategic Prevention Command's role in embedding preventative practice and noted progress was monitored through a range of mechanisms. He also highlighted the work of Community Safety Units (CSUs) which was almost exclusively aimed at combating repeat crime and ASB problems.
- Referring to the OSARA problem-solving model, the CC explained that it identified issues through intelligence and data, analysed root causes and developed targeted responses that were evaluated for impact. He noted efforts to further embed the approach, allowing CSUs to share effective strategies across the Force.
- The CC reported a significant increase in the use of Prevention Orders and Protection Notices with officers growing in confidence to use them and highlighted the extensive prevention-focused training given to officers.
- Noting positive feedback from businesses and the public regarding Op Pilot, the CC explained it was designed to tackle drug possession and use within the nighttime economy.
- In terms of responding to heightened seasonal ASB in coastal areas, the CC highlighted that 34 dispersal orders were issued and numerous Community Protection Notices and Warnings. He advised the focus had now shifted to preventing any recurrence next summer, while ensuring resources aligned to areas of greatest demand.

- The CC highlighted partnership working to address street drinking and rough sleeping and thanked the PCC for supporting initiatives through his commissioning powers.
- Reporting on the use of Youth Intervention Workbooks, the CC advised early feedback indicated they were highly effective in diverting young people away from crime. He noted that the Pol-Ed system, the Reframe drug intervention, and the Youth Justice's deferred outcome scheme all formed part of the Force's wider approach to preventing repeat offending and ASB.
- The CC referred to a case study which successfully used the Buddi Tag system to monitor a young person's behaviour and address problematic lifestyle factors.
- Summarising the 'Clock it, Check it, Change it' initiative, the CC noted it equipped young people with the tools to identify and challenge harmful behaviour.
- The CC advised that the Force's Designing Out Crime Officers played a crucial role in crime prevention by collaborating with local authorities, architects and developers to create safer environments.
- The CC reported effective management of organised crime groups and advised the Force's focus was now on tackling anticipated offending and ASB over the upcoming winter and Christmas period.
- Grateful for the Force's efforts, the PCC requested detail on the extent of the Force's engagement in designing out crime. With specialist training and accreditation, the CC advised the Designing Out Crime Officers were well embedded in planning processes and proactive, as evidenced by the 541 applications responded to over the previous 12 months.
- The PCC asked about crime prevention activity around residential burglary and vehicle crime. The CC highlighted a comprehensive burglary prevention toolkit which was accessible to all officers and helped in giving practical advice to potential victims. He also advised that the Force was developing a CCTV Registry which would allow officers to access the location and contact information of registered CCTV, doorbell and other cameras as part of an investigation, and used My Community Voice to promote prevention messages and engagement events. While confident in the current approach, he expressed his aspiration to embed this further by engaging with every new homeowner.

#### **4. Inspection, Audits & Reviews**

##### **Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service – A joint inspection by HMCPSP and HMICFRS of case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service.**

- The DCC noted the inspection focused on how police forces and CPS areas could improve culture, communication and partnership working to deliver stronger cases and provide an improved public service.
- Summarising the findings, the DCC advised it had found overly bureaucratic systems, insufficiently coordinated IT and weak strategic governance and coordination. Conversely, he noted it highlighted that changes to senior personnel in both policing and the CPS had positively impacted joint working.
- The DCC expressed his confidence in Kent's approach, particularly its oversight and scrutiny through the Investigative Quality Board, engagement with the CPS and the strong performance of Divisional Case Review teams.
- Advising the report made 18 recommendations, three of which were for CC's, the DCC confirmed the Force was well positioned to meet them.
- The PCC requested an update on the impact of the Proportionate File Build Pilot. The DCC said it launched on 29 September and reported that up to 23 October, 296 files had been submitted, delivering time savings of up to 36% and attracting positive feedback. Noting the next phase had commenced with Sussex and Surrey going live on 17 November, the DCC also advised of a name change to the Proportionate Disclosure Pilot, and highlighted enthusiasm to expand it to Crown Court cases due to pressures on investigative teams. Highlighting the benefits to the CPS, the CC emphasised the initiative was helping bring people to justice more quickly and agreed to provide an update on the benefits / savings achieved so far outside the meeting.

##### **How effectively do the police record crime**

- Noting this was a follow-up to a 2014 report, the DCC advised it had found significant improvements in crime data integrity and that all prior recommendations had been met.
- Despite this, he reported that it had found continued challenges in the recording of certain crimes, particularly those associated with DA, ASB and vulnerable victims.
- The DCC highlighted that Kent Police's last crime data integrity assessment (2021/22) had found 96.7% accuracy: the highest in England and Wales. Noting that this was to be reassessed in the current PEEL inspection, he advised the Force continued to have strong governance through the Data Audit Team which worked to HMICFRS' methodology.

## State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024-25

- The DCC advised the report made no recommendations but observed that the decline in public confidence in the police may be levelling out and highlighted the role of the Government's Safer Streets mission in reducing crime and improving access to justice.
- Noting the report reinforced the importance of Neighbourhood Policing, the DCC highlighted previous positive commentary on Kent Police's investment to ensure it remained the bedrock of the policing model.

### HMICFRS PEEL Inspection

- The DCC confirmed that most areas for improvement (AFIs) identified in the 2023 PEEL inspection had been successfully addressed, and those still in progress would be scrutinised under the current PEEL process.
- The DCC noted the Force was in the second week of intensive fieldwork for PEEL 2025/27 and expected the formal debrief in the new year. He advised that informal feedback to date was encouraging.

### Update on 'Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation: A progress report'

- Acknowledging the significant media and public interest, the DCC explained the report followed 2022 findings, which had identified that children were being exploited by criminal networks and highlighted failures in safeguarding responsibilities across policing and local authorities. Additionally, he advised a second report had identified inconsistent definitions and victim blaming language and made nine recommendations and one AFI.
- Noting Kent Police was one of the forces inspected, the DCC advised all recommendations had been responded to with the AFI closed and highlighted positive commentary regarding the CSE Taskforce and correct application of the Independent Inquiry into Group Based Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) definition.
- The DCC stated the recent report noted overall progress in tackling group-based CSE but emphasised that further work was required to ensure a fully comprehensive coordinated response, namely the need for all authorities to adopt the IICSA definition.
- Noting the finding that Force's with dedicated CSE taskforces were better placed to provide advice to improve investigation quality, the DCC highlighted Kent's own CSE Taskforce. He observed the report also found that all forces were engaged in cultural and educational change to eradicate victim-blaming language and adopt a more consistent approach to partnership working aimed at preventing and disrupting CSE.
- The DCC highlighted positive commentary regarding the quality of Kent Police's problem profile, appropriate use of definitions, strong understanding of the issue, and proactive intervention by the CSE Taskforce to safeguard victims.
- Advising that the report made six recommendations, the DCC highlighted the need nationally to adopt the IICSA definition and implement the hydrant programmes CSE problem profiling template – both areas where Kent received positive commentary.
- Regarding record management, the DCC advised that despite the limitations of Athena, Kent Police had worked hard on its data quality and was now helping other forces.
- The DCC highlighted Kent Police's monthly deployments, including 80 hotel visits over the past year and collaborative work with Community Safety Partnerships to educate partners on CSE and the risks in line with Op MakeSafe.

#### Action

- Provide update on benefits of / savings achieved from Proportionate File Build pilot outside of meeting.

## 5. People

- The DCC noted there had been two further officer intakes since the last update, taking the Force to a fte strength of 4099.29, 23.71 under the budgeted establishment of 4123. The headcount was 4226, three over the headcount requirement of 4223.
- Reporting 128 officers had left the Force so far, this financial year, a turnover rate of 3.08% which was lower than previous years and helping to retain valuable experience, the DCC confirmed resignations remained the most common reason.
- Understanding resignations to be most common among those young in service, the DCC outlined retention efforts including 1:1 interventions and structured support to address workload and stress. He highlighted the 'Be The Change' programme and the success of the 'Empowering Leaders and Reducing Bureaucracy' initiative, which was now focused on tackling deeper cultural issues.
- The DCC noted ongoing work to meet the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee whilst ensuring the service remained responsive and beneficial to the public of Kent.

- Acknowledging an increase in absence levels, the DCC emphasised the Force’s focus on improving attendance and wellbeing through return-to-work processes and wellbeing initiatives with evidence of stabilisation in some teams. He highlighted that Kent absence rates tracked below the national trend.
- The DCC advised the Force remained focused on investigator wellbeing and noted the current PEEL inspection would provide independent assurance.
- Commending the Force’s commitment to staff and officer wellbeing, the PCC asked how the reasons for leaving compared with last year. Advising there were 37 less leavers so far this year, the DCC reported it was mainly fewer resignations but noted that analysis had found no obvious trend.
- The PCC asked whether departments with a higher vacancy rate also experienced higher levels of absence. While noting that was sometimes the case, the DCC assured the PCC that overall, there was no significant correlation. He highlighted that the five departments with the highest vacancy rate did not appear in the top fifteen for absence and commended those working in departments with vacancies for their resilience.

**6. Finance**

- Noting the report’s alignment with previous updates, the CC advised he would focus on highlighting key points.
- The CC confirmed a forecasted a revenue underspend of £0.5m, noting the influence of police pay adjustments and movements to/from earmarked reserves.
- Confirming a projected capital underspend of £10m, the CC highlighted the impact of unforeseen delays in IT and Estates.
- With regards to the costs associated with officers leaving, the CC highlighted the impact of the lower-than-expected rate so far, this financial year.
- The CC acknowledged ongoing uncertainty regarding future funding and noted that confirmation of the core grant settlement would be critical to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- Acknowledging good financial management by his and the Force’s Chief Finance Officer, the PCC asked how the underspend and subsequent increase in reserves would help address future financial challenges. Noting the uncertainty around the MTFP, the CC advised both would provide some assurance in future years. He highlighted financial pressures that would need addressing including the Emergency Services Network and Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme, taser rollout and the ageing police estate, alongside the need to reduce borrowing.

**7. Topical Issues & Update on Significant Operational Matters**

- No topical issues or significant operational matters were raised beyond those discussed in the papers.

	<b>Status</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Outside of meeting explore development of contextual update on rural crime for inclusion in report.	Open	Force / OPCC	25.02.26
Outside of meeting provide update on benefits of / savings achieved from Proportionate File Build pilot.	Open	Force	25.02.26

***Date of next meeting – Wednesday 25 February 2026, 10:00am – 12:00pm***