

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 **Wednesday, 16th July, 2025, at 2.00 pm** 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 David Naghi	Maidstone Borough Council
Councillor Eddie Peake	Medway Council
Councillor Perry Cole	Sevenoaks District Council
Councillor Hannah Perkin	Swale Borough Council
Councillor Pat Makinson	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
Vacancy	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mr John Moreland	Co-opted member – Liberal Democrat Group
Mr Maxwell Harrison	Co-opted member – Reform UK Group
Mrs Elaine Bolton	Independent Member
Mr Gurvinder Sandher	Independent Member

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

A - Committee Business

- A1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- A2 Election of Chair
- A3 Election of Vice-Chair
- A4 Apologies and Substitutes
- A5 Declarations of Interest by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A6 Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 4 February 2025 (Pages 1 - 6)

B - Commissioner's Reports Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner

- B1 Criminal Justice System - Update (Pages 7 - 12)
- B2 Contacting Kent Police (Pages 13 - 20)

C - Commissioner's Decisions

- C1 Decision OPCC.D.036.25 - Chief Constable Appointment: Retire and Rehire Scheme (Pages 21 - 22)

D - Questions to the Commissioner

- D1 Questions to the Commissioner

E - Panel Matters

- E1 Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel (Pages 23 - 28)
- E2 Work Programme (Pages 29 - 30)

F - For Information

- F1 Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board Meetings held on 11 December 2024 and 19 February 2025 (Pages 31 - 42)

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

Tuesday, 8 July 2025

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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 Tuesday, 4 February 2025.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr G Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Blakemore, Mrs E Bolton, Cllr P Feacey, Cllr Mrs J Hollingsbee, Cllr S Jeffery, Cllr D Keers, Mr J Meade, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr R Palmer and Cllr R Wells.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Matthew Scott (Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr Tim Smith (Chief Constable), Mr David Paul (PCC's Chief Executive), Mr Neil Wickens (Head of Policy & Research, OPCC) and Mr Rob Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer, OPCC).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Gaetano Romagnuolo (Scrutiny Research Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

129. Introduction/Webcast Announcement

(Item 1)

130. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Cllr Perry Cole, Mr Ian Chittenden, Cllr Eddie Peake, Cllr Charlotte Zosseder and Cllr Nolan.

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

(Item 3)

Councillor Feacey confirmed that he was the Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.

132. (Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 18 December 2024

Item 4)

RESOLVED Members agreed that the minutes of the meeting which took place on the 18 December 2024 were an accurate record and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

133. Appointment of Chief Constable

(Item B1)

1. This was an additional item which was included at the request of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Matthew Scott.
2. Mr Scott presented the item and some of the key highlights included the following:

- a) The Chief Constable, Mr Tim Smith, was required to obtain the Police and Crime Commissioner's permission to participate in the 'Retire and Rejoin' Scheme. The Police and Crime Commissioner set out his reasons for supporting Mr Smith's application to participate in the Scheme in the report provided to the Panel.
 - b) For the purpose of reassurance to the Panel, it was explained that the Retire and Rejoin Scheme was open to all police officers in England and Wales and designed to retain skills, knowledge and experience within the police service at all ranks. It had been recognised by the former Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire. The position was also supported by other national bodies, including the NPCC, APCC, College of Policing and the Chief Police Officers' Staff Association.
 - c) Mr Scott explained to Members that the current advice from the Home Office required the appointment to be treated as a new appointment, falling within the scope of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA).
 - d) If successful in his appointment, Mr Smith would retire on the 28 February and then rejoin on 1 April 2025 with his pension abated. He would be issued with a new term of appointment which would commence on 1 April 2025 and cease on 7 December 2029, to ensure his overall term in post did not exceed the mandated 7 years. Deputy Chief Constable Mr Peter Ayling would be appointed Temporary Chief Constable for the period 28 February to 1 April 2025.
 - e) It was reconfirmed to the Panel that they had a statutory duty, under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to: review the appointment of the Chief Constable in the same way as if it was a first-time appointment; make a recommendation on the proposed appointment; or, if two thirds of the Panel indicated they were not in favour, veto the appointment.
3. In answer to questions and comments, the following was stated:
- a) The appointment of Mr Ayling to cover the period of time Chief Constable Smith was absent, would generate a cost to the force. However, it was not envisaged to be a significant sum. It was further clarified that there would be an ongoing diminishing cost, due to the Chief Constable's pension being abated.
 - b) It was confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner was able to remove the Chief Constable before his term of office ended in December 2029, and that the Chief Constable could retire before this time. The notice period was three months.
 - c) It was confirmed that the scheme was open to any officer within Kent Police. Succession planning had been considered throughout all areas, although it was acknowledged that the selection of Chief Officers was a national process.

4. RESOLVED the Panel were unanimous in their recommendation that the Commissioner appoint Mr Smith as Chief Constable of Kent Police.

134. Draft Police and Crime Plan and 2025-26 Precept Proposal
(Item B2)

1. The report was presented by the Police Crime and Commissioner, Mr Matthew Scott.
2. Mr Scott took the Panel through the draft Police and Crime Plan and expanded on the key areas of focus, as well as the survey responses from members of the community. In answer to questions and comments, the following was said:
 - a) Mr Scott confirmed that he would look to include more free text analysis in next year's survey. The statistics gathered from the surveys would enable data to be pulled out from each question.
 - b) The Panel noted that the Commissioner's new plan set out a framework for delivering his manifesto commitments. The priorities centred around four key areas:
 - Protecting People
 - Protecting Places
 - Protecting Property
 - Productive Partnerships
 - c) The individual areas included in the Police and Crime Plan maintained a focus on national and local policing issues, including knife crime. The County Lines Team were working to issue warrants to tackle gangs and violent crime. Other teams continued to use Stop and Search powers with positive outcomes. The Violence Reduction Unit had played a key role in reducing violent crime.
 - d) Other successful strategies which had been utilised to reduce knife crime in the community included ongoing talks with local schools through the St Giles Trust, and engagement with Pupil Referral Units.
 - e) The Panel considered that the Plan could be amended and suggested adding more emphasis to the issue of knife crime. It was also suggested that collaborative work with the voluntary sector and faith organisations could be made more explicit.
 - f) It was confirmed that the Chief Constable would work with Corporate Communications to develop a social media strategy to publicise good practice initiatives which had taken place within the community.
 - g) Mr Scott highlighted the inconsistencies around decision making between Police forces. Delays with the Criminal Courts and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) were also issues outside the Police remit; this was an aspect that some members of the community were not aware of.

- h) Several organisations and services, such as the Business Improvement District, Street Ambassadors, the Maidstone Task Force and the local Community Safety Partnership, were working to improve residents' safety in Maidstone. Although they were achieving positive results, it was acknowledged that further work was required.
 - j) In response to the Panel's questions about the proposed precept, the Commissioner advised of his intention to increase the precept by £14 a year - or 5.5% for an average Band D property. This was the maximum allowed under the Referendum principles.
 - k) The Commissioner explained that he was aware of current cost-of-living pressures on Kent residents. However, the increase was essential in order to mitigate the Force's funding pressures. Without it, significant additional savings would be required; this would risk jeopardising the strong performance achieved by Kent Police.
3. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel supported the Commissioner's Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029, and asked that the Commissioner consider the comments and suggestions made.
 4. The Panel unanimously approved the Police and Crime Plan, and the Commissioner's proposal to increase the police precept for 2025/26 by £14 per year (or 5.5%) to £270.15 for an average Band D property.

135. HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 - An Inspection of Kent Police
(Item B3)

1. The report was presented by Mr Scott. Some of the key points highlighted to the Panel were as follows:
 - a) Progress had been made since the inspection, particularly in the areas of public call handling, and serious and organised crime.
 - b) The Force had conducted intelligence work to re-profile county lines and gangs, and now had a much better understanding of who they are, what they are doing and where they are operating.
 - c) It had been indicated that Kent was going to be one of the early forces to be inspected under the PEEL 2025-27 inspection regime. Work was expected to start in the summer. A draft of HMICFRS' new assessment framework had been received, including what they considered 'Good' which was helpful.
2. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel noted the report. Since the next inspection was expected to start in the summer, it was agreed that a verbal update would be provided at the October 2025 meeting.

136. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item C1)

1. In reply to a question about Immediate Justice and initiatives aimed at deterring and punishing antisocial behaviour, Mr Scott said he would need to look at the funding received over the next 12 months, but it was something he was committed to and there were opportunities. In the meantime, the Force was looking at what out-of-court resolutions could be used proportionately as well as the new cautions regime incorporating conditional and community cautions. Collaboration with the Probation Service continued in order to support rehabilitation.
2. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel noted the response to the question.

137. Future work programme

(Item D1)

1. The Panel noted the Work Programme. The next meeting was scheduled for the 4 June 2025 (then postponed to 16 July 2025).

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To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Criminal Justice System – Update

Date: 16 July 2025

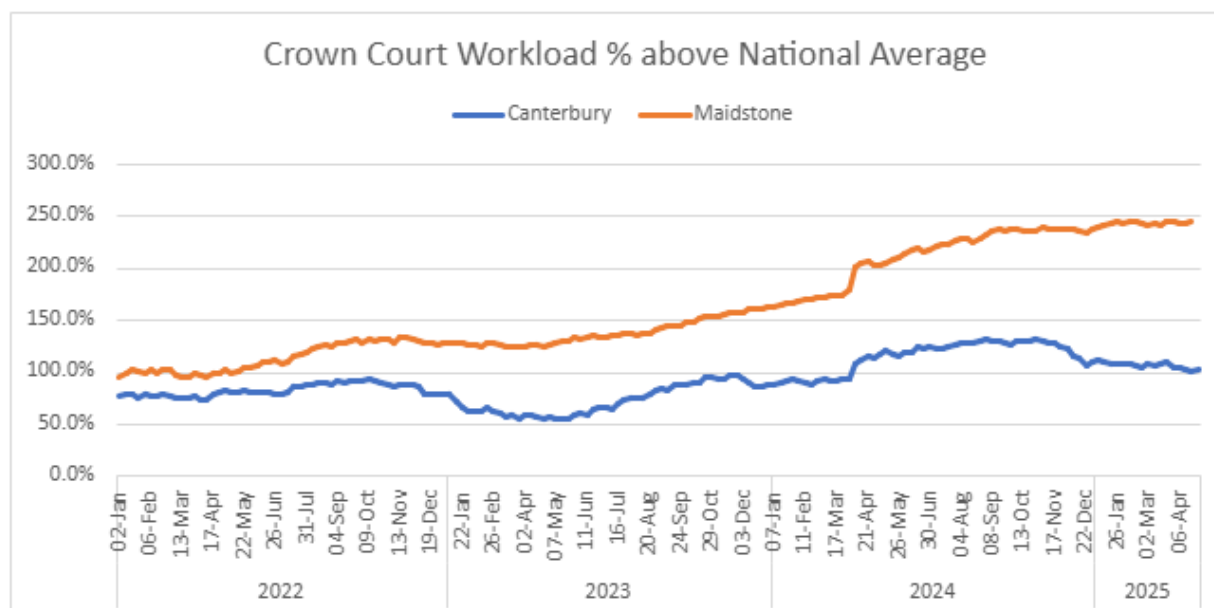
Background:

1. Further to the report that was presented at the 16 July 2024 Panel meeting, this paper provides an update on:
 - the challenges facing the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Kent; and
 - the work of partners and the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB), chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), to try and address them.

Introduction:

2. For reasons out of local control, the outstanding court caseload continues to increase and is likely to do so for some time, particularly in Crown Court.
3. The PCC has been and remains in regular contact with appropriate Ministers and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) who recognise Kent's situation and confirm it is a top priority. However, this has not yet resulted in significant action to reduce the backlog.
4. There is a complex mix of capacity, infrastructure and staffing issues contributing to the overall picture and the CJS' inability to flex resource where it is most needed.
5. Outlined in this paper is the following:
 - latest numbers, highlighting the scale of the backlog and a comparison with the national position;
 - reasons why the court backlog and other issues are so great;
 - potential impact on victims, witnesses, and CJS staff; and
 - actions taken.

Latest numbers:



6. Nationally there remains a serious problem, with the number of Crown Court cases still rising and no sign of recovery anytime soon. Historic reasons include the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bar strike in 2022, and ongoing staff shortages, particularly in terms of the judiciary and barristers.
7. As of April 2025, Canterbury Crown Court's caseload was sitting at 102% above the national average, while Maidstone's was at 247% above the national average.

Reasons for the increase:

8. In addition to national issues, the scale of Kent's increase can primarily be attributed to three factors:
 - Record levels of work entering the system.
 - Insufficient physical court capacity.
 - Shortages of key staff in HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Probation Service.

Work entering the system

9. Kent Police has more officers than at any other time in its history, resulting in more arrests and charges. The number of charges has risen steadily, particularly over the last 3 years, however with most new recruits now qualified and actively deployed, levels are reaching a new norm which is around 50% higher than pre-pandemic. For the 12-month period to April 2025, the charge rate was 9.8% compared to 8.8% in the previous 12-month period, equating to an increase of 1,293 charges entering the CJS. The rest of the CJS has not kept pace, so there are insufficient court sitting days as well as physical court capacity to meet the volume of receipts entering the system. To support the CJS and swifter outcomes for victims, Kent Police has been promoting and supporting Out of Court Resolutions. In the 12-month period to March 2025, there were 8,489 - a 50% increase on the previous 12-month period (5,652).
10. Following the success of a proportionate file build pilot between Cheshire/Merseyside Police and the CPS, and the sharing of early findings, Kent Police has explored a similar pilot. This relates to the amount of material the police have to put into a casefile in the first instance. Currently, they provide most material at the pre-charge stage, but the pilot would allow essential material only to be provided pre-charge, with additional material only being required once a not guilty plea was entered. This would save a significant amount of time. However, when it became evident that the Cheshire/Merseyside pilot had proceeded without national oversight from CPS to deviate from Directors Guidance (DG), CPS National directed Kent and other forces to pause any pilots until such time as it is approved; this has also been agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). Kent stands ready to proceed with the pilot if and when authorised.

Physical court capacity

11. *Crown Court, Canterbury:* Able to currently use all five courtrooms, Canterbury's caseload remains stable at around double its pre-pandemic level. Canterbury is showing signs of recovery and to assist Maidstone, a temporary 12-month committal pathway change has been implemented (from April 2025) for cases originating from ME13 and ME17 postcodes. These cases will be sent to Canterbury Crown Court, where a County Court room has been temporarily reassigned as an additional Crown Court room.
12. *Crown Court, Maidstone:* The position is significantly different in Maidstone where numbers continue to rise steadily, with significant backlogs causing listings to now run into early 2028. HMCTS accepts that eight courtrooms are insufficient to meet demand and the previous report to the Panel highlighted that a business case had been submitted to build a further two jury courtrooms. The outcome of the business case, including proposals to increase capacity is still awaited; if accepted it would still be some years before new court rooms are fully operational. Following an extended period where the disabled access lift at Maidstone has been inoperable, this has now been repaired, however there remains no disabled access until the courthouse meets Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.
13. The Maidstone Nightingale Court shut in March 2024 as it frequently remained unused due to a lack of judiciary and other court staff. This remains closed.
14. As Crown Court numbers increase so too does the number of Custody Time Limit cases that must be heard, resulting in cancellations of trial/sentencing work and lengthening delays. These issues remain.
15. *Magistrate Courts:* While at county level there is sufficient capacity, the problem is that it is not aligned to demand. This issue remains.

16. As the busiest court, Medway only has three secure docks and five cells, significantly short of what is required; however there is unused capacity in courts such as Sevenoaks and Margate. Medway's ability to hear crime cases has been further hindered by the closure of Gun Wharf due to the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and the need to list extra family and civil work there. Currently, Gun Wharf has reopened but some courtroom space is still being used by Family and Civil courts.

Staffing

17. In the last financial year Kent recruited two new Circuit Judges. Whilst there is still a national shortage of Judges (exacerbating the shortage in barristers), HMCTS is continuing to recruit, with a campaign currently underway. With regard to sitting days, as of April 2025, HMCTS reported there is the ability to sit to capacity within the Crown Courts.
18. Judges have significant input into where they work, and so the system is reliant on enough choosing to work in Kent. Unfortunately, Kent has been short over the last two years with Crown Court utilisation averaging around 75%. This year is much better as HMCTS have secured more Recorders to backfill for a shortage in Judges and so utilisation is currently over 95% (yet caseload numbers continue to rise). This level of utilisation is excellent and demonstrates that there is simply insufficient capacity within Kent to deal with demand.
19. In Magistrates Courts, Kent continues to experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining key staff, with shortages of Legal Advisors, Lawyers, and Probation Service staff limiting the number of courts that can be run.
20. Many Kent based staff/recruits opt to work in London to receive the London Allowance. The PCC has previously recommended that a Southeast Allowance be paid to break the constant cycle of failed recruitment campaigns and staff shortages. However, with no funding available the recommendation has not been progressed by those in authority.
21. Despite signs of improvement, staffing in Kent Probation remains lower than that required at Probation Officer grade. Mid Kent (Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells) in particular are experiencing lower than required staffing levels in the court team. They are currently training sentence management staff in pre-sentence report writing and exploring a hybrid model between its courts and community offices.
22. Where possible, Probation Service Officer staff are being deployed for case management to assist with workload.

Impact on victims and staff:

23. The PCC continues to meet with and receives regular correspondence from victims concerning the impact of trial delays, which usually includes multiple date cancellations. Many are truly heartbreaking.
24. Many victims feel unable to move on with their lives while their court case drags on. There is anger and frustration at repeated delays, a feeling of being let down, and that justice is not being served. For many, their health and wellbeing are adversely affected and for the most vulnerable this can be extremely serious and on occasions life changing.
25. The PCC has a statutory responsibility for commissioning support services for victims of crime in Kent, regardless of whether that crime has been reported to the Police. In 2024/25 there were 26 organisations funded by the PCC to deliver around 40 different services to victims, including specialist support for children and young people, therapeutic services, trauma counselling, sexual abuse, and domestic abuse specialist support. These services supported 83,889 victims during 2024-25, with 80,927 reporting the crime to the police prior to engagement with support.
26. Caseloads continue to increase for victim services, particularly Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), where average caseloads are between 21-25 and 51+ respectively. The reasons for the increase are the complexity of cases and delays within the CJS. Feedback from services on why victims/witnesses are withdrawing from the CJS or not reporting to the police include:

- Minimising the abuse, or belief that reporting will escalate the abuse.
- Coercive control leading to victims blaming themselves for the abuse which may be exacerbated by the CJS using victim blaming language. Some clients have reported being told directly that they 'caused' the abuse, 'should have known better', 'should have reacted differently' or that it is a 'civil' issue as it relates to child arrangements, so victims feel they are 'stupid' or 'dumb'.
- Challenges in reporting and engaging with the CJS, particularly in relation to sexual abuse.
- Lack of trust in the police and courts, and that they will not be believed due to previous experiences (e.g. being provided inappropriate advice by the police, feeling that they will not keep them safe or being pressured to support a prosecution).
- Lack of response, or long response times from the police.
- Lack of updates including from the CPS, and continuity of police officers.
- Fear of the process (e.g. giving evidence and of facing the suspect in court).
- Being re-traumatised by the CJS.
- Fear of retaliation, further violence or intimidation from the suspect, their family or associates.
- Impact of family court proceedings on children, and some services reporting an increase in clients being advised to withdraw by their solicitor if going through a divorce due to fear of it impacting on finances.

27. The Kent Police Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) also supports victims and witnesses by ensuring they are kept updated throughout the court process. However, because of trial delays their caseload has increased with contact having to be maintained for much longer, necessitating an increase in resourcing of 5 staff funded until April 2026. VWCU workloads are now at 122 cases per member of staff, 61% higher than pre-pandemic levels. Whilst overall volumes have remained consistent, the increase in receipts is preventing any reductions. The VWCU also reports increased levels of anger from victims and that keeping them on board with a prosecution is becoming more difficult as they grow tired of waiting and want to move on with their lives, often leaving defendants to walk free. Despite this, and due to the VWCU's exceptional work ethic and revised processes, Kent is below the national average court discontinuance rate due to witness issues.

Actions taken

28. Despite the issues, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the work of local teams to continue delivering the most efficient and effective system possible under the most extreme circumstances. Without the excellent relationships built across all agencies which has seen them pull together as one under the control of the KCJB, Kent would be in a far worse position than it is.

29. Through the KCJB, system partners have recently been brought together in a facilitated workshop, designed to give the space and time to identify and assess key issues and barriers within the system, and to initiate programmes of collaboration and improvement in specific areas. A further workshop focusing on victims and witnesses is planned for early July 2025. The KCJB Manager will work closely with, and facilitate a programme management approach on behalf of partners, with the KCJB regularly monitoring progress and the wider impact of this work.

30. Four initial improvement workstreams have been identified as follows:

- **Recalls** – where the current capacity issues are creating repeat demand and there is an unsustainable service model.
- **Out of Court Resolutions (OOCR)/Diversions** – where a need has been identified to focus on effective diversion/rehabilitation at first point of contact, and to widen engagement and use of OOCR.
- **Timely production of prisoners at court/prisoner transport** – to improve fulfilment of the national contract requirements and reduce the knock on effect of delays on different CJS partners (e.g. late court sittings, ineffective hearings, reduced time for defendants with counsel).
- **Updates and information to victims** – to improve the information provided by the courts so victims receive more timely updates with an appropriate level of detail.

31. The issue with Maidstone Crown Court capacity has been known for years and Kent has been sending cases with a DA postcode to Woolwich since 2016. HMCTS is looking at other work that can be sent out of area. Whilst some non-victim cases were previously sent to Dorset, this is no longer happening. In addition to cases from ME13 and ME17 postcodes being temporarily sent to Canterbury, London Courts have availability to take cases from across the South East, with the likelihood of some cases from Kent being dealt with in Southwark and Blackfriars (Nightingale court) on a case-by-case basis for trial.

32. Through partnership working communication between the CPS and Kent Police during the trial/hearing process has been improved to ensure queries can be dealt with expeditiously, reducing case delays. From June 2025, livestreaming communications between the CPS, Kent Police Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) and VWCU will be rolled out.
33. A number of Legal Advisor trainees are now qualified and will start to take courts in the coming months. It is hoped that with work entering the system seemingly levelling out, Kent will start to see a reduction in Magistrates work in the early autumn.
34. The Kent, Surrey and Sussex region of the Probation Service launched a new set of quality measures with a focus on improving the quality of work at the court stage; this includes a focus on getting the right outcomes at court through interventions such as electronic monitoring and other stand-alone requirements.
35. The Probation Service has launched 'Impact', an initiative which focuses certain offenders on completing requirements within the first couple of months of sentence (with exceptions). In addition, it continues to undertake 'RESET', an initiative that suspends contact with people on probation after two thirds of their order or licence (with exceptions).
36. The PCC continues to engage with Ministers and the MoJ/HMCTS setting out the case that something needs to be done as the Crown Court caseload volume continues to increase and the gap between Kent and the national average widens. Following the facilitated workshops there is now greater awareness of action needed over the next 12 months, and the PCC will formally be writing to Ministers to seek their support.
37. On behalf of partners, the KCJB Manager is also monitoring the progress and outcomes of national developments. Of particular note at this time are:
- the Independent Sentencing Review (proposed publication May 2025);
 - the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts (proposed publication of options for long-term reform late spring 2025); and
 - recently proposed plans to change the amount of time some prisoners will serve following recall to prison (to be implemented by September 2025).
- Also of interest is the potential impact of the abolition of NHS England on the commissioning and provision of local/regional health and support services linked to the CJS.

Recommendation:

38. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their 21 July 2026 meeting.

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To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Contacting Kent Police

Date: 16 July 2025

Background:

1. Further to reports presented at the February and October 2023 Panel meetings, this paper provides an update on Kent Police's performance in managing public demand within the Force Control Room (FCR).
2. Over the last year, performance in terms of managing 999 emergency and non-emergency 101 calls has been very effective. The time to answer has improved significantly and the number of calls not answered has reduced to low levels. National comparisons also indicate Kent Police is now performing to a high standard.
3. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

Introduction:

4. The public rightly has an expectation that they will be able to contact Kent Police when they need to in a variety of ways that work for them, whether that be to report an emergency, report a crime, seek advice, offer information, or express an opinion. When they do make contact, they expect to receive a timely and appropriate response.
5. The Force encourages individuals and communities to engage and make contact, with confidence, by making its services accessible, appropriate, easy to use and safe.
6. In addition to handling 999 and 101 calls, it also maintains other methods of contact such as online (including [My Community Voice](#)), and through personal interaction, to ensure it is open to all and can respond to user needs and situations. Communication is key and the Force recognises the importance of adapting, being flexible and developing modes of communication to suit all.

Contacting Kent Police:

7. The routes through which the public can contact Kent Police are as follows:

Emergency

Call **999** in situations like these:

- there is an immediate danger to life
- someone is using violence or is threatening to be violent
- a road traffic collision where life is at risk, or the road is blocked
- a crime is happening right now, like a house burglary or a theft

If a caller dials 999 from a mobile and is unable to speak, they should listen to the questions from the operator and respond by coughing or tapping the handset if they can. If prompted, they should press 55 – this lets the operator know it is a genuine emergency and the call will be put through to the police.

Those with a hearing or speech impairment can use textphone service 18000 or text on 999 if pre-registered with the [emergencySMS service](#).

British Sign Language (BSL) users can call [999 BSL](#) to use a remote BSL interpreter.

On the Relay UK App, tap the 999 button and then confirm to make an emergency call ([further information about the Relay UK App](#)).

Non-emergency

- Call 101
- Online via the website: www.kent.police.uk (includes Live Chat function)
- Police station front counter
- Out of hours police station phone

Those with a hearing or speech impairment can use textphone service 18001 101 and follow the on-screen instructions to make an emergency call ([further information about textphone service](#)).

On the Relay UK app, dial 18001 101 to access a relay assistant ([further information about the Relay UK App](#)).

In the near future, Kent Police will begin taking demand via a 101 BSL service through a Sign Live video interpreting link on the website. This will bring the level of BSL service in line with that offered to the deaf community via 999.

8. All contacts are triaged using a risk assessment tool called THRIVE:
 - THRIVE is a mnemonic for Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement.
 - It guides call handlers in collecting, analysing and prioritising information and intelligence they receive.
 - It offers flexibility, but also organisational structure and therefore consistency; additionally, it acts as an aide memoire when dealing with time critical incidents.
 - Vulnerability (overt and hidden) is a critical element to ensure victims receive the best service and advice.
 - Every incident created (except for emergency calls where there is an obvious threat) has a clear THRIVE rationale recorded.
 - New information or a change in the incident response results in a new THRIVE assessment.
9. On average, 1,400 records are generated a day with approximately 15% being sent to dispatch for attendance by a police officer. The remaining incidents are processed by the FCR and Investigation Management Unit (IMU).

Structure of the FCR:

10. A Chief Superintendent leads the FCR and the senior leadership team consists of both police officers and police staff.
11. On the operational floor, there are five teams. Positions include:
 - Single skilled contact handlers
 - Single skilled dispatchers
 - Dual-skilled operators (contact handler and dispatcher)
 - Other non-call handling functions
 - Crime Investigators and Administrators
 - Duty Inspectors (also Initial Firearms Commanders)
12. Kent is split into three policing divisions with each having a Team Leader overseeing staff on their dispatch pod. They will deal with all incidents on that division. Allocation to roles is based on skills as opposed to any local geographic knowledge.
13. The FCR consists of both police officers and police staff who work either a 24/7 or CORE hours contract to support demand (CORE hours being 0800-2400hrs time window). Shift scheduling is based on forecasted demand analysis utilising previous years data and known events, along with Erlang A calculations from a Workforce Management System to schedule by skill to demand. The FCR has a designated establishment of 35 additional police officer roles to cover the functions of dispatch and contact.
14. The FCR has in previous years utilised the concept of surge demand, where police officers with the requisite skills were reassigned to take phone calls to ensure service delivery was maintained. This was planned via forecasted demand. Whilst this remains available in theory, it has not been used since August 2024 and requires skills to be refreshed throughout the year. This is a last resort measure. Instead, there is now some flexibility to utilise staff in support departments to provide cover when required.

15. Staff turnover is in a good position having reduced from an average of nine leavers a month in 2023, to four in 2024. Contributing factors to this are likely to include increased staff engagement, shift pattern reviews, pay reviews, workplace site re-location and environment, technology changes and improvements to working practices. Anecdotally, a significant factor is the transformation of performance and associated improvement in job satisfaction, alongside a reduction in the sense of pressure to answer calls and level of dissatisfaction from those who previously may have had to wait for their call to be answered.
16. Whilst precise comparisons are not available, discussions with other forces suggest that the FCR's current retention levels are quite favourable and significantly better than those in the private sector. Although direct comparisons are challenging, call centre attrition rates are generally much higher.
17. On 19 February 2024, the FCR relocated from the Kent Police HQ site in Sutton Road to a newly refurbished facility at Coldharbour. The previous building required significant maintenance and was part of a redevelopment project. The new control room, equipped with modern furniture and technology, is in a more accessible location which has contributed to reduced staff attrition. Additionally, a new telephony and radio system was installed, enhancing call distribution, ring-fencing, and supervisory capabilities. Despite some initial technology related challenges the relocation continues to yield performance benefits.
18. Kent Police has conducted a thorough review of current technology and engaged third-party consultants to develop a comprehensive five-year IT roadmap. Key initiatives include transitioning to a portal-based system, implementing automated messaging alongside a Customer Relationship Manager to enhance understanding of those contacting the police, and utilising AI functionality to carry out tasks such as transcription and summarisation. Additionally, there will be enhanced integration with other agencies through Multi Agency Incident Transfer, transforming telephony contact into digital transfers.

Public demand:

19. Telephony accounts for 76% of total FCR demand:

Emergency 999 contact	999 call received, logged on the command and control system and passed to a dispatcher when deployment of a patrol is required.
Non-emergency 101 contact	101 call received, logged on the command and control system and again if attendance is required, passed to a dispatcher or scheduled for an agreed date/time. Some incidents can be logged for information or passed over for direct crime recording.
Switchboard	Call received and triaged before directing to correct department or officer/staff member.

20. Digital accounts for 24% of total FCR demand:

Website forms	Online forms are delivered into the FCR email account where they are automatically identified; depending on level of risk, a Digital Supervisor will read them before assigning to digital staff. Lower risk online forms such as Contact Us and Officer Contact forms are dealt with slower time between Live Chats and higher risk demand.
Live Chat	Live chats are dealt with like a 101 call where they are either directed to the correct department/officer or logged on the command and control system. Staff on the digital desk often select three Live chats to take at once before the next operator is tasked with further chats. They also support with overflow telephony demand when required.

Emergency 999 contact:

21. The table below shows 999 data for the period April to March over the last four years:

	Apr 2021 to Mar 2022	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
Total received	354,887	382,689	384,460	363,396
Total answered	349,804	377,763	383,132	361,813
% answered	98.57%	98.71%	99.65%	99.56%
Total not answered	5,083	4,926	1,328	1,583
% not answered	1.43%	1.29%	0.35%	0.44%
Average queuing time	16 secs	18 secs	10 secs	3 secs
% answered – under 10 secs	66.74%	68.49%	81.41%	96.59%

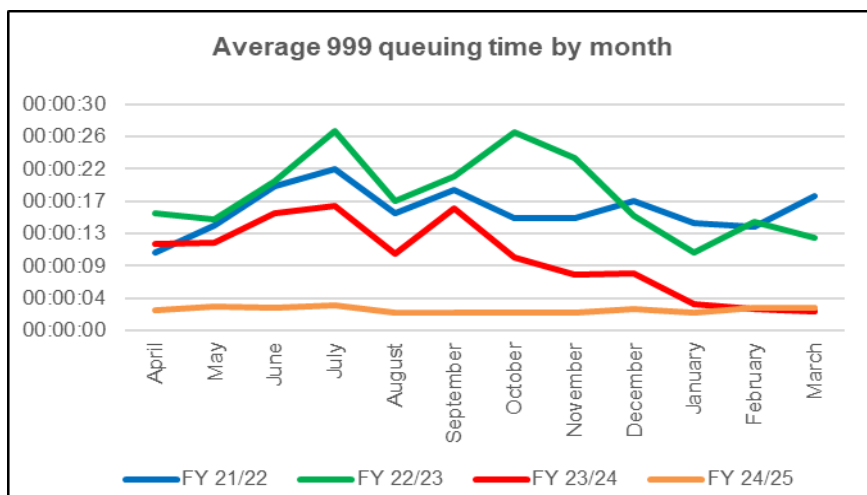
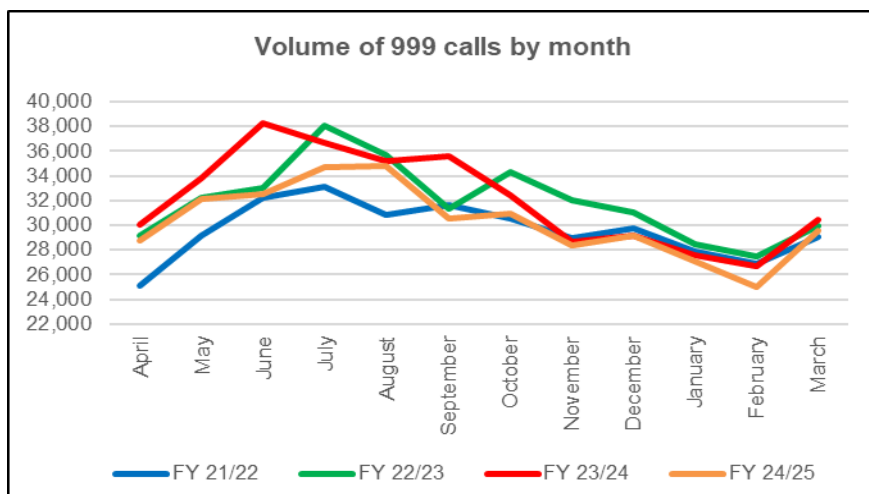
22. April 2024 to March 2025, the number of 999 calls received reduced by 5.5% compared to 2023/24, and 5.0% compared to 2022/23.

23. Emergency 999 calls are managed by BT who will present a call to Kent Police on behalf of the member of the public. If the caller has disconnected, which can be for a number of reasons, mostly accidental or “pocket dials” then BT continue the call and present the details to a contact handler. At this point an incident record is created and attempts are made to recontact.

24. The reduction in 999 volumes can be attributed to three key areas:

- The improvement in 101 answer times has reduced the number of callers moving from 101 to 999.
- Additional work around nuisance and hoax callers, alongside collaboration with community teams to support people suffering with poor mental health.
- Inflated 999 call volumes in the summer of 2023 due to a national android phone issue generating repeat accidental dials.

25. The following graphs show Kent Police’s 999 call volume and average queuing time by month.



26. Nationally, year on year there has been a 1.8% reduction in the volume of 999 calls received by the police. There has been a 16.4% decrease in the average answer time. Using BT figures which include the time to connect to a force, the average for the country in 2024/25 was 8 seconds. In Kent it was just over 5 seconds.

27. Emergency 999 call handling remains the priority for Kent Police recognising the threat, harm and risk that sits within these calls.

28. National rankings are derived from BT data, and the following tables show year-on-year comparisons for 999 performance (national publication of 101 data is still under development):

Average answer time*							
Apr 2021 to Mar 2022		Apr 2022 to Mar 2023		Apr 2023 to Mar 2024		Apr 2024 to Mar 2025	
Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking
17.10 secs	27 th	18.40 secs	30 th	12.87 secs	31 st	5.28 secs	2 nd

Calls answered in under 10 seconds*							
Apr 2021 to Mar 2022		Apr 2022 to Mar 2023		Apr 2023 to Mar 2024		Apr 2024 to Mar 2025	
Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking	Kent	National ranking
67.3%	33 rd	69.5%	30 th	79.7%	31 st	94.3%	2 nd

* Figures differ from Kent Police internal data as they include BT time to handle.

Non-emergency 101 contact:

29. When someone calls 101, the messaging aims to direct them to the most appropriate service, contact method, or relevant agency. This information helps manage expectations, empower and educate service users, and assists Kent Police in prioritising, managing, and responding to demand effectively

30. Current messaging includes guidance on self-service options, such as online crime reporting, to save time for service users. The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system has been refined to respond to demand, including warnings of higher delays during peak periods. Kent Police have invested in the national online service, Single Online Home (SOH), and a comprehensive digital desk structure. The IVR is the primary method to communicate about SOH due to the lack of national advertising.

31. During significant increases in 999 demand, the Team Manager on shift can authorise time-limited messaging that directs non-emergency calls to digital options where possible. This supports the Force's strategic aim of protecting the ability to answer emergency 999 calls while providing an effective service to the public. The IVR is regularly reviewed, including best practice benchmarking and comparisons to other forces.

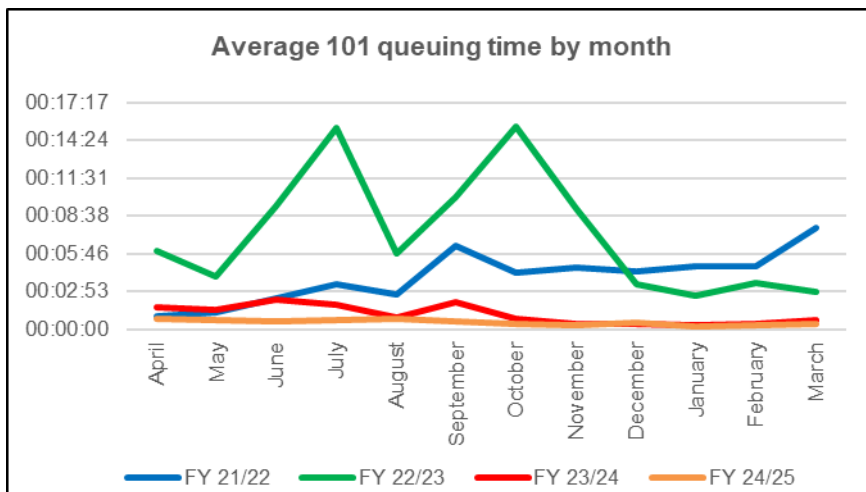
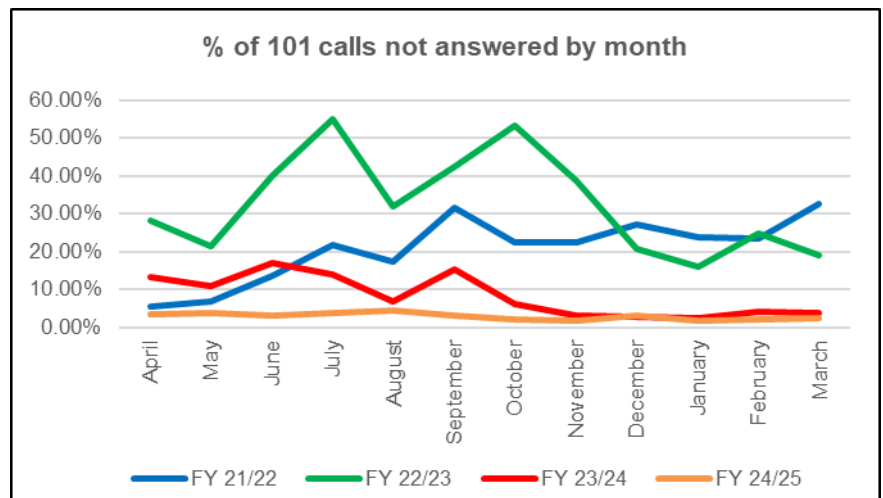
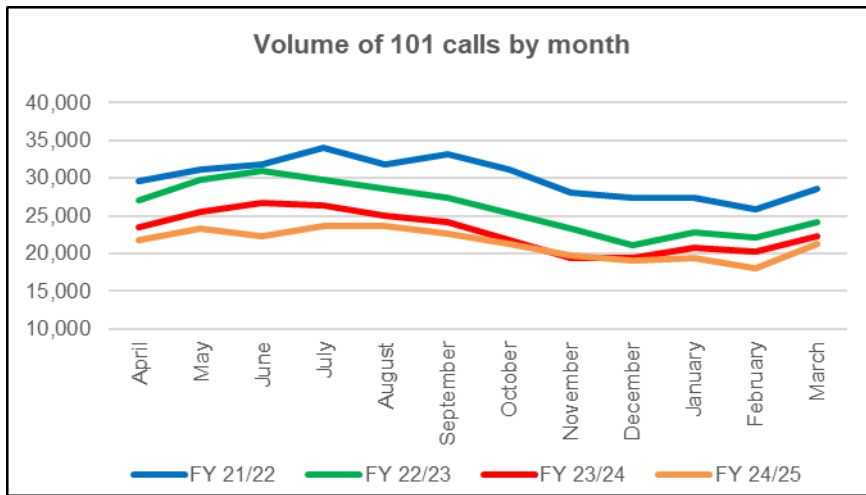
32. The table below shows 101 performance for the period April to March over the last four years:

	Apr 2021 to Mar 2022	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
Total received	360,181	312,321	275,065	255,824
Total answered	286,159	208,034	250,996	248,284
% answered	79.45%	66.61%	91.25%	97.05%
Total not answered	74,022	104,287	24,069	7,540
% not answered	20.55%	33.39%	8.75%	2.95%
Average queuing time	4 mins	7 mins 18 secs	1 min 6 secs	31 secs

33. April 2024 to March 2025, the number of 101 calls received reduced by 7.0% compared to 2023/24, 18.1% compared to 2022/23, and 29.0% compared to 2021/22.

34. Analysis has shown that represented demand, when someone calls 101 but is unable to get through on the first occasion and then rings again or in some cases multiple times, has reduced significantly. The move to digital also accounts for a significant proportion of the reduction.

35. The following graphs show Kent Police's 101 call volume, percentage not answered and average queuing time by month over the last four years.



Digital contact:

36. Overall, digital demand into the FCR has remained stable for the last 3 years. This is positive as it offers an enhanced service to the public given their ability to select and self-serve via a channel of their choice 24 hours a day, providing an effective and customer focused service.

	Apr 2021 to Mar 2022	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
Online Crime Reports	39,527	48,278	47,377	48,876
Live Chats	43,744	70,523	66,421	59,458
Other Digital Contact*	16,591	133,176	136,977	146,505
Total digital contacts	99,862	252,427	250,775	254,839

* 'Contact Us' forms / Emails / Other SOH Options

Holding to account:

37. One of the principal ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
38. 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 Police and Crime Plan '[Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust](#)', as well as policing generally in the county.
39. Published on 1 April 2025, the Plan is underpinned by a Performance and Delivery Framework that is still in development. The framework includes national data and comparative force level data (where available), and both current and historical trend data. It will enable the Office of the PCC to monitor delivery against the key priorities and also form the basis of the papers the Force submits to the Performance and Delivery Board.
40. Other ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account for the service delivered by Kent Police include regular one-to-one meetings and bespoke briefings.
41. In relation to the FCR, the PCC also regularly visits and meets new starters as part of their induction. Not only does this enable him to observe activity and listen to calls from the public, but also to speak with the Senior Leadership Team and most importantly the officers and staff.
42. The PCC does not under-estimate the challenges faced by the FCR in terms of managing public demand. However, he is very pleased with performance and reassured that its ongoing strategic transformation will enable Kent Police to continue providing a first class service to the communities of Kent.
43. The PCC would like to thank the officers and staff who work in the FCR for their hard work and resilience. The level and nature of the demand, as well as the often challenging and difficult decisions made every day in terms of managing risk, should never be underestimated.

Recommendation:

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

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Record of Decision

ORIGINATOR: Chief Executive

REFERENCE: OPCC.D.036.25

TITLE: Chief Constable appointment: Retire and Rehire scheme

OPEN ☒ **CONFIDENTIAL** ☐

Reason if Confidential:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Constable (CC) submitted a request to participate in the 'Retire and Rehire' scheme to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), which was agreed in principle.

The CC set out his achievements in the role to date, and his ambitions for the future, to support his request. He met with the PCC, and subsequently confirmed his position in writing.

Key points noted were:

- The Force Crime and Incident Response command had significantly improved against all metrics.
- The successful implementation of the new Neighbourhood Policing Model, with a focus on the deployment of 'Beat Officers'.
- Overall improved performance in reducing crime and increasing charged rates.

The CC outlined his commitment to the role and leading Kent Police, during what is expected to be a challenging period, owing to funding pressures, the devolution agenda, and issues in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). He also emphasised his support for delivery of the PCC's 'Making Kent Safer' Plan.

Other legal and financial considerations include:

- The re-appointment of the CC until December 2029 will provide strong leadership as well as stability during a period of flux.
- There will be no additional financial pressures as a result of this re-appointment.
- The partnerships and collaborative arrangements the CC has driven will be maintained, which is vital to help improve working arrangements across the CJS and with local authorities during devolution.
- The CC will be appointed under the same terms and conditions.
- The CC's participation in the 'Retire and Rehire' scheme is considered a re-appointment, and therefore necessitates a Confirmation Hearing as per the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- The Deputy CC, Mr Peter Ayling, will act as Temporary CC for the one month Mr Smith is not in post.
- All relevant identity and vetting checks have been completed for both CC Smith and DCC Ayling.

RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable as direct decision for the PCC.

DECISION

- i. The CC can participate in the 'Retire and Rehire' scheme.
- ii. The CC will be re-appointed on the same terms and conditions as of 1 April.
- iii. The Deputy CC will act as Temporary CC for the one-month period Mr Smith is not in post.

Chief Finance Officer:

Comments: Not applicable as direct decision for the PCC.

Signature:

Date:

Chief Executive:

Comments: Not applicable as direct decision for the PCC.

Signature:

Date:

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT

Comments: Approved following formal submissions from the Chief Constable and further in-person discussions.

Signature:



Date: 27 January 2025

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

CC request and subsequent submission.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Police and Crime Plan
*(please indicate which objectives
decision/recommendation supports)*

The Chief Constable is responsible for supporting the PCC in delivering the strategy and priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

Has an Equality Impact
Assessment been completed?

Yes ☐ No ☒ *(If yes, please include within background documents)*

Will the decision have a
differential/adverse impact on
any particular diversity strand?
*(e.g. age, disability, gender
reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex,
sexual orientation, marriage/civil
partnership, pregnancy/maternity)*

Yes ☐ No ☐
This relates to the re-appointment of the CC, an administrative process in nature. Therefore, it does not have a differential/adverse impact on any particular strand of diversity.

By: Gaetano Romagnuolo – Panel Clerk

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel, 16 July 2025

Subject: Draft Panel Annual Report – 2024/25

Classification: Unrestricted

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 2024/25 Annual Report of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

Draft Annual Report

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Panel between February 2024 and February 2025. 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 new 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. During February 2024 and February 2025, the Panel met formally 5 times. [The meetings’ agendas and minutes](#) are available to view. In January 2025, 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 2025/26 Precept Proposal.

Panel's business

5. The Panel met its statutory duty in February 2025 to consider, and make recommendations on, the Commissioner's draft '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 2025/26 Budget and Precept Proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) were:
 - A proposed increase in the precept of £14 a year, or 5.5% for a Band D property, equivalent to £1.17 a month, or 3.8p per day.
 - A council tax for an average Band D property of £270.15.
 - An increase in Government funding of £14.1m.
 - A savings gap of £10m.
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 2023/24, which it considered at its meeting on 10 October 2024.
10. Between February 2024 and February 2025, 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 two updates 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.
 - Kent Police Neighbourhood Policing Review update - further to the paper presented at the June 2023 meeting, this report provided the Panel with an update on the implementation of Kent Police's new

Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) Model which came into effect in June 2023.

- 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.
- Shoplifting –the Panel received an overview of the latest recorded, suspected and solved retail crime offences in Kent, and an update of the impact of interventions that stemmed from the Retail Crime Action Plan.
- Road Safety - Preventing harm and saving lives is a core mission of policing. The Panel was offered an overview of the enforcement activity Kent Police undertook to support Vision Zero; an outline of the partnerships that worked in collaboration with Kent Police to make Kent's roads safer and; the support available to road victims and their families.
- Divisional Policing Review – The Panel was given an overview of the Divisional Policing Review (DPR) Investigation Project and its implementation. The Project was one of four workstreams under the DPR (the others were Neighbourhood Policing, Local Policing and the Force Crime and Incident Response).

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, law enforcement and road safety, 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 2024 and February 2025 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 at the meeting in October.

Commissioner's decisions

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

- Decision OPCC D.035.24

Chief Executive's Notice of Intention to Retire

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 2024-25 was £46,711 (compared to £35,848 in 2023-24 and £37,372 in 2022-23). 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

16. 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.
17. 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 2024/25.

Contact:

Gaetano Romagnuolo

gaetano.romagnuolo@kent.gov.uk

Tel: 03000 416624

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Police and Crime Panel - Work Programme – 16 July 2025

Tuesday, 14 October 2024

Complaints against the Commissioner – Annual Report 204/25	Statutory Requirement	PCP Clerk
PCC Annual Report 2024/25	Statutory Requirement	PCC
Neighbourhood Policing Review - Update	Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner	PCC
HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 Inspection	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 and Delivery Board

Date and time: Wednesday 11 December 2024

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

Attendees: Office of the Kent Police and 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)

Apologies:

1.	<u>Welcome & Introduction</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcoming the CC and his team, the PCC expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.
2.	<u>Notes of Previous Meeting – 2 October 2024</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record, and the following actions discharged:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provide an update on the impact of the ASB/serious violence hotspots – included in the Making Kent Safer Plan paper.○ Provide an update on Community Resolutions – to be provided ahead of the February 2025 meeting.
3.	<u>Making Kent Safer Plan: Delivery & Performance</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC advised he would not read the paper verbatim but pick out key points. <p>Work with residents, communities, and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC reported the continued trend of reduction in reported all crime and victim-based crime. He noted solved rates across both types had increased, with an uplift in the use of Community Resolutions.• With regards to ASB, the CC was pleased to note a reduction of 9.5% in reported incidents and thanked the PCC for both his support of the Force's change to the Neighbourhood Policing Model (NHP), and the additional funding obtained from the Home Office.• Noting that whilst it was early days in terms of seeing changes in ASB and the long-term aim was further improvement, there had been some positive results. The CC highlighted work in specific hotspot areas of the county.• The CC reported a continued reduction in burglary business and community offences.• In terms of shoplifting and retail crime, the CC reported an increase in suspects interviewed and charged, and also noted a high number of Out of Court Resolutions including Community Resolutions.• Acknowledging the PCC's interest in Force activity around the NPCC Retail Crime Action Plan, the CC noted good compliance.

- The CC highlighted the work of the Integrated Offender Management Unit (IOM) using Community Protection Warnings and Criminal Protection Notices, as well as good levels of interaction with partners. The CC further highlighted significant work in Maidstone in which offences at one location had reduced from 75 to 11 in October.
- Regarding serious organised retail crime, the CC referred to media that day regarding an Organised Crime Group (OCG) in another area of the country. He referenced the Serious Crime Directorate within Kent Police, and the resulting strong position this provided in terms of specialist resources if those OCGs were to operate in Kent.
- The CC noted a reduction in reported levels of burglary residential, violent crime and robbery.
- The CC acknowledged positive trends, particularly around violent crime reductions and the investment made paying dividend, while noting they were some of the most harmful crime types. The CC reaffirmed the intent of the Force to continually drive the figures down.
- Similarly, regarding hate crime, the CC reported a reduction. He explained this area was monitored carefully, particularly in light of potential reactions to world events. He noted however, that nothing exceptional had recently been recorded by the Community Liaison Team.
- The CC referenced the PCC's request for information on the Divisional Policing Review (DPR) and highlighted information in the paper. He emphasised the objectives matched Force priorities and the PCC's Making Kent Safer Plan. He said the priority was to build the most resilient policing model to continue to provide a high level of service to the public. Whilst the review was recent and he was not complacent, the CC said early signs showed promising opportunities around many of the crime types.
- The CC referenced the combining and centralising of some of the investigation structure and noted that ensuring respective commands worked seamlessly together was a key risk. Whilst initial evidence seemed positive, he advised the PCC he would provide more detailed feedback in the coming months.
- With regards to an administrative review by the Investigation Management Unit (IMU), the PCC asked for detail on the checks and balances that were in place and requested an update on the Force's position. The CC explained that the Crime Data Audit Team, in line with HMICFRS' methodology, checked compliance. He was pleased to report it was 94.9% in October. He noted that whilst this was a slight decrease from the previous year, it was likely due to administrative strains of system upgrades. He reaffirmed the checks and balances were robust and in line with HMICRS's methodology.
- The PCC noted the HMICFRS PEEL Spotlight report referenced the importance of continuity in policing teams to help tackle ASB. He asked how the Force was taking this into account. The CC explained that maintaining continuity was a Force priority, and that the current model was robust in supporting this. He highlighted risks including unforeseen events and workforce planning requirements, but emphasised continual monitoring by the DCC aimed to minimise any detrimental impact. The CC advised of his intent to keep the PCC informed.
- The PCC asked for detail in respect of a deep dive on the Force's compliance with the NPCC Retail Crime Action Plan, particularly in relation to attendance at scene. The CC reported that 89% were attended and offered to provide further detail on the remaining 11%. However, the CC referenced instances within the 11% where the criteria for attendance would not have been met.
- The PCC asked for detail on attendance at residential burglaries and for information on preventative plans/campaigns in the run up to Christmas. The CC reported an attendance rate of over 97%, with non-attendance being underpinned by reasons beyond the Force's control. The CC explained that a lot was done throughout the winter by various departments, with mention of the Safer Winter campaign. He explained the work of the PCSOs in providing preventative messaging.
- The PCC placed on record his thanks for the Force's proactive work around burglary.

Tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- The CC reported how the Force aligned and worked with partners to tackle VAWG, acknowledging the importance of identifying the right tools for professionals to spot early signs of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and respond more quickly.
- Locally, the CC reported positive progress, including the Force's national recognition for Rapid Video Response and its subsequent roll-out nationally, and the near implementation of the MARAC Hub with the addition of the case management system.
- The CC referenced the content of the paper and acknowledged the PCC's familiarity with the ongoing work of Strategic Partnerships and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). He added that the paper detailed examples and outcomes of the Force's work, creativity and dedication surrounding VAWG and good results in that regard.
- With regards to rape, the CC reported a reduction of 9.4%, 50 less offences, as well as an increase in the charged rate. He added more work was underway to understand the significant reduction in reported offences during August.
- The CC acknowledged the increase in reports of sexual offences and explained it was subject to further analysis.

- The PCC commented on good implementation by the Force of the Best Bar None and Ask for Angela schemes. He referenced a report in London showing that bars were not complying with the Ask for Angela scheme and asked if Kent Police was doing anything to ensure this was not replicated locally. The CC highlighted the Force's national recognition for the Best Bar None scheme. He explained that through this scheme, Ask for Angela compliance was a measure used on local establishments. The CC noted further new material was available to partners that underpinned visibility of the schemes using QR codes. Additionally, the CC explained covert deployments were actively used in areas with a night-time economy and had resulted in a number of arrests.
- Whilst acknowledging its relevance to most offences, the PCC highlighted attrition rates within the criminal justice system and asked whether survivors of rape were bravely remaining in the system to the conclusion of their case. The CC affirmed that survivors of rape were staying within the system but noted the detrimental impact of the delays within the criminal justice system. The CC recognised the continued work in this area and the bravery of the survivors, who wanted to see justice done.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- The CC highlighted a reduction in reports of domestic abuse (DA). The trend was also observed in the charged and solved rate, with the CC confirming it was a key focus for the Force. He advised that the DCC, who chaired the Force Performance meeting would speak further about the challenges.
- The DCC provided a comprehensive update, noting the reduction in charged rate was a performance priority. He reiterated that work was being done to understand victim attrition within the system and to engage with partners who offered support to victims.
- The CC stated adult protection and violence against the person (VAP) were crime types where a reduction in reports was observed.
- The CC highlighted work by the Serious and Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) with regards to operations into child sexual exploitation.
- The CC highlighted a case study showing the work of the Fraud Investigation Unit.
- Whilst noting the good reductions in DA and VAP, the PCC asked for detail on understanding the reasons behind this. The CC explained that whilst some may be due to changes in the Home Office Counting Rules, more work was needed to identify and understand the detail behind the reductions. The DCC clarified the CC's stance and added it may also be influenced by activity surrounding preventative policing measures.

Combat organised crime and county lines

- Whilst recognising the decrease in live OCGs, the CC also noted a reduction in disruptions. He explained this may be due to the often non-linear timeline of investigations but had asked for further work to be undertaken. The CC highlighted the work of the East SOC Team in collaboration with The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority in Canterbury and the upturn in arrests within the period.
- The PCC acknowledged the good work, with the decreasing number of OCGs a strong positive sign.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

- The CC noted the continued impressive work of the Special Constabulary. Referencing their commitment to policing, he highlighted the number of arrests and Traffic Offence Reports detailed in the paper.
- The CC was pleased with the FCIR's performance and reported a good level of sustainability in this regard. He noted that the performance of the FCIR compared positively nationally on multiple fronts.
- The PCC placed on record his thanks for the superb performance of the FCIR and the focus on it from the CC.
- Considering the government target to recruit more Special Constables, the PCC asked what events were planned to help achieve it. The CC assured the PCC there was a provisional plan to train 96 Special Constables, but advised it was not firm due to uncertainty around the government target.
- With regards to borderless response being replaced with Operation Ripple, the PCC asked the CC to clarify the position on resource deployment. The CC clarified the purpose of Operation Ripple was to remind officers of their role in responding to calls, and that it sought to reaffirm this would sometimes be inter-district. The CC highlighted the work being undertaken to ensure the right level of resource was available in the right places.
- In relation to Right Care, Right Person, the PCC asked if any partners had raised concerns about gaps in service provision. Acknowledging the PCCs support, the DCC explained that partners had not reported anything negative and that going into 2025 he expected to see reliance on Kent Police fall further. If there were gaps in service, the DCC believed it was on the health side and recognised the need to monitor continually, alongside partners.
- The PCC asked for detail on action taken to reduce motorcycle theft. The CC stated it was an area of focus and extensive activity. He highlighted the use of drones and collaboration with partners within the

community and at a school level. Despite the activity, the CC recognised it was an area where more work was needed.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

- Recognising the impact of serious collisions, the CC reported a reduction of 65% in fatalities, but an increase in serious injuries. He highlighted the work of the SCIU in providing thorough scene investigations.
- In terms of wider enforcement, the CC highlighted various workshops and operations in the education of safe road use, with positive levels of engagement and enforcement. The CC emphasised the work of the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit and their role in enforcement.
- The PCC asked what action was being taken to address the disproportionate number of motorcyclist fatalities. The CC noted it was an area of concern, with motorcyclist fatalities accounting for 25% of road deaths. He acknowledged the work of the Kent and Medway Safer Roads partnership, particularly highlighting activity at Brands Hatch and visits to cafes popular for biker meets. The CC noted it was of interest to explore the bike simulator already used in Devon and Cornwall.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- The CC reported a decrease in child protection related offences of 95 for the period. He advised it was against the backdrop of restructuring Child Protection Teams within the DPR.
- The CC highlighted the incredible Volunteer Police Cadets, which had received the King's Award for Voluntary Service. He put on record his thanks to all staff involved in the scheme and to the PCC for his ongoing support.
- The PCC also endorsed the phenomenal scheme and asked that his congratulations and thanks be placed on record to the Cadets, the Force, and past Leaders for receiving the King's Award.

Action

- **Provide further detail on the 11% of retail incidents not attended by the Force.**

4. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

HMICFRS publication – An inspection report on progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offence investigations in early adopter forces

- In terms of Operation Soteria, the DCC summarised HMICFRS' methodology, referencing that Kent was included in the inspection. The DCC explained there were a number of findings, with Kent receiving favourable commentary. He highlighted that most forces had a good response to rape and serious sexual offences and effective use of RASSO scrutiny panels. A shortage of detectives nationally was noted as a performance challenge. The DCC also referenced the difficulties within the criminal justice system and the subsequent impact on detectives.
- Of the recommendations made by HMICFRS within the report, the DCC was confident good progress had already been made, noting that they were under continual monitoring.
- Noting the national shortage of detectives and that early advice from the CPS was found to not always work well, the PCC asked whether evidence of these issues existed in Kent. The DCC confirmed the Force was in a strong position. He reported, against a target of 532, the existence of 496 detectives, with more officers working to accreditation. Referencing the early advice, the DCC affirmed this was not the case in Kent and clarified a good working relationship with the CPS meant that should issues arise, the Force was in an advantageous position to resolve them.

HMICFRS publication – An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing

- The DCC provided an overview of the recommendations. He explained there was a heavy focus on the review of policies and practices, applying clear guidance for officers around visible representation and dealing with non-crime incidents.

HMICFRS publication – The police response to stalking: report on the super complaint made by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust on behalf of National Stalking Consortium

- The methodology of the inspection was outlined by the DCC. He explained investigations into stalking offences and the safeguarding of victims were positive areas observed by HMICFRS. The need to understand the scale and type of offending was identified. Of the recommendations made, the DCC highlighted the need to publish an action plan which the Force had done.

- As part of the PEEL 2023/25 report, the CC highlighted the observation of innovative work in identifying stalking, and the establishment of Multi-Agency Stalking Prevention Panels in Kent.

HMICFRS publication – The policing response to ASB

- Despite previous good commentary, the DCC emphasised the Force was not complacent. Areas of focus included collection of data, working with partners and the use of problem-solving tactics to disrupt ASB.
- The DCC advised, that of the recommendations made, there was good progress.
- Referencing upcoming performance framework changes, the DCC noted there would be an emphasis on perception of policing to help tackle ASB. He expected the changes to be implemented in 2025.
- Noting renewed focus on perception, the CE sought assurance of focus around other methods of policing including activity within problem solving. Whilst recognising the importance of perception in policing, the DCC explained the Force also recognised other areas. He advised that beyond collection of data, there was also a focus on the importance of how the data was used to problem solve.

Update on PEEL 2023/25 – An inspection of Kent Police

- The DCC highlighted progress in addressing the areas for improvement (AFIs). He focussed on those surrounding Responding to the Public, noting the early closure of three out of four AFIs. Despite this, the DCC referenced the ongoing review and offered assurance that it remained a focus for the Force.
- The DCC explained the greatest focus was currently on the Investigating Crime AFIs. It was his opinion that they were indicative of a younger workforce, explaining the need to continue driving consistency through policy and leadership.
- The CC added a consultation on the new PEEL framework was expected to result in changes to the question structure and methodology. He offered to provide the PCC with an update when more detail was received.

Internal and External Audit Functions

- The DCC noted that EY had finished their value for money assessment for 2022/23 and it had been presented to the Joint Audit Committee (JAC).

Action

- **Provide an update on the new PEEL framework once more detail is known.**

5. People

- With a maintenance target for 2024/25 of 4,223 officers, the DCC was confident in the Force's ability to meet this, with two intakes scheduled for January and March 2025.
- The DCC noted strong feedback was received regarding the Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP). He highlighted work undertaken by the Learning and Development Teams in aiding an uplift of funding available for Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) students.
- Moving to representation within the Force, the DCC reported a good level of applicants identifying as female and/or from ethnic minority backgrounds. Recognising this was good news, the DCC also noted the level of conversion to employment was not as high, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Regarding the conversion rate, the DCC acknowledged work undertaken by the Inclusion Team to drive up diversity. Of note, school and college engagement programmes across the county and the Positive Action Engagement Programme (PAEP) which offered tailored support and guidance. He promoted the PAEP, which had benefitted 157 candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds. The DCC reported on the use of the More than a Badge podcast to complement outreach work, which had received positive feedback on relatability.
- The DCC confirmed Kent to be in line with national findings on leaver analysis, noting most leavers were young in service, citing alternative employment or health related issues. He explained detailed analysis was communicated with Heads of Departments to respond to any trends identified. The DCC highlighted the success of the Retention Ambassador Programme.
- Citing absence data, the DCC noted a slight increase in days lost, highlighting East Division and PSE and PCSO absence. He confirmed a process was undertaken by the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) to provide interventions and support where necessary, explaining the role of the Be the Change programme in providing leaders with appropriate skills.
- The DCC praised the work of Occupational Health, acknowledging their national recognition in decreasing the referral time from 17.5 days to 11.4, with it currently at less than ten working days.

- The PCC noted the declining proportion of females joining via Investigate First and asked for any rationale. The DCC explained whilst the proportion had decreased, the volume of female applicants had continued to increase, noting an increase of 33 applicants in the last year. Proportionally, the DCC acknowledged the decline in females was offset by an increase in male applicants.
- Citing the 525 live applications in November 2024, the PCC asked whether numbers of applicants across the overall recruitment pipeline were being sustained compared to previous years. The DCC confirmed numbers to be consistent, noting 520 applicants in 2023 and 517 in 2022 for the same month. In response to interest by the CE about the time taken to recruit, the CC explained the volume remained, but there were delays in the process due to vetting.

6. **Finance**

- The CC reported the Force was projecting a £0.5m underspend.
- The CC highlighted the increase in cost of Police Officer Injury Pensions. Whilst acknowledging work was done to mitigate the circumstances, the CC recognised the large financial impact one case could have.
- With reference to savings, the CC acknowledged the position regarding police staff and PCSO vacancy factors. He explained, whilst an area of saving, the current level of police staff vacancies presented a significant challenge operationally.
- The CC stated he remained hopeful the Force would receive recompense surrounding the change in legislation on XL Bullies.
- The CC reported the estimated capital spend was £18.2m, an underspend of £6.4m against a budget of £24.6m.
- Thanking the PCC for his involvement in government conversations, the CC noted the impact of pay scale increases on overall Force expenditure.
- In summary, the CC advised substantial savings would need to be made across the coming years and acknowledged the associated performance challenges. The CC reaffirmed his desire to ensure the Force continued to provide a high-level service to the people of Kent.
- Considering recent confirmation of National Insurance increases, the PCC asked if the Force had investigated the potential impact. Recognising the financial pressure this could put on the Force, the CC also explained he had not received clarity on the matter.

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

- Recognising the PCC's previous interest, the CC explained the EU Entry/Exit system had been delayed and was now expected to commence in spring 2025. He detailed the plan to phase the introduction over six months which was favourable to the UK and would reduce the risk to Kent. The CC emphasised the commencement date had not been confirmed, so a level of risk remained.
- Referencing the early release of prisoners (SDS40 scheme), the CC advised the Force was now operating business as usual around the matter and updated the PCC on both tranches in Kent. He detailed tranche one, 66 offenders released with 17 having now been recalled. Tranche two saw 28 offenders released with no recalls currently. The CC expressed a need for heightened focus around intelligence checks for high-risk prisoners.

In closing, the PCC thanked the CC and DCC for the reports and their teams for producing them. He also thanked those joining online and expressed good wishes for the New Year.

	Status	Owner	Due Date
Provide further detail on the 11% of retail incidents not attended by the Force.	Open	Force	19/02/2025
Provide an update on the new PEEL framework once more detail is known.	Open	Force	19/02/2025

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 19 February 2025

MEETING NOTES

Title: Performance & Delivery Board

Date and time: 19 February 2025

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

Attendees: **Office of the Kent Police and 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)
- Nigel Brookes – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Apologies:

Kent Police:

- Peter Ayling – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

1.	Welcome & Introduction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PCC welcomed the CC and his team. He expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.
2.	Notes of Previous Meeting – 11 December 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record, and the following actions discharged:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provide further detail on the 11% of retail incidents not attended by the Force – written update received with thanks.○ Provide update on the new PEEL framework once more detail is known – update received with thanks.
3.	Making Kent Safer: Delivery & Performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC advised he would not read the paper verbatim but pick out key points. <p>Work with residents, communities, and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC noted the increase in all crime and reasoned this to be a result of increases in crimes against society.• Regarding recorded victim-based crime, the CC was pleased to advise of a continued reduction and a slight increase in solved rate. However, he acknowledged further analysis was needed to understand the increase in December.• The CC reported an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and noted the unusually high level in November. In this regard, the CC outlined the potential role of hotspot centred activity as part of ASB awareness week. The CC noted that while a sustained reduction was the goal, the recording of previously hidden ASB was positive.• Referencing increased recording of shoplifting and retail crime, the CC highlighted it as a trend seen nationally and not necessarily indicative of a problem bespoke to Kent. He further reported that Kent Police's response was keeping pace, with a substantial increase in suspects interviewed and Out of Court Resolutions (OoCRs).• With reference to the PCCs request for detail on the use of OoCRs, the CC summarised details in the paper on the checks, balances and application framework. Despite the lack of national comparisons, the CC advised tentative evidence from Kent suggested OoCRs were effective in addressing an offender's behaviour.• The CC noted decreases in burglary business and community, and burglary residential.• Regarding recorded violent crime, the CC reported a decrease over the three-month reporting period. A reduction in both robbery and hate crime were also observed by the CC.

- With regards to the Divisional Policing Review (DPR) which went live on 14 October, the CC advised it was too early to comment definitively on its success. He also noted a Post Implementation Review was scheduled and offered to provide the PCC with an update.
- The CC highlighted the impact of vacancy rates as a result of the DPR and reaffirmed his commitment to minimising this through new intakes.
- Noting drug offences had increased by 8.9%, the PCC asked whether this was mainly due to activity in Grip Zones and/or linked to the work of Beat Officers. The CC confirmed it was likely both, with significant increases in arrests/seizures in Grip Zones and intelligence from Beat Officers leading to more enforcement activity. The CC also praised ongoing anti-drug campaigns.
- The PCC asked whether the Force's recent focus on motorcycle theft had positively impacted associated crime rates. The CC reported that through county-wide activity, offences had significantly reduced, and there had been an increase in suspect outcomes.
- Commending the achievement of keeping pace with shoplifting offences, the PCC asked how Op Pegasus and Opal were supporting the Force's efforts. The CC confirmed the Force received intelligence from Op Pegasus, and that on a number of occasions it had resulted in preventative and enforcement activity.

Tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- The CC highlighted various workstreams including the launch of the Vulnerability Strategy, work with the University of Kent, Rapid Video Response (RVR) and partnership work to engage men and boys with the topic of VAWG. The CC stated that Kent Police has a comprehensive strategy to tackle VAWG, but commented there was still more to do.
- Noting the increase in rape offences, the CC advised that following further analysis no obvious trend or explanation had been found.
- The CC reported that sexual offences had also increased. He was satisfied it was linked to the introduction of new offences around sharing/threatening to share intimate photographs.
- Concerned about the increase in rape and sexual offences, the PCC asked whether the CC was reassured the 'Ask for Angela' scheme was operating effectively across the county. The CC confirmed he was reassured and noted that 109 premises were signed up. He emphasised his intention to continue pushing the scheme countywide, and that it was one initiative of many, also highlighting wider activity such as Op Vigilant and VAWG events.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- Noting domestic abuse was one of the biggest categories of crime Kent Police responded to, the CC reported a 2.4% reduction in recorded crime over the three-month period.
- The CC also noted reductions in recorded adult protection and violence against the person (VAP) offences.
- Highlighting a reduction in knife crime offences and an increase in charged and solved rates, the CC stressed the importance of Op Sceptre, a national week of focus which had resulted in 36 arrests. He also noted the ongoing success of the Knife Pledge which had contributed to a 32% decrease in youth related crime.
- The CC reported a slight increase in fraud offences.
- Noting the large reduction in adult protection and VAP offences in November, the PCC sought reassurance that the Force understood the reasons. The CC acknowledged unusual patterns of activity in November, advising that Op Sceptre and the ASB awareness week would have had an impact. He also highlighted a 57% reduction in NHS admissions for sharp injuries in under 25s which he said was evidence of a true reduction in crime.

Combat organised crime, county lines and serious crime

- Noting the paper highlighted just a portion of the Force's work, the CC highlighted various case studies across different crime types including drug, sexual and violent offences.
- Referring to the reinvigoration of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), the CC said the Force was beginning to see positive results in terms of quality and volume of intelligence but cautioned that this needed to be sustained.
- The PCC asked for an update on the status of County Lines operating within the county. The CC advised there were 42 known to be in operation, with 15 in East division, 21 in North Division and 6 in West Division.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of the communities

- The CC praised the Special Constabulary's excellent service to the public and noted their seamless collaboration with regular officers in the community.
- Commending Community Policing Volunteers and Police Support Volunteers for their extensive hours, the CC emphasised their role in supporting public safety and the work of the Force.

- Reporting on Force Crime and Incident Response, the CC noted a slight decrease in performance over the period, particularly in December, but said he was satisfied it had been identified, and the reasons were fully understood. Through further discussion the CC remained assured of its sustained good performance when compared nationally.
- Highlighting the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs, the CC stressed the significant challenges it posed, noting the impact was both financial and operational.
- With regards to the costs associated with the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs, the PCC enquired about the current position on reimbursement by the Government. The CC explained it was still under negotiation with the Home Office. Despite this, the CC was of the opinion that the impact should not be on local operational policing and remained hopeful in this regard.
- The PCC asked if the CC was confident the Force could meet the Government's target to recruit 70-80 Special Constables over the next four years. The CC asserted unless there was a dramatic change, he was assured of the Force's ability to meet the target through a gradual recruitment process.

Prevent road danger and support vision zero

- The CC highlighted the high levels of enforcement activity connected to the fatal four road dangers.
- Reporting an 11% reduction in road deaths, the CC emphasised the ultimate goal of zero injuries/deaths on Kent's roads.
- Referring to Op Limit which saw 316 people arrested for driving offences, the CC noted this was a reduction on last year and so further analysis was needed.
- The CC commended the work of the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit.
- Noting national data suggested the number of death or serious injury investigations Kent started had increased over the last year, the PCC asked if this was due to particular factors, such as speeding or drink/drug driving, and whether the Force had sufficient capacity to investigate them. The CC advised the reasons predominantly stemmed from the fatal four but also noted that due to different definitions and varying timelines there would always be a variance between national data and investigations conducted by the Force. The CC stated he had no concerns about the Serious Collision Investigation Unit's capacity, noting additional staff had recently been deployed and it was reviewed regularly.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- The CC reported an increase in child protection related offences and explained work was underway to understand the reasons.
- Whilst highlighting recent intakes into the cadet programme, the CC congratulated all cadets and volunteer leaders on been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service which would be presented in April 2025.
- Referencing recent work on online safety which found parents were worried about the risks of smartphones/social media and 80% would support a smartphone ban in schools, the PCC asked whether the Force would support the parent-led campaign to promote children under 14 not having smartphones and children not joining social media until age 16. Whilst mindful of his role, the CC agreed everything that could be done, should be to protect children and acknowledged that movement in this area would likely have a positive effect on criminality.

Action

- Force: Provide an update on the findings from the DPR Post Implementation Review.

4. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

HMICFRS publication – The policing response to anti-social behaviour

- The ACC outlined the PEEL spotlight report which made a number of recommendations for forces, including the effective collection/sharing/analysis of data; ensuring neighbourhood policing (NHP) resources were not diverted from their main duties, and using problem-solving approaches effectively.
- The ACC highlighted that Kent Police received a grading of 'Good' in the two most recent PEEL inspections and explained this gave Kent Police a good basis on which to build using the recommendations.
- Of the eight recommendations, the ACC reported one had been met through the implementation of a comprehensive training package and advised of good progress on the others.

HMICFRS publication – An inspection of the police response to public disorder in July and August 2024

- Noting Kent was not inspected, the ACC advised that, in summary, the report found forces needed to ensure they were better prepared to plan and respond to serious violence and disorder.
- Areas for improvement (AFIs) included timeliness of the National Mobilisation Plan, training of public order public safety (POPS) officers and engagement with the National Police Wellbeing Service.

- Conversely, areas of praise included the bravery and commitment of POPS officers and the quick identification and prosecution of offenders.
- The ACC advised a working group had been established to manage the Force's response to the report, but good progress had been made, particularly around the training of POPS officers.
- Referring to a wellbeing survey that was sent to all officers deployed to the disorder, the PCC sought assurance that Kent was included and asked about the findings. Assuring the PCC of the Force's commitment to officer wellbeing, the ACC confirmed the survey was sent to Kent officers and noted feedback was widely positive, with no injuries reported nor concerns regarding kit/uniform.
- Thanking the ACC, the PCC asked what information was shared with new officer recruits about Flint House Police Rehabilitation. The ACC advised all recruits were briefed on the services available through Flint House, along with their ability to contribute through monthly stipends.

Update on PEEL 2023/25 - An inspection of Kent Police

- The ACC advised that five of the 14 AFIs had now been met by the Force. He further emphasised work undertaken in response to the four 'Responding to the Public' AFIs which had allowed three to be closed.
- The ACC noted work was ongoing to ensure police attendance and response times were timely and appropriate.
- Regarding the 'Investigating Crime' AFIs, the ACC reported progress in the form of additional training and a refresh of the Investigative Improvement Plan. He also acknowledged charged and solved rates had improved since the PEEL inspection.
- For the 'Protecting Vulnerable People' AFI, the ACC noted work was underway to ensure protective orders were being used effectively.
- Acknowledging the increased solved rate, the PCC asked whether the Force was confident that all reasonable lines of enquiry were being followed up. Agreeing that the increased solved rate provided an element of reassurance, the ACC also said he was confident that the Force's processes for reviewing and governing the quality of investigations was rigorous.
- Noting it could be included in the next PEEL inspection, the PCC asked about the Force's capacity and capability to tackle fraud. The ACC expressed confidence in Kent Police's ability to prevent and investigate fraud. He explained the Force held the unique asset of the Serious Crime Directorate's specialist Fraud Team, as well as expert advice from the Economic Crime Unit and a network of Prevent and Protect Coordination Officers.

Internal and External Audit Functions

- The ACC advised progress of the audits was in line with the timetable and actions were being monitored and fulfilled.

5. People

Recruitment plan

- Reporting on the maintenance headcount target, the ACC noted Kent Police had met and exceeded the target by one at the most recent milestone.
- The ACC noted the Force was on track to sustain the maintenance headcount at the next milestone, with the most recent and subsequent intake in March projected to total 119 new recruits.
- Looking to the future, the ACC confirmed the Force was planning four intakes to maintain its headcount but also noted there was flexibility should the situation warrant it.
- The ACC highlighted increased performance by the Vetting department. He explained a strategic review was underway to ensure there was capacity to meet demand and emphasised the Force's commitment to maintaining high standards.
- Noting public interest in DBS checks, the PCC requested an update on the backlog. The ACC noted the team was funded entirely by the DBS and processed around 94,000 applications per year. He advised currently there were 3,660 applications over 60 days old, but this was a significant decrease from the previous year, when it peaked at over 6,000 applications. He assured the PCC of the Force's focus in this area and outlined a comprehensive set of actions to reduce the delays further, including a structural review of the team which was underway.

Diversity application data and force representation

- Of just under 2,000 applications, the ACC reported 13% were from individuals of ethnic minority backgrounds. Acknowledging this was lower than the previous year, the ACC noted the proportion was higher than that of the active economic population.

- The ACC reported 36.5% of applicants were female which was a slight increase from the previous financial year. He also noted the Investigate First programme attracted a higher proportion of female applicants.
- With regards to Force representation, the ACC reported 3.72% of officers were from an ethnic minority background, and 35.6% female. He also noted progress in the most recent intake whereby 4.7% were from an ethnic minority background and 41.4% female.

Local and national work to enhance recruitment (including diversity)

- The ACC advised of a recent increase in the number of Recruitment Ambassadors and noted the work of the Positive Active Engagement Programme in offering 1:1 support to individuals.
- Summarising outreach and marketing activity, the ACC highlighted the number of individuals impacted and of those, the high proportion of individuals from ethnic minority and females. He also emphasised the large reach of the 'More Than A Badge' podcast and its ability to bring alive a policing career.

Local and national work to enhance retention

- Noting projected leaving officer numbers, the ACC highlighted real-time data from the financial year showed a trend below what was expected.
- The ACC reported reasons for leaving were varied, with the highest portion due to resignations, with those young-in-service most likely to resign.
- Trends for police staff were noted to be similar with personal/professional development the most common reason for leaving.
- The ACC asserted there was little evidence of financial hardship in the leavers data, reporting that 3% of officers and 6% police staff cited pay/renumeration as the primary reason. Regarding secondary business interests, the ACC reported a slight yearly increase for police officers, but a decrease for police staff.

PCSO Update

- The ACC advised the current PCSO strength was 10.94 fte below Establishment but highlighted the Force's commitment to recruitment with an intake planned for May 2025.

Neighbourhood policing model representation update

- ACC Brookes noted representation of ethnic minority officers within NHP teams was in line with overall Force representation but was lower for females.

Attendance and wellbeing

- Summarising findings, the ACC reported that for the period April to December 2024, the average days lost per officer was 7.04 (lower than last year, but higher than the previous six years), and for staff 7.84 (higher than the previous eight years). The ACC advised psychological related absences were the most common for both officers and staff.
- Referencing oversight of employee absence, the ACC detailed a comprehensive strategy shaped through the Force Performance Committee and Chief Officer Management Board to ensure it was fully understood and managed. He reported interventions into long-term sickness had increased over the past financial year.
- The ACC emphasised recent sustained improvements in Occupational Health referral times and highlighted the winter health programme which saw a successful roll-out of winter vaccines.

6. Finance

- The CC advised his update would be brief due to little change in the summary position.
- Referring to the costs detailed in the paper, the CC highlighted the impact of pay scale increases and the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs. He noted the real-time cost associated with XL Bully dogs was now neared £1m and continued to put substantial pressure on the Force.
- In terms of leavers, the CC noted this continued to impact the Force despite the recent reduction.
- The CC reaffirmed administrative and financial challenges posed by the vacancy factor and the Force's commitment to fair distribution of vacancies where possible.
- Noting projections in the Medium-term Financial Plan (MTFP), the CC thanked the PCC for his support with the council tax precept and NHP funding bid submitted to the Government. Acknowledging the potential opportunities, the CC maintained the savings needed remained the Force's biggest challenge.
- Observant of the projected underspend for the financial year, the PCC asked whether it could help with the financial challenges in 2025/26. The CC asserted he was mindful of how any saving could be maximised to benefit the Force operationally and acknowledged it would help.

- Regarding recent announcements around increased firearms licensing fees, the PCC asked about early work to assess the impact and how it could be used to both improve the service and reduce costs. The CC advised work was in its infancy but showed promising projections. He reported that if 80% of current licensed holders continued along with new licenses, £200,000-£400,000 extra would come into the Force. The CC stated first and foremost it would be used to ensure the Firearms Licensing team's performance was where it should be, and any remaining income used operationally or in support of the MTFP.

7. Topical Issues & Update on Significant Operational Matters

- Outlining investigations of note, the CC advised of the large Force commitment to the murder at Knockholt and a positive result in relation to the organised theft of over £1m of watches from Bluewater. An operation in Maidstone was also highlighted which saw 41 shoplifters charged with theft offences in January.

In closing, the PCC thanked the CC and his team for producing the papers and his own team for their support with the technology.

	Status	Owner	Due Date
Provide an update on the findings from the DPR Post Implementation Review	Open	Force	16/09/2025

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 28 May 2025