

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Neighbourhood Policing Review - Update
Date: 18 December 2024

Introduction:

1. Further to the paper presented at the July meeting, this report provides an update on Kent Police's Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) Model.
2. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

The model:

3. With significant changes to the policing landscape, the core NHP guidelines requiring all forces to have an appropriate model which provides visible and efficient NHP, in line with local priorities, and Kent Police requiring permanent revenue savings, the Chief Officer Team decided the time was right to remodel NHP in Kent.
4. The NHP Model was launched in June 2023, with a phased uplift in resources to September 2024.
5. The model consists of:
 - Beat Officers
 - Neighbourhood Taskforces (NTF)
 - Child Centred Policing Teams (CCPTs)
 - Strategic Prevention Command (including a Prevention Hub and the Rural Task Force)

Current Position:

6. The Force has maintained its commitment to ensuring that every ward has a named officer responsible for the area, who is accessible and able to effectively address concerns or emerging trends. This information is easily accessible via the Single Online Home platform, and complements the existing two way communication with officers via the use of 'My Community Voice'.
7. The implementation of the model has been received positively both internally and externally. Feedback from public, partners and stakeholders has been complimentary of all strands, those being: increased visibility and engagement with local officers; early interaction and intervention with children and young people; and the impact on anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the county.
8. The model remains unchanged from that originally proposed with only minor adjustments. A review of each of the roles' Service Level Agreements is underway to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of each team.
9. The Force has a policy which prevents neighbourhood officers, including PCSOs, being abstracted from their core function. However, on occasions where unforeseen spontaneous incidents occur which require a police response, neighbourhood officers will not be excluded; Beat Officers will also regularly deal with emergency incidents that occur within their beat. The decision to deploy follows a structured process to ensure the most appropriate patrol is utilised. Another potential abstraction will be through the daily management meeting under the direction of the Superintendent to provide additional support when required; an example being the stabbing at Gillingham Barracks whereby scene control and additional reassurance patrols were necessary.

10. At the direction of the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing, to prevent officers unduly completing bureaucratic tasks that detract from their core roles and being active in their communities, they do not specifically record the amount of time they spend within their areas. Via the use of the Engagement Tracker on My Community Voice, patrols record engagement and community events that they attend or organise within their local areas.
11. The financial savings expected from the implementation of the NHP Model have been realised with a full saving of £7.1 million being achieved.
12. As reported in the previous paper, following a Post Implementation Review, the following were highlighted as areas the Force needed to focus on:
- Integration of the NTFs with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and newly formed Integrated Neighbourhood Teams within the Integrated Care Partnership in order to provide a fully integrated multiagency provision.
Update: The NTFs continue to work well collaboratively with the CSPs, sharing information to coordinate activity. The integrated Neighbourhood Teams within the Integrated Care Partnerships are in the initial phases at this time, and a strategic commitment to align them has been received.
 - The response to early prevention of exploitation to vulnerable adults and children and how this links to the teams who have investigative responsibility around these groups.
Update: With the increase in officer numbers, the CCPTs are now able to investigate school-based crime to make early interventions and identify vulnerability and exploitation. CCPT officers work closely with partner agencies and organisations, as well as the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), to ensure those at risk of exploitation are identified early and intervention and diversion activity undertaken by the most appropriate organisation.
 - Further enhancement of the tasking of Neighbourhood Teams in line with the Force's review of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) to ensure neighbourhood offenders, problems and requirement for targeted activity is as effective as can be.
Update: The NIM is now embedded and actively driving the tasking of officers in their daily business and targeted activity. To assist in this, each District liaises with their CSP to ensure the sharing of information to best target activity, as well as utilising the VRUs tactical assessments.
 - Achieving full implementation by the end of September 2024 to realise the full benefits of the NHP Model.
Update: There has been a consistent increase in the resourcing of the model and the aim remains to ensure all NHP teams are 100% resourced. Each phase of the projected uplift has been achieved; in line with other teams, there remain some vacancies that have naturally arisen through promotions, external transfers, and officers changing roles for lateral development. Resourcing of the model remains under close scrutiny by Chief Officers via the Force Resourcing Board.
13. The NHP Model has enabled the Force to embed dedicated teams within every district and ensure a proactive partnership response to community engagement, problem solving and targeted activity. It is achieving its strategic objectives and implementation is now complete, with daily resourcing being managed locally to meet operational demand.

Benefits being realised:

14. Engaging Communities

- i) The Force has just begun its fourth year utilising 'My Community Voice' (MCV), a secure, two-way engagement platform using the Neighbourhood Alert system to directly engage with the public. 34 police forces use this system, and it is recognised nationally as the leading platform. It is also the same platform that Neighbourhood Watch use, so allows the Force to link in with the 584 schemes registered in Kent through Our Watch.
- ii) Since the last update, there has been a marked increase in the total number of users to over 24,000. The average message share of 9.6 per person suggests the true reach via the platform could be over 230,000. In the latest round of statistics, 97.98% stated they found the email alerts useful. The most prominent benefit of MCV compared to other platforms is the ability to maintain private communications between the police and the public, encouraging trust and confidence in submissions of intelligence. Kent are currently 5th in the country for representation from seldom heard communities on the Neighbourhood Alert System.
- iii) The volume of engagement with communities has risen dramatically as a result of the implementation of the NHP Model. July to October 2024, neighbourhood officers recorded attendance at:

- 703 engagement events
 - 672 meetings
 - 144 surgeries
 - 792 school or youth visits
 - 92 Parish Council meetings
- iv) Following discussion with the PCC, the Chief Constable has made a commitment that local officers will attend one Parish Council meeting per quarter to provide exceptional updates. This has been well received by Councillors and has seen high compliance by officers.
- v) The Rural Task Force (RTF) are innovative in their engagement methods including the use of, as a Force exception, WhatsApp, with Farmwatch enabling fast time response and information sharing to tackle rural crime and apprehend suspects promptly.
- vi) The Force has Community Liaison Officers working closely with communities - a minimum of one per district - who actively seek out new opportunities to engage and build relationships with lesser heard communities, as well as providing tactical support and guidance to local officers. Independent Advisory Groups also enable the Force to work with a wide range of communities to assist with various matters including the writing of internal policy. The Police Race Action Plan is being progressed within Kent Police with positive steps made.

15. Problem Solving

- i) The OSARA principles of problem solving are firmly established within the Force and the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing hosts bi-annual forums whereby District Commanders update on activity to ensure qualitative assessment and the sharing of best practice. The use of Proactive Management Plans (PMPs) on Athena and the implementation of stringent review processes has also ensured that problem-solving activity retains focus, drive and momentum and actively encourages partner participation.
- ii) With support from the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, the Force has been allocated £1,568,614 from the Home Office hotspot response fund to combat ASB and serious violence. Kent has 27 hotspot locations across the county for 2024/25 which have been identified through extensive analytical review. 24 of which encompass serious violence and ASB, and 3 which focus on ASB only. The funds have been divided, with £600,000 for hotspot additional police patrols, £500,000 for problem solving activity, and the remainder being utilised to fund an Inspector and Sergeant, as well as full time analytical support and IT software. This ensures activity is coordinated and evidence-based to achieve maximum impact. Each hotspot has a PMP assigned to it to set specific actions and record activity. All hotspot PMPs are reviewed monthly by the Strategic Prevention Command to ensure the Home Office funding is being used effectively and progress tracked. All neighbourhood officers attend the NHP Enhanced training course which develops expertise in problem-orientated-policing and underlines the importance of evidence-based techniques. During quarter two, officers completed over 5,000 hours of visible patrol in hotspot locations; this figure includes tasked patrolling as part of core duties and additional duties on overtime shifts paid from the funding.
- iii) The first 'Clear, Hold, Build' project has been undertaken in Medway. The concept sees police and partners carry out targeted, high-impact enforcement to 'Clear' an area. The next phase seeks to 'Hold' an area through enhanced visibility and engagement, to prevent problems re-emerging. Finally, in the 'Build' phase, work is carried out with residents, partners and community stakeholders to encourage greater resilience and prosperity. Whilst the project remains ongoing in the Chatham area, it has seen the following results:
- 21 arrests to date
 - 148 intelligence reports to date
 - 1 x successful Closure Order, 2 x Closure Orders in progress
 - 2 x warrants
 - Op Colour – illegal vapes – successful operation with multiple seizures of unregulated vapes (police and Trading Standards). Further day of action being planned
 - Ongoing work with council around fly tipping, possible illegal car business
 - 3 engagement days in local school – teachers, children, and parents – positive feedback from local resident regarding increased feelings of safety and reduction in ASB
 - MHS family estate day held in August – successful day, high footfall and positive feedback from residents.
 - Engagement by Youth Services with young people – ongoing

Medway Council assumed the lead for the 'Hold' phase from 25 November, with operational tasking meetings now council led.

16. Targeted Activity

- i) The refreshed NIM, alongside the NHP Model, has improved the tasking process for officers and staff and subsequently their targeted activity. This ranges from targeting those individuals causing the most harm in communities, to specific locations requiring increased police activity. Where possible, Community Safety Units are either already or making efforts to co-locate with partners to have the greatest impact possible.
- ii) Examples of recent activity include:
 - ASB
 - Reports of ASB fell by almost 70% following a coordinated response to concerns raised in the Fant area of Maidstone. During July and August 2024, there were 29 and 23 reports of ASB respectively. Many of the issues were related to parks and other open areas near Tonbridge Road. In September, the number of reported ASB incidents reduced to just seven, following the use of targeted activity. Stop and search powers were used, eight vehicles seized including two e-scooters, and an off-road bike.
 - Op Young (nuisance youths, ASB, shopliftings, violence) identified a number of youths who were causing issues in the Dover area. The CCPT took ownership of the issue, targeting their activity, and achieved arrests, charges, Community Protection Notices, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, educational school inputs, referrals and interventions. 12 months ago, 13 of the top 20 offenders on the Harm Index Tool in the location were Op Young offenders, however within 90 days of activity commencing this reduced to 7, and is currently down to just 2.
 - Rural Task Force
 - Officers from the RTF took part in the National Rural Crime Action Week which ran from 21-27 October 2024. They worked with members of the rural community and agencies to carry out extra activity to target rural crime. PCSOs attended community engagement events, undertook rural surveys and provided safeguarding and crime prevention advice to rural business and residents. A total of 10 arrests were made, 14 vehicles seized and eight Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) issued during the week.
 - Retail crime
 - From 14 October 2024, all Districts participated in SAFER Business Action Week. The campaign is a national week of action organised by the National Business Crime Centre, during which police and partner agencies work together to tackle business crime. Over 400 businesses were visited with every town in the county being involved. Over 90 arrests were made as well as vehicle seizures and CPWs issued. Arrests included 4 persons in a car linked to bulk shoplifting near Whitstable, who were found to be in possession of stolen items and were later charged with Theft.
 - The Force's Strategic Prevention command is an integral part of the Retail Crime Board chaired by the PCC which commenced in September 2024, with the intention of reducing retail crime, including shoplifting and threatening and abusive behaviour towards staff. Representatives of the business community, including leading retail brands, members of the customer service industry, Town Centre Managers and senior police staff and officers are now able to share views and experiences, with the aim of building trust between businesses and the police, enhancing support to victims of crime, sharing good practice and developing effective partnerships.
 - Delivery drivers
 - Following ongoing issues causing concern in the community, a crackdown on illegal delivery drivers in Thanet resulted in an arrest and five vehicles being seized by neighbourhood officers. The work was aimed at reminding delivery drivers of their responsibilities to drive safely and legally.
 - Violence Reduction Unit
 - The VRU is a partnership between the police, local councils, health service providers and other key agencies to deliver a reduction in violence across the county. It has a focus on young people, reflecting the prevalence of violence in this age group, taking a public health approach. The VRU's 4 priority areas are: knives and weapons; violence in the community; gangs and county lines; and violence against women and girls.
 - They have trained 425 professionals, funded 64 separate projects, supported 6,898 young people and disrupted 11 young street groups and gangs through their focussed deterrence work. In this rolling year, the VRU has seen a reduction in all of their performance measures. That is a reduction in knife enabled serious violence incidents in all age categories, a reduction in non-domestic homicides in all age categories, and an overall reduction in serious violent crime where the victim or suspect are under 25 years old.

Holding to account:

17. Throughout Kent Police's review of NHP and the implementation of the model, the PCC has held the Chief Constable to account through his quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
18. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
19. The Force has provided updates via the papers, with the PCC taking a particular interest in the welfare of those officers and staff affected. Whilst the model is now embedded and effectively 'business as usual', the PCC will continue to receive occasional updates.
20. The PCC will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings and receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force as required.
21. The PCC is reassured that the NHP Model is providing as good, if not a better policing service to the communities of Kent and Medway.

Recommendation:

22. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report.
23. As the model is now embedded and effectively 'business as usual', the Panel is also asked to consider whether further specific updates are required.