

MEETING NOTES

Title: Performance & Delivery Board

Date and time: 28 May 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)
- 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 the Previous Meeting – 19 February 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record, and the following action update noted:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Provide an update on the findings from the Divisional Policing Review Post Implementation Review – ongoing; to be provided at November meeting.
3.	Making Kent Safer Plan 2022 – 2025: Overview of delivery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC noted the paper provided an overview of delivery against the 'Making Kent Safer' plan over the four-year period 2022-25. He also 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 victim-based (VBC) and all crime both experienced a 10% decrease in recorded offences as well as increases in solved and charged rates. Acknowledging the marked increase in both categories in 2021/22, the CC noted this was a consistent pattern likely linked to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.• Regarding antisocial behaviour (ASB), the CC summarised a similar pattern resulting in a significant decrease in incidents of 52% over the four-year period. Regardless of the reduction, he stressed it remained a focus for Kent Police; particularly tackling the key categories which made up the largest proportion.• Summarising the position on residential burglary (home), the CC noted a significant reduction of 27% in recorded offences. Additionally, he reported the solved and charged rate was relatively static, advising it was being monitored through the Force Performance Committee.• The CC advised shoplifting was the only crime category to experience an overall increase and noted this reflected the national trend. Nonetheless, the CC expressed confidence in the Force's robust response. He advised of good relationships with business communities and thanked the PCC for his engagement in this regard. Furthermore, the CC confirmed a continued focus on policing business communities; supported by the Divisional Policing Review (DPR).• Commending Force strategies and the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), the CC reported a reduction in violent crime of 17.9% over the four-year period.• Noting the high harm often involved, the CC advised of reductions in recorded robbery and hate crime. He further advised of increases in the solved and charged rate.

- Commending the Force's performance, the PCC asked about plans to increase the VBC solved and charged rate over the next four years. The CC assured the PCC of the Force's commitment to securing even more positive outcomes for victims. He advised that through Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) and the DPR, the focus would remain on crime fighting, with Out of Court Resolutions (OoCR) fully utilised to improve outcomes.
- The PCC sought assurance that the Force was maintaining high burglary residential (home) attendance rates and sought clarification on action being taken to increase the solved rate. The CC advised attendance was stable at 98%, with 47 reports not attended in the previous year. He explained they were audited and so he was assured of police attendance where required. Regarding the solved rate, the CC noted there was room for improvement and advised that changes to the NHP model allowed for more proactivity in this area.
- Recognising the positive performance around ASB, the PCC asked whether the significant reduction could be attributed to the NHP model and new Beat Officers. The CC advised partly, but also through partnership working; the problem-solving model and better analytical capability allowed for quicker and more detailed analysis of emerging trends. Additionally, he noted activity during ASB awareness week had supported Force work.

Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls

- The CC reported a 16% reduction in recorded rape offences over the four-year period, and an increase in the charged rate. While noting there were fewer victims and more offenders being brought to justice, the CC assured the PCC that it remained a priority within the Force's Control Strategy.
- Similarly, the CC noted an overall reduction in sexual offences over the four-year period. However, noting the 8% increase in recorded offences in 2024/25, he explained this was the result of changes in recording practices; particularly relating to the sharing of intimate photographs or videos.
- The PCC asked about the impact of Op Soteria on rape and sexual offence charged rates. Acknowledging multiple inspections had found a good level of compliance, the CC was satisfied the principles were effectively embedded in Force practices. Noting charged rates had started to increase, he advised changes to modelling provided opportunities for further improvement.
- Noting the challenging landscape of the criminal justice system (CJS), the PCC asked about the impact on victim confidence and the staff working in the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU). Acknowledging the VWCU's current workload was ~5,000 cases and continued to grow, the CC commended the staff for their tireless commitment to seeking justice. Despite the VWCU receiving extra resource and partner agencies working tirelessly to reduce the CJS backlog, he surmised that unfortunately the challenges would remain for the foreseeable. The PCC also placed on record his thanks to the VWCU staff.

Protect People from Exploitation and Abuse

- The CC reported a 27% reduction in recorded domestic abuse (DA) offences over the four-year period, and an increase in the solved rate. Highlighting a reduction in the charged rate, he advised it was monitored through the Force Performance Committee and was found to be linked to non-crime incidents. Referencing associated Home Office Counting Rule changes, the CC emphasised the Force's dedication to tackling DA.
- Regarding adult protection, the CC reported a significant reduction over the four-year period and commended the work of specialist teams and partners.
- The CC reported a reduction in violence against the person (VAP) of 19% over the four-year period. Noting that it included assault on emergency workers, he referenced an increase during 2024/25 and advised the Chief Officer Team was focused on supporting robust action.
- While acknowledging a reduction in fraud offences over the four-year period, the CC noted referrals from the national reporting centre were increasing and that the long-term impact of recording changes were not yet fully understood. He highlighted the specialist resource of the Serious Crime Directorate and recent investment in fraud prevention activity.
- Acknowledging the decrease in recorded DA, the PCC sought assurance the CC was confident victims were continuing to report offences. Stating he was confident, the CC highlighted work with partners to raise awareness and to reassure victims' that reports would be taken seriously. He noted this was the first step to getting individuals help, tailored to their needs.
- The PCC asked about the impact of changes to the Home Office Counting Rules on recorded DA. The CC detailed a shift in the Principal Crime Rules whereby if an incident involved more than one type of crime, whilst all would be investigated, only the most serious was now recorded. While acknowledging there were associated concerns, he was assured that Kent Police was still obtaining a full picture of DA offences, including non-crime offences. He also emphasised that it had not affected charges, clarifying that where appropriate, multiple charges continued to be sought.

- The PCC queried how the Force ensured malicious communications were dealt with appropriately, including recording practices. The CC explained the decrease in recorded offences was also seen nationally, with an increase in non-crime related reports. He assured the PCC that reports were quality assured by the Investigation Management Unit and where the crime threshold was not met, an auditable record was retained for intelligence purposes. He added that he felt confident the Force continued to capture a full picture and protected victims.
- With regards to offences of assault on an emergency worker, the PCC asked how the Force made sure offenders were dealt with robustly and victims supported. Referring to the Force's Nine-point Plan, the CC explained the principles ensured sufficient support was provided to victims. He emphasised the Force did not tolerate assault on emergency workers and worked tirelessly to obtain justice.

Combat Organised Crime, County Lines and Serious Crime

- Reporting a 16% reduction in recorded knife crime over the four-year period, the CC commended the work of the VRU, and those services commissioned by the OPCC. Referencing work with partners and young people through the school strategy, he advised that Kent Police remained committed to driving knife related crime down further.
- Citing details in the paper, the CC advised activity to tackle county lines and organised crime groups (OCGs) remained vigorous and noted recent structural changes had proved positive.
- Recognising Kent had substantially reduced knife related crime, the PCC commended the Force and VRU.

Be Visible and Responsive to the needs of the Communities

- Noting the increase in calls received since 2021, the CC summarised the significant improvements in the time taken to answer 999 contacts. For 2024/25, the average time to answer was three seconds with 96.59% answered in under ten seconds.
- Commending the FCIR staff, the CC also acknowledged the stark improvement in the handling of 101 and digital contacts, highlighting the associated positive impact on public confidence.
- Consolidating the above, the CC also advised BT data showed Kent Police's advancement in performance when compared nationally.
- With regards to rural crime, the CC reported a substantial reduction in theft of agricultural/farming equipment and wildlife offences. Highlighting prevention activity, effective communication with rural communities and the Rural Crime Board, chaired by the PCC, the CC said he expected it to continue.
- The CC emphasised the success of the Special Constabulary, commending their commitment to policing and the public of Kent. Acknowledging the decrease in numbers and hours volunteered, he explained this was linked to a high proportion becoming regular officers through the uplift programme. He stressed the Force's ambition to reinvigorate the Special Constabulary.
- The CC similarly commended Police Support Volunteers and Community Police Volunteers and highlighted the work of the therapy dogs.
- Thanking the CC and FCIR staff for their hard work in driving up performance, the PCC sought assurance that it could be sustained and enquired whether technological advancements were being explored. Whilst cautious of unforeseen changes, the CC said the ability to monitor and identify trends was exceptional, and he was therefore assured that the right processes and structures were in place to sustain current levels of performance. Noting the Force was exploring and embracing AI advancements, he emphasised it would only be used to assist the work of humans rather than replace them.
- Commending the reduction in rural crime, the PCC enquired whether the data included theft of GPS devices from agricultural vehicles. Noting it was a phenomenon the Force was aware of, the CC advised it did include theft of GPS devices but offered to provide further detail.

Prevent Road Danger and Support Vision Zero

- Emphasising Kent Police's commitment to Vision Zero, the CC reported a reduction in fatalities/serious injuries on Kent's roads over the four-year period. He noted high levels of enforcement activity focussed on 'the fatal four' and also highlighted the role of the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit.
- With regards to fatalities/serious injuries the PCC asked whether there were any consistent contributing factors, including vulnerabilities of road users. The CC reported around two-thirds of fatalities involved a vulnerable road user, with the vast majority being over the age of 65. He advised the Force engaged heavily with the elderly around road safety initiatives, and in terms of other contributing factors, it was most frequently one of 'the fatal four'. He explained Kent Police was focused on driving whilst impaired as this posed the greatest risk to other road users and was often associated with other dangerous driving behaviours such as speeding.

Protect Young People and Provide Opportunities

- The CC reported an increase in child protection related offences of 2.7% over the four-year period, and an increase in the solved rate. He explained the increase in offences was linked to changes in the recording of sexual offences and stalking and harassment.
- Referencing the Kent Police Cadet Programme (Mini, Junior and Senior), the CC praised the 500+ cadets, and all staff involved, highlighting they were recently the first scheme to be awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service.
- The PCC questioned whether the increase in child protection related cases was fully understood. The CC explained it was linked to the introduction of new offences relating to the sharing of pictures or video of someone in an intimate state without their consent, noting a proportion of suspects and victims were children. He advised as it was recent, more time was needed to fully comprehend the impact on child protection related offences. Additionally, he noted online harassment changes had also had an impact.

Action

- Force: Provide further detail on the theft of GPS devices from agricultural vehicles.

4. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

HMICFRS Publication – An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime

- The DCC summarised that whilst crime experienced by individuals had decreased over the past decade, recorded crime rates had increased, as had the volume and complexity of investigator workloads.
- The DCC advised the report highlighted a variety of key points regarding the effectiveness of investigations, including understanding crime demand and outcomes. He explained investigations were subject to regular review through the Investigative Quality Board, and he felt assured by Kent Police's drive for improvement.
- Despite strong governance, the DCC recognised the challenge posed by cumulative workloads and the timeliness of investigations through the Criminal Justice System.
- Regarding effective crime investigation practices, the DCC was pleased to report Kent Police had received positive commentary around detective payments, management of outstanding suspects and the use of Rapid Video Response.
- The DCC advised there were 11 recommendations, eight of which were for all forces to address including, online reporting and effective use of the Police National Database. Within Kent, he advised the recommendations were being progressed through the Future, Investment and Development Board.
- The PCC asked how satisfied Kent Police was that investigator workloads were manageable. Reinforcing that progress against recommendations was regularly monitored, the DCC summarised a comprehensive process which evaluated investigator workloads as well as the risk posed by complexity. He further detailed a supportive intervention process where outliers were identified.
- The PCC sought assurance that when a crime was reported, all reasonable lines of enquiry were being explored as part of the investigation. The DCC explained the Investigative Habits programme provided a guide for investigators which underpinned previous investigative training and was also central to the refreshed crime policy. Additionally, he noted results of a recent quality assurance audit found 85% (of 600) crime reports had all reasonable lines of enquiry identified.

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

- Referencing previous discussion, the DCC emphasised the Force's activity to track areas for improvement (AFIs) and incorporate best practice findings from the PEEL report.
- The DCC advised the Force conducted a Victim Service Assessment bi-annually, mirroring the HMICFRS methodology. He assured the PCC that any key issues were escalated to the Investigative Quality Board but noted recent commentary was positive, particularly around the piloting of innovative techniques to enable more timely decisions and feedback to victims.
- Noting 'responding to the public' had the most AFIs, the DCC advised of good progress aided by the reinvigoration of the RETHRIVE process. He reported three of the four AFIs had been closed.
- As a result of the AFIs under 'investigating crime', the DCC highlighted a focus on improving the recording of Victim Needs Assessments (VNAs). He explained the Force had provided further training for officers and provided an assurance that VNAs were scrutinised. He reported that the benefits were now being seen.
- Noting ongoing work around the outstanding AFIs, the DCC expressed a level of optimism as the next PEEL process commenced, with field work anticipated later in the year.

Internal and External Audit Functions

- The DCC highlighted the full schedule detailed in the paper, adding that EY had just commenced work on the re-invigoration of the National Intelligence Model.

HMICFRS inspection on response to child sexual exploitation

- Referring to a request by the PCC, the DCC referenced a 2023 inspection related to group-based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which made nine recommendations; five of which were for Chief Constables. They included ensuring problem profiles for CSE were completed and updated frequently; that sufficient measures were in place to identify group based CSE; the effective eradication of victim blaming language and implementation of Hydrant programmes for continuing professional development.
- Explaining the Home Secretary commissioned a follow up, with Kent Police one of six forces subject to inspection, the DCC noted the informal feedback was positive, but full findings were not yet published (expected June/July).
- Emphasising the Force's dedication to tackling CSE, the DCC advised a task force had been established to assess the scale, nature and characteristics of CSE and grooming gangs in Kent. He highlighted the Force's 'Good' grading for protecting vulnerable people and expressed optimism, while emphasising the need for continued investment.
- The PCC asked how the Force was performing against Home Office Annual Data Requirement 149 – requirement to record characteristics of offenders in custody, including nationality. The DCC advised Athena Version 6 had made the relevant fields mandatory and compliance was monitored through the Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel. He explained results from 2023/24 showed 95% compliance from 27,000+ records, and advised results from 2024/25 would be provided once published.

Action

- Force: In relation to ADR149, provide 2024/25 compliance figures when published.

5. People

- Praising the professionalism and effort of Learning and Development, the DCC summarised that last year 280 officers joined the Force; 269 new recruits, 6 transferees, 3 re-joiners and 2 returners. He noted, as of 31 March 2025, this gave a headcount of 4224; one above the requirement.
- The DCC highlighted 13.22% of applications last year came from ethnic minority backgrounds, which was above the local economically active population. He advised the Investigate First route remained especially attractive to ethnic minority and female candidates.
- The DCC noted that of the 748 live applications as at 2 April 2025, 11.36% were from ethnic minority backgrounds and 41.98% from females.
- In terms of force representation as at 31 March 2025, there were 157 ethnic minority officers (3.77%), a marginal reduction on the year before, and 1,499 female officers (36.02%), the highest ever month end position on record.
- The DCC noted that of the 280 joiners in 2024/25, 6.43% were from ethnic minority backgrounds, the second highest proportion ever; and 42.14% female, the third highest proportion ever.
- Reporting an average of 23 leavers per month (under the projected figure of 27), the DCC recognised this allowed valuable skills to be retained and that the Force performed well nationally.
- Evaluating the leavers data, the DCC acknowledged there was little change from previous periods. Resignations, particularly among those young-in-service, remained the most common reason. Within that, those seeking alternative employment and better opportunities the greatest presentation.
- Referencing potential intakes in July and November this year, the DCC reported the PCSO strength to be at 86.64 FTE.
- Noting work with the Home Office on the NHP Guarantee, the DCC acknowledged that the Force's NHP function baseline would increase to 309.82 FTE, through an uplift of 65 officers.
- With attendance and wellbeing data showing an increase in absence, the DCC summarised the extensive monitoring, support and intervention processes. Referencing work by the Performance and Improvement Unit, the DCC advised of an increased level of attendance support meetings for the year.
- Noting the 2,820 appointments facilitated by Occupational Health during 2024/25, the DCC highlighted a continued reduction in average referral to appointment waiting times, which stood at 9.7 working days. He also highlighted the 1,700 appointments undertaken by the in-house physiotherapist.
- The PCC asked whether the 65-officer increase under the NHP Guarantee had already been delivered. The DCC confirmed it had with an increase in Beat Officers focused on town centres. In a one-month period, he

advised they had attended 1,300+ incidents, carried out nearly 40 stop and searches, and made 200+ arrests. He also noted that their visibility and availability had been commented on positively by Business Improvement Districts.

- The PCC sought clarification on how the 2024/25 levels of Occupational Health referrals and appointments compared with previous years. The DCC advised referrals were fairly consistent, with number fluctuating between 2,100-2,500 each year. With an average of 2,350 appointments, the DCC noted 2024/25 was a high point but said it was indicative of an extended offer including counselling and physiotherapy.

6. Finance

- Noting the paper covered period 11; up to February 2025, the CC advised the underspend position was greater than predicted and acknowledged this gave the Force some flexibility for the current financial year.
- Referencing section two and three, the CC advised they detailed the forecast position for the period.
- Regarding risks and opportunities, the CC advised projected risks had not manifest as anticipated and opportunities had been affected by the legitimate inability to spend in certain areas.
- Highlighting the lower-than-expected leavers rate, the CC recognised that whilst positive, it also posed a challenge for the budget and advised this would be monitored.
- Noting the vacancy rate stood at ~10.5%, the CC emphasised that whilst it caused challenges operationally, it continued to be necessary to meet financial savings. However, he advised it was his ambition to not rely on it heavily and that the impact of existing vacancies was robustly monitored.
- Referencing detail under section ten, the CC reported a position whereby significant savings would be needed across the next four years and explained more detailed work would be undertaken in the Autumn.
- Recognising the reduced attrition rate was positive, the PCC asked whether the reasons were understood. The CC affirmed understanding, explaining it was predominantly due to fewer retirements and transfers out.
- The PCC asked for an update on the Empowering Leaders and Reducing Bureaucracy project. The CC explained it aimed to streamline processes, return power to senior ranks, and return resources to the frontline and NHP. Reporting that ~1600 ideas had been submitted; he was pleased with the level of engagement and offered to provide more detail as the project evolved.

Action

- Force: Provide update on Empowering Leaders and Reducing Bureaucracy project.

7. Topical Issues & Update on Significant Operational Matters

- Noting there was often a focus on where the Force was not getting it right, the CC said he did not want the good work being done to be missed.
- Advising he had a report with good work examples from Local Policing that ranged from relatively minor issues, up to saving people's lives, the CC offered to provide a copy to the PCC.

Action

- Force: Provide copy of good work examples to PCC.

	Status	Owner	Due Date
Provide further detail on theft of GPS devices from agricultural vehicles outside of meeting.	Open	Force	16.09.25
In relation to ADR149, provide 2024/25 compliance figures outside of meeting when published.	Open	Force	16.09.25
Provide update on the Empowering Leaders and Reducing Bureaucracy project.	Open	Force	26.11.25
Provide copy of good work examples to PCC.	Open	Force	16.09.25

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 16 September 2025