

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Holding the Chief Constable to Account

Date: 16 December 2025

Introduction:

1. In addition to a number of statutory responsibilities that flow from the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA), under the Policing Protocol Order 2023, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have the legal power and duty to:
 - Scrutinise, support and challenge the overall performance of the force including against the priorities agreed within the [Police and Crime] Plan;
 - Hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the force's officers and staff; and
 - Maintain an efficient and effective police force.
2. In discharging these responsibilities, PCCs are responsible for putting in place proper governance arrangements.
3. Through a mix of formal and informal structures, the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Kent Police, including the priorities he has set in the Police and Crime Plan - [Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust](#) - namely:
 - Protecting People
 - Protecting Places
 - Protecting Property
 - Productive Partnerships
4. Mr Scott, in discharging his duties, responsibilities and functions, is supported by a small team of staff within the Office of the PCC (OPCC), led by the Chief Executive.

Daily engagement / Weekly one-to-one meetings:

5. Informally, on a daily basis, the PCC, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and senior OPCC staff liaise and engage with the Chief Constable's office and senior managers. Being sited together at Kent Police headquarters enables, and in many ways encourages, spontaneous face-to-face discussions to take place, such as around IT, estates and significant or critical incidents which may attract media attention.
6. The PCC also has weekly meetings with the Chief Constable to enable an open exchange of information and help maintain an effective working relationship. The meetings are held in the OPCC and allow discussion of a wide variety of subjects, including significant operational matters and delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

Other briefings and meetings:

7. The PCC can request bespoke briefings that enable a more focused and detailed discussion on Kent Police activities, confidential matters or emerging issues. Such briefings enable the PCC to gain a better understanding, provide support and, where appropriate, ensure the right questions are being asked on behalf of the public. Examples include updates on specific policing operations, complex IT and procurement related matters, and issues of significant public interest, such as crime recording accuracy and public contact.
8. The Chief Executive, CFO and senior OPCC staff also have a standing invitation to a number of Kent Police internal meetings. For example, the Chief Executive attends the Force Performance Management Committee; the CFO attends the Commercial Services Executive Board; and the Head of People and Standards attends the Out of Court Resolutions Scrutiny Panel. Through this approach, the PCC retains oversight across a broad range of key business areas.

Performance and Delivery Board:

9. One of the principle ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
10. Open to the public, on a non-participating basis, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#) on the OPCC website. 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 and policing generally in the county.
11. The aims and objectives of the meeting include:
 - Holding the Chief Constable to account for organisational and operational performance of Kent Police.
 - Monitoring and scrutinising performance and service delivery against the Police and Crime Plan priorities, acknowledging success and challenging areas of concern.
 - Receiving and reviewing reports on policing matters considered to be of particular interest and/or concern to local communities.
 - Considering reports from external bodies, including (but not limited to) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS), ensuring areas for improvement are addressed.
 - Exploring areas that are fundamental to healthy and productive organisations, including delivery of the commitments, priorities and values set out in the Kent Police Pledge.
 - Monitoring and challenging wider performance delivery, including value for money, use of resources and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Kent Police.
12. With supporting force papers for each item, the standard agenda consists of the following:
 - Police and Crime Plan: Delivery & Performance
 - Inspections, Audits & Reviews
 - People (*including recruitment*)
 - Finance

In addition, the Chief Constable has the opportunity to provide a verbal update on any topical issues and/or non-sensitive operational matters at each meeting.
13. The Police and Crime Plan is underpinned by a Delivery and Performance framework that consists of a suite of performance measures. It is these measures that the force reports on in the 'Police and Crime Plan: Delivery and Performance' paper.
14. However, Kent Police's performance is not judged on data alone, as despite the best efforts of officers and staff, it is not always possible to protect the public or bring offenders to justice. The PCC therefore considers objective feedback reported via the 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper, including HMICFRS inspection reports and other independent publications.
15. Through the Performance and Delivery Board, the PCC has robustly held the Chief Constable to account for responding to calls from the public. In 2022/23, Kent Police's performance in terms of managing non-emergency 101 calls deteriorated significantly, resulting in an average time to answer of over seven minutes, and in excess of a third of calls being unanswered. The PCC made it clear to the Chief Constable that this was unacceptable and as a result Kent Police implemented a programme of strategic transformation. Performance was routinely reported at the Performance and Delivery Board via the Police and Crime Plan paper, enabling the PCC to monitor progress, and where appropriate challenge the Chief Constable. By the following year, 2023/24, performance had improved significantly with an average time to answer of just over one minute, and under 9% of calls unanswered. In the most recent full year, 2024/25, performance continued to improve with an average time to answer of just 31 seconds, and less than 3% of calls unanswered.
16. In support of the Performance & Delivery Board, the PCC also chairs two community forums – the Retail Crime Board and Rural Crime Board.
 - The Retail Crime Board includes representatives from the retail community, customer service industry, Business Improvement Districts, and Business Crime Reduction Partnerships. Issues discussed to date include town centre policing, pharmacy theft and the disposal of stolen goods.

- The Rural Crime Board includes local farmers, the Environment Agency and representatives from local councils, landowners, as well as shooting and conservation. Issues discussed include waste crime, GPS theft from agricultural vehicles and use of catapults/slingshots

With the Head of Strategic Prevention Command also in attendance, the Boards allow the PCC and Kent Police to engage with stakeholders around their experience of crime/ASB and the police response.

17. Panel Members are welcome to attend the Performance and Delivery Board, and dates of meetings in 2026 are 25 February, 20 May, 2 September and 25 November. However, the meeting is also live streamed to allow a wider audience to observe, with details on how to join published on the OPCC website.
18. The meeting notes from each Performance and Delivery Board are also provided to the Police and Crime Panel for information/reference.
19. While the Performance and Delivery Board does not stand alone from other complementary governance structures employed by the PCC, it does allow the PCC and the Chief Constable to transparently fulfil their respective statutory obligations and accountabilities in respect of scrutiny, challenge and support.

Joint Audit Committee:

20. Financial governance, assurance, risk management and statutory financial duties for both the OPCC and Kent Police are the responsibility of a Joint Audit Committee (JAC), as required by the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice. The JAC is a key component of the corporate governance arrangements, providing an independent and high level focus on the adequacy of audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that support the PCC, the Chief Constable and statutory officers in ensuring good governance and financial standards are in place.
21. Open to the public, on a non-participating basis, the JAC meets at least four times a year and is chaired by one of five members who are independent of both the PCC and the Chief Constable. The PCC and the Chief Constable attend one JAC per year, with standing membership including an Assistant Chief Constable, the PCC and Chief Constable's CFOs and other senior staff, with papers submitted in advance and published [here](#) on the OPCC website.
22. The JAC is responsible for:
 - Providing independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the PCCs and Kent Police's internal control environment and risk management framework;
 - Independently scrutinising financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the PCC's and Kent Police's exposure to risks and weakens the internal control environment;
 - Overseeing the financial reporting process and external audit; and
 - Advising the PCC and the Chief Constable on the adequacy of the Annual Governance Statement.
23. The JAC includes standing agenda items from both the Internal and External Auditors. The internal auditors – currently RSM UK – are appointed by the PCC to obtain assurance around financial governance and areas of perceived risk. The external auditors – currently Ernst & Young - perform the statutory function of reviewing the Statement of Accounts and stating a value for money conclusion. Audit updates are also provided in the 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper submitted to the Performance and Delivery Board.
24. Panel Members are welcome to attend the JAC, and dates of meetings in 2026 are 12 March, 11 June, 17 September and 2 December. The meeting is also live streamed with details on how to join published on the OPCC website.

Kent and Essex Collaboration Oversight Meeting:

25. The PRSRA requires police forces to 'collaborate where it is in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness of their own and other forces'. Furthermore, the Home Office Statutory Guidance for Police Collaboration states that 'joint working between police forces and/or public bodies and/or other parties should be pursued where, in the opinion of the chief officer or policing body, the collaboration delivers greater efficiency or effectiveness to at least one of the participating forces or policing bodies'.

26. In April 2007, the Police Authorities of Essex and Kent agreed to pursue 'full collaboration on operational functions and support services whilst maintaining operational independence'. The rationale for this decision was a common ambition to increase capacity, capability and resilience and deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness. The forces were deemed a 'natural fit' as they shared a border, had similar strategic challenges/opportunities, demographics, demand profiles, staffing levels, comparable coastlines and frontier policing challenges.
27. With the introduction of Police & Crime Commissioners, the collaborative arrangements continued to evolve and the two forces now have a shared Serious Crime Directorate, Human Resources and Learning & Development Directorate, and Support Services Directorate.
28. Held twice a year, the meeting is co-chaired by the PCC and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex. In attendance are both Chief Constables and Deputy Chief Constables, as well as the head of each collaborative function, namely:
- Assistant Chief Constable Serious Crime Directorate
 - Director of Human Resources and Learning & Development
 - Director of Support Services
29. The aims of the meeting include:
- Enabling the PFCC and PCC to jointly hold both Chief Constables to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of collaboration.
 - Providing an opportunity to showcase the collaborative functions, and highlight efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery benefits for the public of Kent and Essex.
 - Enabling both Commissioners to keep collaboration under review in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Demonstrating a regard for the PFCC/PCC's duty to enter into collaboration agreements as set out in The Policing Protocol Order 2023.
30. With each collaborative function submitting a paper, the meeting allows the PCC and PFCC to ask questions and hold both Chief Constables to account for shared functions that support the delivery of their respective Police and Crime Plan priorities and effective policing across Kent and Essex.

Regional oversight:

31. To deliver capacity, capability and value for money, some policing functions are provided on a regional basis. Kent Police is part of the eastern region with six other police forces, namely Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.
32. The PCC chairs regular meetings of the PCCs, PFCCs and Chief Constables of those forces in the region. The meetings provide oversight of and accountability for regional functions, such as procurement and the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU), which provides support to forces in tackling serious and organised crime.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescues Services:

33. All police forces are subject to a formal inspection regime by [HMICFRS](#), and this forms a vital part of the PCC's assurance process in holding the Chief Constable to account.
34. HMICFRS' role is to objectively inspect, monitor and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and Fire & Rescue Services with the aim of encouraging improvement.

PEEL

35. PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is HMICFRS' regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Using inspection findings, analysis and professional judgement they assess how good forces are in core areas of policing.
36. Kent's most recent PEEL report was published on 17 November 2023, providing an assessment across 11 areas of policing with graded judgements on 10.

37. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements in the 10 areas of policing:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers & public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership & force management			

38. As a result of the inspection, the force received 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and created an Improvement Plan. Through the Performance and Delivery Board the PCC has held the Chief to Constable to account for the force's graded judgements, and also received regular updates on the Improvement Plan via the 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper. Progress has also regularly been reported to the JAC.

39. In June 2025, Kent Police were notified that the period of continuous assessment for PEEL 2025/27 was underway. PEEL 2025/27 will inspect against nine core questions, and the AFI's from the previous inspection will also be considered as part of the programme. The force has therefore been subject to an intensive period of scrutiny which culminated in a final period of reality testing at the end of November 2025. Feedback will be provided in early January, and the final report published by HMICFRS later in 2026.

Thematic and Joint Inspections

40. HMICFRS also carry out thematic inspections, commissions from the Home Secretary and joint inspections. Their inspection programme for 2025-29 includes:

- Inspections of police forces focused on vulnerability and child protection; serious and organised crime; integrity; and violence against women and girls.
- Thematic inspections on the police response to knife-related crime; data and analytics; and retail crime and shoplifting.

41. Whilst Kent Police is unaware whether it will feature as one of the visited forces in the future, HMICFRS inspections are learning opportunities with best practice being adopted, and any recommendations acted upon.

Force Management Statement

42. The Force Management Statement (FMS) is a self-assessment that Chief Constables prepare and provide to HMICFRS each year.

43. It is the Chief Constable's statement and explanation of:

- current and projected demand: the demand the force is currently facing, as well as demand it expects to face in the next four years;
- workforce assessment: the performance, condition, capacity, capability, well-being, serviceability and security of supply of the force's workforce and non-workforce assets, and the extent to which current force assets will be able to meet expected future demand;
- prioritisation and planning: how the force will change and improve its workforce, policies, practices and other assets to cope with future demand; and
- risk management: the risks that have been identified because of demand that cannot be met, how these will be mitigated and the effect you expect this to have.

44. The FMS is also designed to improve and streamline the information police forces produce for their own management purposes, PCCs, Home Office, other institutions and the public.

45. Kent Police's FMS for 2025 was shared with the PCC and can be viewed [here](#). In addition to increasing the PCC's understanding of how effective and efficient Kent Police is, the FMS helps to assess whether the priorities set for the Chief Constable in the Police and Crime Plan are likely to be met, how quickly and at what cost.

Value for Money (VfM) profiles

46. The Value for Money profiles provide PCCs and the public with comparative data on a wide range of policing activities. For instance: does a force spend more or less than other similar forces? Does it receive fewer or more 999 calls? How does the crime rate differ from other forces?

47. They are based on data provided by police forces and are published as an interactive dashboard. The 2024/25 VfM profiles can be accessed [here](#) on the HMICFRS website.

48. Used as part of the PCC's overall governance framework, and considered by the JAC, the VfM profile provides a comparison of Kent Police's costs and performance with other police forces, helping the PCC to ask the right questions and if necessary, seek further information. Where appropriate, it also enables the PCC to challenge the Chief Constable on behalf of public tax payers.

49. In addition to the programme of work outlined above, if deemed appropriate, PCCs are also able to commission HMICFRS to carry out inspections within their force area.

Custody:

50. Police custody may only be used where it is both necessary and proportionate to the investigation of an offence. Detainees in police custody are often among the most vulnerable in society and the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account for Kent Police's duty of care.

Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel

51. In 2023/24, the Association of PCCs, and National Police Chiefs' Council (with Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Independent Custody Visitors Association support), contacted all PCCs and Chief Constables, with an expectation that they create and implement Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs).

52. It was recognised that scrutiny of custody was limited to either infrequent, large scale inspections - such as by HMICFRS - or regular, more limited review by Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs). Therefore CDSPs were to provide a more frequent, in depth review of custody and the practices within suites by:

- assessing and reporting on detention and custody processes;
- reviewing and advising on matters of disproportionality; and
- assisting in generating a transparent product suitable for public consideration at the end of each annual Panel cycle.

53. In Kent, the meeting is co-chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive, and one of the ICV Coordinators. It includes representation from Kent Police, the Independent Advisory Group, both Appropriate Adult organisations, ICVs, the Liaison, Diversion and Reconnect service as well as OPCC staff.

54. Supported by an extensive data pack that includes detainee demographic data, Most Similar Group comparators, and detailed information about child detentions, such as their ethnicity and reasons for bail and searches, the meeting scrutinises custody-related data and reviews vulnerabilities and complaint outcomes.

Independent Custody Visitors

55. The PCC is responsible for the ICV Scheme which sees volunteers making unannounced visits to police custody suites to check on the welfare of detained persons (DPs), ensuring they have received their rights and are held in satisfactory conditions.

56. In 2024/25, ICVs conducted 227 visits to custody suites and engaged with 660 DPs. Overall, they found the care to be excellent, with Kent Police staff focused on the dignity and wellbeing of DPs.

Police Complaints:

57. In relation to holding the Chief Constable to account for complaints management, the OPCC has well-established mechanisms, including:
- A monthly file audit of both complaints and misconduct cases, with the findings (and subsequent responses) reported to the PCC, the Chief Executive, and the leadership of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).
 - Monthly meetings between the Head of PSD and the OPCC Head of People and Standards.
 - Regular OPCC review of complaints data and [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) (IOPC) figures.
 - Reporting of complaints performance and related matters to the JAC and the Performance and Delivery Board.
58. In addition, the PCC, Chief Executive and Head of People and Standards meet regularly with the IOPC Regional Director to review Kent Police's performance and discuss complaints handling in a regional and national context.

Complaint Reviews

59. Following changes to the police complaint system in February 2020, the OPCC is one of two 'review' bodies (along with the Independent Office for Police Conduct) to which members of the public may appeal after they have complained to Kent Police and had a response from the PSD.
60. Subject to the nature of the complaint, it is the role of the OPCC to determine whether the handling of the complaint was reasonable and proportionate; and if not, to make recommendations to Kent Police to redress any concerns. This may be that Kent Police apologises to the member of the public, through to the identification of process failures that need to be addressed. It is not a reinvestigation of the complaint itself though, as this is not within the PCC's remit.
61. In 2024/25, the OPCC received 255 requests for an independent review into how a complaint had been handled by Kent Police. Of those:
- 28 were upheld;
 - 174 were not upheld;
 - 11 were passed to the IOPC as the correct review body; and
 - 42 were invalid.
62. The OPCC performed strongly in terms of timeliness, taking on average 30 days to respond to a review, compared to a Most Similar Group average of 46 days, and a national average of 48 days. 14% of valid reviews were upheld, which was in line with the national average and IOPC expectations.

Recommendation:

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