

**To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel**  
**Subject: Neighbourhood Policing Review - Update**  
**Date: 16 July 2024**

**Introduction:**

1. Further to the paper presented at the June 2023 meeting, this report provides an update on the implementation of Kent Police’s new Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) Model which came into effect on 7 June 2023.
2. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

**The rationale for change:**

3. Kent Police needs to achieve permanent revenue savings of £16-17 million over the next three years. It is unable to realise these savings via police officer pay due to the constraints of the Government Police Uplift Programme (PUP) and associated funding rules.
4. The Force had developed and invested in a Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) model that included Integrated Offender Management, Schools Officers, Town Centre PCs, District Taskforces, Crime Prevention Rural PCSOs and the Problem-Solving Taskforce.
5. However, with significant changes to the policing landscape and the core NHP guidelines requiring all forces to have an appropriate model which provides visible and efficient NHP, in line with local priorities, the Chief Officer Team felt the time was right to remodel NHP in Kent.

**Objectives:**

6. The objectives of the Review were as follows:
  - I. To develop a NHP model that maintains or enhances the service provided to the public, in particular the service provided to victims and witnesses.
  - II. Contact, visibility and vulnerability must remain core to the NHP offer.
  - III. To develop a NHP model with fewer PCSO and staff posts, without compromising service delivery.
  - IV. To develop a model with geographical personal ownership of Ward(s) by police officers.
  - V. Develop a model with a tactical capability to respond effectively to high demand areas, requiring a longer-term problem-solving approach.
  - VI. To develop a NHP model that contributes to Force savings whilst maintaining or enhancing the existing neighbourhood service provision.

**The new model:**

7. An overview of the new NHP model, including the number of officer and police staff posts, is shown below:



8. Under the model, every Ward was to have a named police officer and the specialist Rural Task Force (RTF) was to see an uplift of 1 PS and 6.5 PCSOs.
9. The Force formally moved to the new model on 7 June 2023, but it was acknowledged that to resource to full establishment without impacting on other core functions would take time. As a result, the Force's interim model focused on optimising the number of new Beat Officers.
10. The Force anticipated the model would be up to establishment by the end of September 2024.

### **Current Position:**

11. The phased uplift of resources to September 2024 continues, with the first four phases of resourcing having been delivered (except for one Dartford Beat Officer and Child Centred Policing Teams).
12. Phase Five is scheduled for the end of June 2024 with a planned projection of 84% of Beat Officers, 80% of Child Centred Policing (CCP), and 100% of Neighbourhood Taskforce's (NTF's) being in place. Phase Five sees an additional 30 officers moving into neighbourhood roles predominately Beat Officers. These officers have already been selected with the exception of a small number of Districts having minor gaps in Beat Officers. 84% equates to 176 Beat Officers of which the Force will have 162 - a vacancy rate of 7%.
13. Residents in every Ward now have access to a named police officer and upon full implementation the spread of Wards will reduce for officers currently in the model.
14. Phase six will commence in September 2024 and achieve 100% implementation, with an additional 31 officers moving into their roles. In addition, Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) recruitment has been ongoing with a course delivered through February/March 2024 leading to nine joining NHP and a further two courses planned throughout 2024.
15. The planned savings of £6.2 million have been realised with a full saving of £7.2 million being achieved.
16. 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. This policy has been in place since creation of the NHP model and there have been no amendments to that which was presented to the Police and Crime Panel in June 2023.
17. An early Post Implementation Review (PIR) was undertaken in April 2024. It was completed early to enable any gaps to be identified prior to full implementation. The findings highlighted that the NHP is achieving the objectives set out at paragraph 6.
18. Areas highlighted in the PIR which have formed the next phase of development work are:
  - Integration of the NTF's with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and newly formed Integrated Neighbourhood Teams within the Integrated Care Partnerships in order to provide a fully integrated multiagency provision.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - Achieving full implementation by the end of September 2024 to realise the full benefits of the NHP model.
19. All officers in the NHP model have received three-day training on the main areas being delivered aligned to the National NHP guidance published by the College of Policing. This consists of Engaging Communities, Problem Solving and Targeted Activity.

### **Benefits being realised:**

20. Engaging Communities
  - i) The Force has invested in 'My Community Voice' (MCV), a secure, two-way engagement platform using the Neighbourhood Alert system to directly engage with the public. 33 police forces use this system, so

it is the leading platform nationally. It is also the same platform that Neighbourhood Watch use so allows Kent Police to link in with the 400+ Neighbourhood Watch schemes registered through Our Watch.

- ii) Over the last 12 months, Kent Police has ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 forces for the reach of messages, with an average message share of 9.6 per person. This suggests that for the 19,400 official sign ups (as of April 2024), the true reach of the messages could be as much as 186,000 people. 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 public submissions of intelligence.
- iii) In October 2023, Visav, the developers launched a national public survey. For Kent there were 2,350 responses; the results showed Kent MCV is above the national average with regards to: the public feeling more informed (Kent 3.9, National 3.78); that messages are timely (Kent 3.8, National 3.72); messages are useful (Kent 4, National, 3.93); and messages are relevant (Kent 3.8, National 3.73). 18.5% of respondents also stated their confidence in the police listening to and understanding their concerns had increased since being a member of MCV – Kent were identified as one of the top 10 forces where an increase in confidence had occurred through use of the system.
- iv) Throughout 2023/24, the RTF carried out significant engagement work with the aim of building the trust and confidence of rural communities. The RTF PCSOs focused on building relationships with partners in rural communities as well as from Heritage Sites and locations such as fishing lakes. In addition to the broad in person engagement activities, the team established the 'Farmwatch' WhatsApp group, with over 1,800 members able to access the team's officers to share their concerns or raise issues. The team responds directly with advice on crime prevention, reporting and intelligence gathering and this has yielded some excellent disruption of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and criminality throughout the county.
- v) A survey was posted on Kent MCV for all of those who had registered an interest in rural policing. This covered topics such as key priorities, issues affecting them and their experiences of interactions with Kent Police, and particularly the RTF. The survey yielded over 900 responses, clearly highlighting those matters of most importance for Kent Police to develop work against in the coming year.

## 21. Problem Solving

- i) The Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing has established a bi-annual forum whereby District Commanders update on current activity to ensure qualitative assessment and as an opportunity to share effective practice. Through this process, two examples of high-quality problem solving have been sent to the College of Policing national best practice bank. Furthermore, two nominations for Tilley Awards (National Awards for problem solving) have been completed for 2023/24.
- ii) The PCC has been awarded £1,568,614 from the Home Office as part of the Hotspot Response Programme which merges existing ASB funding and Serious Violence funding together. Kent Police have identified relevant hotspots across the county, which benefit from enhanced visible patrol and enforcement action. Performance is monitored at the Force's Quarterly Performance meeting chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Divisional Commanders are held to account for measured activity in hotspots and corresponding reductions in crime and harm (measured by the Cambridge Crime Harm Index). The Force will continue to deliver enhanced Hotspot patrolling of the 25 serious violence hotspots, 17 of which are also the most prevalent for ASB.
- iii) Linked to problem solving is the national approach to tackling larger, more significant problems affecting communities that are intensified in specific areas and often linked to organised crime. The Clear Hold Build approach is being adopted in the county; this is a national initiative carried out in three phases. First 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.

## 22. Targeted Activity

- i) The main function of the NTF's is to target those who cause harm to the local community. These teams are being developed alongside CSPs and the newly formed Integrated Neighbourhood Teams within Health (NHS) to enable a truly holistic approach to targeted activity.
- ii) The NTF teams surge across the county in areas where focussed activity is required. These new specialist teams have delivered very impressive results across 2023/24, some of which are summarised below:
  - Violence Against Women & Girls
    - Project Vigilant - the use of specially trained officers to identify suspicious behaviour within the night-time economy and those who perpetrate violence against women and girls. Through Vigilant and other activity there are many examples of how the Force targets VAWG, such as the Beat

Officer who identified a sexual predator harassing a local businesswoman. Utilising the NTF the offender was arrested, charged and remanded to court for his behaviour. The offender was a previous serious sexual offender. Media coverage includes:

[We joined Kent Police officers on patrol tackling violence against women in Canterbury \(kentonline.co.uk\)](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/crime/2024/05/23/we-joined-kent-police-officers-on-patrol-tackling-violence-against-women-in-canterbury/) / [Officers in Folkestone ensure safer socialising | Kent Police](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/crime/2024/05/23/officers-in-folkestone-ensure-safer-socialising-kent-police/)

- Targeted operations around ASB
  - Through identified issues within the local community, ASB - specifically vehicle related - has been and remains a priority for the neighbourhood teams. Media coverage includes: [Anti-social drivers and boy racers in Medway to be fined for playing music too loud, revving engines and stunts \(kentonline.co.uk\)](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/crime/2024/05/23/anti-social-drivers-and-boy-racers-in-medway-to-be-fined-for-playing-music-too-loud-revving-engines-and-stunts-kentonline-co-uk/)
- Retail Crime surge activity
  - The Force has conducted targeted activity alongside the National Police Chief Council's (NPCC) Retail Crime Action Plan. Media coverage includes: [Shoplifters arrested during operation in Canterbury | Kent Police](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/crime/2024/05/23/shoplifters-arrested-during-operation-in-canterbury-kent-police/)
- Rural Crime
  - Op Thames - the RTF conducted a warrant which led to the recovery of over 3,000 tools, 6 stolen caravans and a stolen quad bike. Several arrests were made and significant disruption to criminal activity achieved. The investigation remains ongoing. [Tool thefts: Kent Police recovers goods worth more than £1m \(BBC News\)](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-police-67890)

23. The Local Policing and Prevention Board is developing a performance framework for NHP based on new national guidance. It seeks to incorporate qualitative measures that have traditionally been difficult to capture.

#### **Holding to account:**

24. Throughout Kent Police's review of NHP and the ongoing implementation of the model, the PCC has held the Chief Constable to account through his quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.

25. 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.

26. Whilst the Force continues to provide updates via the papers, the PCC also asks questions and has taken a particular interest in the welfare of those officers and staff affected. The PCC continues to receive updates as the model progresses and will continue to do so as the Force moves to full implementation.

27. 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.

28. The PCC remains reassured that the new NHP model is providing as good, if not a better policing service to the communities of Kent and Medway and will continue to monitor progress and delivery carefully.

29. The PCC's Rural Safer Streets Programme is currently being designed with the Force and will be implemented in the coming weeks.

30. In addition, the PCC is establishing a Rural Policing Board to examine Force performance on rural crime, wildlife crime and firearms licensing, with the first meeting planned for the Autumn.

#### **Recommendation:**

31. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their December 2024 meeting.