

Meeting Notes

- Title:** Performance and Delivery Board
- Date & time:** Wednesday 28 February 2024
- Venue:** OPCC Meeting Room, Sutton Road, Maidstone (also broadcast via Microsoft Teams Live)
- Attendees:** **Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:**
- Matthew Scott - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
 - Rob Phillips - Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
- Kent Police:**
- Tim Smith - Chief Constable (CC)
 - Ian Drysdale - Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
- Apologies:**
- Adrian Harper - PCC's Chief Executive
 - Peter Ayling - Deputy Chief Constable

1. Welcome & Introduction

- Welcoming the CC and his team, the PCC expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.

2. Notes of Previous Meeting – 29 November 2023

- There were no actions from the previous meeting and the notes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. Making Kent Safer Plan: Delivery & Performance

- The CC advised that whilst the new Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) Model was working well, it would not be fully effective until totally populated in September 2024. He added the numbers were tracking as expected.
Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Compared to last year, the CC reported a continued reduction in recorded all crime and victim based crime, and increased solved rates.
- Reporting a continued reduction in ASB, the CC noted an increase in animal nuisance/dog bites and inappropriate use of fireworks. He said the Force would review its plans for this year around Halloween and Bonfire Night.
- With regards to animal nuisance/dog bites, the CC noted recent changes to the Dangerous Dogs Act and reported 36 incidents related to the XL Bully breed compared to one in the previous year. However, he explained the majority were possible sightings of XL Bullies requiring investigation and very few involved attacks on other animals or people.
- Reporting an increase in burglary business and community, the CC advised it predominantly stemmed from a series of offences involving a particular chain of shops which had now been resolved resulting in arrests.
- In terms of shoplifting and retail crime, the CC reported the number of suspects interviewed had increased by 43.7%. He said it was the result of a renewed focus on how the Force responded to shoplifting at key locations.
- Highlighting the NPCC Retail Action Plan, the CC said the Force's performance was currently healthy in terms of outcome rates, number of suspects interviewed and offences attended, but there was more to do. He added part of the new NHP Model involved the Beat Officers combatting retail crime in town centres and high footfall locations.
- The CC reported an increase in burglary residential of 44 offences. He explained there were six separate series involving offenders or groups of offenders targeting multiple houses; arrests had been made in relation to five with the sixth still being worked on and a number of suspects had been charged with 37 offences.
- The CC reported reductions in violent crime, robbery and hate crime compared to last year.
- With regards to non-crime hate incidents, the CC highlighted how the Force was ensuring officers and staff understood the rules and followed the guidance around recording of personal data.
- With regards to XL Bully dogs, the PCC asked about the impact of the new legal restrictions and whether the Force had sufficiently skilled officers to manage reports of unregistered dogs and breaches of the legislation. The CC explained the Force had designated staff, but said consideration was being given to training more due to the increased volume. Noting there were challenges around the number of animals being seized, kennel space and associated costs, he advised it was being managed. He suspected there would be a peak in dog seizures, noting the legislation

was ultimately designed to remove the breed from circulation unless it was licenced and the owner obeyed conditions. He added there had been unintended consequences and a complete under estimation by DEFRA of the number of animals within communities.

- With regards to shoplifting and retail crime, the PCC noted the report stated 'facial recognition software is yielding about 30% success rate for all crimes that have an image for comparison'. He asked if that related to image matches and if so, how the Force responded when an identification was made? The CC said it was a combination of Caught on Camera and officers identifying opportunities for matching, so was retrospective and not live; however, where there was a match, the suspect was arrested and dealt with. He advised a pilot by Essex Police using live facial recognition was being monitored closely and could extend its use even further within the county.

Tackle violence against women and girls

- The CC said he was grateful to the PCC and his office for providing services to victims and supporting frontline staff.
- The CC highlighted how examples in the paper underlined the benefits of certain tactics, such as plain clothes officers.
- In terms of understanding the impact on communities, the CC advised of a review around the night-time economy/town centres to improve the NHP Model and ensure it really tackled areas where women and girls felt most vulnerable.
- Stating the investigation of rape offences continued to be a focus, the CC reported a thematic review and inspection of Op Soteria had largely found the Force to be in the right space around structure and skills. Whilst some of the data, particularly the reduction in offences appeared positive, he said there was more to do. Noting there were complexities linked to the CPS and particularly the courts, he said he would like to see the volume of arrests to charges increasing, adding it was the single biggest area of focus for him in the coming year.
- The PCC commented that understanding why a case did not result in a charge was just as important as securing the charge itself. Noting there had been a small numerical decrease in charges for rape, he sought assurances that the Force understood the reasons. The CC stated the Force reviewed every single case where there was no charge and it was often because there was simply not enough evidence to take it to the CPS. He added when the Force thought there was enough evidence, conversations took place with CPS colleagues through the Soteria process which resulted in them sometimes agreeing and sometimes not. He said there was still more to do, and volume wise the Force should be charging more suspects.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- With regards to DA, the CC said there was a healthy reduction but he was cautious to say that was a good thing as he was concerned some victims may lack the confidence to report to the police.
- The CC reported a reduction in adult protection reports, some of which he said was down to the longstanding work around safeguarding with local authority partners and care homes. He added the Force was seeing a reduction in the number of serious abuse cases reported at care homes which was positive.
- Noting a reduction in VAP, the CC advised work would be undertaken to understand the increase in the month of January, particularly in serious violence.
- In terms of reports from Action Fraud, the CC advised increases had been experienced for some time as the nature of crime changed resulting in the Force having to constantly review staffing levels and skills. Noting the investment around enforcement and prevention, he said it was aimed at trying to make sure those most vulnerable to such offences were protected, adding it was an area that required further investment both locally and nationally.
- With regards to DA reducing, the PCC sought assurance that the Force understood the reasons as it was an issue policing wanted more people to report. Noting the data was reported to both the PVP Board and Force Performance Board, the CC said importantly the focus was on the very highest risk DA which showed a reduction; however, medium and standard risk DA were showing the largest reductions in terms of reported crime.

Combat organised crime and county lines

- Highlighting the operational examples in the paper, the CC said the investigation into the murder of toddler Alfie Phillips was extremely professional but had hit the Major Crime Team very hard.
- In terms of county lines, the CC reported a decrease in the overall level of harm, adding that it had halved since the creation of the team. Noting it was a moving picture with the team regularly taking lines down and arresting individuals, he said the response needed to continue due to the significant level of harm associated with such criminality.
- The PCC said it was an area of exceptional performance and expressed his thanks to all the officers/staff involved.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

- Commending the Special Constabulary, the CC said it continued to be a market leader in UK policing and noted in a recent survey on morale, happiness and productivity, Kent was found to be the most productive and best in the country. He said it provided huge support to policing in the county, adding one of the real successes was the Roads Policing Unit which had skilled and experienced officers providing enforcement activity.
- With regards to the Code of Ethics 2024, the CC noted the PCC's interest in how the Force was managing implementation and offered to provide more detail if required. Noting it was not a complete re-write as the previous iteration had great value, he said the College of Policing had conducted a huge amount of consultation. He added it brought clarity around things like duty of candour and how staff should behave which would support the Force's Counter Corruption Policy and help drive out misogyny.
- The CC reported continued strong FCIR performance. Referring to the structural changes that went live the previous week, he advised they had gone surprisingly well considering such major change, movement of staff and adjustment to working practices nearly always created problems and challenges. Whilst there were a couple of minor issues, he said performance had been completely unaffected except in a positive way. He added evidence of the investment the

Force had made in fixing previous issues could be found in national data which showed the Force had gone from pretty much bottom for 999 performance and speed of answering to now sixth nationally, with a similar trend in the other areas measured in the Beating Crime Plan.

- The CC said the Force was keeping a close eye on digital contacts and also looking at the relationship between 101 and digital contact – was the Force pushing people onto digital as much as it could.
- Compared to conversations 18 months ago, the PCC said FCIR performance was simply outstanding and acknowledged the hard work of staff and the Chief Officer team in turning it around.
- With regards to the NHP model, noting that postings had started for phase 4 of the PC uplift, the PCC asked when it began and would end. The CC reported that at the end of January 2024, the model was expected to be populated with 75% Beat PCs, 100% Neighbourhood Task Force PCs and 57% Child Centred Policing; however, it was actually at 70%, 86% and 45%, so not quite on track. By the end of March he said it would be as there was a large influx of officers and a new PCSO cohort, adding the model was on track to be fully populated by September 2024.
- Noting the importance of the Beat PCs in terms of engagement and visibility, the PCC asked about the current extraction rate from their core role and whether there were any examples where that had been necessary. While he retained the right to move staff around to address operational need, the CC said the extraction of Beat PCs would be in extremis. Whilst unable to provide a definitive extraction rate, he advised he was aware there had been a few instances. Noting it currently required manual counting which was wasteful of resources, he said some Beating Crime Plan Measures and Safer Streets funding required monitoring information and so the Force was working closely with TVP which had an App that enabled neighbourhood officers to be tracked. He hoped the App would provide an automated facility to measure how much time Beat PCs were spending in their areas and enable supervisors to review by exception. Over time, he said it would provide enough data to reassure him that Beat PCs were spending most of their time speaking to residents/businesses and fighting crime in their areas.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

- The CC reported on the level of road deaths, adding that ideally he would like to get to none. Noting that seasonality in terms of weather had an impact, he also highlighted the work of the SCIU and described it as remarkable.
- Advising that excess speed was a factor in a number of road deaths, the CC stated it was one of the fatal four the Force focused on as part of its strategy around enforcement, prevention and education.
- The CC thanked the PCC for his support around the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership .
- Noting an increase in operational activity, particularly in December around driving whilst impaired, the said locally and nationally it was always a period policing focused on.
- The CC advised very few forces had a dedicated Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit that supplemented the Tactical Operations Roads Policing Team on a daily basis.
- Paying tribute to the SCIU, the PCC said it was humbling to talk to the officers who often dealt with horrific scenes.
- The PCC asked the CC to outline how the Force triaged investigations into non-fatal/serious injury road traffic collisions. The CC said the work of the SCIU was primarily determined by injury level, but it was not a completely back/white decision; other factors included whether the collision involved a police vehicle, the complexity of the case (such as multiple vehicles/offences) and the technicality of a scene. After that he said triaging was based on the impact on people, with injury and non-injury collisions treated differently and consideration of aggravating factors. He added that every single collision reported to the Force was investigated.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- Reporting a slight reduction in child protection related offences, the CC said it was an area of focus due to the impact on some of the most vulnerable within communities.
- Noting the PCC had been invited to the out brief of HMICFRS' Child Protection inspection which the Force had volunteered to pilot, he said it would hopefully yield more learning to help the Force improve further.
- With regards to the POLIT, the CC thanked the PCC for his support particularly around technology, adding it was a team he wanted to have the very best tools so they could catch some of the most dangerous people in communities.
- Welcoming the recent Kent Online article about the POLIT, the PCC said it was a good way of highlighting their work which was often unseen by the public. He asked that his thanks to the team be placed on record.

4. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

- In terms of PEEL 2023/25, the CC stated the Force spent a long time with the inspectors to understand the two areas assessed as 'Requires Improvement'. Advising of personal disappointment at the Investigating Crime grade, he noted there were changes to how it was assessed during the inspection. He said a lot of the significant improvements HMICFRS found were great to hear, but there were still areas of focus; in particular, along with a number of other forces, how the Force maximised getting the right outcomes for victims. In terms of Responding to the Public, he stated there were a couple of very bespoke areas, but generally HMICFRS' view which the Force had accepted, was that they wanted to see sustained FCIR performance. He was confident in the Improvement Plan and that the gradings would improve in the next inspection.
- In terms of positive grade changes, the CC highlighted Managing Offenders and Protecting Vulnerable People which he said was an area receiving increased HMICFRS focus.
- Stating his focus was on the Improvement Plan, he noted the internal Inspectorate Team was responsible for assessing progress using the same criteria as HMICFRS and advised that at a point later in the year, he would provide a briefing to the PCC on progress to enable challenge and support.

- With regards to Responding to the Public, the PCC asked about reasons for the Force re-instating the Re-THRIVE process for high graded calls. The CC advised it was partly to align with national work around using similar language in policing, but also to address HMICFRS feedback on the need to ensure where attendance was delayed, the risk was reviewed. It was very much about trying to make sure the Force did not miss incidents that were becoming more urgent and perhaps needed a priority response, or vice versa. He said the training had been re-invigorated and there was an evaluation which once completed, he would be happy to share with the PCC.
- With regards to investigating crime and the Force's use of the E-BIT tool, the PCC asked about the crime types it was being used for and whether victim satisfaction was being monitored. The CC confirmed that satisfaction was monitored and reported at Force Performance Committee, with a particular focus on hate crime, rape and DA. He said the crime types were criminal damage, theft other, common assault, Section 4 and 5 Public Order Act offences, theft from the person and theft by employee, adding it was a small suite in terms of number, but high in volume which was the premise of E-BIT – to help the Force identify detection opportunities. With increased opportunities around bots and AI in the future, he advised the Force was engaged with work nationally. He said his stance was straightforward, anything that assisted with understanding crime, better supporting victims and detecting crime would be grasped, however he did not see a position where technology would ever replace human decision making.
- Report on the Criminal Justice Alliance super-complaint – highlighting the response, the CC said it was particularly important to note how the Force scrutinised itself and ensured independent review through the IAG's.
- Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system – the CC advised it was heavily influenced by how the Force, the CPS and Probation were having to support victims for prolonged periods because of court backlogs. Stating victims were having to wait a lot longer to see justice served compared to many years ago, he acknowledged the support of the PCC as Chair of the KCJB. Noting that meeting the needs of victims was writ large through the Kent Police Pledge, he said the Force continued to over resource the Witness Care Unit but there were cost and resource implications. He added none of the recommendations were specific to Chief Constables, but one was aligned to forces in terms of compliance with the Victims Needs Assessment and would be assessed via the PEEL process.
- Interim update: Activism and Impartiality in Policing Inspection – the CC advised it was commissioned by the previous Home Secretary and Kent was not one of the forces inspected.
- Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service – the CC noted the inspection and the PCC advised it was more than covered at the KCJB.
- Independent Review on Taser Disproportionality – the CC stated he was happy with the Force's oversight arrangements regarding use of Taser and disproportionately. He advised 'use' did not mean discharge and explained the table showed the five areas where the Force was required to capture data – from the Taser being drawn which in a lot of circumstances de-escalated the situation, through to it being discharged. He said it was extremely important kit for frontline staff to ensure they remained safe, but more importantly, to enable them to protect the public.
- The PCC thought the public did not understand how little it was actually discharged as opposed to drawn or aimed. He said the fact it was only discharged in one in seven incidents showed the benefit in terms of a deterrent and not a weapon. Noting the Force led the way in allowing Special Constables to be Taser trained, he sought confirmation that they had to pass the same rigorous training as their regular colleagues. The CC confirmed they did. The PCC sought reassurance that the number of Taser trained officers was appropriate based on the current threat assessment. Whilst recognising there were costs involved, the CC stated the offer remained for frontline staff who wished to carry a Taser, adding that in terms of the threat faced there were more than enough trained officers to meet the Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment. The PCC provided an assurance that any costs would be met.
- The DCO reported 12 internal audits were planned for 2023/24 – four had been finalised and two were in draft with the Force receiving substantial assurance for investigative wellbeing and overtime. He said investigative wellbeing was important as the Force had received what it felt was a harsh recommendation in the previous PEEL inspection around looking after its investigators. He added overtime was a big spend each year, so it was also pleasing to see it was being spent correctly and authorised appropriately by both local and central teams.
- Remaining audits were either being scoped or in field work and there were currently 16 live recommendations; all classed as medium or low.
- Work on the external audit was delayed through no fault of the Force; the DCO said any leverage that could be applied in terms getting the accounts signed off had been, but owing to delays in the whole public sector it was not going to be possible to do so in a timely fashion as in previous years.

Actions

- **Force: Provide a briefing on progress against the PEEL Improvement Plan later in the year.**
- **Force: Share evaluation of re-THRIVE process on all high graded calls once completed.**

5. People

- The DCO reported the headcount figure for 2023/24 was 4,223; five more than the 4,218 it was agreed would be recruited. He advised the Force was audited against the headcount figure at the end of September and March each year to ensure it was fulfilling the PUP requirement and enabling it to draw down the grant.
- Noting the audit in September was successful, he advised whilst the Force did not recruit every month, it did lose officers and between September and December attrition had created 71 vacancies which the Force was actively recruiting against.

- April to December 2023, there were 133 joiners – 124 new recruits, 7 transferees and 2 re-joiners.
- The DCO noted there was an intake of 55 officers on 28 December and a further intake of 81 planned for March 2024 (87 stated in the paper, but updated due to levels of attrition).
- The DCO advised the Force would need to remain at 4,223 in 2024/25 and with an average of 27 leavers per month, had planned four intakes totalling 312 officers. He added the Force was able to flex recruitment to ensure it met the numbers required for the audits in September 2024 and March 2025.
- The DCO noted the new College of policing entry route was being piloted and the Force was awaiting the outcome.
- In terms of diversity the DCO reported applications from females and ethnic minority candidates were positive, with 15.85% from ethnic minorities being the highest ever and higher than the economically active population in Kent.
- In terms of Force representation, he reported 159 ethnic minority officers (3.88%) and 1,426 female officers (34.82%).
- The DCO reported the PCSO establishment was 101.5 FTE with a strength of 78.00 following 9 recent joiners, adding a further intake was planned for May 2024.
- Compared to last year, absence was up 0.5 average days for officers, 0.1 for staff and down 1.28 for PCSOs.
- With 1,565 OH referrals and 1,776 appointments in the first nine months of the financial year, the DCO reported a reduction in the referral to appointment waiting time.
- Acknowledging the new College of Policing entry route was being piloted, the PCC asked about the anticipated uptake. The DCO advised the Force was hopeful it would be around 40% of all recruits, adding the pilots would assist in determining whether that ambition was realistic.
- Noting the overall increase in officer absence, the PCC asked if the proportion accounted for by psychological related absence had increased compared to previous years. The DCO confirmed it had by about 2-3%.

6. **Finance**

- The DCO reported the 2023/24 capital budget was £29.4m, including £7.7m rolled forward. He advised the roll forward was through no fault of the Force, but due to goods and services not being received or not to the extent expected.
- The spend projected for this year was £23.6m, an underspend of £5.8m which he said would again be rolled forward.
- In terms of revenue, the Force was projecting an underspend of £1.5m which was 0.38% of the total budget.
- Noting operational activity was a priority and would be preserved, the DCO stated the Force had a 2024/25 savings plan. He added it was challenging, but the Force intended to balance the budget.
- Whilst the recently agreed £13 precept would help limit the extent of savings required, the DCO said it was still a large figure at £7.3m which was subject to current unknowns such as inflation, pay award, central grant and officer attrition.
- The MTFP continued to assume stable police officer numbers given the auditing around the PuP drawdown figures.
- The DCO stated the Force had a strong track record in delivering savings, but it was set against a backdrop of just over 20% of the revenue budget not being salary related. With the limitations placed on the CC with regards to flexibility around police officer numbers, he said it would be a very challenging year.
- Despite the Force being in the lower bottom quartile for funding per 1,000 population, the DCO advised it still managed to achieve good PEEL gradings in terms of resources and use of the workforce as well as signed off accounts. Noting that was not the case for all public sector organisations, he added the Force also had sufficient reserves.
- Acknowledging the PCC's support via the precept, the CC said the reality was that the funding formula was unfair to Kent and a few other forces and if it didn't change the financial challenge would continue for another 3-5 years. Agreeing, the PCC said he was committed to making sure the formula going forwards reflected what Kent needed.
- The PCC sought an assurance that next year's savings plan would not impact on the NHP Model. Confirming it would not, the CC said thanks to some creativity about how the budget was apportioned, the Force would be able to preserve unequivocally the NHP Model next year. He was concerned however about future years - without a significant change to the formula, he said it was likely he would not be able to give the same assurance.

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

- Confirming he updated the PCC regularly on operational matters of significance, the CC noted the Angiolini Report would be published very soon. Whilst currently confidential, he said the Force had looked at the report and it was very significant in terms of its recommendations. He added the Force would engage with the PCC about the recommendations and its response. The PCC said it would probably be an item for the next meeting.

In closing, the PCC thanked the CC and DCO for the reports and their teams for producing them. He also thanked his team for their support with the technology and those who had joined the meeting online.

	Status	Owner	Due date
Provide a briefing on progress against the PEEL Improvement Plan	Open	Force	11/09/2024
Share evaluation of re-THRIVE process on all high graded calls	Open	Force	12/06/2024

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 12 June 2024