

MEETING NOTES

Title: Performance & Delivery Board

Date and time: 19 February 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)
- Nigel Brookes – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Apologies: **Kent Police:**

- 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 Previous Meeting – 11 December 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record, and the following actions discharged:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provide further detail on the 11% of retail incidents not attended by the Force – written update received with thanks.○ Provide update on the new PEEL framework once more detail is known – update received with thanks.
3.	Making Kent Safer: Delivery & Performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CC 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 noted the increase in all crime and reasoned this to be a result of increases in crimes against society.• Regarding recorded victim-based crime, the CC was pleased to advise of a continued reduction and a slight increase in solved rate. However, he acknowledged further analysis was needed to understand the increase in December.• The CC reported an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and noted the unusually high level in November. In this regard, the CC outlined the potential role of hotspot centred activity as part of ASB awareness week. The CC noted that while a sustained reduction was the goal, the recording of previously hidden ASB was positive.• Referencing increased recording of shoplifting and retail crime, the CC highlighted it as a trend seen nationally and not necessarily indicative of a problem bespoke to Kent. He further reported that Kent Police's response was keeping pace, with a substantial increase in suspects interviewed and Out of Court Resolutions (OoCRs).• With reference to the PCCs request for detail on the use of OoCRs, the CC summarised details in the paper on the checks, balances and application framework. Despite the lack of national comparisons, the CC advised tentative evidence from Kent suggested OoCRs were effective in addressing an offender's behaviour.• The CC noted decreases in burglary business and community, and burglary residential.• Regarding recorded violent crime, the CC reported a decrease over the three-month reporting period. A reduction in both robbery and hate crime were also observed by the CC.

- With regards to the Divisional Policing Review (DPR) which went live on 14 October, the CC advised it was too early to comment definitively on its success. He also noted a Post Implementation Review was scheduled and offered to provide the PCC with an update.
- The CC highlighted the impact of vacancy rates as a result of the DPR and reaffirmed his commitment to minimising this through new intakes.
- Noting drug offences had increased by 8.9%, the PCC asked whether this was mainly due to activity in Grip Zones and/or linked to the work of Beat Officers. The CC confirmed it was likely both, with significant increases in arrests/seizures in Grip Zones and intelligence from Beat Officers leading to more enforcement activity. The CC also praised ongoing anti-drug campaigns.
- The PCC asked whether the Force's recent focus on motorcycle theft had positively impacted associated crime rates. The CC reported that through county-wide activity, offences had significantly reduced, and there had been an increase in suspect outcomes.
- Commending the achievement of keeping pace with shoplifting offences, the PCC asked how Op Pegasus and Opal were supporting the Force's efforts. The CC confirmed the Force received intelligence from Op Pegasus, and that on a number of occasions it had resulted in preventative and enforcement activity.

Tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- The CC highlighted various workstreams including the launch of the Vulnerability Strategy, work with the University of Kent, Rapid Video Response (RVR) and partnership work to engage men and boys with the topic of VAWG. The CC stated that Kent Police has a comprehensive strategy to tackle VAWG, but commented there was still more to do.
- Noting the increase in rape offences, the CC advised that following further analysis no obvious trend or explanation had been found.
- The CC reported that sexual offences had also increased. He was satisfied it was linked to the introduction of new offences around sharing/threatening to share intimate photographs.
- Concerned about the increase in rape and sexual offences, the PCC asked whether the CC was reassured the 'Ask for Angela' scheme was operating effectively across the county. The CC confirmed he was reassured and noted that 109 premises were signed up. He emphasised his intention to continue pushing the scheme countywide, and that it was one initiative of many, also highlighting wider activity such as Op Vigilant and VAWG events.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- Noting domestic abuse was one of the biggest categories of crime Kent Police responded to, the CC reported a 2.4% reduction in recorded crime over the three-month period.
- The CC also noted reductions in recorded adult protection and violence against the person (VAP) offences.
- Highlighting a reduction in knife crime offences and an increase in charged and solved rates, the CC stressed the importance of Op Sceptre, a national week of focus which had resulted in 36 arrests. He also noted the ongoing success of the Knife Pledge which had contributed to a 32% decrease in youth related crime.
- The CC reported a slight increase in fraud offences.
- Noting the large reduction in adult protection and VAP offences in November, the PCC sought reassurance that the Force understood the reasons. The CC acknowledged unusual patterns of activity in November, advising that Op Sceptre and the ASB awareness week would have had an impact. He also highlighted a 57% reduction in NHS admissions for sharp injuries in under 25s which he said was evidence of a true reduction in crime.

Combat organised crime, county lines and serious crime

- Noting the paper highlighted just a portion of the Force's work, the CC highlighted various case studies across different crime types including drug, sexual and violent offences.
- Referring to the reinvigoration of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), the CC said the Force was beginning to see positive results in terms of quality and volume of intelligence but cautioned that this needed to be sustained.
- The PCC asked for an update on the status of County Lines operating within the county. The CC advised there were 42 known to be in operation, with 15 in East division, 21 in North Division and 6 in West Division.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of the communities

- The CC praised the Special Constabulary's excellent service to the public and noted their seamless collaboration with regular officers in the community.
- Commending Community Policing Volunteers and Police Support Volunteers for their extensive hours, the CC emphasised their role in supporting public safety and the work of the Force.

- Reporting on Force Crime and Incident Response, the CC noted a slight decrease in performance over the period, particularly in December, but said he was satisfied it had been identified, and the reasons were fully understood. Through further discussion the CC remained assured of its sustained good performance when compared nationally.
- Highlighting the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs, the CC stressed the significant challenges it posed, noting the impact was both financial and operational.
- With regards to the costs associated with the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs, the PCC enquired about the current position on reimbursement by the Government. The CC explained it was still under negotiation with the Home Office. Despite this, the CC was of the opinion that the impact should not be on local operational policing and remained hopeful in this regard.
- The PCC asked if the CC was confident the Force could meet the Government's target to recruit 70-80 Special Constables over the next four years. The CC asserted unless there was a dramatic change, he was assured of the Force's ability to meet the target through a gradual recruitment process.

Prevent road danger and support vision zero

- The CC highlighted the high levels of enforcement activity connected to the fatal four road dangers.
- Reporting an 11% reduction in road deaths, the CC emphasised the ultimate goal of zero injuries/deaths on Kent's roads.
- Referring to Op Limit which saw 316 people arrested for driving offences, the CC noted this was a reduction on last year and so further analysis was needed.
- The CC commended the work of the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit.
- Noting national data suggested the number of death or serious injury investigations Kent started had increased over the last year, the PCC asked if this was due to particular factors, such as speeding or drink/drug driving, and whether the Force had sufficient capacity to investigate them. The CC advised the reasons predominantly stemmed from the fatal four but also noted that due to different definitions and varying timelines there would always be a variance between national data and investigations conducted by the Force. The CC stated he had no concerns about the Serious Collision Investigation Unit's capacity, noting additional staff had recently been deployed and it was reviewed regularly.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- The CC reported an increase in child protection related offences and explained work was underway to understand the reasons.
- Whilst highlighting recent intakes into the cadet programme, the CC congratulated all cadets and volunteer leaders on been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service which would be presented in April 2025.
- Referencing recent work on online safety which found parents were worried about the risks of smartphones/social media and 80% would support a smartphone ban in schools, the PCC asked whether the Force would support the parent-led campaign to promote children under 14 not having smartphones and children not joining social media until age 16. Whilst mindful of his role, the CC agreed everything that could be done, should be to protect children and acknowledged that movement in this area would likely have a positive effect on criminality.

Action

- Force: Provide an update on the findings from the DPR Post Implementation Review.

4. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

HMICFRS publication – The policing response to anti-social behaviour

- The ACC outlined the PEEL spotlight report which made a number of recommendations for forces, including the effective collection/sharing/analysis of data; ensuring neighbourhood policing (NHP) resources were not diverted from their main duties, and using problem-solving approaches effectively.
- The ACC highlighted that Kent Police received a grading of 'Good' in the two most recent PEEL inspections and explained this gave Kent Police a good basis on which to build using the recommendations.
- Of the eight recommendations, the ACC reported one had been met through the implementation of a comprehensive training package and advised of good progress on the others.

HMICFRS publication – An inspection of the police response to public disorder in July and August 2024

- Noting Kent was not inspected, the ACC advised that, in summary, the report found forces needed to ensure they were better prepared to plan and respond to serious violence and disorder.
- Areas for improvement (AFIs) included timeliness of the National Mobilisation Plan, training of public order public safety (POPS) officers and engagement with the National Police Wellbeing Service.

- Conversely, areas of praise included the bravery and commitment of POPS officers and the quick identification and prosecution of offenders.
- The ACC advised a working group had been established to manage the Force's response to the report, but good progress had been made, particularly around the training of POPS officers.
- Referring to a wellbeing survey that was sent to all officers deployed to the disorder, the PCC sought assurance that Kent was included and asked about the findings. Assuring the PCC of the Force's commitment to officer wellbeing, the ACC confirmed the survey was sent to Kent officers and noted feedback was widely positive, with no injuries reported nor concerns regarding kit/uniform.
- Thanking the ACC, the PCC asked what information was shared with new officer recruits about Flint House Police Rehabilitation. The ACC advised all recruits were briefed on the services available through Flint House, along with their ability to contribute through monthly stipends.

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

- The ACC advised that five of the 14 AFIs had now been met by the Force. He further emphasised work undertaken in response to the four 'Responding to the Public' AFIs which had allowed three to be closed.
- The ACC noted work was ongoing to ensure police attendance and response times were timely and appropriate.
- Regarding the 'Investigating Crime' AFIs, the ACC reported progress in the form of additional training and a refresh of the Investigative Improvement Plan. He also acknowledged charged and solved rates had improved since the PEEL inspection.
- For the 'Protecting Vulnerable People' AFI, the ACC noted work was underway to ensure protective orders were being used effectively.
- Acknowledging the increased solved rate, the PCC asked whether the Force was confident that all reasonable lines of enquiry were being followed up. Agreeing that the increased solved rate provided an element of reassurance, the ACC also said he was confident that the Force's processes for reviewing and governing the quality of investigations was rigorous.
- Noting it could be included in the next PEEL inspection, the PCC asked about the Force's capacity and capability to tackle fraud. The ACC expressed confidence in Kent Police's ability to prevent and investigate fraud. He explained the Force held the unique asset of the Serious Crime Directorate's specialist Fraud Team, as well as expert advice from the Economic Crime Unit and a network of Prevent and Protect Coordination Officers.

Internal and External Audit Functions

- The ACC advised progress of the audits was in line with the timetable and actions were being monitored and fulfilled.

5. People

Recruitment plan

- Reporting on the maintenance headcount target, the ACC noted Kent Police had met and exceeded the target by one at the most recent milestone.
- The ACC noted the Force was on track to sustain the maintenance headcount at the next milestone, with the most recent and subsequent intake in March projected to total 119 new recruits.
- Looking to the future, the ACC confirmed the Force was planning four intakes to maintain its headcount but also noted there was flexibility should the situation warrant it.
- The ACC highlighted increased performance by the Vetting department. He explained a strategic review was underway to ensure there was capacity to meet demand and emphasised the Force's commitment to maintaining high standards.
- Noting public interest in DBS checks, the PCC requested an update on the backlog. The ACC noted the team was funded entirely by the DBS and processed around 94,000 applications per year. He advised currently there were 3,660 applications over 60 days old, but this was a significant decrease from the previous year, when it peaked at over 6,000 applications. He assured the PCC of the Force's focus in this area and outlined a comprehensive set of actions to reduce the delays further, including a structural review of the team which was underway.

Diversity application data and force representation

- Of just under 2,000 applications, the ACC reported 13% were from individuals of ethnic minority backgrounds. Acknowledging this was lower than the previous year, the ACC noted the proportion was higher than that of the active economic population.

- The ACC reported 36.5% of applicants were female which was a slight increase from the previous financial year. He also noted the Investigate First programme attracted a higher proportion of female applicants.
- With regards to Force representation, the ACC reported 3.72% of officers were from an ethnic minority background, and 35.6% female. He also noted progress in the most recent intake whereby 4.7% were from an ethnic minority background and 41.4% female.

Local and national work to enhance recruitment (including diversity)

- The ACC advised of a recent increase in the number of Recruitment Ambassadors and noted the work of the Positive Active Engagement Programme in offering 1:1 support to individuals.
- Summarising outreach and marketing activity, the ACC highlighted the number of individuals impacted and of those, the high proportion of individuals from ethnic minority and females. He also emphasised the large reach of the 'More Than A Badge' podcast and its ability to bring alive a policing career.

Local and national work to enhance retention

- Noting projected leaving officer numbers, the ACC highlighted real-time data from the financial year showed a trend below what was expected.
- The ACC reported reasons for leaving were varied, with the highest portion due to resignations, with those young-in-service most likely to resign.
- Trends for police staff were noted to be similar with personal/professional development the most common reason for leaving.
- The ACC asserted there was little evidence of financial hardship in the leavers data, reporting that 3% of officers and 6% police staff cited pay/renumeration as the primary reason. Regarding secondary business interests, the ACC reported a slight yearly increase for police officers, but a decrease for police staff.

PCSO Update

- The ACC advised the current PCSO strength was 10.94 fte below Establishment but highlighted the Force's commitment to recruitment with an intake planned for May 2025.

Neighbourhood policing model representation update

- ACC Brookes noted representation of ethnic minority officers within NHP teams was in line with overall Force representation but was lower for females.

Attendance and wellbeing

- Summarising findings, the ACC reported that for the period April to December 2024, the average days lost per officer was 7.04 (lower than last year, but higher than the previous six years), and for staff 7.84 (higher than the previous eight years). The ACC advised psychological related absences were the most common for both officers and staff.
- Referencing oversight of employee absence, the ACC detailed a comprehensive strategy shaped through the Force Performance Committee and Chief Officer Management Board to ensure it was fully understood and managed. He reported interventions into long-term sickness had increased over the past financial year.
- The ACC emphasised recent sustained improvements in Occupational Health referral times and highlighted the winter health programme which saw a successful roll-out of winter vaccines.

6. Finance

- The CC advised his update would be brief due to little change in the summary position.
- Referring to the costs detailed in the paper, the CC highlighted the impact of pay scale increases and the changes to legislation for XL Bully dogs. He noted the real-time cost associated with XL Bully dogs was now neared £1m and continued to put substantial pressure on the Force.
- In terms of leavers, the CC noted this continued to impact the Force despite the recent reduction.
- The CC reaffirmed administrative and financial challenges posed by the vacancy factor and the Force's commitment to fair distribution of vacancies where possible.
- Noting projections in the Medium-term Financial Plan (MTFP), the CC thanked the PCC for his support with the council tax precept and NHP funding bid submitted to the Government. Acknowledging the potential opportunities, the CC maintained the savings needed remained the Force's biggest challenge.
- Observant of the projected underspend for the financial year, the PCC asked whether it could help with the financial challenges in 2025/26. The CC asserted he was mindful of how any saving could be maximised to benefit the Force operationally and acknowledged it would help.

- Regarding recent announcements around increased firearms licensing fees, the PCC asked about early work to assess the impact and how it could be used to both improve the service and reduce costs. The CC advised work was in its infancy but showed promising projections. He reported that if 80% of current licensed holders continued along with new licenses, £200,000-£400,000 extra would come into the Force. The CC stated first and foremost it would be used to ensure the Firearms Licensing team's performance was where it should be, and any remaining income used operationally or in support of the MTFP.

7. Topical Issues & Update on Significant Operational Matters

- Outlining investigations of note, the CC advised of the large Force commitment to the murder at Knockholt and a positive result in relation to the organised theft of over £1m of watches from Bluewater. An operation in Maidstone was also highlighted which saw 41 shoplifters charged with theft offences in January.

In closing, the PCC thanked the CC and his team for producing the papers and his own team for their support with the technology.

	Status	Owner	Due Date
Provide an update on the findings from the DPR Post Implementation Review	Open	Force	16/09/2025

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 28 May 2025