

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 21 July 2026.

PRESENT: Mr G Sandher, MBE DL (Chair), Mr J Moreland (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Blakemore, Cllr P Cole, Cllr H Crittenden, Mrs H de Jong, Cllr P Feacey, Mrs G Foster, Mrs S Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr M Nee, Cllr C Nolan, Mr R Palmer, Cllr H Perkin and Cllr R Wells.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Paul (Chief Executive, OPCC), Mr R Phillips (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC) and Mr N Wickens (Head of Governance & Performance, OPCC).

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer – Overview and Scrutiny).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair

(Item A2)

1. The Panel Clerk asked for nominations for Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
2. Mr Moreland proposed, and Cllr Feacey seconded, that Mr Sandher be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
3. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED: That Mr Gurvinder Sandher be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

(Item A3)

1. Cllr Wells proposed, and Cllr Nolan seconded, that Mr Moreland be elected Vice-Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
2. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED: That Mr John Moreland be elected Vice-Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

3. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A4)

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Croxton, Cllr Peake and Cllr Murray.
2. Mr Romagnuolo informed the Panel that there had been changes in the Panel's membership:
 - Cllr Lynne Wright had been replaced by Cllr Michael Nee as the representative of Dover DC.
 - Mrs Georgia Foster and Mr Richard Palmer had replaced Mr Maxwell Harrison and Mr Paul Webb respectively as representatives of Kent County Council.
 - Cllr Pat Makinson had been replaced by Cllr Crittenden as the representative of Thanet District Council.
3. Mr Romagnuolo also explained that, because of exceptional personal circumstances, it was necessary for the Commissioner to attend virtually.

4. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting *(Item A5)*

1. Mr Moreland declared that he worked in the Criminal Justice System across criminal law courts, family law courts and civil law courts. He said that he was also a Member of the National Law Society's Criminal Law Committee.

5. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 23 April 2026 *(Item A6)*

1. The Panel agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2026 were an accurate record.

6. Caring for Victims *(Item B1)*

1. Kent's PCC, Mr Matthew Scott, congratulated Mr Sandher and Mr Moreland on their appointments as the Panel's Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.
2. He said care and support for victims of crime was a vital element of modern policing and the wider criminal justice system (CJS). In addition to investigating offences and bringing offenders to justice, the police had a responsibility to ensure that victims were supported, safeguarded and treated with dignity.
3. The care and support of victims was a key component of the PCC's 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' Police and Crime Plan. Work around victims was a priority for PCCs as they advocated for victims' rights and commissioned support services to help them cope and recover.
4. In Kent, victim care was delivered through a whole system model, combining the operational response of Kent Police, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and services commissioned by the PCC. Multi-agency public protection arrangements

and stalking intervention panels were crucial, and the support from Kent County Council, Medway Council and the Districts was acknowledged.

5. The Commissioner said there were a number of specialist Kent Police officers who provided support to victims. These included Family Liaison Officers, Sexual Offence Liaison Officers and a Prevent and Protect Team. Kent was one of the foremost users of Stalking Protection Orders and the use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices had increased in recent years.
6. Over the last year, 96% of victims who were referred received some kind of support from organisations commissioned by the PCC. The Commissioner received a grant of £3.9m from the Ministry of Justice for the commissioning of victim services, with £1.8m dedicated to those supporting domestic abuse and sexual violence victims.
7. Victim satisfaction with the service provided by Kent Police was monitored for three offences: rape, domestic abuse and hate crime. For the rolling year to March 2026, they were all above 90% which was positive.
8. In response to a question about the backlog within the CJS, Mr Scott said that there had been some progress with regards to reducing it. However, there was only so much that could be done at the local level. The government was trying to address this issue, for example by removing the cap on Crown Court sitting days.
9. In response to a question about how the removal of the Commissioners role would impact on support for victims, Mr Scott said that, while the Government had not published specific legislation yet, the indications were that it would recognise the need for continuity of commissioned services and that funding would continue at least for the near future.

RESOLVED: That the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel **note** the report.

7. Decision OPCC.D.037.26 – Sale of Surplus Land at Sutton Road Site (Item C1)

1. The Commissioner clarified that the decision entailed only the disposal of land which was underutilised and not required for operational policing; Kent Police Headquarters remained at Sutton Road.

RESOLVED: That the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel **note** the Decision.

8. Verbal Update from the Commissioner - Responding to the Public

1. The Commissioner explained that the PEEL inspection programme was HMICFRS' regular assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales. The inspection made graded judgements in eight areas of policing. In the last inspection (2025-27), one of the areas - Responding to the Public – was rated as 'Adequate'. The Panel asked the Commissioner to expand on the action being taken to improve this area of policing.

2. Since January 2026, the Force had been focusing on improving its response times, with the Force Control Room working in close collaboration with local divisions to drive progress. The delivery of Operation Infinite to all local policing teams, community safety units and tactical operations teams, and a strengthened emphasis on the Most Appropriate Person process, ensured the quickest and most appropriate response was consistently identified.
3. Supervisory structures had been enhanced to provide a real-time overview, enabling more effective support and scrutiny of call grading decisions. This ensured that incidents were appropriately prioritised and that response standards were being met.
4. The percentage of emergency calls attended within 20 minutes in May 2026 was 76.0%, compared to 60% last year. . The percentage of priority incidents attended within one hour - which is the next grade below emergency - was 82%, compared to 41% last year .
5. Kent Police's Force Control Room (FCR) continued to operate at a very high level and remained one of the best performing FCRs in the country.
6. The Deputy Chief Constable chaired the Performance Management Board and maintained close oversight of all operations in relation to the 'Responding to the Public' area.

RESOLVED: That the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel **note** the verbal update.

9. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item D2)

Question 1

1. *In light of the ongoing reports and incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB) and criminal damage caused by the use of catapults across Kent, impacting vehicles, property, and wildlife - what specific performance data or trends is the Commissioner reviewing to assess the effectiveness of the current Kent Police forces approach? Furthermore, how is the Commissioner holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure that resources are being appropriately balanced between reactive enforcement and long-term preventative measures in our local communities?*

(Mr Richard Palmer, Kent County Council)

1. The Commissioner said a substantial amount of work was currently underway, particularly through the work of the Rural Task Force. The Rural Task Force was made aware by the FCR of every incident involving catapults or slingshots.
2. There had been a substantial increase in incidents over the last year, so they were now reviewed on a monthly basis. In terms of trends, urban areas were experiencing more incidents involving assault with injury, while in rural areas there were more incidents involving property damage.

3. There was a clear policy and process in place to make sure that each incident was dealt with by the most appropriate team. Cases were investigated by either local victim-based crime teams or Beat Officers. The Rural Policing Team also managed cases involving prolific offenders, securing convictions against them.
4. A number of Local Authorities had also implemented Public Space Protection Orders which addressed the misuse of catapults.

RESOLVED: That the Panel **note** the response to the question.

10. Work Programme

(Item E1)

1. The Chair reminded Panel Members to let the Panel Clerk know if they wished to suggest any items for the work programme.
2. The Panel noted the work programme.

RESOLVED: That the Panel **note** the Work Programme and **contact** the Panel Clerk with any items they wish to be added.

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