

AGENDA

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Dear Panel Member

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the **KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** will be held in the **Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone** on **Tuesday, 16th July, 2024, at 10.00 am** when the following business will be transacted

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Anna Taylor on 03000 416478

Membership

Councillor Peter Feacey	Ashford Borough Council
Councillor Connie Nolan	Canterbury City Council
Councillor Richard Wells	Dartford Borough Council
Councillor Charlotte Zosseder	Dover District Council
Councillor Mike Blakemore	Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox	Gravesham Borough Council
Mr Mike Hill	Kent County Council
Councillor Eddie Peake	Medway Council
Councillor Perry Cole	Sevenoaks District Council
Councillor Richard Palmer	Swale Borough Council
Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid	Maidstone Borough Council
Councillor Pat Makinson	Thanet District Council
Councillor Des Keers	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Councillor Nancy Warne	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Councillor Tristan Osborne	Co-opted member – Medway Council
Mr Ian Chittenden	Co-opted member – Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mr Jordan Meade	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mrs Elaine Bolton	Independent Member
Mr Gurvinder Sandher	Independent Member

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- 2 Election of Chair
- 3 Election of Vice-Chair
- 4 Apologies and Substitutes
- 5 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- 6 Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 6 February 2024 (Pages 1 - 6)

B - Commissioner's reports requested by the Panel/offered by the Commissioner

- B1 Neighbourhood Policing Review - update report (Pages 7 - 10)
- B2 Criminal Justice System - update report (Pages 11 - 14)
- B3 Shoplifting - update report (Pages 15 - 18)

C - Commissioner's Decisions

- C1 Decision OPCC D.035.24 - Chief Executive's Notice of Intention to Retire (Pages 19 - 20)

D - Questions to the Commissioner

- D1 Questions to the Commissioner

E - Panel Matters

- E1 Annual Report of the Police and Crime Panel (Pages 21 - 26)
- E2 Future work programme (Pages 27 - 28)

F - For Information

- F1 Minutes of the Commissioner's Governance Board meetings held on 13 September 2023, 29 November 2023 and 28 February 2024 (Pages 29 - 50)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 8 July 2024

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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, 6 February 2024.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr G Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Blakemore, Cllr P Cole, Cllr D McDonald (Substitute for Cllr L Edwards), Cllr P Feacey, Cllr D Keers, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr T Murray (Substitute for Cllr T Osbourne), Cllr R Palmer, Cllr L Parfitt-Reid, Cllr N Warne, Cllr R Wells, Mrs E Bolton, Cllr Mrs J Hollingsbee and Mr J Meade

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive), Mr R Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer), Mr N Wickens (OPCC - Head of Policy & Research) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**110. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting**
(Item 3)

Mr Meade declared that he was Chairman of Gravesham Pastors Charity.
Mr Feacey declared that he was Chairman of Ashford Volunteer Centre.

111. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 17 October 2023
(Item 4)

In response to a question from the Chair the PCC confirmed that an update on the criminal justice system would be brought to the Panel at the next meeting planned for July 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chair.

112. Draft refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' plan and 2024/25 precept proposal
(Item A1)

1. The Panel received a report which detailed the Commissioner's refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' Police and Crime Plan and proposal to increase the policing precept in 2024/25 to £256.15 for an average Band D property, which represented an increase of £13 per year, or 5.34%, on the 2023/24 precept.
2. The Commissioner introduced his refreshed Police and Crime Plan and confirmed that his priorities within the plan had remained consistent. The top five issues identified by the Annual Policing Survey were already included within the plan and were:

- a. Serious violence, including gangs/weapon offences.
 - b. Sexual offences, including rape.
 - c. Child sexual exploitation.
 - d. Antisocial behaviour.
 - e. Burglary/robbery.
3. The most notable change was to the priority previously described as 'Combat organised crime and county lines' which had been changed to 'Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs' on the basis that illegal drugs were the root cause of much offending and therefore Kent Police should ensure it takes robust enforcement action to reduce harm in local communities. Other issues were becoming more prominent such as Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, whilst there remained a clear desire for Kent Police to prioritise Violence against Women and Girls.
 4. The Commissioner responded to Members comments and questions which included the following:
 5. Further work should be undertaken on refining the survey to engage the voices of children and young people. The Commissioner explained that he had engaged with schools, youth groups, cadet forces to share messages and listen to the voices of young people.
 6. Concerns were raised regarding the backlog within the Crown Prosecution Service and the effects of this on the confidence of the public in Kent Police. The Commissioner considered this did affect trust and confidence and also in the wider Criminal Justice System.
 7. It was considered that the survey needed to show what was important for the residents of Kent and what made a difference to them. The Commissioner took the comments around the survey on board and would take this on board including responding to comments made within the service to provide a 'you said, we did' response.
 8. In response to a question about survey responses from partner organisations some work would be done where possible to capture which organisations responses were coming from. The survey had been given out at street stalls and in supermarket foyers with an aim of reaching as many people as possible. Members were keen that the survey was representative of the residents of Kent and encouraged further efforts to increase responses from ethnic minority communities and young people.
 9. In relation to the Commissioner's priorities and the links between mental health and crime the Commissioner explained that mental health had been one of his driving forces since beginning in his role. The relationship between the Police and Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) had improved, there was a shared understanding and the Commissioner commended the relevant teams for their work to improve this relationship.
 10. Members discussed the national funding formula which had disadvantaged Kent against other authorities. The Commissioner was aware that a new formula

was awaiting consultation, and it was hoped that this would be brought forward as soon as possible to address historic underfunding in Kent.

11. The Commissioner summed up by confirming that further work would be done on refining the survey for the future to gain information on what was important for the public and what made a difference. Surveys would also be targeted at young people to ensure their views were represented. The Chairman suggested a question be added to the survey asking about satisfaction with Kent Police's response to the public.
12. Moving on to the proposed precept the Commissioner introduced his proposal, thanking Members for engaging in his precept setting process via briefings to inform the Panel's scrutiny of the proposal.
13. There were three key factors around the budget proposal; the economic case, the policing case and the external/public case.
14. The Commissioner proposed to increase the policing precept by the maximum allowable amount of £13 per year, or 5.34% for an average Band D property (equivalent to £1.08 per month, or 3.5 pence per day). The Commissioner considered that this increase was needed in order for the Chief Constable to maintain policing services in Kent. Kent Police had an increase in funding of £15.4million in 2024/2025 however there were cost pressures of £22.7million. Even with the proposed precept at £13, there was a gap of £7.3million. The majority of cost pressures resulted from Police Officer pay. Unachieved savings were being monitored closely; however, these had been offset by savings made elsewhere and would be carried forward.
15. In relation to the funding formula and how this disproportionately affected Kent the Chairman asked whether partners could be of help in lobbying the Government to ensure the funding formula review took place as soon as possible. The Commissioner welcomed this and following further comments from members it was agreed that a public letter would be sent asking the Chancellor and Home Secretary to fully fund Kent Police.
16. In response to a question about the impact on police staff roles, the Commissioner explained that this was difficult, and the Commissioner was having to make decisions he did not want to take.
17. The Commissioner confirmed that Safer Streets 5 projects were due to run until March 2025. In relation to Immediate Justice which was being launched in October 2024. The Commissioner had engaged with probation services and learning was being taken on board from the pilots and other organisations.
18. Regarding Value for Money, the Commissioner explained that profiles were produced on Police Forces by HMICFRS and exercises were also undertaken comparing costs between forces. The Commissioner considered that indicators of success included; recruitment and retention and outcomes for victims of crime. Retention was being monitored closely.
19. A Member asked about the introduction of the EU EES which was due to be brought in in October 2024 – would this create a pressure on Kent Police finances

in the costs of officers working overtime over this period – was there opportunity to recoup any of this money from central government? The Commissioner agreed that it was likely that increased police resources would be needed to police the roads on occasions when Operation Brock and Brock Zero were the contingency plans when there were problems on roads in East Kent. There was a multi-agency approach to these plans, and the impact on residents was not underestimated with regards to this national border issue. There was the opportunity to recoup costs via the Special Grant Programme in relation to national issues.

20. Cllr Mochrie-Cox proposed, and Cllr Palmer seconded that, as set out in paragraph 15, a public letter be sent to the Chancellor and Home Secretary requesting that Kent Police be fully funded. This motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the proposed refreshed Police and Crime Panel and Precept be approved, and a public letter be sent from the Panel Chairman to the Chancellor and Home Secretary requesting that Kent Police be fully funded.

POST MEETING NOTE: this letter was sent on 1 March 2024; a copy was sent to all Kent and Medway MPs and Leaders and is available here:

[Panel letter to Government – Police Funding](#)

113. HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner introduced this item which provided an overview of Kent Police's HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 Inspection and outlined how the PCC would hold the Chief Constable to account. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of the HMICFRS reports to him in assisting him to hold the Chief Constable to account and provided independent assurance, or not, around the performance of Kent Police.
2. The Commissioner was pleased with the improvements made since the last report and it was positive that a couple of gradings had improved, however two categories remained in the requires improvement category. It was acknowledged that there were still areas for improvement, but the Commissioner considered that overall direction was positive.
3. The Commissioner wanted to record his thanks to Roy Wilsher, OBE QFSM HM Inspector of Constabulary and HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services and his team for their work on the inspection.
4. The Commissioner set out the key areas which required improvement, the majority of grading were good but areas such as 'storing best practice' needed to improve and it was considered that this was improving with the increased use of SharePoint. The Force Control Room grading was based on data from March 2023 and this was correct as of that time, 101 call attrition rate was 1.93% at the end of January 2024 and it was considered that this grading would move to at least adequate if the inspection were to be repeated today however it was

accepted that the grading was appropriate for its time. This continued to be monitored on a weekly basis with the Chief Constable or his Deputy.

5. In relation to investigating crime, this had improved however the category remained as requires improvement. The Commissioner had written to the HM Inspector of Constabulary with concerns that the measures used for grading this area were inconsistent.
6. The Chairman welcomed the report and the continued monitoring of the areas which were graded as requires improvement.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Panel note the report and agree to a further update at their October 2024 meeting.

114. Future work programme

(Item C1)

RESOLVED to note the future work programme.

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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 6th 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/2023/09/20/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/2023/09/20/officers-in-folkestone-ensure-safer-socialising/)

- 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/2023/09/20/anti-social-drivers-and-boy-racers-in-medway-to-be-fined-for-playing-music-too-loud-revving-engines-and-stunts/)
- 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/2023/09/20/shoplifters-arrested-during-operation-in-canterbury/)
- 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/health-67111111)

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.



To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Criminal Justice System - Update

Date: 16 July 2024

Introduction:

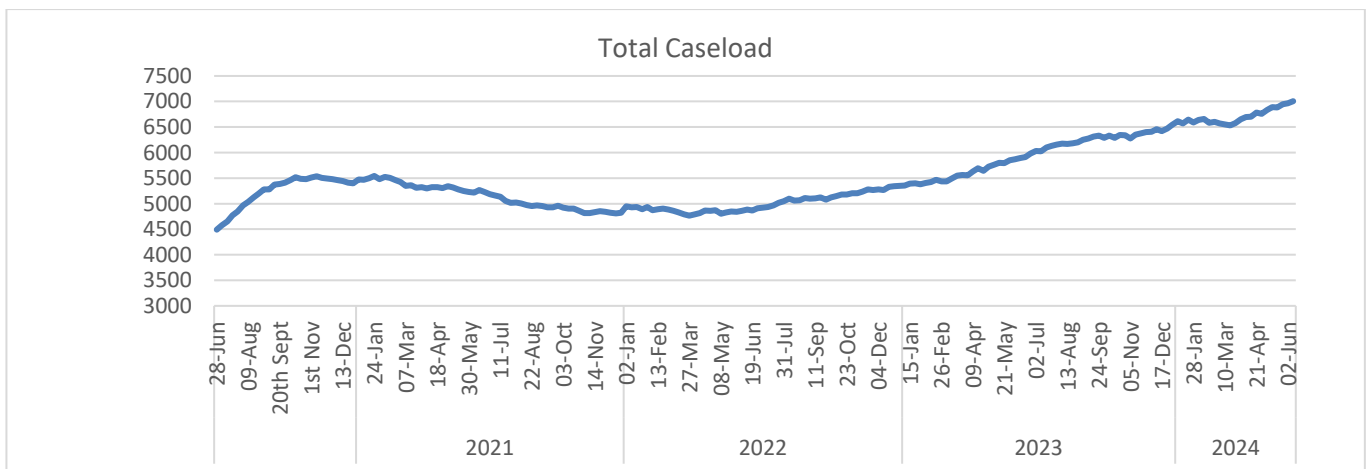
1. For reasons out of local control, the outstanding court caseload continues to increase and is likely to do so for some time, particularly in Crown Court.
2. The PCC has been and remains in regular contact with appropriate Ministers and with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) who recognise Kent’s situation and confirm it is a top priority. However, this has not yet resulted in a reduction in the backlog.
3. A lack of staff is very much at the heart of the problem along with the criminal justice (CJ) systems inability to flex resource where it is most needed.
4. This paper provides an update on:
 - latest numbers, highlighting the scale of the backlog and a comparison with the national position;
 - reasons why the court backlog is so great;
 - potential impact on victims, witnesses, and CJ staff; and
 - action taken to reduce numbers.

Latest numbers:

5. The following table shows the percentage increase in outstanding caseload between February 2020 (pre-pandemic benchmark) and 23 June 2024 for Kent and nationally.

	Total caseload	Crown Court	Magistrates Court
Kent	+ 164%	+ 193%	+ 137%
National	+ 61%	+ 84%	+ 44%

6. The graph below shows how the total caseload in Kent has been increasing since 2020.



7. At 61% above February 2020, nationally there is clearly a serious problem and with numbers still rising there is no sign of a recovery anytime soon. Reasons for this increase include the impact of the pandemic, the Bar strike in 2022 and ongoing staff shortages, particularly in terms of judiciary and barristers.

8. Whilst of course these play a part in Kent's increase, at 164% there are other factors also at play as outlined below.

Reasons for the increase:

9. In addition to national issues, the scale of Kent's increase is primarily down to three factors:
- Record levels of work entering the system.
 - Insufficient physical court capacity.
 - Shortage of key staff in HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Probation Service.

Work entering the system

10. Kent Police now has more officers than at any other time in its history which is resulting in more arrests and charges. The number of charges has been rising steadily particularly over the last 3 years, however with most new recruits now qualified and actively deployed, levels are reaching a new norm which is around 50% higher than pre-pandemic. Despite frequent warnings dating back to pre-pandemic, the rest of the CJ system has not kept pace.
11. Members may also have seen recent press coverage about a request for police forces to delay arresting people in 'non-priority' cases due to prison overcrowding issues. The Chief Constable has made it very clear that catching criminals is a core component of policing and that when arrests need to be made in Kent, they will be. He has advised officers that they should not be put off making an arrest because of issues upstream in the CJ system. I wholeheartedly support this position as the job of the police is to prevent and detect crime in local communities, whatever national issues there may be.

Physical court capacity

12. *Crown Court:* While currently able to use all five courtrooms, Canterbury's caseload remains stable at around double its pre-pandemic level. Current capacity does not allow for any recovery.
13. The position is vastly different in Maidstone where numbers continue to rise steadily. HMCTS accepts that eight courtrooms is insufficient to meet demand and as such, a Business Case has been submitted to build a further two jury courtrooms. However, there is no guarantee the request will be accepted and if it is, it will be some years before they become operational. Numbers are currently three times pre-pandemic levels and continuing to grow.
14. The Maidstone Nightingale Court shut in March as it frequently remained unused due to a lack of judiciary and other court staff.
15. As Crown Court numbers increase so too does the number of Custody Time Limit cases that must be heard, resulting in cancellations of trial/sentencing work and lengthening delays.
16. *Magistrate Court:* While at county level there is sufficient capacity, the problem is that the capacity is not aligned to demand.
17. As the busiest court, Medway only has three secure docks and five cells which is significantly short of what is required, yet there is unused capacity in courts such as Sevenoaks and Margate. Medway's ability to hear crime cases is further hindered by the closure of Gun Wharf because of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and the need to list extra family and civil work there.

Staff shortages

18. There is a national shortage of Judges and although more are being recruited, this just exacerbates the shortage in barristers as they all come from the same pool.
19. Judges have a significant input into where they work, and so the system is reliant on enough choosing to work in Kent. Unfortunately, Kent has been short over the last two years with Crown Court utilisation averaging around 75%. This year is much better as HMCTS have secured more Recorders to backfill for a shortage in Judges and so utilisation is currently over 95% (yet caseload numbers continue to rise). This utilisation is excellent, and demonstrates further that there simply is not sufficient capacity within Kent to deal with our demand.

20. In Magistrates Courts, Kent continues to experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining key staff, with shortages of Legal Advisors, Lawyers, and the Probation Service limiting the number of courts that can be run.
21. Many Kent based staff / recruits opt to work in London to receive the London Allowance. The PCC has therefore recommended that a Southeast Allowance be paid in order to break the constant cycle of failed recruitment campaigns and staff shortages. However, with no funding available this recommendation has not been progressed by those in authority.

Impact on victims and staff:

22. The PCC has met with and receives regular correspondence from victims concerning the impact of trial delays, which usually includes multiple date cancellations. Many are truly heartbreaking.
23. Many victims feel unable to move on with their lives while their court case drags on. There is anger and frustration at repeated delays, a feeling of being let down, and that justice is not being served. For many, their health and wellbeing is adversely affected and for the most vulnerable this can be extremely serious and on occasions life changing.
24. The delays are having a direct impact on PCC commissioned services for victims and witnesses of crime in terms of demand and cost. They are having to provide support for longer as cases work their way through the system and are seeing people withdraw completely from the process. The PCC has sought feedback on why victims and witnesses withdraw - the reasons vary depending on the circumstances and individual concerned. However, those directly related to the CJ system are; the length of wait including the number of adjournments leading to a lack of trust; being re-traumatised; fear of the process; the expense, including impact on work and childcare; and intimidation from the perpetrator and their associates.
25. The Kent Police Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) also supports victims and witnesses by ensuring they are kept updated throughout the court process. However, as a result of trial delays, their caseload has increased with contact having to be maintained for much longer; this has necessitated an increase in resourcing. The VWCU also reports increased levels of anger from victims and that keeping them on board with a prosecution is becoming more difficult as they grow tired of waiting and want to move on with their lives, often leaving defendants to walk free.

Action taken:

26. Despite the issues, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the work of local teams to continue delivering the most efficient and effective system possible under the most extreme circumstances. Without the excellent relationships built across all agencies which has seen them pull together as one under the control of the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB), Kent would be in a far worse position than it is.
27. The issue with Maidstone Crown Court capacity has been known for years and Kent has been sending cases with a DA postcode to Woolwich since 2016. HMCTS is looking at other work that can be sent out of area and non-victim cases continue to be sent to Dorset.
28. A number of Legal Advisor trainees are now qualified and will start to take courts in the coming months. It is hoped that with work entering the system seemingly levelling out, Kent will start to see a reduction in magistrates work in the early autumn.
29. The PCC continues to engage with ministers and the MoJ / HMCTS setting out the case that something needs to be done as the caseload volume increases and the gap between Kent and the national average widens.

Recommendation:

30. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their June 2025 meeting.

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To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Shoplifting - Update

Date: 16 July 2024

Introduction:

1. Retail crime (or shoplifting) is not victimless and can often be accompanied by assaults and threats of violence. It can also result in shop closures and damage public confidence in the police's ability to prevent crime, safeguard shopworkers and target offenders.
2. In light of increases in retail crime, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) [Retail Crime Action Plan](#) was launched in October 2023 and sets out six key areas of focus:
 - Attendance at the scene - police attendance, as with other crime, to be prioritised based on circumstances.
 - Investigation and reasonable lines of enquiry - all reasonable lines of enquiry to be pursued; CCTV images to be checked against the Police National Database (PND) using facial recognition.
 - Prolific or repeat offenders - identification of those offenders that cause the most harm and development of joint action plans to target offending.
 - Hot spot patrolling - top locations to be identified and patrol plans developed to provide a visible presence.
 - Problem solving - problem-solving plans to be developed for repeat locations and prolific offenders.
 - Response to serious and organised retail crime - a new centrally funded and governed team to support identification of organised crime groups so they can be targeted locally.
3. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

Kent context:

4. Whilst recorded retail crime in Kent has experienced increases in line with those seen nationally, the local policing response shows an improving picture with the introduction of the new Neighbourhood Policing Model and improvements to the Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs).
5. The data below shows that compared with April 2021 to March 2022, the number of recorded offences in April 2023 to March 2024 increased by 39% (4,278), but the suspect interviewed rate and solved rate remained stable. Of note, an additional 1,113 suspects were interviewed in April 2023 to March 2024 compared to two years previously, and 1,121 more outcomes achieved.

	Shoplifting Data		
	Apr 2021 to Mar 2022	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024
Recorded crime	10,859	12,704	15,137
Suspect interviewed rate	32%	30%	30%
Solved rate	27%	26%	27%

6. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) figures also show offences leading to a court appearance increased by 37% in Kent, from 2,234 to 3,070, between the year ending September 2019 and the same period in 2023. In comparison, the number of offences leading to a first court appearance fell by 66% (794 to 271) in Surrey and by 2% (1,471 to 1,441) in Sussex.

Retail Crime Action Plan update:

7. As outlined below, the Retail Crime Action Plan is helping to build on excellent work within the county, supporting retailers through a robust partnership approach.

Attendance at the scene

8. The national plan states that police will respond promptly in the event that an offender has been apprehended (e.g. by store security). Repeat, prolific, or juvenile offenders will be given a higher level of priority. A THRIVE risk assessment (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement) will be conducted for all police attendance.
9. A recent audit carried out in Kent for the month of May 2024 identified that 44% of incidents where a shoplifter was detained actually did not require attendance and were subsequently resolved appropriately (for example low level shoplifting with the store banning the individual after getting the goods back); all remaining incidents were attended by police.

Investigation and reasonable lines of enquiry

10. Links to Kent Police's Digital Asset Management System are distributed which enables efficient quick time uploading of CCTV from stores. The CCTV is viewed, and if the image is suitable, it is uploaded to a localised internal system called "Caught on Camera" where officers can quickly identify suspects. The process also utilises the PND enabling retrospective facial recognition to be used.
11. In May 2024, 532 images sent to 'Caught on Camera' were for retail crime and had sufficient facial features to enable a retrospective facial recognition search. 186 (35%) received a PND facial recognition hit enabling officers to identify a suspect. In 2024 the Home Office are introducing Strategic Facial Matcher (SFM) which is like PND facial recognition but far more advanced. This will assist identify more suspects for retail crime.
12. Where suspects are identified, the report is allocated to Kent Police's Victim Based Crime Teams (VBCTs), with top offenders, locations and repeat victims prioritised.

Prolific or repeat offenders

13. Kent Police are currently participating in a Home Office Persistent Offender Pilot. Kent and Medway have identified a total of 110 offenders who meet the pilot criteria (i.e. suspects of 20 or more offences in the last 12 months + 5 or more cautions or convictions in their lifetime of offending). Kent Police have been able to identify the top 20 retail offenders and by tailoring a problem-solving approach to each individual, has targeted those offenders with 15% now having a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) in place. A further 20% are currently in the court process, awaiting a CBO hearing, and have other interventions such as Community Protection Notices.
14. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Anti-Social Behaviour teams regularly look at a range of orders to prevent reoffending. The IOM prolific offenders (different definition to persistent) includes repeat retail crime offenders and are referred into the forces IOM flex or free scheme. If adopted onto IOM via referral, offenders receive partnership IOM support, risk management, intervention and monitoring. The IOM teams also conduct home visits to add further support and work with relevant agencies to rehabilitate offenders and reduce their reoffending and in turn the harm caused to local communities.

Hot spot patrolling

15. The new Neighbourhood Policing Model has provided an excellent means of tackling persistent offenders / hot spots supported by the local Beat Officers and Neighbourhood Taskforces (NTF), while the Child Centred Policing Team (CCPT) presents an excellent opportunity to maximise early intervention with support from the Youth Justice Team.
16. A joint problem-solving approach led by the Beat Officers and Neighbourhood Task Force on each division is essential. NTF's are developing towards being co-located with the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) and the newly formed Integrated Care Board (ICB) Neighbourhood Hubs wherever possible to strengthen this and the wider partnership problem solving approach.
17. On 13 March 2024, all districts participated in another National Safer Business Action (SaBA) day to show support for local businesses. The objective of SaBA's is to deliver a focused operation with joint patrols, the targeted intervention of offenders and a range of crime prevention activity.

Problem Solving

18. The CCPT and BCRPs are producing a victim based shoplifting video to show the impact on small businesses and employees, with the intention of showing this to officers and staff. They are also exploring other joint initiatives, such as real-life case studies that could be incorporated into educational inputs. Kent Police has helped build a strong business crime reduction community which has helped facilitate the quick introduction of partnership initiatives such as Best Bar None.
19. The BCRP is a partnership-based approach to preventing crime and disorder. Kent has 13 BCRP's covering approximately 35 trading locations across Kent. Schemes are funded by renting radios to individual members; the cost of rental includes partnership membership, radio repairs, license costs, the employment of a scheme coordinator and all other membership benefits. Working with BCRP's is core business for Kent Police and wherever possible officers carry scheme radios which enables them to monitor tension in the night-time economy, attend incidents and communicate with business users. Membership is made up of retailers in the daytime economy and pubs and restaurants in the nighttime economy. One of the main objectives is to prevent crime and violence by deterring thieves or troublemakers.
20. At present BCRP membership is restricted by the ability to communicate with members, this tends to be governed by the radio footprint which unfortunately does not normally extend beyond the scheme's town centre. Coverage does not currently reach rural villages or farms where the fear of crime is high. Kent Police's Business Crime Co-Ordinator has successfully bid for money from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to pilot a scheme in Tonbridge. This pilot will extend the radio communication to rural areas and enable rural businesses to benefit from membership.

Response to serious and organised Retail Crime

21. Kent Police has an organised crime group Management Unit which is responsible for identifying, mapping, and scoring organised crime groups. In addition, the Serious Crime Directorate Research and Development team have a dedicated officer who is responsible for serious organised acquisitive crime and links into Op Opal and Op Pegasus (national operation targeting retail crime). To date there are no scored organised crime groups around retail crime.
22. In addition, Kent Police has recently targeted retail crime through surge operations which led to positive results, some of which are detailed below:
 - [Three arrested during Folkestone shoplifting operation](#)
 - [Shoplifters arrested during operation in Canterbury](#)
 - [Three more suspects face shoplifting charges as west Kent crackdown continues | Kent Police](#)
 - [Shoplifter responsible for spate of more than 20 thefts in Sheerness | Kent Police](#)

Next steps

23. There are a small number of areas where further development work is required. For example; where offenders are brought into custody, Kent Police utilise drug testing on arrest (DToA). Theft is a 'Trigger Offence' and as such all shoplifters entering custody are tested in line with DToA requirements. Kent Police are 85% compliant in testing those arrested for trigger offences, this has increased from 10% only 2 years ago.
24. However, the tracking of offender attendance at their drug referral meetings following a positive DToA has been inconsistent and so funding has recently been granted from the Home Office / Ministry of Justice to support the use of the Making Time Count app. This provides a good opportunity to address the criminogenic needs of persistent offenders or target where they fail to engage. Use of the app remains in its infancy and further work is required to ensure officers and staff are utilising to its full potential.
25. In addition to drug referrals via DToA, Kent Police utilise Community Treatment Sentence Requirements (CTSR) in the form of Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR), Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) and new Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTR). These are being used more and Probation Services are working within Kent to develop and raise awareness of the CSTR's with courts. Kent Police continue to work with courts to encourage the consideration of treatment orders when deciding between custodial sentence or community supported sentence requirements which could assist repeat offenders of shoplifting.

Holding to account

26. One of the principle ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
27. 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.
28. The PCC will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings which allow discussion of a wide variety of subjects.
29. Supplementing the above, the PCC is in the process of establishing a Retail and Customer Service Board. This will examine Kent Police's performance in tackling shoplifting and violence against those working in public facing customer support roles, as well as ongoing delivery of the Retail Crime Action Plan.
30. Shoplifting is not a victimless crime; it is important that policing recognises the impact it can have on individuals, retailers and communities and takes appropriate action to tackle it.

Recommendation:

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

Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

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Email: contactyourpcc@kent.police.uk

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The Office of the Kent
Police and Crime
Commissioner
Sutton Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 9BZ



Record of Decision

ORIGINATOR: Chief Executive	REFERENCE: OPCC.D.035.24
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TITLE: Chief Executive's Notice of Intention to Retire

OPEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONFIDENTIAL <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Reason if Confidential:</i>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Adrian Harper, has provided advance notice of his intention to retire later this year.

He has not formally triggered his notice period of three months, instead allowing the PCC to commence the recruitment process for his replacement. History has shown that when allowing for the entirety of the process; advertising the role, application period, paper sift, interview process followed by the requirements of vetting and then the likely notice period of the successful candidate themselves, the period can easily surpass 6 – 9 months. There is also the requirement of a Confirmation Hearing before the Police and Crime Panel.

These requirements can therefore lead to a significant period without a substantive person in post were the formal notice period engaged.

In providing this advance notice, it is hoped that any period without the Head of Paid Service will be either mitigated completely or managed to the most minimal period possible.

RECOMMENDATION

The PCC is recommended to commence recruitment for the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer immediately.

DECISION

To immediately commence recruitment for the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer.

Chief Finance Officer:

Comments: The advance notice means there are no additional costs incurred in having to seek cover while a replacement is found. The cost of the recruitment process itself will be managed within the existing office budget.

Signature: 

Date: 4 July 2024

Chief Executive:

Comments: I have provided this advance notice to mitigate as far as practicable any period without a substantive person in post. We will ensure at all times full HR compliance.

Signature: 

Date: 3 July 2024

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT

Comments: I am so very grateful to Mr Harper for his service to the OPCC and me personally over the last eight years. He will be a real loss and I wish him well. In order to find and attract an equally high calibre candidate, I have authorised the advertisement of the role through an established recruitment agency. This will ensure the broadest pool of applicants. I am grateful for the opportunity he has afforded to enable an early recruitment process.

Signature: 

Date: 8 July 2024

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Police and Crime Plan
(please indicate which objectives decision/recommendation supports)

Provides effective leadership on behalf of the PCC, enabling them to successfully deliver their Police and Crime Plan, fulfil their statutory obligations and deliver tangible improvements in policing and relevant parts of the Criminal Justice system. Leads the Office of the PCC and has direct responsibility for the management of the PCC's budget. Supports the PCC in ensuring the total policing budget is properly and effectively used by the Chief Constable in furtherance of his statutory duties and the priorities of the PCC.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?

Yes No *(If yes, please include within background documents)*

Will the decision have a differential/adverse impact on any particular diversity strand?
(e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity)

Yes No
The recruitment and selection process will be open, transparent and comply with all relevant legislation to ensure there is no differential/adverse impact on any particular strand of diversity.

By: Anna Taylor – Panel Officer
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel, 16 July 2024
Subject: Draft Panel Annual Report – 2023/24
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Preparation and publication of an Annual Report by the Panel is a legal requirement under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel is asked to consider and approve the below content for the 2023/24 Panel Annual Report.

Draft Annual Report

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Panel between February 2023 and February 2024. It follows annual reports that have been produced every year since the Panel was established in November 2012. The objective of the Panel is to scrutinise and support the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in Kent and Medway.
2. The Panel provides a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding his priorities for Kent Police contained within his Making Kent Safer Plan. The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties, in particular in the way he holds the Chief Constable to account.
3. The Panel comprises 18 elected members from local authorities across Kent and Medway and two co-opted independent members. Membership of the Panel can be viewed here: [Membership of the Panel](#).

Meetings

4. During this period the Panel met formally 4 times – 1 February, 18 April, 27 June and 17 October 2023 copied of the [agenda and minutes](#) are available to view. The Panel also received a briefing from the Chief Constable in November which addressed the pledge made by Kent Police, workforce numbers, finance, control strategy, the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection results, demand and performance, the neighbourhood policing model and strategic

issues. In addition to this, the Chair communicated regularly with the Commissioner to assist and support the smooth running of Panel business.

5. The Panel also met informally in November 2023 and January 2024 to discuss the development of the precept proposal with the Commissioner's Officers.

Panel business

6. The Panel met its statutory duty in February 2023 to consider and make recommendations on the Commissioner's draft "Making Kent Safer 2022-25" Police and Crime Plan, as well as his proposed budget and precept. The Commissioner attended to present his proposal and answer questions from the Panel. The Panel noted that the Commissioner's priorities within the plan had remained consistent and the Panel supported the Plan and precept proposal.
7. The Panel approved the Commissioner's proposed precept increase of £13 for the year for an average Band D, which equated to a 5.34% precept increase. The Panel noted that under the proposal a Band D property would pay £256.15 a year towards policing. The Panel noted that the Kent PCC remained within the lowest quartile of precepting PCCs across the country and Kent remained in the lower quartile for Government funding for PCCs.
8. As required the Panel reported on the Commissioner's Plan and Precept and the Commissioner provided a written response – both of which are available here: [Panel Report and Commissioner's Response on Plan and Precept](#). The Panel Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, also wrote to the Chancellor and Home Secretary, on 1 March 2024 to raise the unfairness of the national funding formula, which disproportionately affects Kent.
9. The Panel met its statutory duty to consider the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2022/2023, which it considered at its meeting on 17 October 2023.
10. The Panel received reports on the following issues between February 2023 and February 2024:
 - a. Contacting Kent Police – the Panel received a comprehensive summary of how best the public could contact Kent Police; the structure of the Force Control Room; emergency (999), non-emergency (101), digital contact performance and the measures used by the Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account on performance. The Panel received a further report on contacting Kent Police at their meeting in October 2023. This detailed progress that had been made

to recruit to the Force Control Room (FCR) to answer 999 and 101 calls.

- b. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2021/22 – the Panel received an update on Kent Police’s progress in addressing the findings from the PEEL Inspection 2021/22. The Commissioner continued to hold the Chief Constable to account for performance and the Commissioner’s Performance and Delivery Board continued to focus on identified Areas for Improvement.
- c. Vetting, Counter Corruption & Pension Forfeiture – the Panel sought reassurance from the Commissioner that Kent Police had robust vetting and counter corruption measures in place. The report provided an overview of Kent Police’s Central Vetting Unit and Counter Corruption Unit’s functions; the policing Code of Ethics; how the Chief Constable was held to account on officer and staff integrity and standards; and the pension forfeiture process which the Commissioner could consider in certain circumstances following the conviction of an officer for a criminal offence.
- d. The Kent Police Neighbourhood Policing Review – which was a significant initiative aiming to maintain effective community policing whilst addressing budget constraints. The Panel requested further updates the latest of which is due to be considered at the meeting in July 2024.
- e. Fraud – the Panel requested this report following concerns raised about the prevalence of fraud. Partnership working remained very important and it was considered that the National Fraud Strategy and improvements to Action Fraud should improve residents’ confidence.
- f. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Inquiry – update – this following previous reports on the VAWG Inquiry. The Commissioner highlighted some of the recommendations from the inquiry that were being delivered such as officer verification checks; the launch of the StreetSafe tool and more comprehensive safeguards. He explained the Walk and Talk events and the launch of his Victim Voice initiative, as well as school intervention programmes and victim satisfaction surveys.

11. “Questions to the Commissioner” continued as a regular item at each meeting. The Panel welcomed the Commissioner’s willingness to answer questions, of which he had been given prior notice. This agenda item continued to provide a greater opportunity for Panel members to raise issues with the Commissioner that do not form part of his formal reports. Question topics included issues such as VAWG, victim and community feedback on investigations, charging, prosecuting and justice, resourcing within Kent Police and recruitment and

retention, trust in the police, use of CCTV in investigating crime, safeguarding of domestic abuse victims.

Complaints

12. The Panel, via its Officers, maintained oversight over formal complaints made against the Commissioner under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012. No complaints had progressed to a Complaints Sub-Committee hearing during this period. Officer contact with other Panels suggests that the number of complaints (recorded or otherwise) against the Kent Commissioner remained low compared with other Commissioners. The annual report setting out the number of complaints received against the Commissioner will be submitted to the Panel in October 2024 as usual.

Commissioner's decisions

13. The Commissioner published the following decisions during this period, which were considered and noted by the Panel:

a. Decision OPCC.D.032.23

To award the Victim's Advocacy and Support Services contract to Victim Support for 4 years commencing 1 April 2023.

b. Decision OPCC.D.033.23 – Sale of IP Addresses

To sell the IP address at public auction and not through a preferred buyer.

Panel terms of reference

14. The Panel's terms of reference require them to be reviewed annually. It is considered convenient to do this at the same time as the Panel reviews its work over the past year. Minor wording changes, clarifications or consequential amendments to address changes in law or external arrangements may be made from time to time by Officers, subject to review by the KCC Monitoring Officer. No significant changes to the terms of reference are proposed at this time for the Panel's consideration and approval. The full terms of reference can be found by following this [link](#).

Panel budget

15. The Panel's terms of reference also require the Panel to review its budget on an annual basis. Finance for the Panel's work comes from an annual Home Office grant of £71,700. The expenditure incurred is predominantly on staff

support to the Panel, but also relates to subscriptions to relevant membership bodies and payment of co-optee member allowances and expenses. The outturn for 2023-24 was £35,848 (compared to £37,371 in 2022-23 and £34,900 in 2021-22). The Panel has, while meeting all statutory obligations and undertaking appropriate work as a Panel, kept its costs contained well within the existing Home Office Grant, demonstrating that Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel continues to deliver good value for money.

Conclusions

16. Panel Members remain focused on supporting and scrutinising the PCC in relation to key policing and crime issues in local communities. The Panel reviews and agrees a future work programme at each meeting. This ensures that the Panel can deliver its functions in a timely way and emphasises the transparency of the Panel.
17. Meetings of the Panel have continued to be webcast to promote public engagement and the Panel welcomes the positive approach taken by the Commissioner in responding to questions as well as the standing invitation to all Panel Members to attend the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meetings.
18. The PCC elections took place on 2 May 2024 and the Panel looks forward to continuing its effective working relationship with the Commissioner.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider and approve the draft Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel 2023/24 Annual Report.

Contact: Anna Taylor
anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk 03000 416478

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Police and Crime Panel - Future Work Programme – July 2024

10 October 2024

Complaints against the Commissioner – Annual Report 2023/24	Statutory Requirement	PCP support officer
PCC Annual Report 2023/24	Statutory Requirement	PCC
HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 - update	Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner	PCC
Divisional Policing Review	Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner	PCC

18 December 2024

Standard item at each meeting

Questions to the Commissioner

Items to note at each meeting

Commissioner's decisions

Performance and Delivery Board minutes (if available)

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Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

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The Office of the Kent
Police and Crime
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Meeting Notes

Title:	Performance and Delivery Board
Date & time:	Wednesday 13 September 2023
Venue:	County Room, Sutton Road, Maidstone (also broadcast via Microsoft Teams Live)
Attendees:	<p>Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matthew Scott - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Adrian Harper - Chief Executive (CE) <p>Kent Police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Smith - Chief Constable (CC) Ian Drysdale - Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Apologies	<p>Rob Phillips - PCC's Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Peter Ayling - Deputy Chief Constable</p>

1. Welcome & Introduction

- Welcoming the CC and his team, the PCC expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.
- The PCC also welcomed any members of the public watching the meeting live online.

2. Notes of Previous Meeting – 7 June 2023

- The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record and the following three actions discharged:
 - With regards to unauthorised encampments and the new legislation, provide an update on the impact and application of the changes later in the year (i.e. if the definition of significant disruption hasn't enabled the Force to act, would be good to understand as law may need to be changed) – will be covered as part of specific item on Rural Crime at 29 November meeting.
 - Provide the ILAS (Intelligence Lead Assessment Service) DA risk identification pilot results to the PCC in due course – interim update received; final results to be provided when pilot ends in Spring 2024.
 - Following the Shopkind week of action, provide a summary of local activity outside the meeting – national campaign summary received with thanks.

3. Review of Terms of Reference

- Advising his office had made some amends via Track Changes which had been shared prior to the meeting, the PCC asked if the CC had any comments or issues he wished to raise.
- The CC stated he did not and the Terms of Reference were therefore approved with a review period of one year.

4. Making Kent Safer Plan: Delivery & Performance

Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

- Highlighting a continued reduction in victim-based crime, the CC said shoplifting was responsible for some of the increase seen in July.
- The CC stated the solved rate was 9.2%, an increase of 1.1% or 420 more charges compared to last year, adding that there was a much greater focus on outcomes.
- Advising incidents of motor vehicle nuisance had increased, the CC said there would be a renewed focus but noted a distinction between noise nuisance and vehicles being driven dangerously. With regards to the increase in rowdy or nuisance gatherings in public, he said there had been a lot of enforcement through the Safer Summer campaign.
- The CC said the Force continued to work in partnership to reduce business crime through the Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) and the Business Crime Advisory Group.
- Noting a reduction in burglary residential and business, violent crime and robbery, he said it was equally important there was no reduction in enforcement or the prosecution of offenders. In terms of violent crime, the CC highlighted the proportion of offenders charged had increased from 5.3% to 6.6%, and for robbery from 7.8% to 12.0%. He said he was convinced the Force was getting better in terms of outcome rates, but there was no room for complacency.

- Noting the attention it was receiving, the PCC asked about the Force's response to retail crime and how it ensured investigations were progressed appropriately. Stating the Force would always support businesses, the CC reported a decrease in recorded shoplifting offences in 2022 compared to 2019 (to exclude the Covid period). He said more importantly the charge rate in 2019 was under 15% compared to 19.8% in 2022, and over 20% for the year to date which equated to more than 1,700 charges and was above the Most Similar Group average of 17%. He stated shoplifting would be a focus of attention through the new Neighbourhood Policing Model, adding he was hopeful the Force would increasingly work with the BCRPs to identify hotspot areas and those offenders causing the most harm. He advised the joint Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) had identified offending linked to an Organised Crime Group (OCG) and work was underway to incapacitate it.
- Thanking the CC, the PCC paid tribute to the Force and particularly the Best Bar None scheme which had recently received a national award.
- The PCC asked about the overall trend in charge rates and case file quality. The CC stated it was positive in terms of direction of travel with the all crime charge rate standing at 7.4% compared to 6.3% in April 2021, with a similar pattern for victim based crime. He said importantly the volume of charges had also increased from 898 in April 2021 to 1,082 in August 2022, adding it was a 20% increase with a similar 28% increase for victim-based crime (613 to 787). Noting the PCC was chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, the CC stated the Force was maintaining strong performance with regards to case file quality measures and was above the national average. By way of example, he reported Kent's 2014/15 benchmark rate for guilty plea at first hearing was 65.2%; as at June 2023 it was 71.6% with a national average of 67.7%. The CC offered to provide the PCC with further data on case file quality outside of the meeting, adding that overall he was pleased with the where the Force was in terms of file quality.
- The PCC congratulated the Force on the improvements to the charge rate and case file quality. With regards to investigations, he asked if the Force was able to meet the Operation Soteria guideline that rape and sexual offences should be investigated by PIP accredited detectives. The CC reported the Force had a detective establishment of 532 with a strength below that, but also had 277 officers on the pathway who had passed the requisite exam and a further 103 awaiting approval to become accredited. In terms of Op Soteria, he said the Force was 20 under the 114 accredited detectives required and whilst there were staff in post, they were on the detective pathway. For those on the pathway, he said each investigation was overseen by a Detective Sergeant and Detective Inspector who were fully accredited. He advised the Force was subject to inspection and as one of the expansion forces continued to work on a robust Op Soteria plan to ensure all staff investigating adult rape were accredited detectives.

Tackle violence against women and girls

- The CC reported a reduction in rape offences of 78 for the period and a similar pattern for sexual offences. With regards to the charge rate he reported continued improvement, with rape increasing from 4.3% to 7.6% and sexual offences from 4.3% to 8.3%. Commenting there was more to do, he said the Force would continue to work closely with the CPS and this would be picked up through the Op Soteria plans.
- In terms of Op Soteria, the PCC asked what the impact had been locally and whether the implementation had identified any areas of improvement. The CC stated the Force had not fully implemented Op Soteria yet and there was a lot of work to do over the next year, adding HMICFRS would review and report on progress. The Force was one of 14 expansion forces and a self-assessment had been returned to the national team which had identified a few areas to be looked at around:
 - the structure and leadership of adult rape investigations;
 - whether the Sexual Offences Liaison Officer model was right or other models should be considered;
 - an expectation the CC continue to try and influence the cultural change in attitude towards investigating VAWG, and particularly the investigation of rape offences internally and in other organisations;
 - a need to refer more victims to ISVAs and other commissioned services which the CC said the Force was doing, noting that in the last four months the number of referrals had doubled.

The CC said there were a lot of areas under Op Soteria the Force needed to implement and improve, but the large structural changes around the investigation team was the main task.

- The PCC asked about feedback from the VAWG Walk and Talk events and whether there were plans to replicate the evening events run in 2021. The CC said the Force recognised the value of holding events during the hours of darkness because it provided an opportunity to identify where environmental improvements could make a difference. Advising they would continue, he reported that over the last 12 months the Force had conducted 35 events, with over 55 partners involved and members of the public, adding the Force would review how those in the hours of darkness were conducted. At some events he said the focus was on what the Force was doing internally which was beneficial as it provided an opportunity to outline action to address misogyny and sometimes criminality by officers/staff.
- Commenting on the Best Bar None Scheme, the CC said it had been very successful and he would like to get to the position where all night-time economy venues in the county were signed up to and it became a statutory position.
- Whilst the increase in referrals to ISVAs was positive, the CE said they were in short supply and so from an OPCC commissioning perspective it needed to be monitored and the impact understood. Whilst commenting that the Force was linked in to partners through the Op Soteria plan, the CC agreed advising it was anticipated more victims would be referred not just to ISVAs but other support services as the Force adopted the full model.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- Stating domestic abuse (DA) was a key part of the Force's VAWG Strategy, the CC reported a decrease in incidents of 14.9% over the period and an improving charge rate from 5.4% in 2022 to 7.5% as well as solved rate.

- The CC reported the DA Hub and use of Rapid Video Response continued to show success in terms of outcomes for victims and was also being taken up nationally. The Force had also secured some funding from the Home Office to roll out the DA Matters training to those frontline staff who were likely to come into contact with DA victims.
- The CC explained there was also joint training between the Protecting Vulnerable People command and the CPS, giving over 200 officers, staff and lawyers enhanced knowledge about DA and stalking aimed at improving the response, case file quality and court outcomes. He added the capacity in the justice system, and particularly the courts, continued to be a challenge.
- Whilst the Force was good at Stalking Prevention Orders, the CC acknowledged that performance around issuing Domestic Violence Prevention Notices fluctuated. He said the new bail rules were being looked at closely because some of the fluctuation may be associated with them.
- In terms of VAP, the CC reported a continued reduction in offences and increased charge rate from 5.4% to 6.4%, with the volume of suspects arrested and interviewed also increasing.
- With regards to organised immigration crime, the CC advised referrals into the National Referral Mechanism remained consistent. Whilst the number of suspects interviewed and charged was low, he said it was an area every force struggled with but was not reflective of the work undertaken as very often there were charged for other offences.
- In terms of DA, the PCC asked about the Force's communication to promote reporting and reassure victims the matter continued to be taken seriously. The CC personally urged anyone who was suffering DA to report it and access help, adding if they lacked the confidence to report to the police at least report to someone so they could get support. Stating the Force was very proactive in taking advantage of all media opportunities, he advised the central Protecting Vulnerable People command worked with Corporate Communications to ensure a constant use of all platforms to positively support victims of DA and stalking. Noting there was more work to do, he said the Force was liaising with the OPCC around a new DA campaign, adding it was an area where legislative changes had enabled a wider range of behaviours to be considered an offence and the Force was slightly out of date in terms of promoting that.
- Noting in the report that specific funding was being provided to Divisions to increase the capacity of Vulnerability Investigation Teams (VITs), the PCC asked where that capacity was likely to come from. The CC stated the current staffing position was that each of the teams was either at, or over Establishment but there was a need to increase the skill level and number of detectives in some. In terms of where the capacity would come from, he said the first place new recruits worked was Local Policing before moving into other specialist teams such as VITs.
- In terms of the Organised Immigration Crime Team, the PCC asked about the timeline for implementation. Whilst advising it was still a work in progress, the CC said the DS and DI posts would be filled by the end of 2023. He noted they would work closely with the other Serious and Organised Crime teams, with the DS and DI in each team having specific areas of focus. He added the full staffing of the team would take place in early 2024, but the intention was that once the DS and DI were in post, they would be able to direct any of the staff on any of the teams.

Combat organised crime and county lines

- Through the SCD the Force continued to have a robust impact on organised crime, with the assessment and scoring of harm improving over the last year as a result of introducing dedicated staff. Referring to the July figures, the CC said there was now greater confidence the Force had an accurate picture around organised crime which was important as it meant enforcement activity and covert activity could be quickly focused on those causing the most harm. Commenting on the anomaly that was Bedfordshire's data, he explained there were some specific issues in the Luton area and differences in the scoring process still existed that were being investigated to ensure a fairer comparison so the allocation of Eastern Region Organised Crime Unit resources was apportioned fairly.
- With regards to the County Lines and Gangs Team, the CC highlighted the examples in the paper and particularly one of the operations that resulted in 28 arrests, 49 charges and 5 people engaging with drug rehabilitation services.
- The CC stated the violence used in such criminality was so high that he did not see a position where the Force would not have some level of dedicated activity around it. He said it was very challenging, but officers would always focus on who was controlling the line, adding the Force was successful at going into London and other areas to find them.
- Commending the teams, the PCC expressed his thanks for the joint work across Kent and Essex on serious and organised crime which he said was incredibly important but not immediately obvious to the public. He also said it was pleasing to see the county continued to have under half the number of county lines of only three years ago.
- In relation to drug seizures, the PCC asked if there was a noticeable increasing trend in the detection of cannabis as opposed to Class A drugs at a local level. Whilst confirming there was, the CC said it was only a small spike rather than significant change in criminality adding that Class A drugs and particularly opioids continued to cause the most harm. He explained the figures were skewed by two factors: i) work of the Force as part of a national operation against western Balkan OCGs involving mainly cannabis production; ii) an extraordinary job in July involving a sophisticated set-up by an OCG which resulted in the seizure of over 1,800 cannabis plants and two arrests, with more to follow.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

- In terms of mental health, the CC stated the Force was rolling out Right Care Right Person with the support of health partners. He said many of the initiatives within Right Care Right Person emanated in Kent; noting the number of S136 detentions had decreased from 2,000 in 2019/20 to just over 800 in 2022/23, he added benchmarking was underway to better understand how many incidents the Force should be attending each year. The CC also took the opportunity to reassure partners and the public that the police would always have a role in responding to mental health incidents where someone's life was at risk or there was a risk of serious harm.

- With regards to stop and search, the CC reported a high compliance rate - 88.5% - in a recent HMICFRS inspection looking at reasonable grounds. Whilst pleasing, he said as a result of feedback the Force's external website had been updated to give members of the public the information they needed to ensure the power was being used appropriately. He said innovative work underway included use of body worn video to provide a much richer picture around the public's perception of stop and search and how it was being used.
- In terms of non-crime hate incidents, the CC stated the Force had responded to the new Code of Practice. Whilst the full training package was still awaited and there was a completion date of 1 December, he said the Force was ready for it and all the associated data protection issues. He offered to provide the PCC with a briefing on how the Force had dealt with the new Code of Practice outside of the meeting.
- Commenting that it continued to be a challenge, the CC reported 940,000 calls for service in the rolling year which was up 8% or 69,000 on the previous year. Advising 999 and 101 call handling was an improving picture, he stated the Force's plan around 101 was working and it was in a much better position. Referring to the global issue around Android handsets, he said it was simply not possible to prepare for such spikes in demand which led to a high 999 abandonment rate and had a knock on effect in terms of capacity to deal with 101 calls. He added the Force was working hard and focused on quality of service as well as timeliness.
- Overall, he said digital contact was a pleasing picture with a growing percentage of the public making contact via online methods. He said it was good for the public to be able to make contact via diverse routes, but also easier for the Force to manage - for example, one member of staff could manage multiple Live Chats.
- With regards to front counters, the CC reported there were currently six vacancies which the Force was trying to fill.
- Noting it was not an easy problem to solve, the PCC commended the efforts of the CC, his team and FCR staff and paid tribute to them for driving up performance which in turn had improved the service provided to the public
- Referring to Right Care Right Person and acknowledging the Force worked extensively with statutory agencies and partners, the PCC sought assurance the Force was also engaging with charities and the third sector. Confirming it was, the CC advised whilst there was support from the Integrated Care Partnership it went much wider and engagement had taken place with 12/13 third sector/charities with more events planned.
- Noting the Neighbourhood Policing Model was currently being implemented, the PCC questioned how the Force would ensure Beat Officers were as visible as possible and extractions minimised. The CC stated he was committed to ring fencing the individuals and they would deal with crime investigations, prepare case files and respond to calls from the public centred on issues/problems within their patch. However, he said he could not and would not have a position where if there was an urgent call and that officer was the nearest resource they would not respond, but he added they would not routinely be taken away from their post because it would defeat the object. He also reserved the right to move them if there was a major incident in the county but said that was the same for any officer.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

- Whilst the number of fatalities and serious injury collisions continued to reduce year on year, the CC reported 14 road deaths in the period which was sadly an increase of three on the same period in 2022. He said the Force worked hard with partners to make the roads as safe as possible by design and undertook a huge amount of enforcement activity.
- Referring to the data on enforcement, he stated a good level of performance was being maintained by the Roads Policing Unit despite occasionally having to support other significant events, such as Operation Brock.
- The CC highlighted the good work of the Kent & Medway Camera Partnership and the amount of activity by the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit in the period, which he said was very impressive.
- Expressing his thanks to the Force for its support of the Safer Roads in Kent & Medway Partnership, the PCC said its proactivity had been noted by partners.
- With regards to e-scooters, the PCC asked about Force action to address ongoing concerns around their use on public roads, pavements etc. and if they were being seized. Advising it was an issue taken very seriously by the Force, the CC stated they were mechanically propelled motor vehicles and therefore the rules around use were the same as someone driving their car on the road. Explaining they could not be registered or insured the same way as a car or motorcycle, he said officers had the power to seize and destroy them under the Road Traffic Act. To date in 2023, he reported 66 e-scooters had been seized and destroyed via the Vehicle Recovery Unit; however, he said that was not the totality as a great number had been seized by other officers but unfortunately he did not have the number. Noting it was a focus of the Safer Summer campaign and enforcement continued, he said the challenge was a lack of control and regulation around them. Agreeing, the PCC said he would continue to push for more control and regulation.
- Referring to the enforcement figures on speed, mobile phone use and seatbelts, the PCC asked if the Force could also provide data for driving whilst impaired through drink or drugs. Confirming he would provide outside the meeting, the CC reported there were well over 700 arrests in the period May to July.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- Advising the Force's Child Centred policing approach continued, the CC highlighted a collaborative project with the University of Kent which it was hoped would not just be for police officers but anyone regularly interacting with children. He said the pilot training sessions had been tested on over 20 officers in specialist teams, with further sessions planned over the rest of the year and it was about trying to better identify the signs of exploitation.
- Noting the launch of the national Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Taskforce, the CC advised a self-assessment had been submitted which highlighted areas of good practice, but also areas where the Force needed to improve particularly around identification of child exploitation which at times was difficult due its nature. He added enhanced

training had been put in place for the Neighbourhood Officers in recognition of the amount of time proportionally they would spend interacting with families and communities.

- In terms of the Cadet Programme, the CC said it remained strong and was well supported by regular officers, volunteers and the OPCC. Commenting that it was a real success story, he said the proof was that cadets were starting to join as regular officers and some were already pushing the boundaries for promotion. The PCC said it would be good to track their careers as it would be an excellent achievement for the individual and programme.
- Following the implementation of the new NHP model, the PCC asked about the level of engagement with schools and other education establishments around the Child Centred policing model. The CC advised the Local Policing ACC first wrote to schools in January and there was a follow up in May, just before go-live. He said whilst the Force did not intend to wait to progress the work, capacity in terms of numbers was not there yet with the majority of Child Centred Policing officers being in post by November and close to establishment by January 2024. He advised those officers already in post, supported by the central team had started engaging with secondary schools, including Pupil Referral Units to make staff aware of who the officers were, their remit and how to contact them. They had also provided transition talks at primary schools and engaged with approximately 15,000 students from 50 schools through projects such as the joint knife pledge and work of the VRU and Ben Kinsella Trust. Whilst the CC advised the work with schools continued, he acknowledged the Force was not where he wanted it to be and said the coming academic year would be a challenge. He added there would still be the right support for schools, but it would be the next school year when 100% of Child Centred policing teams were in place before the full offer as per the model was provided.
- The PCC asked for an update on the Force's work around Operation Encompass. The CC explained it was where information was proactively shared with schools about DA incidents at which a child was present enabling appropriate support to be provided. He said it had been very successful and had expanded to Operation Encompass Plus which was any information where there was a safeguarding concern for a child. Advising most schools were signed up and it was a model the Force wanted to embed across the whole county, he added the Central Referral Unit was in the process of supporting the Medway schools safeguarding leads with further training around it. He reported that in 2022 the Force made 17,700 referrals under Operation Encompass and Encompass Plus; January to August 2023, over 11,200 referrals had been made.

Actions

- **Force: Provide data on case file quality measures outside of meeting.**
- **OPCC: Further to CC advising of an increase in ISVA and other referrals, monitor impact on commissioned services.**
- **Force: Provide a briefing on the new Code of Practice for Non-Crime Hate incidents (including update on training) outside of meeting.**
- **Force: Provide figures for driving whilst impaired through drink or drugs outside of meeting.**

5. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

- With regards to the HMICFRS reports referenced in the paper, the CC stated any recommendations for the Force or Chief Constables were in hand and would be reported back to the PCC in due course.
- HMICFRS Publication – An inspection of the eastern regional response to serious and organised crime: whilst noting the Force received support from the eastern region for various activities, the CC advised the bulk of the response was delivered through the SCD. He said the Force received a 'Good' grading which reflected the investment in tackling serious and organised crime over many years and the unique and specific skillsets within SCD. He said there was work to do around the one area for improvement (AFI) relating SOC profiles.
- HMICFRS Publication - The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022: the CC advised the report made three recommendations for the National Police Chiefs Council, College of Policing (CoP) and Home Secretary. He said effectively each recommendation had been overlaid for Kent to determine if the Force was compliant.
- HMICFRS Publication - Police Performance: Getting a Grip: the CC said very positively the Force was referenced twice in the report for good work around the use of body worn video and the safeguarding of vulnerable repeat callers. He advised the report made 11 recommendations, three of which were for Chief Constables.
- HMICFRS Publication – An inspection of how effective police forces are in the deployment of firearms: the CC stated he was confident the Force response was fit for purpose with the number of fully trained and capable firearms officers aligned to the strategic threat and risk assessment. He advised they had all completed the training advocated by the CoP and their health and wellbeing was regularly monitored.
- PEEL 2021/22 and 2022/23 – noting the Force received 19 AFIs in its 2021/22 inspection, the CC advised 13 were now considered discharged but had to be ratified by HMICFRS. He said the six outstanding AFIs were at various stages of completion, with three remaining challenging through the 2022/23 PEEL inspection and replicated in other forces. He added the Force awaited publication of its 2022/23 PEEL report which was scheduled for October 2023.
- Update on HMICFRS Publication – Inspection of Vetting, Misconduct and Misogyny in the Police Service: the CC advised that based on information provided to the NPCC by all forces in January, 17 of the 28 recommendations for Chief Constables were assessed as complete. In terms of Kent, he said 25 recommendations were already in place and he was confident could be fully evidenced; the remaining three were partially in place but needed more work.
- Update on NPCC Historical Data Wash – the CC advised this required the Force to review all staff against information held in the Police National Database. He said the Force was through the third phase of four having returned 100% of

records, conducted all relevant checks and taken action where issues of concern were highlighted and submitted its final return. Noting phase four was the final report being presented to the NPCC lead in October, he commented that he was happy the Force had discharged its obligations.

- Noting the Internal Audit function was provided by RSM, the DCO reported there were three areas still undischarged from last year that were being worked through, but there were no particular risks or concerns. He said there was a close eye on the 13 audits planned in the 2023/24 programme as there was still a lot of work to do. In terms of progress against previous audit recommendations, he stated there were none that were of particular concern.
- Advising the External Auditor was EY, the DCO highlighted the Force was not going to meet the statutory deadline for publication as a result of limited individuals having to deal with outstanding audits from 2021/22. Noting it would not be an issue as there was provision within the rules, he said it would be the first time and there was a need to ensure it did not become a repeated event resulting in the Force getting behind like other public sector organisations. He stated the Force would do everything it could to work with EY to ensure it did not fall behind, adding there was strong discipline through both CFOs which the Force wanted to maintain.
- With regards the audit, the PCC said he recognised the consequences were out of the Force's control but knew work would continue to get the best service from the auditors. The CE sought assurance that if during the delay period any concerns arose they would be proactively raised with the OPCC and the DCO confirmed they would.
- Commenting that the Government was publishing more plans to hold policing to account through, with regards to the Beating Crime Plan the PCC asked how the Force's call handling performance compared nationally. The CC stated there were challenges with the data and there was no nationally agreed set of data, with some forces not paying regard to it at all. He advised the Force was one of the poorer performers in terms of percentage of calls answered in 10 and 60 seconds, but in terms of other measures around attrition, the Force compared more favourably. He said it was a fragile position in terms of the rankings - for example, in relation to the 999 rankings a change of less than half a second could see a force move 10-12 places month on month. Acknowledging he could not argue the measures, he said they had to be considered with others around attrition, the grading of calls, quality of feedback, assessment of threat, harm and risk and ultimately whether the Force was responding to the public in the right way. Noting he could change the FCR structure and response quickly to make the measures look positive, he said it would be at the detriment of other factors and so he would not be doing so. The CC offered to provide a briefing on how the Force compared across the Beating Crime Plan call handling performance measures outside of meeting.

Action

- **Force: Provide a briefing on how the Force compares across the Beating Crime Plan call handling performance measures outside of meeting.**

6. People

- The DCO reported prior to the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) the Force Establishment stood at 3,656 and was now 4,145. Noting the PuP had provided 489 additional officers, he added that thanks to the PCC's precept increases in 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Force had experienced five years of continued growth.
- Congratulating HR, L&D and all the other departments that had supported an intense period of recruitment, he said the Force now had to ensure it continued to meet the PuP Establishment to meet the September and March 2024 audits in order to draw down the associated grant.
- Going forwards, he said the Force aimed to have a Headcount of 4,223 - five over the PuP allocation of 4,218.
- The DCO advised the Force had anticipated a further intake of 100 officers on 29 September but that had now increased to 107. He stated there would be two more intakes in January and March 2024, with the size determined by attrition. He said they would be flexed to ensure the Force achieved the correct number for the PuP which was anticipated to be around 156 in total, taking a smaller number in January and larger number at the end of March to ensure the requirement was met.
- In terms of the 2,545 applications received in 2022/23, he reported 39% were from females and 13% from ethnic minorities which was the best the Force had ever achieved. The DCO advised the current Force representation was 34.74% (1,430) female and 3.79% (156) ethnic minority which he said remained a challenge.
- Following the Neighbourhood Policing Review, the DCO reported the PCSO Establishment was 101.5 with a current Strength of 82.82. He said the finalised recruitment options would be approved in the next two weeks.
- With regards to plans for PCSO recruitment, the PCC asked if this had already started and what the timelines were. The DCO advised the CC would have the recruitment timetable within the next couple of weeks, adding there was currently just over 18 vacancies. On 7 June when the Neighbourhood Policing Model went live, he said there were 99.1 PCSOs so there had been attrition since then and so the plan was being finalised based on a prediction of how many more might leave. He added the Force would probably recruit around 25.
- Noting there were currently Occupational Health Adviser vacancies, the PCC asked what the Force was doing to ensure the wellbeing of staff still performing the role. The DCO advised there was a national shortage of qualified and experienced Occupational Health clinicians and so the management were working hard to ensure the Force could recruit in the long term. Highlighting the Force had always ringfenced the service so it could look after its people, he said it was currently relying on external Occupational Health providers to ensure the service was not diminished, but that was not sustainable in the long term. The CC added that in terms of the Advisers themselves, there was a structure of using other force's Advisers to support them as they were entitled to the same help as they offered.

7. **Finance**

- The DCO reported the Capital Budget for 2023/24 was set at £20.6m and the projection was well within that budget. He stated it was always difficult to spend exact amounts of money because the Force was in the hands of major projects being delivered on time and according to specification to be able to settle the bill in full. He said the Capital Budget was capable of being rolled over to ensure the Force did not pay for services it had not received.
- In terms of the Revenue Budget, he advised the forecast as at P3 was for a slight overspend of £100k against a budget of £386.3m. However, having looked at the P4 report which fell outside the drafting timeframe for the paper he said that had now reversed and was showing a projected £500k underspend. He added subject to ongoing events during the year, the Revenue Budget was in good shape and should come within budget which was challenging given the amount of savings the Force was having to make.
- Noting much of the budget was spent on people, he advised the Force kept a close eye on levels of attrition and the replacement of officers at the top end of the salary scale with joiners at the bottom. Given the audits the Home Office would conduct at the end of September and March 2024, he said the Force had to be timely in terms of replacements to ensure it did not miss the opportunity to draw down the associated grant.
- The DCO stated that it was a positive position but there was more work to do and a lot of the year still to go.
- Welcoming the 7% pay rise, the PCC requested an update on the financial implications to the Force of applying to both officers and staff. Advising it had been welcomed by officers and staff, the DCO also thanked the PCC for his support in bringing it to fruition. He stated the Home Office funded much of the pay award, but not all of it and there were in-year implications for the Force's budget. He said the Force craved more information in terms of the exact figures, adding that next year the Force anticipated the extra demand on the Force's budget could be in the region of £2.7m linked to how the Government distributed the funds. If on a net revenue expenditure basis, that could prove challenging; if however it was based on police officer PuP figures, that would be better and fairer. Noting there was an underspend last year, he said the Force had held it in Reserves to offset any of the cost pressure and in hindsight that appeared a wise decision. He also advised the budget savings put in place last year to cover the Force's element of the pay award had meant the implications and negative impact in the current year had been reduced. Seeking the PCC's support in trying to influence the funding distribution model, the CC stated the reality was that a force with several hundred less staff than Kent would get more money next year under the proposed model, yet rightly the Government wanted the Force to maintain police officer numbers; he commented that it seemed unfair. The PCC said he was always happy to support as best he could.

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

- Highlighting the continued impact of small boat arrivals into the county, the CC reported there were over 800 the previous weekend. He said it created huge demand for a lot of partner agencies but also impacted Kent police staff as they supported the security assessment and screening of individuals who were often very vulnerable, very traumatised and had no identification papers.
- Advising that he had provided specific details to the PCC outside of the meeting, the CC reported a period of heightened demand for the SCD with a flurry of serious crimes which was putting extra strain on some teams.

In closing, the PCC thanked the CC and DCO for their presentations and for answering his questions. He also thanked his team for their support with the technology and those who had joined the meeting online.

	Status	Owner	Due date
Provide data on case file quality measures outside of meeting	Open	Force	29/11/2023
Monitor the impact of the increase in ISVA and other referrals on commissioned services	Open	OPCC	29/11/2023
Provide a briefing on the new Code of Practice for Non-Crime Hate incidents (including update on training) outside of meeting	Open	Force	29/11/2023
Provide figures for driving whilst impaired through drink or drugs outside of meeting	Open	Force	29/11/2023
Provide a briefing on how the Force compares across the Beating Crime Plan call handling performance measures outside of meeting	Open	Force	29/11/2023

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 29 November 2023

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Meeting Notes

- Title:** Performance and Delivery Board
- Date & time:** Wednesday 29 November 2023
- Venue:** County 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)
 - Adrian Harper - Chief Executive (CE)
 - Rob Phillips - Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
- Kent Police:**
- Tim Smith - Chief Constable (CC)
 - Peter Ayling - Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
 - Ian Drysdale - Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)

1. Welcome & Introduction

- Welcoming the CC and his team, the PCC expressed his thanks for the meeting papers.
- The PCC also welcomed any members of the public watching the meeting live online.

2. Notes of Previous Meeting – 13 September 2023

- The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record and the following actions discharged:
 - Force to provide data on case file quality measures outside of meeting - received with thanks.
 - OPCC to monitor the impact of the increase in ISVA and other referrals on commissioned services – to be monitored as part of Commissioning Team’s regular oversight of commissioned services.
 - Force to provide a briefing on the new Code of Practice for Non-Crime Hate incidents (including update on training) outside of meeting - received with thanks.
 - Force to provide figures for driving whilst impaired through drink or drugs outside of meeting - received with thanks.
 - Provide a briefing on how the Force compares across the Beating Crime Plan call handling performance measures outside of meeting - received with thanks.

3. Rural Crime

- Expressing his thanks for the paper, the PCC highlighted that rural crime was now a priority in the Control Strategy and said local communities had welcomed its inclusion.
- The CC commented that there were specific issues that affected rural communities more than urban communities.
- With regards to the new Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) model, he said Beat Officers would be covering rural wards therefore providing a named officer and face for those communities. He added they were very much about catching criminals, reducing crime as well as community engagement.
- The CC noted the Force investment in the Rural Task Force (RTF) and its success, adding that he couldn’t underplay the reputation of the team in rural communities. Advising there were some excellent staff working in the RTF which was reflected in the results, he said the Force had made further investment with the addition of a Sergeant and seven PCSOs, although not all posts were filled yet.
- The CC said the examples in the paper demonstrated how the RTF was utilising Farm Watch and their investigative skills to achieve good results in rural communities.
- In terms of partnership working, the Force worked with all the local authorities as well as other rural partnerships. The CC stated operations were regularly run around specific issues, for example fly tipping and illegal waste carrying with enforcement activity often leading to the detection of other offences.
- Referring to the Rural Crime Week of Action, the CC stated the Force policed 365 days a year, so whilst such weeks of heightened activity were helpful they were an addition to daily business and not instead of it.
- The CC said the Force was committed to supporting national operations and each example in the paper enabled the Force to take enforcement action along with its partners and had a positive impact on rural communities

- In terms of the benefits of the investment, the CC highlighted the RTF winning National Wildlife Operation of the Year at the National Wildlife Crime Conference in October.
- With regards to unauthorised encampments, the CC stated that local authorities had the lead role under Government guidance but the Force was an active partner. He advised there was specific legislation that policing regularly enforced, but it was recognised that at times the police would need to take decisive action. Noting the Force worked closely with the local authorities, at an operational level he said the right response was usually found, with the Force often supporting the exercise of their powers. The CC explained that KCC and Kent Police had re-launched a joint working group with all the Councils, which he hoped would ensure decisions were made correctly and enable all agencies to resolve issues stemming from unauthorised encampments.
- In concluding, the CC stated there was a real commitment to tackling rural crime and Kent would not be a Force only seen in towns and cities. Acknowledging there was a need to police 365 days per year across the county, he said rural areas faced some unique threats and so the investment in resources and specialisms would continue.
- Noting the popularity of Whats App with farms and rural businesses for sharing intelligence and information, the PCC said he understood it was being reviewed by the Force and wondered if it was going to continue. Noting there was an issue around sharing of images the Force would tighten up on, the CC said the Force had no plans to change how it operated. The DCO added it had been successful and there had been no information security breaches, so based on the dispensation awarded when it came in, his recommendation would be that it continued.
- Acknowledging the Force's efforts to crack down on GPS thefts, in terms of Operation Walrus, the PCC asked about the number of thefts and whether there had been a substantial increase. Under Operation Walrus, the CC advised the Force recorded seven offences, but said multiple systems were often stolen which had a huge impact on farmers' livelihoods. He said the Force did not have a specific marker for agricultural GPS systems but it was thought likely there were three or four similar offences in the previous year.
- Noting the update on unauthorised encampments, the PCC asked if the Force had used the new powers and if so, the number of times. The CC advised there had been 10 incidents since the Act was amended where the Force had utilised its powers under Section 61, but Section 62 had not been used because it related to transit sites of which there were none in the county. From a police point of view, the CC said it was something the county should consider as part of the solution to the challenge of unauthorised encampments. Noting that staff had been trained and understood the powers, he said they would be used when they were needed, adding there were other enablers that could be put in place to reduce the impact of unauthorised encampments even further.
- Thanking the CC, the PCC said it was reassuring and the rural community appreciated the RTF's efforts.

4. **Making Kent Safer Plan: Delivery & Performance**

Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

- The CC reported that All Crime and Victim Based Crime continued to reduce, adding the solved rate for All Crime had increased by one percentage point on the previous year, from 10.4% to 11.4% with 122 additional charges. Noting it was a similar pattern for Victim Based Crime, he commented that as crime was reducing, the Force was arresting and charging more people.
- With regards to ASB, the CC reported an increase of 4.8%, with the largest increases in motor vehicle nuisance and rowdy or nuisance gathering in public.
- In terms of Safer Autumn, noting he had recently provided the PCC with updates on some operations, the CC advised he was unable to give a full breakdown of the results as yet. He added there was a clear commitment to each campaign with a different response by the Force to the changes in crime and ASB experienced with each season.
- Commenting that it was a challenge for the Force to respond to, the CC reported an increase in Shoplifting and Retail Crime but also an increase in charges and the solved rate. Noting the paper included examples of policing activity, he said first and foremost the Force looked to charge offenders, but some of the other orders and powers were equally beneficial when applied in the right set of circumstances.
- The CC highlighted the introduction of a new App called 'Making Time Count'. He advised it was 50% funded by the Home Office and aimed to make the process of dealing with out of court resolutions (formerly known as out of court disposals) more efficient and effective. Reporting it had been rolled out across the Force, he said they were not a replacement for arresting and charging people, but evidence showed applied appropriately they could correct behaviours and most importantly, prevent and reduce crime.
- The CC reported that Burglary Residential, Violent Crime, Robbery and Hate Crime continued to show reductions.
- With regards to the Crime Squad, the CC advised some of the reduction in offences and performance improvements were down to their enforcement activity, as evidenced by the great results referenced in the paper.
- Acknowledging the reduction in Victim Based Crime was good news, the PCC questioned whether it was driven by particular crime types or consistent across the board. The CC advised it was driven by Robbery, Burglary Residential, Burglary Business and Community, Vehicle Crime and Violence Against the Person in particular. He said the Force was conscious of its commitment to tackling hidden harms and wanted more people to come forwards, but overall the mission was to reduce crime. He added the Force was not complacent as there were increases, for example in Shoplifting and Retail Crime which needed to be looked at in terms of commitment and resourcing.
- With regards to Shoplifting and Retail Crime, the PCC was pleased to see the number of suspects being interviewed and charged steadily increasing, but asked about the volume of offences in 2023 compared to 2022. The CC reported that for the period August to October 2023 there were 4,041 shoplifting offences compared to 3,276 in the previous

year, an increase of 23% or 765. The PCC said it was helpful as it showed not only were offences increasing, but charges as well.

- Referring to the launch of the national campaign Pegasus, the PCC asked how Kent Police were involved and whether any intelligence had been received yet. The CC confirmed the Force was engaged and supporting the national initiative; highlighting analytical work to identify the top 20 individuals of most concern, he reported seven were already in prison and five had orders ready to go or already served on them. Through Pegasus, he reported the charged rate for the year so far was 20.4% - a significant increase on the previous year. He said whilst some national media had suggested police forces had stopped dealing with retail crime, it was an area the Force had never shied away from, with a particular focus on organised criminality.
- With regards to the App 'Making Time Count', the PCC asked if there were any particular examples of how it had been used effectively during the pilot. The CC reported that prior to the pilot in East Division there was an average of 21 conditional cautions per month which had now increased to 31, and the number of Community Resolutions issued for Victim Based Crime had increased by 28% compared to the previous year. Whilst it was only rolled out in October, he said there were early indications that it was encouraging greater confidence in how and when to apply out of court resolutions. The PCC said in due course it would be helpful to measure victim satisfaction; the CC agreed.

Tackle violence against women and girls

- For the period August to October 2023, the CC reported Rape offences decreased by 10.1% (60) on the previous year, and the charged rate increased from 5.4% to 6.0% - the volume remaining stable. He said the Force was working with the CPS through Op Soteria to get to a position where it was getting the right outcome in each and every case and he was convinced that over time there would be steady increase in the charged rate. However, he noted it was a complex area to investigate and challenging due to the significant backlog in the court system.
- Whilst early days, the CC advised the Force had been inspected on Op Soteria compliance and was found to be in a good place in terms of structure. He added the Force was committed to Op Soteria and hoped to see the level of Rape offences reduce, impact on victims reduce and most importantly, appropriate action taken against suspects.
- The CC advised POLIT had received further investment in the form of an additional 11 detectives, as well as Digital Investigators to ensure any protective orders were enforced robustly and to tackle offending in the long term.
- The Sexual Offence Liaison Officers continued to work closely with victims, and the CC advised feedback on the care and support was positive. He added the Force continued to work closely with the Office of the PCC and commissioned services, as well as key partners to improve safety in the night-time economy.
- Sexual offences was a similar pattern to rape in terms of a decrease and increase in the charged rate, but the CC said the Force was hoping Op Soteria would have a positive impact. Noting the PCC had received briefings on potential changes to how the Force dealt with such offences in the next year, the CC advised he was confident it would improve performance and the service provided to the public.
- Noting the Force continued to invest heavily in Stalking and Domestic Abuse (DA), the CC advised there had been a lot of professional development and training with the CPS around improving the response further. He added the increase in quality was evident in the improved charged rate and proactivity in securing Stalking Prevention Orders – totalling 131, of which 117 remained live which was the highest in the country.
- Welcoming the increase in the Rape charged rate and noting the investment in Op Soteria, the PCC asked if the CC expected the rate to continue improving. Confirming he did, the CC would not commit to what it could or should be, but said it definitely needed to increase. He advised he had met with the Head of CPS Southeast and other senior leaders and they were committed to Op Soteria, as a result he believed it would increase naturally.
- With regards to Stalking, the PCC asked about the current charged rate. The CC reported that for the period August to October 2023, there were 1,100 offences and 114 charges, equating to 10.3%; in the previous year there were 1,038 offences and 87 charges, equating to 8.4%.
- Whilst welcoming the work on Stalking Prevention Orders, the PCC advised evidence he had gathered suggested male victims were much less likely to be under the protection of an order. He asked about reasons why that might be and how many male victims in the county were currently protected by a Stalking Prevention Order. The CC said it was perhaps due to a different stigma being attached to the reporting of offences by men than women. Whilst the majority of victims were women, he advised the Force recognised men were also victims and so each response was based on the outcome of the DARA risk assessment; it was not based on gender of the victim. He reported 19.8% of Stalking victims in the county were male and there were 10 Stalking Prevention Orders protecting male victims, which was 8.5% of the Force's live orders. He added 11% of referrals into the Perpetrator Programme were females and the Force treated male victims of Stalking with the same gravity and level of support and care as female victims.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

- August to October 2023, the CC reported a reduction in DA of 14.5% (1,299) compared to the previous year and a charged rate of 7.2% for the rolling year, up 1.1% on the previous year. He said the Force was committed to dealing with DA and whilst the charged rate was improving, there was a way to go.
- The CC advised the new Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Hub would be established in the new year; he was convinced it would bring about much greater coordination across the partners in the management of risk and the response to it. He added it was a real partnership investment to help take the response to the next level.
- Advising the charged rate would continue to be a focus for the Performance Committee chaired by the DCC, he said it would equally look at the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders and how breaches were dealt with. The CC reported 70 DVPO's were granted between August and October and 40 breaches dealt with in the same period.

- With regards to the Force's determination to prevent Fraud, the CC highlighted the Fraud Coordinators 600 contacts with vulnerable and elderly people in the period July to September 2023. Whilst Fraud would continue to challenge policing for many years to come, not just in terms of volume but also complexity, the CC said he was keen to preserve and build on the Force's investment.
- With regards to DA, the PCC asked if the Force understood what was driving the reduction. The CC referred to an increased focus on repeat perpetrators, an improved response to repeat victims, and a change in how crimes were recorded. To demonstrate the Force's proactivity, the CC reported that use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) had trebled from an average of 40 per month to 120. He was convinced the model of looking at the most harmful individuals would continue to have the largest impact as they were people who, whatever interventions were put in place, were unable to change their behaviour. In terms of crime reporting, he explained that previously, for every single offence identified officers had to create a crime report which was labour intensive, tied them up and was recording for the sake of it. Now, officers were able to capture all offences predominantly on one crime report, although importantly there was no difference in the action that would be taken. Whilst sure this had resulted in police forces recording less crimes, he said it was positive because every hour staff were not completing a bureaucratic form for the sake of it meant more time to combat crime and support victims. He added he was hopeful the amount of training officers and staff had received would improve the Force's capability and in turn reduce and prevent DA even further. The DCC advised that in terms of the change in recording the Force had been at pains to account for the adjustment to ensure it did not disguise a rise in a certain area, or a certain crime type – that was not the case. He added because of the value found in its hidden harms work, the Force continued to monitor victims and he was reassured they were not being left in a more dangerous set of circumstances.

Combat organised crime and county lines

- Referring to data and examples in the paper, the CC stated that through the Serious Crime Directorate and Serious Organised Crime Teams the Force continued to be strong in dismantling Organised Crime. However, whilst performance was good, he said there was no complacency as had been borne out in HMICFRS' inspection into how the Force dealt with organised crime.
- Highlighting the ongoing threat from County Lines, the CC advised the Force continued to reduce the level of harm with the number of charges being impressive. Noting the length of sentences at over 36 years, he said they were offenders who thought they could operate their drugs business in the county and cause significant harm to communities, often punctuated by violence which resulted in serious injury and sadly on occasions loss of life. Whilst it may be an impossibility to achieve, he said the Force did not accept any level of harm in the county and his view was that it would keep going until it was eradicated completely. He added the Force worked closely with the Metropolitan Police and others to combat what was a seriously damaging crime.
- The PCC acknowledged the good work of both teams in tackling Organised Crime and County Lines. With regards to the strength of substances being cut, dealt and sold on the streets, the PCC asked if the Force had noticed any particular pattern in terms of purity. The CC advised the Force had seen a similar trend to that nationally which was an overall decline in the purity of heroin which was linked to issues with production and criminals managing the demand in a different way. He added it was not clear whether the decline in purity was linked to a reduction in the Afghan Opium Harvest, but it was monitored closely along with trends around synthetic opiates.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

- Advising the new NHP model went live in June, the CC said the Force could not get it fully resourced quickly enough but it was a balance as to where the officers were taken from as new officers continued to be recruited.
- Referring to the examples in the paper, the CC said they underlined the results being achieved during the early days of the model, as well as the breadth and impact of having visible uniformed officers in Wards and on the streets.
- With regards to mental health, the CC reported s136 detentions continued to reduce and the Force was committed to the Right Care Right Person programme. Whilst it involved a lot of partnership working, training and knowledge sharing, he said ultimately it had to result in officers spending less time dealing solely with people in a mental health crisis. Noting that policing would always have a primary role in preserving life, he stated the Force was currently attending far too many incidents that health partners should be responding to. Over the next year he said he would like to see Right Care Right Person fully implemented, adding the PCC would receive regular briefings on progress.
- In terms of Citizens in Policing, he said the numbers demonstrated a very vibrant Special Constabulary and superb support from volunteers across the county. He added they were great people, helping the Force day in and day out.
- The CC reported that 999 call answering continued to improve, with an abandonment rate over the last three months of 0.3% and average answering time of 12 seconds. He also highlighted a significant improvement in 101 call answering, with an abandonment rate over the last three months of 9.4% and average answering time of 1 minute 15 seconds, although he said both had improved further in recent weeks. He advised there was a strong focus from himself and the DCC on ensuring all calls were answered, answered as quickly as possible and most importantly, providing the right response. He said the volume was quite incredible in terms of contacts every month and year, and there were a lot of dedicated and hard working staff in the Force Control Room he was proud of. He added there was no complacency and he expected the good performance to be maintained in the future.
- In terms of digital contact, the CC advised the general trend was a reduction in 999 and 101 calls and increase in online reports and Live Chat. He added the Force would continue to adapt and respond to changing public behaviour.
- Paying tribute to the work in the Force Control Room over the last 12 months, the PCC said performance was now excellent and asked that his thanks be placed on record to those involved.

- With regards to Right Care Right Person, the PCC said it was right the Force engaged with the NHS and the care sector, but asked about the relationship with third sector organisations and charities that were also part of the mental health delivery mechanism in the county. The DCC advised the Force was in a good place with the Integrated Care Board and a recent webinar had brought a number of organisations together, including the third sector to talk about implementation. Following the Metropolitan Police's implementation, he said there was concern about a sudden withdrawal of support but the Force was able to provide reassurance and describe a well organised transition, with an emphasis on how services were commissioned and preventing people from going into crisis. Within that, the Force was also able to highlight the significant contribution the third sector could and would make. He added it was early days, but he saw an important and strong contribution from the third sector that would accelerate heading into 2024.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

- The CC reported in the period August to October 2023 there were 16 road deaths; a 24% decrease on the previous year. Given the impact on people's lives, the CC said he wanted to get the figure to zero and the Force's commitment and work with partners would continue with the aim of reducing the number as far as it possibly could.
- Referring to examples in the paper, the CC stated it showed continued great work by the Serious Collision Investigation Unit. He added the Force's response to those killed and seriously injured on the roads in terms of prevention activity, target hardening and working with partners was going from strength to strength.
- In terms of speed, mobile phone, seatbelt and driving whilst impaired enforcement activity, he said it continued to be strong with great support from the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit.
- Noting Road Safety Week took place from 19-25 November, the PCC asked for some examples of activity undertaken by the Force. In terms of headlines, the CC reported: 40 motorists received Traffic Offence Reports, including one for driving at over 100mph and facing prosecution; several motorists stopped with unrestrained children in the vehicle; 10 uninsured vehicles seized; 5 arrests for driving whilst impaired through drink/drugs; one driver reported for careless driving; a couple of vehicles taken off the road – one for being in a dangerous condition; and a number of reports submitted to the DVLA for untaxed vehicles. Across the board, he said there had been good enforcement activity and it reflected the Force's commitment to Vision Zero. He added it was important to note offences were detected by both marked and unmarked police vehicles which regularly patrolled the county's roads.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

- The CC reported an increase of 5.5% in Child Protection referrals for the period August to October 2023 compared to the previous year. He said whilst there did not appear to be any patterns, the Force was looking at in more detail.
- Noting the NHP model included a Child Centred Policing Team, the CC highlighted the statistics in the paper on the Youth Justice Team outcomes and referred to the Force's plans around continued professional development.
- Advising there was a huge amount of partnership working, in particular the CC highlighted the Force's relationship with schools and support to children in them.
- The CC advised the trauma informed Child Sexual Exploitation training was a joint project with the University of Kent and the Force had spent a lot of time making sure it was right. He said very specialised skills were needed to deal with what was a really impactful area of criminality and he was pleased the training package was now being delivered to relevant officers. He added that he was convinced it would serve to improve the Force's response.
- Noting the PCC supported the Violence Reduction Unit directly, the CC highlighted the information in the paper around the key metrics set by the Government. He said the challenge going forwards would be how to maintain the investment, how to get the benefits and ensuring it reflected changes to the Force's policing model.
- The CC said the Cadets remained strong and vibrant, noting there were programmes now available for all ages, He added positive outcomes included Cadets joining the Force, and some going into other public service roles and jobs in the community. Every time he visited a Cadet unit, he said he was impressed with the impact the programme was having on young people's lives, adding that he wished to extend his thanks to those staff who gave up their own time to run the programmes.
- The PCC also asked that his thanks be placed on record to everyone who was making the Cadet programme such a success. He added the amount of volunteering required was spectacular and it was very much appreciated.

5. Inspections, Audits & Reviews

- Noting the recent publication of HMICFRS' PEEL report of Kent Police, the PCC congratulated the Force on the overall good performance evidenced. Acknowledging there were some areas for improvement (AFIs), he advised the Force had already taken steps to address them and requested his thanks be put on record for the good work and positive momentum that was being maintained.
- The DCC advised HMICFRS published three reports during the period:
 - An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide – advising Kent was not inspected, but had made a significant contribution to the NPCC Homicide Prevention Framework, the DCC stated work continued with clear governance structures. He said the three recommendations for Chief Constables were all in hand.
 - Two related to race and policing:
 - A review of the police service's leadership and governance arrangements for race related matters – contained no recommendations for Chief Constables.
 - An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making – whilst Kent was not inspected, the Force recognised the issues highlighted and there were four recommendations for Chief Constables which were being monitored through the Future Improvement and Development Board (FIDB).

- The DCC advised the Force's most recent PEEL report was published on 17 November - just after the meeting papers were put together.
- In terms of the AFIs from the previous PEEL inspection, the DCC reported that 13 had been signed off as completed at the most recent FIDB, with the rest subject to the most recent PEEL inspection process.
- He said the Force was pleased the most recent PEEL report commented on progress against the previous AFIs and the improved processes, governance and policies, as well as leadership throughout the Force.
- Referring to the workforce survey that accompanied the PEEL inspection, the DCC reported over 2,000 members of staff responded - almost 34% of the workforce. Being significantly above the level HMICFRS usually received, he advised the Force had been asked to share its communications strategy. The DCC stated the Force was encouraged by the level of participation and results, adding it was reflective of efforts to create a positive workplace.
- Noting many areas were graded 'Good', the DCC reported that Preventing crime and Protecting vulnerable people were particularly pleasing as at the time of the inspection the Force was in the early stages of rolling out the NHP model. Even before full implementation, in terms of Preventing crime he said HMICFRS saw a strong commitment to visibility, effective problem solving and good reductions in areas of recurrent demand. In terms of Protecting vulnerable people, he said it was an area many forces were finding challenging and being graded 'Requires Improvement' was a theme; therefore, 'Good' was pleasing. Whilst Management of offenders had also improved from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Adequate', he stated there was no complacency as the Force was graded 'Requires Improvement' for Investigating crime and Responding to the public.
- With regards to Investigating crime, the DCC reported the Force had already made good progress on a number of the AFIs. He said he was confident progress would continue to be made, adding the Force compared well to others subject to PEEL or recently assessed.
- In terms of Responding to the public, the DCC stated it was an area that had proved challenging and taken 12 months hard work to improve. He advised the most recent performance data for 999 call answering showed a mean average of 5 seconds and median average of 13 seconds; for 101 calls, the Force was regularly achieving an attrition rate of less than 10% which was class leading across all forces. He said the Force was not complacent, but had firmly grasped the nettle and was seeing sustained improvements. He was confident the AFIs would be achieved quickly, adding that it would put the Force in a good position for its next PEEL inspection, for which it was already preparing.
- In summary, he said it was a challenging assessment over many months but positive and showed good momentum.
- Thanking the DCC, the PCC said the two AFIs he was going to ask about had been covered. Firstly, the increase in the charged rate over the last year and the improvements in call handling within the FCR.
- Noting changes to the Police National Computer so that ethnicity was better recorded were intended to be introduced in 2023, the PCC asked if there was any update. The DCC advised the action dated back to April 2023, but prioritisation of changes to the PNC system focused on urgent and critical issues, so as yet there was no update on when it would be introduced. He added it was something the Force would continue to monitor.
- The DCO reported 13 internal audits were at various stages of completion and so there was a lot of work still to do. In terms of actions, he advised seven had been discharged and there were 11 recommendations.
- In terms of external Audit, the DCO advised the Force had been notified of delays in publication, adding that it was through no fault of its own, but did mean the statutory deadline would be missed since the External Auditors were unable to sign off the accounts in the usual timeframe. On behalf of the PCC and CC, he noted they would issue a notice detailing the reasons which would be published on the website. Whilst common for other organisations, he said it was disappointing that the Force's efficiency could not be matched by that of the External Auditors. He stated there was nothing the Force could do as it was a capacity issue in the External Audit market.

6. People

- The DCO reported the Force ended 2022/23 with a Strength of 4,148 officers against an Establishment of 4,144. The Headcount stood at 4,261 and over the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) threshold requirement of 4,218 in order to draw down the associated grant.
- In the current year, the Force would recruit up to 4,223 which was five additional officers on top of the 4,218 PUP requirement. He said it would be subject to audit again in March 2024 with the first audit taking place at the end of September 2023 when the Force had 4,225 officers - seven more than was required to draw down the funding.
- The DCO reported April to September 2023 there were 133 joiners, advising based on that number and attrition projections, it was estimated a further 160 would need to be recruited by the end of March 2024. This would consist of two cohorts – in January and March 2024.
- Noting the Police Constable Entry Programme would be introduced towards the end of April 2024, the DCO advised it would be in addition to the three existing routes. Overall, he said the Force had a sufficient number of candidates to fill vacancies across the range of entry routes but that was not the same across the region.
- With regards to diversity, the DCO advised there were 161 (3.86%) ethnic minority officers in the Force and of the 133 new recruits, seven (5.26%) were ethnic minority and 52 (39.1%) female. He added there were currently nine ethnic minority candidates in the recruitment process.
- Noting the recruitment events listed in the paper, the DCO said given the numbers in the pipeline it showed the importance of maintaining that effort to ensure the Force could develop enough strong candidates to join. The DCO advised the Force had introduced 41 Retention Ambassadors that were proving successful.
- The PCSO establishment was 101.5 and a new intake was planned for January 2024 to fill the 30 current vacancies.

- Officer absence was up slightly (3.8 average days to 4.3), staff down (4.3 to 4.1) and PCSOs down (6.3 to 5.9); taking all three together the DCO advised it was a stable position, which in comparison to other forces remained strong.
- Commending those involved in the recruitment process, the PCC said it was good to know Kent continued to lead the way and was the most attractive Force in the region.

7. Finance

- The DCO reported the total Capital Budget was £28.8m and said historically there was an average underspend of 38% - not due to poor management, but the requirement in regulations to pay only for goods and services received to a satisfactory level on time. He added the forecast spend was £23.4m (81%), which was an underspend of £5.4m and represented a reasonable spend against the funds allocated for capital projects.
- The Capital Receipts budget had been set at £10.5m, but the Force was only likely to achieve £4.1m as it was anticipated more land would be sold. The DCO said whilst delayed it would be sold at some point, so the opportunity would not be lost.
- The DCO reported the Revenue Budget was £386.2m with a forecast spend of £384.5m – an underspend of £1.7m which was 0.45% of the total budget.
- He said the Force kept a close eye on levels of attrition and the replacement of officers at the top end of the salary scale with joiners at the bottom which provided a financial benefit but operational difficulties.
- The DCO advised future risks included inflation, transport costs, pension detriment and pension auto-enrolment.
- In terms of one of the major financial threats, the DCO reported that following meetings with the Home Office regarding the former PFI project in North Kent they had agreed verbally there would be no detriment to the Force's finances.
- To demonstrate some of the unfairness in the current Funding Formula, the DCO advised that Merseyside's spend was the second most of all forces in the country at £268 per 1,000 population; Kent's spend was £193 – Merseyside received £74.60 or 28% more than Kent and yet they were required to maintain 106 less police officers under the PUP. In round figures, he said Merseyside received £81.4m per year more than Kent.
- Going forwards the DCO said the Force was making good progress on the savings plan for the current year, but there were some big challenges ahead.
- The PCC said comparing other forces that were in receipt of much stronger financial settlements than Kent was helpful. He added the Funding Formula work was ongoing as it had been for a while, and the fight would continue.
- Looking ahead, the PCC said it would be good to get the Force's perspective on the budget and financial outlook for 2024/25, including the need for precept. Noting the PCC was supportive around lobbying for fairer funding, the CC stated the Funding Formula needed to change as there was currently an inherent unfairness with some forces having significant reserves because they were regularly over funded, whereas Kent did not receive enough to pay even its wage bill. He stated it was one of the most strategic issues affecting the Force. In terms of the Value for Money Profiles, the DCO said Kent was delivering a lot more people and activity than perhaps comparator forces. Noting a further Chief Officer meeting was scheduled, he advised for 2024/25 no assumptions had been made about the PCC's precepting decision nor could an accurate assumption be made around the Government Grant. He said there were a number of pressures and opportunities including inflation and the pay award, and when brought together the Force anticipated a shortfall of about £9.8m in terms of being able to start the year with a balanced budget. He added the Force was looking to devise a savings plan around that figure which could be adjusted, subject to variables the Force did not know and assumptions changing. He said the Grant and precepting decision were two important pieces of information the Force currently lacked, but it anticipated a savings plan of £9.8m in 2024/25.
- The PCC thanked the CC and the DCO for their candour which he said was helpful in making the argument, but also for the Police and Crime Panel in February where the discussion around the precept would take place.

8. Topical issues & Update on Significant Operational Matters

- The CC stated there was nothing, advising that he would keep the PCC updated on any significant events via their weekly meeting.

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

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 28 February 2024

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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

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