

Meeting Notes

Title:	Bespoke HMICFRS PEEL Inspection - Performance and Delivery Board
Date & time:	Monday 31 October 2022
Venue:	Kent Police Headquarters, North Kent (also broadcast via Microsoft Teams Live)
Attendees:	Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matthew Scott - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)• Adrian Harper - Chief Executive (CE) Kent Police: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tim Smith - Temporary Chief Constable (T/CC)• Ian Drysdale - Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Apologies	Rob Phillips - PCC's Chief Finance Officer

1. Welcome & Introduction

- The PCC welcomed those present, including members of the public and press, as well as those watching online to a special meeting of the Board to discuss the HMICFRS PEEL Report and Improvement Plan.
- He advised it was a meeting held in public, not a public meeting, so the exchanges would be between himself, his CE, the T/CC and DCO.

2. Notes of Previous Meeting – 8 June 2022

- The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record and the following updates on two outstanding actions noted:
 - Provide an update on borders, migrants and Kent Police's role supporting Border Force (1 December 2021): discharged - verbal update due to be given at cancelled September meeting. Written briefing received with thanks.
 - Provide an update on the assessment of Force Control Room demand, resources and whether 999 calls are being managed in the most efficient and effective way (8 June 2022): discharged - covered in Making Kent Safer paper (under paragraph 7.5) prepared for cancelled September meeting. Papers available on the OPCC website.

3. HMICFRS PEEL Report & Improvement Plan

- The PCC explained that with the fieldwork conducted nearly a year ago, a 'hot debrief' and the substantive report published there had been an opportunity to get to grips with the issues highlighted.
- He said this was an opportunity for the T/CC to present the progress that had been made in addressing the AFI's.
- The T/CC introduced the presentation and explained that he would cover all 19 AFIs, but on occasion bring some together because of similar themes.

Slide 2

- The T/CC advised the report was published on 28 April and the Force responded quickly by collating the good and not so good areas identified to develop an improvement plan.
- The Victim Service Assessment was not graded, but HMICFRS had provided some commentary.
- He said two important areas of policing – Serious and Organised Crime and Counter Corruption and Vetting – had now been inspected, but it was anticipated the reports would not be published until December 2022.
- Noting the inspection was based on the new PEEL methodology, the T/CC added that unhelpfully it also changed halfway through which caused some issues that had to be resolved with HMICFRS.
- Everything in the report, the Force had the opportunity to discuss with HMICFRS prior to publication.
- The HMICFRS Force Liaison Officer was already back in Force and the T/CC advised he had met with him to discuss the Improvement Plan and the re-inspection which would take place in 2023.
- The T/CC said the AFIs were clear statements, but HMICFRS had qualified a lot with 'often', 'sometimes' or 'rarely' and used descriptive words to provide guidance as to how big an issue it was for the Force.

Slide 3

- The T/CC stated it was important not to lose sight of the areas of good practice highlighted in the report. He added the Force was graded 'Good' in several areas and 'Outstanding' for Crime Data Integrity (CDI).
- He advised that CDI was a very significant limiting factor. He said if Kent had a lower crime recording rate there would be thousands of fewer crimes and therefore less to be dealt with. Whilst clearly not the right thing to do for victims, he said the demand on the Force would be a lot less. Whilst the compliance rate was very important to the Force, it had an impact in terms of volume of demand that had to be managed and resourced effectively.
- The PCC said whilst focused on the AFIs, it shouldn't be lost that the majority of grades were 'Outstanding', 'Good' or 'Adequate'. He said Kent Police officers and staff did their absolute best and the good practice should be recognised and celebrated whilst scrutinising the AFIs. He asked that his thanks be placed on record for their work.

Slide 4

- The T/CC described the governance arrangements around the PEEL Inspection.
- He advised the Force quickly identified what was needed and implemented an Improvement Plan that was overseen by Chief Officers and reported into the Force Improvement Board.
- The T/CC said a PEEL Oversight Board which he chaired had been introduced and provided an opportunity to formally test what he was being told on a day-to-day basis or observing in terms of performance.
- Two extraordinary meetings had taken place to date – 25 August and 27 October; he said he intended to continue with them to make sure he had a clear picture about which areas were improving and which required more impetus.

Slide 5

- **AFI 1: The force needs to improve the capacity and capability of its response teams.**
- **AFI 2: The force is failing to properly resource the teams that investigate domestic abuse.**
- **AFI 3: The force needs to review how it allocates resources to ensure it can meet demand.**
- HMICFRS found the response teams on occasions were over-stretched and inexperienced. Similarly, they felt the resourcing of the Force's domestic abuse (DA) investigation teams wasn't what it should be. At the heart of the issue was the allocation of resources to meet demand.
- The T/CC advised that since the inspection, an additional 69 officers had gone into Local Policing (LP) – 43 to LP Teams and 26 to Vulnerability Investigation Teams (VITs).
- He said the Investigative Improvement course had been designed by experienced investigators and L&D staff to give supervisors the tools to manage investigations to the standard required which was not consistent across the Force.
- Over a third of Sgts had completed the training; the T/CC said it supplemented previous training and was not a replacement, but focused on the areas identified by HMICFRS with regards to investigation supervision.
- The T/CC said the Force was constantly looking to push the boundaries to try to find better ways to respond to DA victims. He highlighted the DA Hub and use of Rapid Video Response (RVR) as examples.
- In terms of LP teams, the T/CC reported the establishment had increased across the board; he said it was a conscious decision as a result of the Government's Police Uplift Programme (PuP) supported by the PCC through council tax.
- The T/CC reported the number of DA detectives had increased and that by January/February 2023, DA teams would be up to full establishment. Although not quite as rapid progress as he would have liked, he said the numbers were monitored and that whilst there was a demand in other teams, VIT DA teams had been prioritised.
- More widely, as a Force he advised the number of Detective Constables was increasing – the establishment was 613 and currently there were 567 on the detective pathway. Whilst unable to give an exact date, he said the Force was moving as quickly as possible to meeting the detective establishment.
- The T/CC advised the Force was trying to offer as many routes as possible into the organisation, particularly for DA victims. He said the innovation around the DA Hub and RVR was exciting and noted the following:
 - Data showed RVR was a service victims appreciated and welcomed with high levels of satisfaction that also enabled the Force to manage critical issues early. He said it was not a replacement for an emergency response to a victim in need of immediate assistance; however, it was about looking at DA that fell below the high-risk category and a HMICFRS observation that sometimes the response was not as good as it could be.
 - Whilst early days and RVR was still being evaluated, he said it was a useful technological tool.
 - In relation to the DA Hub, the Force used to average about 100 high appointment CADs a month that were responded to in under a couple of hours; it was now nearly 300.
- The T/CC said there were plans to make greater use of RVR, potentially rolling it out to other crime types to assist with managing demand and ultimately provide a better service to victims.
- In summary, the T/CC advised in both LP and VIT the Force was increasing capacity and capability; he believed the Force was in a much better position now than at the time of the inspection.
- Thanking the T/CC, the PCC asked if he was satisfied the extra resourcing was sufficient to address the AFI, and how it had been focussed. The T/CC said he was satisfied it was sufficient capacity advising that work had taken place to overlay where staff were in LP against the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). He said some Districts had increased by 18 constable's and others had seen no increase as it was based on the RAM. He said 43 extra officers across the county was not a lot, but it was making a difference and had to be seen in the context of all the other work the Force was doing to try and reduce demand. The T/CC was content it would meet the AFI, but not in isolation.

- With regards to the Force's overall recruitment, the DCO reported that thanks to the PuP uplift and precept increase the Force was on course to have 4,145 officers by the end of March 2023. It was receiving an average of 55 applications per week, up from 37 despite the challenges presented by the MPS. There were two more cohorts in January and March which would get the Force to the March 2023 figure and enable positions to be resourced.
- The PCC said the public may not recognise investigation teams such as VIT as part of LP and asked about the support they offered besides investigative capacity. The T/CC said traditionally visibility may have been a uniformed officer driving a marked car, or walking around, however VIT staff were working in local communities and were particularly visible to DA victims. The VIT Proactive Teams were designed very much with the targeting of repeat, difficult or sometimes dangerous DA offenders and the Force was seeing some great results in terms of the pursuit and incarceration of perpetrators. Acknowledging the difference between an officer who routinely worked in uniform versus one who did not, the T/CC said it was only right most VIT staff did not work in uniform because of their work.
- Noting that at previous meetings the Force reported DA Hub victim satisfaction was tracking higher than general DA satisfaction – just over 90% for the RVR process and 87% for general – the PCC asked if that was still the case. The T/CC confirmed it was; he said DA victim satisfaction remained high, but the Force needed to look at the small percentage who weren't satisfied to understand where perhaps it hadn't got things quite right. He added that he didn't want to read too much into the higher levels of satisfaction as it was still early days. He said it certainly filled victims' needs, but the fact there was a need for the victim's cooperation, support and engagement to use RVR maybe explained the higher satisfaction. He advised the Force would be looking very carefully at the application of RVR, but it was a positive news story and legitimised the Force's use of video technology.

Slide 6

- Further information in relation to AFIs 1-3.
- In addition to capacity and capability, the T/CC stated there were several innovations the Force was looking at or already doing. He highlighted work to place experienced staff – those with real investigative knowledge – with inexperienced detectives to help them with the trade, craft and skills; experienced staff going out for a number of days each year; and the Crime Academy supporting staff at all ranks and all levels/skills by providing support, development and experiential learning that could not always be achieved in a classroom environment.
- Referring to the Investigative Improvement course, the CE said it was a big investment and therefore a big extraction; he asked what feedback had been received so far in terms of effectiveness and help in discharging the supervisor role to a better standard. The T/CC advised it had been universally positive; he said the genesis was the Crime Academy - skilled, experienced detectives and trainers - but it was designed very much with the need in mind. It was based around findings from internal inspections and what HMICFRS reported around the supervisory gap. Giving supervisors policies and practice was all well and good, but it was about equipping them with the skills, and to be able to spend three days on standards, support for staff and supervision had gone down well.

Slide 7

- **AFI 4 – The force needs to improve how it collects information about the diversity of crime victims and use this to ensure it serves different communities equally.**
- The T/CC said at its heart was work around Athena - the main computer system used by the Force for recording crime, custody, investigations etc.
- Whilst it did not negate the AFI, the T/CC noted policing generally was struggling with collecting the information.
- He advised a number of pieces of work were underway, adding it was likely to necessitate some changes to the Athena system which was shared with other forces and therefore not in the Force's gift to change. Noting that work was already underway via an Athena Working Group, he said several solutions were being looked at to try and ensure the Force routinely captured the information so it could be built into the Force Performance Framework.
- Whilst the Force collected some information on the diversity of crime victims which helped shape the response, he said the reality was that until the Force had the ability to capture it in a more structured it would remain a challenge.
- The PCC asked what steps the Force was taking to reach out to victims from diverse backgrounds who may be less likely to report. The T/CC highlighted the Community Liaison Officers whose full-time job was pretty much engaging with communities, to try and understand what was of concern to them. He said the Force also did a lot of work in the modern slavery/human trafficking part of the business to understand the causes of victimisation and maximise opportunities to rescue victims. He stated the Force was active in terms of outward communication, inviting scrutiny from communities whether that was through the IPAG or the PCC, such as his VAWG Inquiry.
- Whilst there were other innovations helping the Force to understand the impact of crime on victims from diverse communities, the T/CC said as an AFI the Force had work to do with other Athena forces to address the matter.

Slide 8

- **AFI 5 – The force should improve the way it assesses public satisfaction with the service it provides.**
- The T/CC referred to his previous comments about RVR, explaining the assessment framework was put in place very much with this AFI in mind to ensure the Force really understood what victims felt about the service.
- He stated the Force continued to conduct surveys with hate crime, DA and rape victims with the data used in the Force Performance Committee to monitor performance and shape resourcing decisions.

- He advised the Force was looking to make greater use of technology but noted a clear difference between an organisation like Amazon testing customer satisfaction versus the Force testing wider public and victim satisfaction. He said there was a need to think about the impact on victims as some crime types were trickier than others, but there was some innovative work looking at other force systems, and My Community Voice (MCV). Whilst the uptake was still not where the Force would like it to be, he said it was growing and the Force wanted to use such platforms to give the very best possible view of wider public satisfaction as opposed to just specific crime types.
- Noting the take up of MCV and that it was just one public communication platform, the PCC asked what steps were being taken to look at other mechanisms – for example Nextdoor - which already had a large captive audience of Kent residents. The T/CC said the Force wanted to use any platform to push sign up for MCV and there was a lot of work underway to publicise and push it. He acknowledged the Force wouldn't ignore public opinion that came through other avenues, but stated the decision had been made that it was the right mechanism to push as the Force's preferred platform. He also hoped other platforms could be seamlessly dovetailed into MCV or linked to it.
- The T/CC advised there was a plan to push MCV in January 2023 across mainstream media and social media to increase the take up, but said whether in the long term it was MCV or something very similar, it was good to have a platform through which the Force could engage directly with the public.

Slide 9

- **AFI 6 – The force needs to ensure that neighbourhood policing officers have access to structured training.**
 - The T/CC advised the words used in the report were 'clear development pathways'.
 - He stated the Force was happy that it's training offer was strong, but accepted the development pathway for neighbourhood officers wasn't as defined as it should have been.
 - The T/CC said he was confident the Neighbourhood Policing model changes would define aspects of neighbourhood policing more clearly. He added the Force would design its training around that so it was very clear what each part of the Neighbourhood Policing model was and what skills each officer required.
 - He advised work was already underway to design what development for each of the roles would look like and said he was confident the Force would be able to convince HMICFRS that it had discharged the AFI.
 - The PCC asked how the Force was managing the extraction of officers for training, particularly with the current high vacancy rate in some neighbourhood policing roles. The T/CC commented that he had already described the over-population in LP roles, adding the Force would not be reckless with the allocation to a new Neighbourhood Policing model. He said the abstraction for training was not an issue, it was more about how the Force ensured it was shared evenly and proportionately. The Force offered a lot of training online and as self-teach; he said whilst some might say it's not the best way to learn, for the fundamental basics of what's required it was a useful tool. The Force was as creative as it could be to minimise abstractions and very careful to spread them over time and the whole force.
 - The T/CC said the Force was also good at ensuring resourcing levels met daily requirements; it would never jeopardise operational need over training and was very used to managing the abstraction of staff.

Slide 10

- **AFI 7 – The force needs to make sure that repeat callers and those that are vulnerable are routinely identified.**
 - The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported 'checks were not always completed at the first point of contact'; they found whilst there was high compliance in the application of THRIVE by call takers, sometimes it was not completed.
 - As a critical area of work, he advised the Force had undertaken a lot of work and the application of THRIVE had improved; in terms of the vulnerability part of THRIVE, compliance was now nearly 90% compliance. He added the Force would continue with dip testing and quality assurance and invite HMICFRS back in to re-look at it.
 - The T/CC said there had been changes to working practices in the Force Control Room (FCR) to focus on when vulnerability was not identified at first contact; sometimes it was a recording issue so work was underway to make sure the data was correct, but when appropriate there was also immediate supervisory intervention. There was now a much greater focus on compliance to make sure the Force was as close to 100% as possible.
 - The T/CC noted that just because it was not picked up at first point of contact that did not mean the vulnerability was never identified. He advised there was a lot of re-checking to make sure nothing was missed and the Force was able to show HMICFRS that on most occasions, the vulnerabilities were picked up, just not at first contact.

Slide 11

- **AFI 8 – The force needs to make sure call takers give advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.**
 - The T/CC noted the commentary in the report was 'sometimes crime prevention or scene preservation advice was not given at first contact by the call taker'.
 - He advised there had been some good innovation with CSI staff going into the FCR to support call handlers; he said the Force was not seeking to make FCR staff CSI's, but was providing direct support which would have real benefits.
 - He said the Force responded to thousands of crimes and provided crime prevention advice, adding that CSIs also responded to thousands each year and preserved evidence which ultimately brought offenders to justice.
 - Whilst the Force absolutely accepted the AFI, the T/CC noted HMICFRS used the term 'sometimes' as opposed to 'often' or 'consistently' which he said would have been of more concern.

Slide 12

- **AFI 9 – the force needs to better manage its response to incidents.**
- Whilst a global statement, the T/CC said HMICFRS presented several examples where calls graded high were not allocated resources in an acceptable time frame.
- The T/CC advised the Force had reviewed its incident grading; whilst it would be presented to HMICFRS in due course, he was happy that it followed the national guidance and believed it was fit for purpose.
- The DA Hub was very strong in this area as it offered an alternative route for victims. Importantly it was also reducing high graded demand which was sometimes trickier to manage than emergencies that had to be responded to immediately. The T/CC said that area of demand had always been the volume and trickier one to deal with.
- Noting that he had already mentioned the increased establishment of LP teams, the T/CC said it would provide greater resource going forwards to respond to calls. Whilst he was unable to give details, he added when the Neighbourhood Policing model changes were implemented most of the police uplift over the last 2 years would be in frontline teams.
- Acknowledging that not having targets was something he supported, the PCC noted there were some concerns about response times to immediate and high graded calls, particularly with longer waits in rural areas, and asked about the average response times and what assurance the Force could give to rural communities. The T/CC confirmed the Force did not have response time targets, adding there were good reasons for that, not least the unintended consequences of getting a response wrong. He reported that April to September 2020 the average response time was 25 minutes 13 seconds; 2021 was 20 minutes 33 seconds; and 2022 was 21 minutes 24 seconds. He said it had improved since 2020 and was now stable, adding that it was monitored carefully and if the times started to creep up, the Force would look at whether the resources were in the right place to meet demand.

Slide 13

- **AFI 10 – The force needs to make sure that crimes are allocated and investigated in a timely manner.**
- **AFI 11 – Investigation plans should be created where applicable and properly supervised.**
- **AFI 12 – The force needs to take every opportunity to pursue offenders when victims disengage.**
- The T/CC advised for AFI 10 HMICFRS said 'investigations were not always progressed in a timely manner'; for AFI 11 they found 'some investigations lacked an investigation plan'; and for AFI 12 they reported 'the Force wasn't always considering evidence led prosecutions (ELP's)'.
 - He explained the Crime Management and Investigative Quality Board focused on investigation resources, governance and professionalism under the Investigative Improvement programme. At the heart of the programme was a root and branch development of the Force's volume crime practices, with the strapline 'solve the solvable' and most importantly a tried and tested Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). Whilst no QAF was completely fool proof, the T/CC stated it had been designed to ensure the areas identified by HMICFRS were catered for, with staff and supervisors in over 400 investigations a month now using it for guidance and support. Ultimately, the T/CC said he would like to see the performance improvement result in more positive outcomes for victims with more offenders arrested and charged, or where appropriate, put into rehabilitative and preventative programmes.
 - In November 2021, about 20% of cases had clear investigation plans and 27% supervisory reviews; in June 2022, that had increased to 81% for both. Conscious there may be questions around the Force marking its own homework, the T/CC advised supervisors had different obligations that were monitored through the Crime Management and Investigative Quality Board. He said the Force had already invited HMICFRS in to look at it and make sure the way it was being assessed mirrored their approach. He added he was confident the Force was going in a very positive direction with regards to the 3 AFIs.
 - The T/CC reported that cases where the Force could show an ELP had been properly considered had increased from 48.4% in June, to 67.6% in September 2022. He said for some categories of crime more than others, where a victim disengaged and there was evidence, the Force would take positive action and prosecute. He said he was confident the Force was doing the right things and that when HMICFRS returned they would see a significantly improved picture.
 - The PCC said it was good to hear the Force was taking forward ELPs; the CE asked if RVR was assisting where victims maybe chose a different outcome. Confirming it was, the T/CC said he could think of several examples where engagement with the victim at the point of crisis had resulted in key evidence being captured which had enabled a prosecution later in the process. He added there was a need to balance support for victims and victim confidence; the Force did not just ride rough shod over victims' views, but there were times when it was essential to take ELPs.

Slide 14

- Further information in relation to AFIs 10-12.
- The T/CC re-iterated there had been a Force response at every rank; all had a part to play in the improvement journey and it was very clear in policies and now practice where people fitted into it.
- For example, some DCIs were less experienced than others and the Force was buddying them up with Specialist Crime DCI's who had vast experience to help with trade, craft and understanding of what crime types they needed to focus on, as well as how to support their staff better.
- The T/CC reported that through the repeated intervention of supervisors the Force was seeing a decrease in the number of older crimes. For example, in August there were 655 cases at the 6 monthly review point which was key in terms of many investigations; it was now 407 and falling.

Slide 15

- **AFI 13 – The force needs to make sure the needs of all victims are assessed so they can be supported.**
- The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported 'Kent Police wasn't always completing and recording Victims Needs Assessments'; he added it certainly wasn't an indication the Force was completely failing to record them, but they weren't being done as consistently as HMICFRS thought they should be.
- He said in conjunction with other work and changes to the FCR, the Force was undertaking an end-to-end review of the Victim Needs Assessment.
- All policies had been reviewed and he advised there had been a lot of work with the Athena Team and other forces to make sure there was the ability to track, record and measure the completion of assessments. He said the drive was starting to improve compliance and completion with 48.8% in June and 60.1% in September. Importantly, he reported that whenever an Assessment was not completed there was an intervention and review at the earliest opportunity to understand why it had happened – sometimes it was human error, but often it was just not recorded in the right place in the right way. The Force also recognised the links between the Assessment and the rest of the criminal justice system, for example the application of Special Measures.
- The PCC sought reassurance that victims were still being made aware of the support and services available to them such as Victims Support, but also Restorative Justice. The T/CC confirmed they were; he explained that in terms of the universal Victim Support offer it was an automatic 'opt-in' with every recorded crime sent to them overnight. There was also an expectation the Victim Care Card which contained links to Victim Support and other services would be given to victims, but he said the Force needed to get better at making sure officers explained it. The Force worked closely with language line to translate materials and the Modern Slavery Team and CLOs worked closely with the Samaritans, Victims Support and other specialist services. The T/CC stated he thought policing generally, and the Force in particular was getting better at ensuring victims had access to the right information.
- The T/CC said he was confident completion of the Victims Needs Assessment was improving and HMICFRS would be happy with what they saw when they returned.

Slide 16

- **AFI 14 – The force needs to improve how it records why victims withdraw their support for investigations.**
- The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported that 'an auditable record of victims wishes was rarely obtained', adding that it was an area the Force felt needed a lot of work.
- He reported there were conversations with HMICFRS about what they considered to be an auditable record and as a result, the Force had made some changes to its policy and practice. He said officers would always try to obtain a statement about a victims' wishes, particularly if they did not wish to support a prosecution, but it was not always possible and officers were now directed to record that fact on the Athena crime report.
- The Force was able to evidence other ways officers and staff were recording the victims wishes, notably in their pocket notebook, but HMICFRS felt that was not always sufficient to be regarded as an auditable record.
- The T/CC said he hoped the clear expectation and change to policy would make a difference, noting that DA outcome 16 'Victim Withdrawal' data was also monitored closely at Force Performance Committee. He stated it would continue to be an area of focus because the Force wanted to make sure every possible support was given to victims - no matter whether they supported a prosecution or not. He said there were early signs the Force was getting better at capturing and recording the reasons a victim did not wish to support an investigation, adding it would provide greater insight enabling the Force to adjust its response. He added the Force would never lose focus, but it was an area HMICFRS would be invited back in to check compliance on.
- Noting the level of victims withdrawing support, the PCC asked if there was any evidence that it was exacerbated by the high level of crime data integrity in that many victims were reporting past as well as current incidents. The T/CC could not say it was, but stated he had no doubt if Kent's crime data integrity was lower the victim withdrawal rate would be less because the Force could invest more resource into fewer crimes. Fundamentally though, he thought it would hit the target and miss the point because it lacked integrity and the public would have no confidence that when they reported a crime it would be recorded and something done about it. In summary, he said there was a link to some degree between the Force's crime data integrity and the rate at which victims withdrew because the Force was complying with a set of rules that a number of Chief Constables had questioned in terms of efficacy. He added the Force worked to the current rules, but if they changed the Force would adapt accordingly.

Slide 17

- **AFI 15 – The force should make sure orders protecting victims of DA are considered in all appropriate cases.**
- The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported 'limited evidence of preventative measures', adding that it had resulted in some significant changes.
- Referring to the development of the proactive DA Teams, he said in simple terms they were targeting offenders who posed the greatest risk; those who repeatedly abused others, often women and girls, and made their lives a misery. They were a critical investment that was already yielding dividends as the Force had seen the number of DV Protection Notices (DVPNs) and DV Protection Orders (DVPOs) increase. He advised they were also identifying opportunities to take out Notices and the Force was getting better at identifying resource to enforce Orders; he didn't want to be in a position where there were so many orders they couldn't be enforced, or action was not taken when they were breached. He added the investment and re-structuring of DA resources was starting to improve performance.

- In terms of the DA Hub, the T/CC said a part of their work was the management of the DV disclosure scheme and compliance with it, which as a result was much better than at the time of the inspection.
- Noting disclosure schemes had been discussed at previous meetings, the PCC said he was pleased to hear about the high levels of compliance. In addition to the notices and orders which the Force was proactive in securing, he said tagging orders were also helpful in dealing with suspected offenders; he asked what steps the Force took with partners to make sure when people were given a tagging order, they were fitted, monitored and complied with. The T/CC advised the monitoring of tags and breaches was managed by Probation, but the Force worked closely with them. Breaches were notified to Probation who liaised with the Force's IOM Coordinators; subsequently alerts were sent to the relevant Offender Management Team for actioning. Importantly, he said alerts generated from Buddi tags which were predominantly fitted on recidivist violent sex offenders went straight to the FCR, so there was no delay in responding. He added acquisitive crime tags were monitored through the MoJ, and there was a current cohort of 93 with 61 live orders. He said he could give countless examples where breaches had been responded to positively: the Force regularly charged registered sex and violent offenders with additional offences and they were often returned to prison for breach of their licence terms. Whilst Probation had been through some big changes in recent years, the T/CC advised at a local, operational level there were excellent links and described them as a very supportive partner.

Slide 18

➤ **AFI 16 – The force should maintain and improve the wellbeing of staff involved in protecting vulnerable people.**

- The T/CC advised HMICFRS' commentary was 'staff working with the most vulnerable victims often do not feel cared for or supported'; he added that as a cop of 32 years it was disappointing to hear but there had been a strong response from the Force to try and make sure all staff had access to good health and welfare support.
- He advised there was now a dedicated area for investigator wellbeing on the Healthy You website and highlighted bespoke work to develop higher levels of welfare support for certain roles, such as Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) officers that had been extended to Family Liaison Coordinators and VIT staff.
- He stated that along with Chief Officers he was determined the Force would be open about mental health; he wanted staff to talk openly if they were struggling and didn't want any inspection body to find staff who felt they weren't supported or valued.
- Whilst he felt support for staff was excellent and he stood by that, he said it was only right that HMICFRS highlighted their concerns and the Force had worked hard to correct them. He stated he was confident that when HMICFRS returned and spoke with frontline staff, they would see an improvement.
- The DCO advised the Force had struggled to triangulate the AFI but said it hadn't in anyway diluted the energy to enhance and improve where it could. During the previous spending reductions, the Force had maintained its health and wellbeing services, something many other forces did not and introduced an Employee Assistance Programme, which had been extended to family members. Notwithstanding that a few individuals may have felt unsupported, he said the Force had gone above and beyond and would continue to do so.
- The PCC said he recognised how much the Force cared for its people and was confident the support would continue to improve as it was such a priority.
- The T/CC highlighted his previous comments about capacity and capability and said the Force was becoming more sophisticated at understanding demand, allocation of resources and how to look after staff. Whilst not complacent, he said there was a strong investment in wellbeing and the Force just wanted to get better and better at it.
- The CE asked if work linked to the AFI in terms of looking after the welfare of staff was included in the Investigative Improvement course. Confirming it was, the T/CC said the course was predominantly aimed at improving investigations, but there was a whole section on welfare, support as well as standards. He added it was obvious to the Force that if staff were healthy and happy, they were more productive.

Slide 19

➤ **AFI 17 – The force needs to review its policy for people released on bail and while under investigation.**

- The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported 'significant delays in case progression, especially for those released under investigation'.
- He said there had been a comprehensive review of policy and practice in relation to bail management in line with changes to the bail legal framework which had strengthened the Force's position and enabled it to be more intrusive. In terms of numbers, he reported there were about 200 less now than when the inspection finished.
- In terms of released under investigation (RUI), the T/CC stated he was confident the changes had strengthened the Force's position. For example, reviews being the responsibility of Superintendents would heighten the level of seniority and scrutiny and with part of the QAF focused on bail and RUI, it was monitored at Force Performance Committee.
- The PCC asked how the Force was ensuring bail conditions were appropriate to the needs of the victim, so their lives were not disrupted, and how bail breaches were followed up. The T/CC explained the custody sergeant and investigation supervisor discussed the application of bail and bail conditions; he said the decision on whether to bail with conditions or apply for remand to custody was based on the risk the individual posed. He said victims' wishes and needs did come into it – they weren't ignored – but bail was very much based on offender risk and if the Force considered it necessary to impose bail conditions to protect the public, it would do so even if a victim disagreed. He

added the Force did not seek to 'disrupt' the lives of victims, but he could think of a few occasions where everything was done to try and protect the public and the victim would not cooperate and even tried to undermine it.

- Whilst changes to the Bail Act would help, he said when there was a need to vary bail conditions, the views of the victim were sought and that was down to the custody sergeant and investigation supervisor. He added officers should always explain to victims why they were applying bail conditions or for remand in custody.

Slide 20

➤ **AFI 18 – The force needs to review whether its operating model is hampering its ability to effectively manage registered sex offenders.**

- The T/CC advised HMICFRS reported 'there was an inconsistent response to visiting even the highest risk offenders', adding it was an area of great public and Force concern.
- He said there had been strong performance from the Management of Sex Offender and Violent Offender (MOSOVO) officers over many years resulting in hundreds of dangerous offenders being arrested and imprisoned, and that good work was continuing. However, the Force accepted HMICFRS' finding and had looked carefully at the MOSOVO teams and re-structured the way they operated and brought in some additional performance monitoring.
- He advised the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements had been reviewed and now also reported to the Force Performance Committee with a breakdown of the total number of offenders, where they were in the system, what level of risk they were and outstanding visits. The T/CC reported that at the time of the inspection there were some very high and high risk offenders with outstanding visits; whilst other monitoring was in place, he said the structured visit regime by trained offender Managers wasn't where the Force wanted it to be and was quickly corrected. In August and September there were no very high risk sex offenders who hadn't been visited in the relevant time and 3 high risk offenders (2 in August and 1 in September); however, there was good intervention from supervisors to understand why they hadn't been and what else was in place to monitor and intervene if necessary.
- The T/CC said the next piece of work would be a review of the overall structure to see if it was sustainable and fit for purpose. Whilst performance was improving and HMICFRS would see that, he wanted to take a longer-term view.
- Stating the approach to criminality by registered sex offenders and violent offenders was robust, the T/CC said he could give countless examples where officers had taken direct action to prevent offences or recall offenders to prison.
- The PCC said he had visited a MOSOVO Team earlier in the year and had been very impressed with the arrangements for managing visits.

Slide 21

➤ **AFI 19 – The force should review its digital capability and capacity to effectively target online child abuse.**

- The T/CC advised HMICFRS' commentary was 'the Force should aim to reduce delays in examining digital devices'.
- He reported there had been a host of work to look at the overall service to investigators via the Digital Forensic Unit, as well as the Digital Media Hubs which dealt with most telephone examinations. Working practices had been reviewed and capacity in both increased; new processes had also been introduced to reduce investigative delays, particularly in terms of online child abuse investigations which took priority over many other crime types. Noting the compliance rate was almost 100% for urgent cases, the T/CC explained that in such cases the examination was done almost immediately. He said online child abuse was a volume piece of business and whilst it was positive the Force was receiving more referrals, the demand on the team was growing exponentially.
- He advised the Force had provided more support to POLIT staff, with 90% now trained in a particular triage tool which enabled them to undertake very quick examinations of devices to identify anything of grave concern. In turn, that provided greater capacity to focus on more detailed examinations.
- He stated that in many ways the AFI was a positive because it meant the Force had a very active POLIT, but that perhaps the digital examination side of the business hadn't kept up. He said he would much rather it that way round than have a lot of digital capability and fewer cases to deal with.
- In the future, he said the Force would keep an eye on technology in terms of what would enable it to manage demand better. With the PCC's support, he noted there had been some significant investment in digital forensic capability.
- The T/CC stated that when HMICFRS returned, he was sure they would be satisfied the AFI had been addressed.
- In concluding the PEEL Report and Improvement Plan, the PCC asked if the Force was re-inspected tomorrow would HMICFRS find the same problems, evidence of improvement, and would the areas graded 'adequate' and 'requires improvement' move upwards.
- The T/CC said HMICFRS' Liaison Officer was already back, adding it was very likely data requests would be received early next year and they would physically return around springtime. He noted that would be nearly a year after publication of the report, and stated he was extremely confident that all the activity was pushing the Force in the right direction. Recognising that some of the AFIs were trickier than others and some more difficult to achieve, he said he would like to see a position where the Force had addressed all the AFI's.
- The T/CC advised strategic ownership of the plan sat at Chief Officer level, it was very much part of their daily business to drive the improvements and he was also committed to it.

- He stated he was confident when HMICFRS returned they would see a vastly improved position. However, he said the Force couldn't be complacent and needed to ensure there was no loss of traction in other important areas, and those areas graded 'Outstanding' and 'Good'; if the Force didn't maintain focus, there was a danger they would slip.
- Whilst no one expects an inspection body to find perfection, he said the Force was certainly striving for it.
- Referring to the recent implementation of the DAMS solution for photographic/video material, the CE said his understanding/expectation was that it would provide almost a self-service facility for a lot of routine - not less important - work that officers dealt with, which hopefully would provide more specialist capacity to deal with serious offending. He asked if he was right and the DCO confirmed he was, adding the investment in the central DFU facility and the Force's accreditation at a national level spoke volumes about its ambitions, both through DAMS and the DFU.
- Thanking the T/CC and DCO for the presentation, the PCC said he very much looked forward to receiving further updates at future meetings.

Slide 22 and 23 – FCR performance

- The PCC thanked the T/CC for the 999 and 101 call handling data and the Force's commitment to transparency. He said it was something they discussed on an almost weekly basis, adding that anything said was not a reflection on the call handlers themselves who were doing tremendous work to service a huge amount of demand.
- Noting one of the challenges had been a significant drop in FCR staffing numbers over recent months, the T/CC advised there were many reasons, some of which were outside the Force's control, but the result was more pressure on less staff. He said a comprehensive plan was in place to increase numbers as quickly as possible because calls for service were increasing and there was a public expectation that if they called, Kent Police would respond.
- 999 calls
 - The T/CC said 999 calls took priority over other contact, but the Force sought to provide a good service and response no matter what route contact was made through.
 - He reported low attrition across the rolling year – just over 1% - but advised any dropped 999 was called back.
 - Some of it was outside the Force's control, for example resourcing was affected by other career opportunities. He said some staff wanted to become police officers which was great on one hand, but on the other, the Force spent a lot of time and effort training them to do very important jobs within the FCR only to see them leave.
 - He advised there had been a lot of work around improving and stabilising the staffing numbers, but the public also needed to understand the 999 call priority and volumes. He said if there was a major incident, such as something on the motorway, the FCR could receive hundreds of calls and each had to be responded to.
- 101 calls
 - The T/CC reported they marginally decreased in the last quarter by 2,103 calls, whereas 999 calls increased.
 - With regards to the suggestion that people unable to get through on 101 called 999, he said there was some element of that, but it wasn't dramatic.
 - He advised in recent months attrition had increased, sometimes hitting very high numbers, but over recent weeks the Force had taken some quick decisions about staffing within the FCR – including the redeployment of officers on an urgent basis - to try and correct the position. He said it shouldn't be the case that when someone called 101 they had to wait, and the Force was determined to fix it. He stated it was his responsibility to make sure there was the right capability and capacity; currently there wasn't, but it was improving.
 - In terms of channel shift the T/CC said the Force was not seeking to stop people calling the Force, but there was great impetus to offer a wider range of contact methods. He added the Force wasn't looking at channel shift as the exclusive answer to the 101 challenge.
 - Noting that many people made contact about non-policing matters, he said the Force would still seek to respond, but there was a need to find better ways of working with partners to manage such demand in the future.
 - The PCC expressed his thanks for the clarification around encouraging online contact and making it clear that it was optional and not a replacement for 101. Noting recorded crime and ASB levels had fallen at the same time people had experienced difficulties in getting through on the phone, he asked how that was being checked and accounted for. The T/CC stated whilst it had been looked at carefully, there was more work to do to understand the drop in ASB. He said it was not right to say that it was all a result of 101 because the drop in performance was a recent phenomenon. He added some of it was probably linked to changes in society, some of it due to areas of ASB being criminalised and some due to the Force's policing of ASB and work with partners to reduce it.
 - The T/CC explained that at the heart of the Neighbourhood Policing model was a desire to strengthen the local police presence and accountability. Through that relationship with the public, he hoped officers and staff working in communities would pick up more of the ASB workload and give communities greater confidence to report.
 - Noting there had been some short-term actions to try and turn things around and there was a need for a long-term view, the PCC asked when the public could expect 101 attrition and waiting times to return to previous good levels. The T/CC said he would not wish to commit unequivocally because it was not an exact science, but he hoped the 35 officers who were going into the FCR would have an immediate impact and there would be a change in the next 2-4 weeks. He added that he was not only focused on recovery but also longer-term sustainability, so there was a comprehensive plan to re-look at the FCR and most importantly its resourcing.

Slide 24 – VAWG performance

- The T/CC stated the Force had a strong VAWG strategy which complemented the national strategy, adding that DCC Maggie Blythe, the national lead, had visited the Force to look at what it was doing.
- There were set areas for scrutiny at daily management meetings across the Force and it also featured as key area in the Force Performance Framework.
- The T/CC reported that compared to August both rape and sexual offences increased in September 2022, but rape volumes had fallen slightly over last 3 months compared to a high of 186 in June 2022.
- He said significant areas of work had included the structural changes in DA; dedicated teams of officers investigating rape – either on Division or the Major Crime Team; and work with the CPS to bring offenders to justice.
- Areas focused on at Force Performance Committee included:
 - The suspect interview rate which was continuing to decline – the T/CC said there was a need to understand further and ensure where there was a named suspect, the report was not finalised without them being spoken to. November 2021 to October 2022, of 2,413 total crimes, 1,616 (67%) had a named suspect; he said whilst there may be a reason not to, in most cases he expected the individual to be spoken to.
 - The growing amount of activity linked to public expectations - for example, the Government's commitment on the examination of victims' phones. The T/CC advised the Force had the technology and was getting better but warned many victims groups spoke about victims feeling re-traumatised and re-victimised.
- The T/CC said as one of the pilot forces for Op Soteria he was confident the response to victims of rape and other sexual offences would get better. As a snapshot, he reported there were three rapes over the weekend where the investigating officers did tremendous work to support and manage the needs of the victim and in all 3 cases, with CPS support, the Force charged and remanded the offenders.
- He said he was confident the sea change that was perhaps more a national need was under way and the Force was focused on VAWG as a strategic area of importance.

Slide 25 – VAWG Strategy one year on

- Referring to the slide, the T/CC commented on activity under some of the key themes:
 - Culture – he said there was a focus on VAWG that as T/CC he didn't shy away from. There was no place for staff who thought it was acceptable to victimise women or who acted in a sexist or misogynistic manner and the Force would be robust in dealing with them.
 - Strengthening the system – the T/CC stated the Force was part of the solution to the phenomenon that was VAWG, but it was only societal change and a partnership response that would truly protect women and girls. Referring to the 'Best Bar None' scheme, he said it was important to push the partnership element; he could give examples where staff working in the night-time economy had rescued victims by informing officers of something suspicious that had enabled direct action to be taken.
- The strategy had a number of areas the Force would continue to focus on in coming years, but the T/CC hoped the update demonstrated a keen focus on tackling VAWG and a real commitment to improvement.
- With regards to the suspect interview rate, the PCC noted the DA and rape charges were positive, but commented there was still some way to go, particularly in terms of the relationship with the CPS – not from the police end, but cases that needed to be taken forward.
- In terms of the strategy itself, the PCC said there was a lot of good work going on within the Force to tackle VAWG. In addition, he advised the joint work on his Inquiry was being seen as best practice and the data review was being picked up nationally in terms of profiling those likely to commit offences and how to target them better.
- He thanked the Force for the work it was doing on a crucially important matter. He said the fact it was recognised as a water shed moment for policing so quickly after the tragic murder of Sarah Everard had not been lost and there continued to be a strong culture within the Force.
- The PCC said that throughout the meeting, in terms of the AFIs, the T/CC had shown how they were coming alive in practice. He highlighted how the Force was looking to improve performance; the downloading of phones, RVR, and its culture work, but also referred to the community aspect, such as the 'walk and talk' events which were just starting but would increase over the next few months. He thought they would be crucial in terms of showing what the Force had done since the community engagement events last year and demonstrating the Force was continuing to listen.

4. Update on any Significant Operational Matters

- The T/CC said he wanted to make it clear the Force took the improvement journey very seriously.
- He said the Force accepted HMICFRS' evidence, but it did not change the fact that everyday officers and staff were doing tremendous work to keep the public safe, to support victims, and ultimately to bring offenders to justice.

In closing the PCC thanked the T/CC and DCO for the presentation and commentary, their team for pulling the information together and also his team for making the meeting run smoothly. He also thanked those who had joined online and said he hoped they had found the meeting interesting and helpful, and he looked forward to the next meeting.

Date of next Performance and Delivery Board: 30 November 2022