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# MEETING OF HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025 – 6 pm

Broxbourne Borough Council Offices  
Bishops' College, Churchgate,  
Cheshunt, Hertfordshire,  
EN8 9XQ

## DRAFT MINUTES

(Please note that the minutes are a summary of the discussion and not intended to be verbatim)

**Members Present:** Cllr Alex Curtis  
Cllr Aga Dychton  
Dr Malcolm Ramsay  
County Cllr Reena Ranger OBE  
Mr Luke Rigg  
Cllr Andrew Scarth

Broxbourne Borough Council ('Chair')  
Watford Borough Council  
Independent Panel Member  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Independent Panel Member  
Three Rivers District Council

### Also Present:

Mr Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner('PCC')  
Mr Ian Rooney, PCC Chief Financial Officer  
Mr Rafal Hejne, Interim Chief Executive  
Ms Rhiannon Sawyer,  
Mr Ibrahim Balta, Clerk to the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel  
Miss Jessica Verdicchio, Head of Legal for Broxbourne Borough Council

### 1 WELCOME BY CHAIR

Welcome Chair, welcome to new Independent Panel Member Mr Luke Rigg and Mr Rigg introduced himself to the Panel.

### 2 APOLOGIES

Apologies from; Cllr Val Bryant, Mr Mark Jackson, Dr Julian Hargreaves(joined remotely), Cllr Duncan Jones, Cllr Harriet Sherlock, Cllr Richard Townsend.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 6 FEBRUARY 2025 (*attached*)

Agreed.

### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

### 5 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

## **6 QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

## **7 THE PROPOSED POLICE AND CRIME PLAN**

**PCC:** introduced his plan, a copy of the PCC's plan is attached.

**Chair:** harm and community concern, in the key no mention of burglary, is burglary not a community concern?

**PCC:** It is, we can add if needed, there is mentions of reducing burglary.

**Chair:** page 9 and 26 of the plan, acknowledges that it's a draft question the grant funding, update to be circulated by email on this.

**PCC:** agreed.

**Chair:** how will you be reporting.

**PCC:** thinks it's useful for feedback as to what they will find helpful, to have action tracker, happy to do that.

**Cllr Scarth:** priorities and objectives, will you report to us for example started on ground 0, and this is how far we are, to measure. Also, enquired about neighbourhood policing.

**PCC:** agrees with the findings and pointed to the use of hotspot policing. In the plan it's a bit complicating. The Chief Constable is very focused on neighbourhood officers/policing.

**Cllr Scarth:** commented positively on the use body worn cameras.

**Dr Ramsay:** The document/plan is clearer and more focused than previous ones, provides a good overarching narrative. Some areas need further clarification. The PEEL focus on police reform, victim support, violence against women and girls, highlighting hotspot policing is a real achievement. Looking ahead, we should consider how we can add further value, particularly in tackling repeat offending and victimisation issues often underexplored in these reports. It's a good opportunity and get expert guidance and from relevant academic sources about how policing should be capturing evidence.

**PCC:** Understanding the context is critical, especially when we are analysing performance over a relatively short period of time. Aims to outline the need to focus on the fundamentals first before they can explore new approaches or push boundaries, such as improving crime recording, getting those basics right is essential.

We also need to have a clear and pragmatic approach within PCC offices — making significant progress and doing so at pace. Changes in PCC offices can help drive alignment and create new opportunities.

Our thinking should centre around repeat victims and preventing future victimisation, rather than only reacting to repeat incidents. For example, today's discussions from the child

protection team highlighted escalation in offence types — such as searching for harmful content online — which reinforces the need for early intervention strategies.

When it comes to shoplifting, burglary, and similar crimes, the focus should be on reducing repeat victimisation. Our current plans include measures that address these concerns — particularly around protective orders for domestic abuse cases.

If we can enhance our protective powers and put stronger safeguards in place around victims, we will likely see a reduction in reoffending. The plan includes some tangible steps to achieve this outcome.

**Dr Ramsay:** questions about different versions of report. Enquired about diversity amongst the force given the composition of people.

**PCC:** refers to Dr Hargreaves questions and his response to that, work is being done in terms of recruitment and retention, has made reference in the engagement section of the plan. Making sure that whoever you are whatever background you are from your voice is heard.

**Mr Rigg:** general comments on the structure of the plan. Thinks the plan will benefit bit more if more information is provided on demographic of Hertfordshire and how will that change over the course of the plan, emerging issues because of demographic change and different demands.

**PCC:** reiterated his limit in directing the Chief Constable, but emphasised the strategic oversight and holding the Chief Constable accountable through planning and performance. The strategic focus is on crime reduction and safety.

**Cllr Plater:** welcomed emphasis on town centres and retail.

**PCC:** highlighted Anti-Social Behaviour efforts in Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead and positive outcomes from partnership work.

**Cllr Ranger:** raised road safety concerns.

**PCC:** discussed limitations of Drive Safe and funding issues, emphasis a data-led, sustainable approach.

**Cllr Scarth:** questioned lack of action on speed indication devices.

**PCC:** agreed to look into it, highlighting operational and financial limits around enforcement tools like vans.

**Cllr Dychton:** raised concerns about officer time spent at hospitals.

**PCC:** confirmed the issue is significant, citing 1,000 hours being spent in A&E. He supports the Right Care, Right Person initiative and ongoing engagement with NHS partners.

**Cllr Dychton:** suggested better local authority involvement in mental health data and impact.

**Mr Rigg:** emphasised culture and leadership as central, requesting stronger focus in the delivery plan.

**PCC:** agreed culture is crucial, with standards, integrity and public trust key. Vetting processes are under review nationally and locally.

**Cllr Plater:** sought updates on engagement with hospital trusts and vetting procedures.

**PCC:** confirmed vetting is primarily operational but acknowledged its importance.

**Cllr Scarth:** emphasised the trauma of burglary and stressed the importance of police presence.

**PCC:** agreed, confirmed increased focus and hotspot approach, while noting operational independence on response protocols.

**Cllr Dychton and Chair:** praised ASB hotspot funding outcomes in Watford.

**Chair:** raised burglary targeting of British Indian communities. PCC acknowledged community-specific targeting and outlined engagement and prevention measures.

**Cllr Scarth:** highlighted community tools like Herts Connected and Neighbourhood Watch.

**Chair and Cllr Plater:** discussed challenges around retail crime and the £200 theft threshold.

**PCC:** is cautious about unintended consequences of legislative changes and expressed concerns about backlog impacts and court priority.

**Cllr Ranger:** asked about nail bar exploitation links to organised crime.

**PCC:** emphasised the existing multi agency work on vulnerability.

**Cllr Plater:** also questioned sexual exploitation.

**PCC:** acknowledged it's significance and referenced ongoing national work.

**Cllr Dychton:** stressed serious around violence against women and children and support for male domestic abuse victims.

**PCC:** confirmed strong commitment and balanced response.

**Mr Rigg:** questioned local action on national backlogs and effectiveness of out of court resolutions.

**PCC:** acknowledged national and local delays, praised local judicial efforts, and stressed need for partnership efficiencies.

**Chair:** raised concerns on sentencing delays, particularly for violent offences. PCC supports proportional sentencing, while acknowledging prison limitations for short sentences.

**Cllr Plater:** praised the plan's integration with local priorities.

**Chair:** queried the omission of HQ development.

**PCC:** confirmed it's on track, slightly ahead of schedule.

## **8 PCC GENERAL UPDATE**

**PCC:** The Chief Constable has settled in very well and has been actively engaging across the constabulary. He has been working at pace, focusing particularly on previously identified priority areas. Primary focus has been on improving performance, particularly in relation to the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy ('PEEL') inspection and addressing the most pressing areas for improvement. Key issues include data and crime recording. Progress has been made following the Inspectorate's visit, there is still significant work to be done. Some areas were previously rated inadequate, particularly data monitoring and sampling. Improvements are evident, the Constabulary is still not where it needs to be. The Inspectorate will be reinspecting.

The Chief Constable is exploring structural changes, including the establishment of a new Crime Hub, which will be based in the Force Control Room.

Broader updates provided in respect of various grant applications and budget. No significant changes to the budget.

Updated in respect of work undertaken in rural areas for example work on machinery trial project, farm equipment to be forensically to be marked, deterrent effect, reducing crime.

**Chair:** requested update on firearms, action taken on the issue.

**PCC:** this has been an issue since elections. Number of actions carried out to improve applications processed and complaints. Additional resources added. Team looking at streamlining and risk assessing, significantly better place and the backlog will be cleared 6-9 months. At each meeting will be tracking to ensure that the backlog is coming down. Reassurance is provided about the quality of decisions is good.

Government devolution. My team are part of the those conversations, primarily my responsibility is considering the impact of devolution will have on policing. This is primarily a matter for local Government but I am involved.

**Cllr Scarth:** commented on used of Artificial Intelligence being used and raised the issue in respect of law on crossbow licences and thinks that is being addressed by Central Government.

**PCC:** agrees on the Artificial Intelligence. In respect of crossbow point, it is an area requires a look, previous government and this government are committed to licensing regime, hasn't reached a conclusion, not in the Crime and Policing Bill, awaiting further decision.

**Cllr Scarth:** expanded on the work carried out on rural areas in respect of tracking forensics.

**Cllr Dychton:** as mentioned Policing Bill, recently introduced and reassured the public, pointed out issues with domestic abuse record as common assault, which is different to an assault in the street. There is a difference between the two. It will help to recognise the understanding and awareness.

**9 AOB**

Police Head Quarters visit to be confirmed via email to members.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING- THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025- HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL**