



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



# MEETING OF HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 20 November 2025- 6 PM

**Broxbourne Borough Council  
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)

<b>Members Present:</b>	Cllr Jim Clune	Broxbourne Borough Council
	Cllr Tom Plater	Stevenage Borough Council('Chair')
	Dr Malcolm Ramsay	Independent Panel Member('Vice Chair')
	Cllr Vijaiya Poopalasingham	North Herts Borough Council
	Cllr Matt Fisher	Hertfordshire County Council
	Mr Mark Jackson	Independent Panel Member
	Cllr Andrew Scarth	Three Rivers District Council

### Also Present:

Mr Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner ('PCC')  
Mr Rafal Hejne, Interim Chief Executive  
Ms Amie Birkhamshaw, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Policy and Partnership  
Mr Ian Rooney, Chief Finance Officer  
Mr Ibrahim Balta, Clerk to the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel

- 1 WELCOME**  
Welcome by Chair.
- 2 APOLOGIES**  
Apologies from Mr Luke Rigg, Cllr Christian Gray, Cllr Aga Dychton(joined the meeting remotely), Cllr Harriet Sherlock.
- 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 19 JUNE 2025**  
Deferred to next meeting.
- 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**  
Deferred to next meeting.
- 5 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL FROM THE PUBLIC**  
None

**6 QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FROM THE PUBLIC**  
None

**7 PART 1**

**i) POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE ON SAFER TOWN CENTRES INITIATIVE**

**PCC:** Presented his updated on safer town centres initiative, provided an overview of hotspot policing activity across 18 town centres, with high priority town centres and parks. The programme was described as a positive piece of work, producing meaningful operational outcomes, particulars in Watford. Summer activity resulted in reduction in personal robberies and improved safety in town centre hotspots.

Surveys showed tentative increase in people reporting that they felt safer, linked to police visibility. Also highlighted the unique work done and work with councils on night-time economy safety, violence against women and girls, youth diversion, anti-social behaviour and retail and trading staff safety. Appreciated given to police officers, Trading Standards and councils and all partners. Learning was captured alongside delivery, with work continuing through Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas and less focus on parks.

**Cllr Clune:** praised the work on robbery and theft. Highlighted good practice around searching properties, identifying stolen goods and proactive investigation.

**PCC:** explained that detailed tactics were operational matters. Confirmed confidence in investigation standards, particularly around shoplifting and town-centre crime. States that case examples in the report demonstrate patterns of investigation.

**Cllr Fisher:** raised concerns about car thefts particularly in London Colney and St Albans. Asked how crime trends are reflected locally and how public reassurance is managed.

**PCC:** Acknowledged vehicle crime as a legitimate concern, noting county wide and national trends. Emphasised the importance of contextual communication to avoid unnecessary alarm. Confirmed police teams are actively addressing vehicle crime and that trends are starting to move in a positive direction. Reassured members about leadership strengthening and crime-solving capability.

**Cllr Scarth:** Highlighted the value of modern CCTV, noting costs challenges for councils. Also raised concerns about fly-tipping enforcement and the importance of PCSOs being visible and engaging with communities. Suggested considerations of vehicle security pouches if funding allowed.

**PCC:** Agreed CCTV coverage and capability vary across the county and require further review. Confirmed that PCSO roles remain unchanged, with strong engagement and visibility. Highlighted a shift toward proactive neighbourhood and hotspot policing. Took away the suggestion regarding the vehicle security measures.

**Dr Ramsay(Vice Chair)-** as a Criminologist welcomes hotspot policing but queried crime recording accuracy and the role of social media in amplifying fear. Asked when it would be appropriate to intervene in public messaging.

**PCC:** Confirmed crime recording accuracy has improved following inspection and remains under review. Explained that some crime types (e.g. burglary, town-centre public order) are more reliably recorded than others. Noted recent concerns in Hertford, with data showing a temporary increase followed by reduction. Agreed to consider further reassurance work.

**Cllr Jones:** Shared personal experience of vehicle theft and suggested public awareness campaigns, including AirTags and security advice.

**PCC:** Agreed further awareness work could be beneficial and committed to considering this.

**Mr Jackson:** Spoke about the long-term impact of a single crime on community fear and confidence. Emphasised that perception can change significantly even after isolated incidents.

**PCC:** Agreed, particularly in rural and low-crime areas, and stressed the importance of solving crimes and delivering justice quickly.

**Cllr Dychton:** In respect of measuring safer town centres, asked how the PCC would measure success and value for money from additional funding.

**PCC:** explained layered approach, neighbourhood policing in every town centre and targeted hotspot patrols with over 3200 hours delivered. Confirmed strong value for money from grant funding, delivering reductions in robbery and shoplifting.

**Cllr Fisher:** Raised 3 questions: Firstly knife crime and 3D printed weapons, retail security challenges, and cycling and e-scooter safety

**PCC:** confirmed knife crime remains low in Hertfordshire with strong education and youth work being carried out. Described retail crime forums, improved reporting systems and challenges for small retailers. Also explained enforcement and education approached to e-bikes, and vulnerable road users.

**Cllr Clune:** Observed increased proactive policing, including stop and search and vehicle seizures. Asked whether officers were becoming more confident using powers.

**PCC:** Confirmed a more proactive culture is developing. Stated stop and search volumes have declined but effectiveness has improved. Emphasised focus on outcomes rather than raw numbers.

**Cllr Poopalasingham:** asked about performance, cost and community engagement around knife arches.

**PCC:** Confirmed arches are temporary and portable, used in colleges/schools, transport hubs and town centres. No significant complaints received. Costs relate mainly to officer time within hotspot deployments.

**Cllr Fisher:** Raised concerns about speeding in town centres and public expectations around enforcement.

**PCC:** Explained the tension between public perception and harm-based data. Shared enforcement statistics on drug driving, speeding and mobile phone use. Confirmed road policing resources prioritise locations with the highest risk of serious injury or death.

**Cllr Scarth:** Advocated for wider use of speed indication devices and cameras.

**PCC:** Agreed to review speed data and patterns with Chief Constable

**Cllr Plater(Chair):** welcomed the focus on town centres and night time economy safety.

**PCC:** Highlighted work with taxi drivers, licensed premises and Project Vigilant. Noted positive activity across Watford and North Hertfordshire. Confirmed further grant-funded work planned.

## **ii) POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROGRESS UPDATE**

**PCC:** Reflected on 18 months in office and progress against strategic objectives. Noted improvements in: Crime recording accuracy, ASB data, Solving more crime, 999 call handling performance. Explained voluntary redundancy scheme (around **50 posts**) and associated savings. Confirmed new headquarters project is ahead of schedule and under budget.

**Dr Ramsay(Vice Chair) and Mr Jackson:** raised concerns about sentencing reform, prison capacity, probation resources and victim confidence.

**PCC:** Acknowledged significant system pressures. Emphasised prevention, early intervention and realistic community resolutions. Confirmed continued engagement with partners and national bodies.

## **iii) UPDATE ON INTERIM/PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE POSITION**

To follow.

## **PART 2**

### **i) POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PRECEPT UPDATE**

Update provided in closed session to public.

**8 AOB**  
None.

**9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING 5 FEBRUARY 2026 VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED**  
Stevenage Borough Council Offices