

Everybody's Business – Progress to Date

Review of The First Six Months Activity against the Police and Crime Plan

November 2013

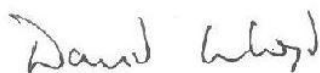
Everybody's Business

I am pleased to present this first formal review of progress against my five-year police and crime plan, *Everybody's Business*, which launched in April 2013.

The title of my plan sums up my philosophy. Keeping our community safe and strong isn't just a job for the police. It's not just a job for the state. I want to see a county where businesses, charities and residents can all play their part. The plan was fundamentally different to those produced by the out-going Police Authority in previous years. The focus on maintaining strong police performance was maintained – I want to build on success - but the plan brought a strong policy drive in three new areas: offender pays; public focus; business sense.

In reporting activity against the plan, I have followed the format of the original document, outlining how I have worked with other local leaders and with the community to build on successes to date, with headlines on each development area. In preparing for this report, I commissioned a six-month progress report from the Chief Constable. The Constabulary have a vital role to play in all aspects of delivering my plan and I have been impressed by their response to the challenging agenda for change that the plan establishes. A detailed breakdown of Constabulary performance is provided at annex A, whilst reports on delivery by the Chief and his team are threaded throughout the report.

I am proud of what has been achieved in this first six months. I look forward to working with the full range of local leaders in policing, community safety, criminal justice and beyond - as well as with local residents and businesses - to go further still.



David Lloyd

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Hertfordshire is a safe place, having seen fantastic reductions in crime over recent years. It is widely recognised that there will come a point where crime reduction successes start to level off but having taken the Chief Constable’s operational advice I felt confident in setting a plan for further crime reduction. Following substantial reductions in crime to date 2012/13 saw a 14.2% year on year reduction overall (equivalent to 8609 fewer victims) and there has been a further 6% reduction in the six months to September (another 1610 fewer crimes). As the annexed performance information shows, Hertfordshire Constabulary are getting great results. Of particular note are the reductions in anti-social behaviour, which is down by a third.

Action	Plan Commitment: I will ensure that frontline Safer Neighbourhood Teams will continue to be maintained to at least their current strength.
	Delivered: Protecting local policing and ensuring accessibility.

At the same time as overseeing some fantastic performance, the Chief Constable and I have been working together to meet the financial challenges that police forces face. I am clear that this must not be done at the expense of the services that residents have told me matter most to them. That is why we have been able to protect frontline neighbourhood policing teams (and even make some modest increases).

But mine is not a plan driven by targets and officer numbers; keeping the county safe is not a numbers game. The vision that I have set in the plan is for a real improvement in outcomes: a system centred on victims and the public; a rebalancing of the responsibility for the costs of crime; services that work well together and make business sense.

MAINTAIN OR INCREASE STRENGTH OF SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS. IMPROVE VISIBILITY AND PUBLIC CONTACT

Constabulary Commentary:
The Chief Constable has demonstrated his commitment to Neighbourhood Policing by increasing the Safer Neighbourhood teams by one Sergeant and 6 Constable in the last year. We are investing in technology to support front line policing by freeing up time for more effective interface with the public. With the introduction of ‘Toughpad’ technology into the vehicle fleet, there will be less of a need for officers to return to police stations to retrieve or input information so this will increase police visibility and accessibility.

Action	Plan Commitment: I will review how partnership arrangements are coordinated and funded so as best to serve and protect our communities.
	Delivered: Investing in partnership and establishing a new countywide community safety body.

Keeping Hertfordshire safe really is everybody’s business - not only a matter for the police. One of the great things about the role of Police and Crime Commissioner is that it provides a drive to bring agencies together to focus on what the public really want. This includes local councils, who can help tackle the causes of crime by designing safer places, or by providing the housing and education services that will keep people away from offending. It includes health – both public health work with local government and asking more of acute services like accident and emergency. It includes the courts, prosecution and justice services who work to bring offenders to justice and then to rehabilitate them.

Though I have consciously kept my own team lean, I have put a premium on partnership since the start and built a structure that helps me to look across the whole system. This includes developing links with colleagues in each district and borough of the county – particularly the group of Community Safety portfolio holders in local councils who have meet with me monthly and provide a valued sounding board.

For issues that need a countywide solution I have established a new strategic body, drawing together the full local leadership team, including local politicians as well as service leaders in areas such as probation, public health, criminal justice and the youth service for their advice and support. My new Community Safety Board has taken ownership of some of the crunch issues we collectively face including setting strategy for reducing reoffending, tackling domestic violence and managing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol.

I acted quickly to protect community safety funding that is provided to local authority partnerships and other agencies that tackle youth offending and drugs. In addition, my Community Fund provided room for innovation and to enable grass roots organisations to bring forward their community safety ideas.

Action	Plan Commitment: Ensure that Hertfordshire Constabulary plays its part in tackling criminality that crosses police force boundaries.
	Delivered: Working across political and geographical boundaries.

On issues that cross my county’s borders I have developed strong links with partners too. This has included not only collaborative work with other police force areas but leading on pioneering work with the Commissioners of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire to ensure that the Ministry of Justice's rehabilitation programme delivers for local people. This will be a vital area of work over the next six months.

PUBLIC FOCUS

The big change in electing a Commissioner for Hertfordshire is that the public themselves are now in the driving seat. Their concerns have formed the bedrock of my plans and I am challenging the constabulary and others to put the public at the heart of all that they do.

Action	Plan Commitment: I am initiating a new approach to customer care. I want to put victims of crime in the driving seat.
	Delivered: Tasking the police to bring a sharper public focus into all areas of work

I am working with the Chief Constable to improve police accessibility and visibility. For instance, safer neighbourhood newsletters are currently being delivered to households in the county, keeping residents informed of what is being done to make their local area a safer place to live as well as spelling out the range of ways they can contact and engage with the police.

I have also commissioned substantial investments in technology to save time and help frontline officers to get out into their communities. This includes mobile data and tablet computers in police cars as well as doubling the 'virtual' court capacity to speed up justice. A new website is in development to reunite people with their stolen property. The Constabulary are scoping new case tracking software to keep victims of crime better informed. This is critically important to me and is an area where I will be pressing for swifter action.

CASE TRACKING

Constabulary Commentary

The Chief Constable is committed to improving victim's satisfaction and one approach is by making the use of innovative technology so that officers and staff have the tools to ensure that victims are kept informed of progress of their case in ways that they choose. Work has begun on developing a system to do this. We are currently in the process of evaluating the "Track My Crime" system used by Avon and Somerset Constabulary to see whether it will meet our needs.

HERTS REUNITED

Constabulary Commentary

Another approach to improving victim care is by reducing the impact on victims of crime by re-uniting them with their stolen property. Work has begun on a project to develop 'Hertsreunited' website in a way that will make sure it provides a valuable service. We are adopting a phased approach with the first focus likely to be on cycles. It is intended that the website will bring together a number of disparate services and provide the people of Hertfordshire with a one stop shop for stolen property. We are in the process of recruiting volunteers to help run the initiative.

Action	Plan Commitment: I want to help individuals, communities and businesses to get together and generate ideas to make Hertfordshire safer.
	Delivered: Committed £250,000 to community ventures through Commissioner's Community Fund.

As well as protecting core funding to local community safety services, I have given grants to some great, innovative community projects: driving up volunteering; supporting the young and the vulnerable; supporting rehabilitation. I received bids totalling more than £1m for the first tranche of this £250,000 fund. The quality and ambition on display was excellent, showing that people really want to get in involved and to form part of the effort to make our local communities safer.

The first grants were issued this autumn to 17 innovative schemes including a street pastors' scheme in Dacorum, a Groundwork scheme for East Herts providing clean-ups and maintenance for vulnerable people's gardens and the Youth Talk scheme in St Albans which provides talking therapies for young people who present with anti-social, violent or criminal behaviours. A second round is underway.

Action	Plan Commitment: I am making a commitment to welcome into the policing family as many applicants to the Special Constabulary as meet the qualifying requirement. For those who want to play their part but not to wear the uniform there will be many other ways to get involved
	Delivered: Volunteering strategy launched; Special Constabulary commitment delivered.

I want to shine a light on the great work that volunteers and community groups do across the criminal justice system and to increase their strength and volume. My volunteering strategy, recently launched for consultation sets out a plan to achieve this. I want to make sure there are great ways to volunteer: with the police; with victims of crime; across the criminal justice system. Specifically, I have worked with the police to strengthen the special constabulary, especially in rural areas and to initiate DriveSafe - providing people with the means to tackle antisocial behaviour on their roads.

Beyond formal volunteering, my message to the county is that we all have a part to play. Our strong community ties and our individual actions hold the key to keeping us safe - from remembering to lock doors, to looking out for each other or playing a direct role in reporting crime and giving evidence. I am working with a number of areas of the county to develop pilot Citizen Academy programmes.

COMMUNITY DRIVE SAFE

Constabulary Commentary

The Chief Constable is committed to supporting the community in having a real and practical opportunity to shape their policing and community safety service. Community Drivesafe is an initiative that empowers people to make their communities safer. The initiative was successfully launched in April and already generated considerable public interest. 23 new schemes have already been approved and more are in the pipeline. Additional speed indicator devices are being purchased in a number of areas to meet this strong demand.

OFFENDER PAYS

I said in the plan that I wanted to see a fundamental shift to make those responsible for crime bear more of its costs. I want to see offenders directly paying the costs that they create, particularly where costs could have been avoided by complying with the directions of the courts or the police. I want to keep taxes low and to spend the funds we have on keeping people safe – not cleaning up after offenders. Some of my ideas are being delivered now; others will require concerted partnership work; others are long-term reforms requiring new legislation or regulation to bring about.

Action	Plan Commitment: It should be those responsible for crime who bear its cost ... I will be working with communities and with victims of crime to understand the kinds of rehabilitation and payback that they would wish to see.
	Delivered: Developing the programme; identified test cases to pursue full compensation; payback and rehabilitation reform.

It is obviously a challenge to bring about such a fundamental shift but I am pleased with some of the early developments in this area of work. Good progress has been made by the Constabulary legal team in identifying appropriate test cases to pursue offenders for the full costs where an officer is injured in the line of duty. Work is also underway with the Association of Chief Police Officers to develop the idea of ‘drunk tanks’ paid for by the inebriated.

More generally, work is underway across the Offender Pays programme. Herts Constabulary have joined a Home Office pilot to expand the range of cases that can be directly prosecuted by the police. Where the police are the prosecuting authority they should be able to recoup the true costs of crime. We are also in the process of preparing a scheme to let the public have a say in the type of work that offenders will do to pay back to the community. This will provide a foundation for work with fellow Commissioners in Beds, Cambs and Northants to ensure that the Government’s rehabilitation reforms deliver for local people.

This is the most complex, long-term aspect of my plans but I will be pressing the police and partner agencies to step up their efforts in delivering the cultural shift that my plan mandates.

DIRECT REPAYMENT

Constabulary Commentary
 We are actively examining ways of implementing the Offender Pays objective as this is complicated legal territory and some aspects of the plan may require legislative changes. However, the Chief Constable is keen to pursue offenders who have caused injury to officers for compensation where it is economically viable. We have identified 2 cases in which we believe we can take action and expect to progress them over the coming months.

PAYBACK AND REHABILITATION

Constabulary Commentary
 The Chief Constable fully supports robust offender management and will look at ways needed to address and change offenders' attitudes and behaviours that will make them less likely to re-offend. The police have an important role to play in working with partners to provide access to interventions or programmes designed to change behaviour and attitudes and to lower the risk of harm to others. We will continue to build on the number of offender retraining schemes that are already in place. These include a Drug and Alcohol diversion scheme and the Constabulary is fully supportive of the National Driver Offender Re-training Scheme.

Action	Plan Commitment: I have asked the Chief Constable to extend further our efforts to use the Proceeds of Crime Act to make the lives of criminals difficult.
	Delivered: Record levels of confiscations.

Hertfordshire Constabulary was already a strong performer at clawing back cash and assets from criminals. I tasked the chief constable to lead a 'concerted attack on criminal assets and he has delivered some astounding results.

PROCEEDS OF CRIME

Constabulary Commentary:

We have made a major increase in both the number of awards and confiscations we have achieved under the Proceeds of Crime Act and their total value. In the past 6 months we have made more confiscations than we did in the whole of the previous year. In addition the value of those confiscations has increased by almost 300 percent to a total of £1.7million, which is a record figure for the force. This has resulted in a significant return to the people of Hertfordshire. We are continuing to look for ways in which we can improve this performance even further

Action	Plan Commitment: I will be bringing partners together to make sure we do better for victims of crime.
	Delivered: Preparing for formal commissioning role in 2014; focussing on domestic violence victims.

On my first day in office I didn't meet the Chief Constable (nor the many other professionals involved in keeping Hertfordshire safe) I met with victims of crime. This focus on the needs of victims has been maintained although the Government's timetable for devolving victim support funding to local Commissioners has shifted to October 2014. Support for domestic violence victims is an area where I want to make a real difference and I am using the slippage in the Government's timetable to map and understand local supply and demand. This will be a critical area of activity over the next six months.

BUSINESS SENSE

In the plan, I was clear that Hertfordshire's businesses could play a larger role in the fight against crime. In return I committed to demonstrating that the Chief Constable and I are resolutely on the side of business. I also sought to see how much we can learn from industry in the way that we tackle policing and crime.

Action	Plan Commitment: I want to ensure that frontline police resources are maximised, even as we make necessary savings by finding efficiencies elsewhere in the Constabulary.
	Delivered: Protecting frontline teams; exploring best outsourcing and collaboration options for Herts

Prudent financial management and my clarity on the need to protect the services that matter most to the public - frontline policing teams - have meant that the Chief Constable and I have been able to deliver on this key commitment. Over the last 12 months we have implemented the £6.8m of budget savings and are making good progress finding further efficiencies in order to achieve the required budget savings in 2014/15. The focus of these savings is on improving the efficiency of our support and specialist teams so as to protect frontline policing capability.

At the same time I have been working with the Constabulary top team to pursue the best outsourcing and collaboration deals for Hertfordshire. I considered but ruled out a potential back office outsourcing approach with G4S. Strong work with neighbouring forces continues, particularly in areas such as joint protective services (a range of specialist policing services that are better and more efficiently done across a wider geographical patch) and I continue to explore how collaboration with police and other partners can create savings. I said in the plan that I wanted to encourage the police to recognise and maximise our assets in a number of ways. I have been having a close look at the police estate; in addition we have a strong brand and assets that could be made to work harder for Hertfordshire. The Chief Constable and I will need advice from business experts as we tackle this development area.

Action	Plan Commitment: I am establishing a Business Development Unit - drawing on the skills and experience of business leaders, the police and the voluntary sector.
	Delivered: Drawing together all business themes under a single strategy.

Business Sense is a large and challenging area for development. Plans have been coming together over this first six months but will be delivered across the plan's lifetime. I want to take a measured approach to scheduling the work involved and to make sure that I am working on strong advice from business leaders. To do this, I intend to draw together all the business-related policy initiatives signalled in my plan into a single business strategy, with oversight from a co-ordinating 'business unit'. The unit will be made up of representatives from a range of sectors - some directly invited; others by an open nomination process. The strategy will cover three main elements: business sense in the constabulary; 'responsible business' (i.e. businesses being active in their commitment to work with the police and community safety partners to tackle crime); tackling crime against business. A review and proposals for improving CCTV arrangements will form part of the business crime strategy.

I made a commitment to support rural business too, which will be a big part of business plans that I will be bringing forward. This work ties in with the new volunteering strategy and my commitment to tackling crimes against rural businesses by strengthening the rural special constabulary.

SPECIAL CONSTABULARY - EXPANSION

Constabulary Commentary

The Chief Constable has implemented the commissioner's pledge to increase the number of Special Constables and there are currently 425 working within our policing teams, which is an increase of 4%. We are currently on target for a 12% increase giving us a force of 460 Special Constables, which is the highest figure in the history of the Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Our rural Specials Support team has increased by 25% this year and we have implemented a number of measures to help us recruit additional rural Special Constables to help us meet the target of a Special Constable on each rural beat. However, the specialised nature of the work and the fact that it is very specifically location based presents a number of recruitment challenges which we are still looking to overcome.

Action

Plan Commitment: Great strides have been made in speeding up justice in this county and in using technology and I will push for further improvements.

Delivered: Doubling virtual courts capacity; investing in frontline technology.

Delivering on my commitment to develop faster and more efficient justice, a new 'virtual' court launched in October, doubling current capacity in Hertfordshire. The county's second virtual court, based at Hoddesdon Police Station where there is a large custody suite, reduces the need to move offenders from custody to court by enabling them to appear before magistrates via a video link from the police station. Another virtual court facility is already operational at Watford Police Station which has been used more than 600 times since its launch last year. Virtual courts are part of a wider project to digitalise, streamline and make the criminal justice system more efficient. Hertfordshire is at the leading edge of this work.

More widely I have announced substantial investments in technology to support frontline policing. I committed in my plan to ensuring that we work with business to explore innovative ways of delivering a policing service to our communities across Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire Constabulary's Mobile Data project is the first part of a £3m investment in technology to support operational policing and is also a great example of successful partnership with Panasonic, KME and Vauxhall. It aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness by providing access to the cutting-edge technology that provides frontline officers and staff with real-time information to support them in their operational duties. In turn, this aims to increase police visibility and accessibility as officers are less likely to need to return to their base to carry out intelligence checks or input data.

VIRTUAL COURTS

Constabulary Commentary:

By embracing innovation and good practice, the Chief Constable will ensure value for money and an effective and efficient modern police service by making full use of technology. Virtual courts are designed to avoid delays for victims and witnesses and to ensure crimes are dealt with more quickly and effectively which provides for more efficient speedy justice. We have successfully expanded our Virtual Court operation. Our original operation in Hatfield continues to work extremely well and we have recently doubled our capacity with the opening of the new virtual court operation in Hoddesdon. We are examining the opportunities for further expansion, but this will require a decision from the PCC as to whether the additional resources required should be committed. The Chief Constable firmly believes that greater use of Virtual Courts could have an important role to play in dealing with the increasing problem of foreign nationals who commit crimes in Hertfordshire but who escape justice because their offences are not speedily dealt with on arrest.