

Appendix two

Delivery of the Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan: Everybody's Business

You will have heard me say before, and I will say again here tonight, that I continue to be one of a few PCCs who publish an Annual Delivery Plan against the Police and Crime Plan priorities. Even fewer go into the level of detail in the paper you are reading tonight. This is because I know the public rightly wish to hold me to account on the commitments I make during my term of office.

Since publishing my Plan on 31 March last year, there has been considerable work undertaken by my office, the Constabulary and our partners in the districts, health, housing, blue light services and volunteers to progress the 147 priorities. And I pay thanks to them for working hard to help deliver on the outcomes we all want – low crime, fewer victims and safer streets.

While the 5-year Plan spans to 2027, this annual delivery plan outlines the progress that has been made 18 months since publication and the picture is a positive one. Of the 147 actions, 51 actions are now 'business as usual' as they have become embedded into daily business, 16 are complete, 66 actions are in progress. 5 actions are paused and 9 have not started.

You have the full report in front of you and I am happy to answer any questions and I am sure you will want to discuss those that haven't yet started. But as we have Police and Crime Commissioner elections next May, I wanted to take a few moments to reflect on the 6 pledges I made in 2012 and what's been achieved during my 11 years as PCC.

This was:

...To ensure Hertfordshire continues to be one of the safest places to live and work, and **keep crime low.**

...To be a champion and **voice for victims** – putting them at the centre of all we do and investing in important new services.

...**Protect local policing** - a model we know helps to maintain visibility and contact with the public – and importantly cuts crime.

...**To recruit more police officers** – to ensure Hertfordshire has the largest police force in its history to ensure we have the right resources to match our demand.

.... **To keep tax low**– to ensure every penny of public money is spent wisely.

... **and increase efficiency** - to deliver policing within the available budget- reducing costs, improving efficiency and delivering effective services.

So what about crime?

Hertfordshire performs highly and is one of the best. Levels of crime have remained low under my watch – with the fifth lowest level of recorded crime in the country (63.6 per 1,000 population) when excluding fraud and cybercrime¹. We are first in our most similar group of forces for crime volume. When I first became PCC in 2012 on a typical day in Hertfordshire we had around eight home burglaries a day which was unheard of for a county this size. It now stands at five a day². I always say this bell weather crime is a good barometer of levels of crime and safety across the county.

Despite these low levels, burglary remains a top priority for Hertfordshire’s residents and one which rightly requires a continued focus. I’m pleased that the Constabulary continue to offer victims of burglary a gold standard of service and this high quality of service is reflected in the feedback received from victims who tell us they are most satisfied with police response.

All crimes can have a significant and traumatic impact on victims and that’s why I’ve remained focused on preventing crime from happening in the first place and when it has occurred, ensured there is provision in place to help victims cope and recover with their ordeal. The best outcome for the public is not crimes solved, but not to have crimes occur in the first place. Yes, the police will always have the task of reacting to crime, enforcing the law, and investigating

¹ This excludes fraud and cybercrime.

² As of November 2023, home burglary was up 20% year on year (up 14 offences to 83) due to increases in Watford and Welwyn Hatfield. This was due to a prolific burglar which was publicised in the news recently. Vasile Ganea, aged 31, of West Hendon Broadway, London, was charged with seven counts of burglary, which started in June this year across the Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere areas

crime, but preventing crime, changing the focus upstream to prevent harm, rather than merely responding to it, has been a game changer. And actually, the way to drive down policing costs is to drive down demand.

That's why in 2020, together with the Chief Constable, we developed '**Prevention First**', a transformative approach to crime prevention. Under his first-class leadership we've been able to go beyond a focus on crime volume and harm to an approach that sits across all organisational and operational areas of the business to prevent duplication, waste and inefficiency. By fundamentally understanding why organisational and operational issues occur, and by applying evidence-based policing, we've started to see a shift in the dial in incoming demand, and an improving picture in productivity, and public confidence.

Whilst we are still very much on a journey, we've seen a notable shift in how resources are being deployed and the results being delivered from taking a hot spots policing approach (Op Target)³ which involves targeting those places³ where crime is most concentrated, testing and then tracking. We've also tackled head on those more complex and high demand areas of the business including around mental health through the s136 ambulance conveyancing pilot, which in January will move to Right Care, Right Person⁴, and the rolling out the Rapid Video response (RVR) in the force control room to support victims of domestic abuse. These projects will fundamentally change the picture of demand around those calls for service relating to 'public safety and welfare'.

For me, the interesting piece is looking at what is happening as a result of prevention first. When we look at the percentage difference in total crime harm and crime volume per 1,000 population against our most similar force group we see that the gap is widening. We don't know precisely what has made the difference, but positive signs that good things are happening.

³ Commencing in 2022, Operation Target used Stevenage and Bedwell as trial hotspot policing locations. The hotspot was identified through analysis of crime data and the government index of deprivation. The trial was conducted over a 3-month period utilising 15-minute patrols at randomised periods every day. The Officers recorded their patrols on GoodSam. This GoodSam data was analysed, and it demonstrated that arson and criminal damage within the Hotspot was reduced by 40% and violence against the person was reduced by 25%.

⁴ This will see the Constabulary significantly reduce the time spent by officers in emergency departments. Commencing from 9 January 2024, the aim will be to achieve a one-hour handover period by April 2024.

Before Prevention First was launched in 2020, Hertfordshire had 10.7 fewer crimes per 1,000 population than the MSF average, but this gap has now widened, with Hertfordshire now having 19.4 fewer crimes per 1,000 population. If wholly attributed to Prevention First, it is estimated this would amount to 104,000 crimes avoided⁵. Even if the 2020 gap between Hertfordshire and our MSG is considered, this would still amount to 60,967 crimes avoided.

Similarly, when looking through a harm lens, in 2020 before the launch of Prevention First, the force had 21% less crime harm than our MSF, in 2023, it had increased to 31%. Whilst it is difficult to prove this from the evidence base, if it was down to Prevention First, it would mean a relative crime harm prevention gain of 8% which is significant. So, a positive picture.

Be a voice for victims

Beacon, our victim care centre which my office set up in 2015 is perhaps one of the things that I am most proud of. Through this provision, we've transformed thousands of victims experiences providing a step change in the way victims are able to access a range of coordinated services and cope and recover from their ordeal. Whether it's providing timely information, practical support or emotional support, we are now rightly putting victims at the centre of all we do, ensuring that no one victim is left behind.

Although Hertfordshire remains a top performing force – there is still much we need to do to understand and respond to fraud. Fraud⁶ is sometimes referred to as a 'victimless crime', it is not. Being scammed can result in trauma and knock a victim's confidence which can last months or even years. The consequences go far beyond any financial impact. We've seen how the internet has enabled fraud to be undertaken at scale, anonymously, and from overseas. Generative AI is making frauds ever more believable using fake videos and Chat GPT to write compelling phishing emails. Our investment into the fraud and cyber unit is helping to expand our provision, but we still need to go further to bring offenders to justice.

⁵ The figure was calculated by adding the number of crimes estimated to have been prevented every year (i.e. the change in differences multiplied by Hertfordshire's population) between 2020 and 2023.

⁶ Between April and October this year, there were 3,271 reports of fraud totalling £19m of loss. From the 626 investigations created this year, the outcome rate was 14.5% which is an improving picture from the 9.9% in 2022/23.

Our award-winning Fraud hub within Beacon contacts everyone in the county who has been defrauded. It develops an action plan for victims which includes, where necessary, liaising with agencies on their behalf; conducting a needs assessment and providing practice support and target hardening measures. Though not set-up to investigate the crime or recover lost funds, they have been able to help victims retrieve £3m in stolen money through effective advocacy with financial institutions and advising on the use of the banking protocol procedure. The excellent work of this hub has been recognised nationally winning several awards for innovation.

Of course, preventing fewer victims requires concerted efforts to prevent offending. Graham Allen, a former MP of Nottingham North once said '1,000 extra police officers would be great, but 1,000 extra health visitors would be clever'. Stopping people committing crime and entering the criminal justice system is the future of policing.

We know the cost of continuing to respond in the same way we always have done. Police officers up and down the land will tell you that they engage with the same individuals day in and day out. This is why the establishment of the Chrysalis Centre by my office has the potential to transform how we engage with perpetrators across the county. Having won £2m in Home Office funding this year, we can now respond to an identified gap across the county in providing behaviour change interventions and programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Protecting Neighbourhood Policing and recruit more officers

I have always believed that my role as a PCC is to listen to the public and to try and deliver the type of policing that they want. Over the last 11 years, the public have told me loud and clear that they want to see visible and local policing. The local policing model we have in Hertfordshire is fundamental to reducing crime, partnership working and community engagement. It helps to create a police force that is embedded in, and supported by, a community working together to cut crime, rather than one which is distant and isolated, only engaging when called upon in an emergency.

Designed around the 10 local authority boundaries, it continues to serve us well and enables local policing teams and community safety partners to understand the nature of problems in a geographic areas and target responses. Over the years I have ensured that each district has at

least one major station so there is a visible and accessible policing. Next week I will be reviewing with the Chief Constable the findings of our recent public survey on public contact to help understand the impact of the closure of front counter enquiry desks on visibility and accessibility, and ask for a review of the costs and benefits so that an incoming PCC has options.

Sitting at the core of the local policing model is having safer neighbourhood and intervention teams that are up to full strength. Even before the government uplift programme was launched, I raised council tax to increase officer numbers and meet the increases in crime. For many years we were one of only a few forces to have increased officer numbers. Hertfordshire already has the largest police force it has even seen. As of today, we have 441 more police officers than we had in 2012. This equates to a headcount of 2,425 officers⁷, surpassing the original uplift target set by government.

Keep tax low and spend wisely

In my time as Police and Crime Commissioner, I have tried to make the force more efficient, more accountable and more effective in reducing crime. Police reform is much more than making savings, it is about making policing work for the better for the workforce, and for the public.

Over that time, I've continued to press ahead with collaboration with our neighbouring forces of Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire where it was clear that we could improve the service to Hertfordshire residents at a lower cost.

Since 2012 we've driven out net savings of £32m for Hertfordshire from collaboration with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Constabularies on all elements of protective services, operational support and organisational support (excluding local policing). We've also made efficiencies and improved effectiveness through our closer collaboration with fire and rescue service which has allowed us to better share resources and make improvements around public safety.

I still believe there is an opportunity to drive out further savings. Earlier this year the Chief Constable and I launched a joint efficiency and effectiveness review to ensure that we have a

⁷ We are tracking about 8.8% from Black and minority ethnic communities.

force that it fit for the future, that is financially stable over the medium term, and is better able to manage demand against resources. With 83% of our cost on workforce, I want to be sure that we are delivering the best service we can to the public at the times most needed. This review will help inform the budget setting process for 2024/5.

I still believe there is more we should be doing to consider the role of the private sector in policing and the opportunities available to learn from industry and work with them to enable a greater focus on core police business. I recognise that some forces have had negative experiences of outsourcing non-core functions, resulting in a legacy of distrust with most policing functions that could have been serviced by an external provider, now being kept in-house. However, collaboration takes many different forms and I want us to redouble our efforts around working with the private sector, as enabled by S93 of the Police Act 1996 and the financial regulations to enter into commercial sponsorship opportunities with businesses, generate income⁸ and seek cost recovery.

Increased efficiency

Working with the Chief Constable I've continued to have a good look at how we can make best use of public property and the police estate by reviewing our use of buildings and the potential for the relocation of police teams into district councils to improve partnership working and accessibility at reduced cost.

No longer is it acceptable, if it ever was, to spend £9m a year on running police buildings when we could be sharing estates and co-located. The co-location of St Albans, Hertsmere and Three Rivers policing teams within the civic buildings has been testament to achieving better coordinated services and delivering services that better reflect how the public use and engage with services. But we need to continue to drive forward one public sector approach.

Police Legitimacy

And finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention police legitimacy. Rooting out inappropriate behaviour, misogyny and criminal activity, and addressing public trust and confidence in policing has long been a key priority. Clearly, the issues have become ever more

⁸ Income generation broadly can come from the following categories: grant funding, sponsorship, cost recovery, charging for services, supplies or products

pressing since the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Met officer in March 2021, through to the conviction of David Carrick, another service Met Officer who lived in Stevenage. Baroness Casey's report was clear that inappropriate behaviour and misogyny was not just a problem for the Met Police, it was happening in all Constabularies. Last year I appointed an Assistant Commissioner with specific focus on legitimacy as I wanted it to have the right strategic coordination to assess our plans around police vetting, internal investigations, culture and the welfare of officers. Our new Legitimacy Strategy will be published next week.

Since 2017 I have invested, and continue to invest, more than any PCC in the country in police complaints. My Complaints Resolution Team makes up a third of my office, and we accept and deal with all police complaints relating to Hertfordshire police officers and staff. We record and undertake service recovery of those complaints, and undertake trend analysis to identify those who are being complained about on more than one occasion. That information is fed back to local policing teams, and to the constabulary's Professional Standards Department, to ensure that those officers are known about, that any risks are managed, and that issues are addressed at the first possible opportunity.

External scrutiny is an important part of police legitimacy. It opens police practices to communities for closer examination, with a view to them providing constructive oversight, discussion, and challenge. If done well, it can provide opportunities for the police to understand communities' concerns and take steps, where appropriate, to improve policies, procedures, and practices. My office now supports the running of three independent community panels on stop and search, use of force and BWV. This provides a level of scrutiny of records, body worn video encounters, and complaints which provide a key insight into the culture of the workforce. Its diverse membership ensures that views across different communities in Hertfordshire is represented and its feedback and observations have been instrumental in helping to improve policing practice.