

Appendix A
DRAFT FOR FEEDBACK
FROM POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Fighting Crime, Making Hertfordshire Safer

Police & Crime Plan 2025-29



**Police & Crime
Commissioner**
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

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FOREWORD FROM JONATHAN ASH-EDWARDS, POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

To follow

**MESSAGE FROM ANDY
PROPHET, CHIEF CONSTABLE**

To follow

POLICING HERTFORDSHIRE

Police forces around the country face increasing pressure to address the growing complexities of modern society, balancing resources to respond to emergencies, prevent crime and keep people safe. Residents and businesses across Hertfordshire should feel confident in their local police service due to its strong commitment to community safety and proactive crime prevention approach. My public consultation exercise found that more than three-quarters of Hertfordshire's residents are confident that they would receive a good service from police if they needed their help.

Every day, Hertfordshire Police receive an average of:

- 1469 999 and 101 calls
- Attend an average of 310 incidents
- Attend 56 ASB cases
- Attend 85 Violence Against the Person crimes

My funding of Hertfordshire police funds:

- 2,400+ police officers
- 1,600+ police staff
- Almost 150 special constables
- More than 500 volunteers
- 42 police buildings
- 551 fleet vehicles



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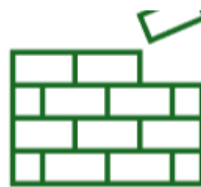
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THREATS, HARM AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Crime in Hertfordshire and across the UK has changed over the years, and while overall levels of crime have dropped, the harm caused by crime has never been more apparent. The most serious offences – such as violent crime and sexual offences – continue to have devastating impacts, particularly on the most vulnerable in society. As overall crime has fallen over the past two decades, violent crime in Hertfordshire now makes up a far greater proportion of offences. In 2002/03, fewer than 1 in 14 recorded crimes were violent offences; today, that figure is more than 1 in 3. Domestic abuse is a more prominent issue in society, as more victims feel confident in police to report these crimes, and now makes up 15% of recorded crime. Safeguarding those at risk and understanding the hidden nature of crimes like domestic abuse and hate crime are critical. Many of these offences happen behind closed doors, and tackling them requires trust, engagement, and a commitment to rooting out harm wherever it occurs.

At the same time, I recognise that for many people, their experience of crime is shaped by more visible, routine offences. Through a public survey I commissioned, residents have made it clear that issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug-related crime, and violence in town centres are their key concerns. We also experience anti-social behaviour far too often – on average, police dealt with more than 50 ASB incidents every day last year. These offences, though often less harmful than serious violence or exploitation, have a profound impact on people's daily lives and sense of security. Addressing these concerns is just as important for building safer communities.

My approach will be balanced and responsive. We will continue to tackle the most harmful crimes with a focus on safeguarding the vulnerable, while also addressing everyday issues that undermine public confidence and wellbeing. By listening to our communities and working in partnership, we can ensure that policing priorities reflect both the reality of crime and the concerns of the people we serve.

POLICE & CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES

The development of the Police & Crime Plan priorities has been informed by a wide evidence base:

- They implement the manifesto on which I stood for election to be the Police & Crime Commissioner in 2024.
- They take the public's priorities into account, understood through opinion polling and public consultation carried out by my office in autumn 2024 as well as public engagement activity I have undertaken since my election.
- They have regard to the findings and recommendations of the HMICFRS PEEL inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary in early 2024.
- They have been informed by a range of inputs from police officers and staff from Hertfordshire Constabulary as well as from community safety partners.
- They draw on national evidence and best practice as well as analysis of current data in Hertfordshire.

In the following section of the Police & Crime Plan, I set out five priority areas:

Priority 1

Make Hertfordshire safer

Priority 2

Strengthen local policing and build public confidence

Priority 3

Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour

Priority 4

Protect people from violence, abuse and exploitation

Priority 5

Bring offenders to justice and support victims

The actions in each priority area have a range of delivery mechanisms. Some are actions which I am asking the Chief Constable to take or consider. Others are things that I will undertake myself through my convening, commissioning and accountability roles. A number seek to influence other public services who have community safety functions.

I will monitor the delivery of the Plan through my accountability and governance structures, and I will report periodically to the Police & Crime Plan on progress.

PRIORITY 1 – MAKE HERTFORDSHIRE SAFER

Hertfordshire is a safe county, which means people want to live, work and invest here. With partners, we will improve community safety, proactively prevent and deter crime and reduce the number of people who come to harm. This means fewer victims, fewer offenders and less demand on policing.

My strategic goals

1. Prevent crime and harm through effective crime prevention initiatives, early intervention and partnership working.
2. Safer neighbourhoods, taking a hyper-localised crime prevention and reduction approach in areas of Hertfordshire where crime is higher.
3. Relentlessly pursue, and make Hertfordshire unwelcome for, the small number of prolific offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime.

Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?

Crime can place immense economic and social costs on communities, and often irrevocable physical, emotional and financial harm on the individual victims of crimes. Prevention of crime and harm must come first. For centuries, prevention has been a core Peelian principle of policing and a fundamental measure of a modern police force's effectiveness. The premise is simple and convincing: prevention is better than cure and the absence of crime is better than responding to it.

Hertfordshire is a safe county with a strong record of prioritising prevention and working in partnership to improve community safety. The HMICFRS PEEL inspection in 2024 found that Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at crime prevention and deterrence. But there is more to do, especially in driving down crime hotspots in some neighbourhoods that have higher levels of crime and harm than the county as a whole.

Neighbourhood level crime prevention works. The previous Government's Safer Streets Fund helped Hertfordshire deliver a range of projects to cut anti-social behaviour, crime, drug supply and improve safety. Safer Streets interventions in Hatfield's underpasses in 2022 reduced crime by 46%. After my election, I launched Operation Hotspot which puts additional high-visibility patrols in anti-social behaviour and crime hotspots, often town centres, as well as funding problem solving approaches. This has resulted in reductions of crime and effective use of anti-social behaviour powers alongside improvements in police visibility.

We also know from national and local evidence that prolific offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. For example, a study of prolific shoplifters carried out by my office showed that 10% of shoplifters are responsible for 40% of shoplifting in Hertfordshire. Deterring, or changing the behaviour of, prolific offenders is an important way of cutting crime.

Road safety is one of the biggest concerns raised with me by residents. More people die each year on Hertfordshire's roads than by homicide, with many more being injured. Road safety is a concern raised frequently with me by residents, particularly around anti-social driving. We need a greater emphasis on improving road safety and this requires a partnership effort. The police and my office both have roles to play alongside the county council as the highway authority.

Everyone can help make Hertfordshire safer; it's not something the police can do alone. Wherever possible, I will work in partnership with Councils, other public services, community organisations, victims, residents and businesses to improve public safety and cut crime.

Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan, as Commissioner I will:

Crime prevention

- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure that crime prevention and reduction is at the heart of the Constabulary's work.
- Work in partnership to reduce crime and harm and make Hertfordshire safer, taking a place-based, public health approach alongside situational crime targeting.

Safer neighbourhoods

- Ask the Chief Constable to use the Clear, Hold, Build approach to reduce serious and organised crime and help people reclaim their neighbourhoods from the impact of criminality, drug supply and exploitation.
- Deliver a comprehensive data analysis project to identify crime outliers across our districts and boroughs to support and inform local priorities.
- Fund 'safer streets' interventions at neighbourhood level, securing match funding where possible, to undertake proactive, place-based crime reduction.
- Focus on Hertfordshire's town centres to ensure our retail and leisure areas are safe places where business wants to invest and people want to spend their time.

Early intervention

- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure the Constabulary proactively engages with young people at risk of offending, knife carrying or violence to divert them away.
- Focus on preventing violence against women and girls and young people's safety.

Prolific offenders

- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure the Constabulary relentlessly pursues prolific offenders to reduce their impact on Hertfordshire.
- Lobby the Government to introduce a more effective sentencing regime for hyper-prolific offenders that disrupts their pattern of offending and provides respite for communities.
- Test wraparound support programmes offering interventions to prolific shoplifters who want to break the cycle of offending.

Road safety

- Work with the Road Safety Partnership to reduce deaths and injuries on Hertfordshire's roads.
- Review the OPCC Road Safety Fund to make it more financially sustainable and ensure activity is focused on the greatest risks to public safety and reducing anti-social driving.

- Support the BCH Roads Policing Unit to undertake proactive enforcement activity targeting the ‘fatal five’ – speeding, drink driving, drug driving, mobile phone use and lack of seatbelts.

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PRIORITY 2 – STRENGTHEN LOCAL POLICING AND BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

Hertfordshire has more police officers than ever before. I know that residents want visible, responsive local policing to make them feel safer and deter neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour. We will strengthen local policing and ensure communities know how to contact their named police officer or PCSO. Public confidence will also be maintained and built with high standards, effective community engagement and a good service to the public.

My strategic goals

1. Increase police visibility and connection with communities to improve public trust and confidence, reduce crime and make communities feel safer.
2. Grow neighbourhood policing and ensure communities have a named police officer or PCSO they know how to contact.
3. Hotspots of crime and anti-social behaviour are tackled through local patrols and problem solving.

Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?

The vast majority of residents (88%) have told me they feel safe in their neighbourhoods. Yet 70% of residents have said that Hertfordshire Constabulary could make them feel even safer by providing more visible patrols in crime hotspots. Public opinion is supported by evidence: strong police visibility both reduces crime if it is targeted in hotspots where crime is concentrated, and strengthens public confidence in the police and public perceptions around feelings of safety.

Hertfordshire has invested significantly in local policing over the years. The Constabulary's neighbourhood policing teams are closely aligned to the communities they serve, with at least one police station in every district. There remain opportunities to strengthen neighbourhood policing and the connection between the police and the public even further, which this Plan seeks to address.

After my election, I launched Operation Hotspot with funding from the Home Office to put additional high-visibility patrols in anti-social behaviour and crime hotspots across the county, many of which were town centres or related to the night-time economy. In its first year, Operation Hotspot delivered significant results in increased visibility, reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour and proactive use of police powers to keep communities safe.

As Hertfordshire is a lower crime county, many crime types are driven by 'hotspots' and it is important that they are effectively tackled. There is significant learning from Operation Hotspot that can be applied more broadly to hotspot policing.

There are significant pressures on policing, influenced both by resources and demand. Asking the police to do more without seeking to reduce other pressures is unsustainable. Freeing up police officer time is critical, through technology and system improvements as well as working with other public services to ensure demand is met by the right service. Right Care Right Person has delivered some reduction in mental health calls to the police, but there is much more to be done. There are other areas where local authorities will often be better placed than the police to use their enforcement powers and respond to community concerns.

The Constabulary seeks to maintain high standards of conduct, integrity and professionalism. This is vital to maintain legitimacy. The HMICFRS PEEL inspection in 2024 identified there is more to be done to instil confidence in the workforce to report inappropriate behaviour.

Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan, as Commissioner I will:

Police visibility, connection and engagement

- Ask the Chief Constable to establish and implement a strategy on police visibility and connection with communities.
- Ask the Chief Constable to review how the Constabulary updates local communities about its work.
- Work with the Chief Constable to ensure communities have a named police officer or PCSO they know how to contact.

Neighbourhood policing

- Work with the Chief Constable to grow the number of police officers in neighbourhood roles and boost the status of neighbourhood policing.
- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure Neighbourhood Policing Team officers, staff and supervisors have a programme of learning meaning they are experts in problem solving, community engagement and partnership working.
- Ask the Chief Constable to measure, understand and minimise abstraction from Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Hotspot policing

- Work with the Chief Constable to ensure the effective use of hotspot funding for Operation Hotspot to provide additional high-visibility police patrols to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots across Hertfordshire.
- Ask the Chief Constable to embed hotspot policing, with clearly defined hotspots for local policing teams and achieving greater activity in hotspots to reduce crime.

Freeing up police officer time

- Ask the Chief Constable to consider how police officer time can be freed up, and service improved, through better use of technology, innovation and systems efficiency.
- Monitor the rollout of Right Care Right Person to ensure progress is made so that people in mental health crisis in Hertfordshire are supported by the appropriate service.
- Work with other public services in Hertfordshire to ensure that demand is met by the right service, especially where policing is not the best placed service to respond.

Improving service to the public

- Hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering an effective and efficient service to the public, including in responding to initial public contact.

- Monitor the Constabulary's response to the 'Cause of concern' and areas for improvement outlined by the HMICFRS PEEL inspection in 2024 and progress towards demonstrating improvements in the next inspection.
- Ask the Chief Constable to improve the timeliness and efficiency of decision making for firearms licenses, whilst ensuring the quality of decisions maintains public safety.

Standards, culture and leadership

- Ask the Chief Constable to review leadership training and activity, to create a culture of 'train, trust and empower' within the Constabulary.
- Ask the Chief Constable to maintain high standards of conduct, integrity and professionalism.
- Ask the Chief Constable to create a culture that celebrates success, treats people with respect, challenges all forms of discrimination, is inclusive and seeks to represent the communities we serve.

PRIORITY 3 – TACKLE CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Making Hertfordshire's communities safer and protecting the quality of life in the county requires effective action against people behaving criminally or anti-socially in their neighbourhood. The public have told me that anti-social behaviour is the top cause for concern in their neighbourhood, with two thirds of respondents to my survey saying ASB is the main reason for feeling unsafe. Burglary, retail crime and vehicle crime are also concerns of high public concern in Hertfordshire.

My strategic goals

1. Reduce neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour, making communities feel safer and ensuring an effective police response.
2. Tackle hotspots of burglary and vehicle crime to ensure Hertfordshire's residents feel safe in their own home.
3. Work collaboratively with retailers to address retail crime, improving crime prevention, reporting and business confidence.

Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?

Hertfordshire is a safe county, but anti-social behaviour and many neighbourhood crime types can cause public concern, especially when hotspots of criminal activity develop.

The safety of local neighbourhoods, people's homes and businesses is of paramount importance to ensure that Hertfordshire continues to thrive. To the communities impacted, there is no such thing as a 'minor' or 'low level' crime and it is important to recognise that such behaviour, repeated over time can become 'high harm'.

When unchallenged, anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime can lead to more serious offending and intervening is crucial to making our streets safer and policing effectively.

Crimes like burglary are particularly personal and distressing, impacting people's absolute right to be safe in their own home and an effective response is essential. Hertfordshire Constabulary has a policy to attend every residential burglary, unless declined by the victim, with over 99% compliance and I am keen to see this continue. While burglary is relatively low in Hertfordshire, there is more that can be done to reduce hotspots and catch more burglars.

I want to ensure robust action against those who are committing shop theft at all levels so that businesses have the confidence to report incidents. I will use my convening power as PCC to foster a collaborative approach between businesses, police, and the broader criminal justice system to tackle retail crime.

Since my election, I have worked closely with Hertfordshire's farmers and rural communities to understand the issues they face. Having heard concerns about the theft of high value farm equipment and machinery, I am funding the introduction of a trial of DNA forensic marking to reduce farm theft and make it easier for police to return stolen items to their owners.

Hertfordshire is a great place to live and work with real diversity: beautiful countryside and villages, thriving towns, lively night-time economies, close links to London and dynamic business sectors. But this diversity also presents a complex crime picture with different communities affected by different crime types.

Regardless of where you live, work or study in Hertfordshire, I want you to feel safe. Working with Hertfordshire Constabulary and local partners, we will tackle anti-social behaviour, and the crime types you have told me are your most important concerns locally.

Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan, as Commissioner I will:

Anti-social behaviour

- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's approach to reducing anti-social behaviour, including through a hotspots approach.
- Work with the Chief Constable in partnership with local authorities, housing providers and community safety partners to ensure a joined up, problem orientated approach to anti-social behaviour across Hertfordshire, including the commissioning of diversionary activities.
- Monitor the Constabulary's use of anti-social behaviour powers, including Community Protection Warnings and Notices.
- Work with Neighbourhood Watch to keep local communities safe.

Burglary and vehicle crime

- Ask the Chief Constable to develop a plan to reduce residential burglary and increase the number of burglars caught.
- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure the Constabulary continues to attend every residential burglary, unless declined by the victim.
- Work with communities most impacted by residential burglary to ensure prevention and awareness raising, with particular focus on high value burglaries linked to family gold and jewellery, or to facilitate the theft of a vehicle.

Retail crime

- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's delivery against the national Retail Crime Action Plan.
- Convene businesses and police to take a collaborative approach to tackling retail crime, improving crime prevention, reporting and improving the confidence of retailers.
- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure robust action is taken against prolific shoplifters and those who assault retail workers.

Rural crime

- Ask the Chief Constable to increase the Constabulary's knowledge of rural crime through more consistent 'tagging' of rural crime on its crime recording system.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the Constabulary's rural crime strategy.
- Introduce a trial of DNA forensic marking to reduce theft of farm equipment and make it easier for police to return stolen items to their owners.
- Support rural and isolated parts of Hertfordshire with ongoing effective engagement to build trust and confidence, including monitoring response times.
- Encourage local authorities to increase their use of prosecution powers for fly-tipping.

Night-time economy

- Work with local authorities and venues to ensure our towns remain safe places for people to enjoy themselves.
- Support the ongoing use of Project Vigilant to proactively target predatory behaviour in the night-time economy.

Fraud and cybercrime

- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's response to fraud and cybercrime.
- Promote the support available to businesses and organisations from the Constabulary's cyber prevent and protect officers.
- Support the Beacon Fraud Hub to recover money belonging to Hertfordshire residents.

Hate crime

- Support a partnership approach to preventing and tackling hate crime in Hertfordshire, ensuring people have confidence to report.
- Ask the Chief Constable to continue to take a pragmatic approach to non-crime hate incidents, recognising that it will sometimes be appropriate for the police to respond to intelligence of threats to communities, but that public confidence can be damaged when police are not responding to crime.

PRIORITY 4 – PROTECT PEOPLE FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

By the end of the Plan period, Hertfordshire residents will be safer and better protected because we effectively use best practice to prevent and disrupt high harm criminality, violence against women and girls and the abuse and exploitation of children and young people. We need to make Hertfordshire one of the safest places in the country to be a woman and to grow up as a child or young person.

My strategic goals

1. Focused work on preventing and disrupting violence against women and girls and domestic abuse will deliver measurable improvements in Hertfordshire.
2. Children and young people are kept safe from sexual and criminal exploitation, abuse and violence.
3. The identification and protection of vulnerable adults from high harm crimes such as fraud, cuckooing and drug related harm is improved.

Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?

The harm caused by violence against women and girls (VAWG) is significant in all its forms, including but not limited to rape and sexual offences, domestic abuse, murder, stalking, harassment and coercive control.

Men and boys suffer from many of these forms of abuse, and should expect a good service from the police, but these crimes disproportionately affect women and VAWG is a Strategic Policing Requirement. Sadly, a woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK and domestic abuse makes up 18% of all recorded crime in England and Wales.

In Hertfordshire, 68% of victims of domestic abuse related offences are female, 82% of victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation offences are female and 92% of victims of rape and serious sexual offences are female.

All women and girls should feel safe in the home or in their local community and a wide range of partnership work is required to achieve this, alongside rigorous enforcement action against perpetrators.

The HMICFRS PEEL inspection in 2024 identified a number of areas where improvements are needed in Hertfordshire. For example, the recording of sexual offences and domestic abuse crimes and the use of protective powers. In 2024, a Joint Targeted Area Inspection into children aged 0-7 who are impacted by domestic abuse in Hertfordshire found that changes to safeguarding referrals are needed to better understand the risk involved.

An emerging domestic abuse trend involves children or young people carrying out violence and abuse against their parents/carers (CAPVA). From April 2023 to October 2024, 20% of referrals into the OPCC commissioned Chrysalis Centre related to those under the age of 20. I will continue to commission a specialist intervention service for young domestic abuse perpetrators.

Hertfordshire must be one of the safest places in the country to grow up as a child or young person and there must be no tolerance of child exploitation, whether criminal or sexual. Keeping young people safe also extends to crimes such as personal robbery, where young males are four times

more likely to be a victim in Hertfordshire than the adult population, and protecting young people from county lines and drug supply. I will also seek effective multi-agency arrangements to protect children who go missing, especially those in or leaving the care system and black children, who are disproportionately likely to be assessed as lower risk.

Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan, as Commissioner I will:

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and the voluntary sector to help protect women and girls from all forms of violence and abuse.
- Work with partners on a new Hertfordshire strategic needs assessment for VAWG.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's response to VAWG.
- Work with the Chief Constable to increase the confidence of women and girls in reporting offences to the police and supporting police action.
- Ask the Chief Constable to embed good practice from Operation Soteria, to improve the response to rape and serious sexual offences.
- Work with the Chief Constable to implement and embed the recommendations from the stalking super-complaint.
- Trial an intervention programme for stalking perpetrators commissioned through Chrysalis.

Domestic abuse

- Ask the Chief Constable to increase the use of protective powers and orders such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) so the Constabulary is in the top quartile nationally.
- Ask the Chief Constable to implement the recommendations from the Joint Area Targeted Inspection into children who are victims of domestic abuse in Hertfordshire.
- Commission specialist services for children and young people in Hertfordshire who are violent or abusive towards their parents/carers.

Children and young people's safety

- Develop and trial a keeping safe programme for children and young people.
- Ask the Chief Constable to enhance the Constabulary's information sharing with key safeguarding agencies to better protect children at risk of neglect, abuse, child exploitation and harm.
- Seek assurance over the Constabulary's approach to child sexual exploitation.
- Work with partners to ensure an effective multi-agency response to missing children, especially those missing from care or from black communities.
- Ask the Chief Constable to ensure the Constabulary is ready to use the new offence of child criminal exploitation once passed by Parliament.

County lines and cuckooing

- Ask the Chief Constable to take robust enforcement action against county lines and drug supply to reduce its harmful impact in Hertfordshire.

- Ask the Chief Constable to review the Constabulary's approach to cuckooing and ensure the Constabulary is ready to use the new offence once passed by Parliament.

Serious violence

- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's compliance with the Serious Violence Duty.
- Work with partners to commission interventions to reduce serious violence in Hertfordshire.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's work to reduce knife crime and use of offensive weapons.

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PRIORITY 5 – BRING OFFENDERS TO JUSTICE AND SUPPORT VICTIMS

Hertfordshire residents overwhelmingly support law and order. People want to see consequences for criminals and justice and support for victims. We will ensure that victims feel confident reporting crime, knowing that the crime will be investigated effectively, and they will be supported throughout. Offenders are dealt with robustly, with a focus on reducing reoffending and protecting communities from further harm.

My strategic goals

1. A more efficient criminal justice system, with improved use of Out of Court Resolutions and effective community remedies to crime where appropriate.
2. Break the cycle of reoffending and prevent re-victimisation, including through the use of perpetrator intervention programmes.
3. Support victims of crime to get justice, with timely investigations and updates, and effective support through the investigation and court processes.

Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?

Despite the efforts and hard work of police officers and staff, more investigations in Hertfordshire are closed without a suspect being identified than the national average. Even when a suspect is identified, too few crimes lead to a successful outcome such as charge, prosecution, caution or Out of Court Resolution (OOCR). A key strategic performance objective for the Constabulary is to improve investigations and solve more crime.

A large number of investigations are closed because victims do not feel able to continue with the case. Rape is a significantly underreported crime, but even when reported, roughly half of rape cases are not supported by the victim. Having been on a jury in a rape trial myself, I have had some insight into the significant impact the criminal justice process can have on victims and the need for effective support throughout.

The Constabulary is working to improve the service victims receive. Victims tell me they want better communication and updates about their case. Hertfordshire is not immune from the national delays in the criminal justice system, with cases taking too long to reach a charging decision, and too long to reach Court. As Chair of the Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board, I will work to bring criminal justice partners together to improve timeliness and efficiency wherever possible. Where this is out of the control of local partners, we must focus on communication and the quality and availability of support services.

Justice does not always mean court. Out of Court Resolutions can offer a swift and agile response which can reduce reoffending and improve victim satisfaction when used appropriately. However, the use of OOCRs in Hertfordshire is far lower than national average and can be improved.

Restorative Justice is also significantly underutilised in Hertfordshire. This process brings victims and offenders together to navigate the harm caused by offending. While it offers victims an opportunity to hold their perpetrator to account, it is also a way for offenders to understand the full consequences of their actions, leading to reduced recidivism.

To break the cycle of reoffending and reduce re-victimisation, we must also ensure work is undertaken with perpetrators to intervene and change behaviour and address the underlying

causes when possible. The Chrysalis Centre is showing promising results in reducing reoffending amongst domestic abuse perpetrators who complete its interventions.

Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan, as Commissioner I will:

Criminal justice system

- Chair the Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board, working to improve timeliness, efficiency and communication with victims wherever possible. Ensure particular focus on partnership working between the police and Crown Prosecution Service.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the timeliness and quality of investigations undertaken by the Constabulary and overall file quality.
- Lobby the Government to reduce the delays and backlogs in the Court system.

Out of Court Resolutions

- Introduce an 'Immediate Justice' approach to anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime to add a community payback option to Out of Court Resolutions.
- Ask the Chief Constable to increase the Constabulary's use of Out of Court Resolutions where appropriate and proportionate.
- Review the use of Restorative Justice in Hertfordshire and consider what improvements could be made.

Support for victim-survivors

- Develop a Victims Commissioning Strategy, responding to partner feedback about sustainability of funding and shortage of some specialist services, and commission high quality support services.
- Explore opportunities to join up the commissioning of advocacy services in Hertfordshire to create a more streamlined and easier to access system for victim-survivors.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's support to victims of crime.
- Review how victims are updated, including consideration of tech-based solutions such as implementation of a Citizens Portal and automated messaging where appropriate.
- Review local implementation of the NPCC Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan, with an emphasis on the quality of service and support received by victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Offenders and perpetrators

- Make best use of Home Office and local partnership funding to deliver the domestic abuse perpetrator programme in Hertfordshire, to reduce reoffending and change behaviour.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the effectiveness of the Constabulary's offender management.
- Work with other public services to address the underlying causes of crime and offending.

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Hertfordshire Constabulary is full of brilliant people who are incredibly hard working and committed to policing the county effectively. Despite their efforts and many successes, there are a number of areas where the Constabulary recognises that improved performance is needed.

I am pleased that the Constabulary is working to address the findings and recommendations of the HMICFRS PEEL inspection which took place in the first half of 2024. This Plan also needs to respond to that report, as well as the 2024/25 performance data.

It is important that the Chief Constable has transparency about how I will assess the Constabulary's performance over the life of the Plan and where I will prioritise holding to account.

The strategic performance objectives are cross-cutting and apply to many of the priority areas in the Plan, so I have decided to set them out in one place at the beginning of the Plan for clarity.

My goal is that, over the life of this Plan, Hertfordshire Constabulary is able to achieve the following objectives:

Improve crime recording – to create a full picture of crime in Hertfordshire, allow crime reduction to be measured from an accurate starting point and ensure every victim has their crime recorded and responded to.

The starting point is that the 2024 PEEL inspection found that Hertfordshire Constabulary was recording 82.5% of all reported crime, 89.8% of sexual offences and 75.7% of violent offences. More than half of unrecorded violent crimes were also domestic abuse cases. This resulted in an 'Inadequate' grade and formal 'Cause of concern' being issued.

Success looks like HMICFRS discharging the 'Cause of concern' and the Constabulary achieving and maintaining the standard required for a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' judgement for crime recording.

For the public this will mean the Constabulary accurately records crimes reported to it and is able to respond appropriately.

Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour – in the short term, recorded crime will increase as recording improves. Once a full picture is known, the priority is to achieve tangible reductions in crime experienced by Hertfordshire residents and businesses.

The starting point will be known once improved crime recording practices have been seen in recorded crime data in 2025.

Success looks like the Constabulary achieving tangible reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour from the new baseline, building on its recognised successes in crime prevention and diversion.

For the public this will mean less crime and anti-social behaviour and confidence that reductions are real rather than influenced by changes in crime recording.

Solve more crime – to ensure that more offenders are brought to justice and more victims see a positive outcome from their report of crime.

The starting point is that, in common with policing nationally, the proportion of victim-based crimes which result in a charge of summons has fallen over time. In 2023, a higher percentage of investigations were closed with no suspect identified in Hertfordshire than the national average.

Success looks like the Constabulary solving more crimes and reducing the proportion of investigations that are closed with no suspect being identified.

For the public this will mean greater confidence that there are consequences for crime in Hertfordshire.

Keep people safe – to ensure that proactive, safeguarding action is taken through the use of protective powers and orders, especially relating to violence against women and girls.

The starting point is that the 2024 PEEL inspection found that Hertfordshire Constabulary was using some protective orders and powers less than other police forces. Hertfordshire had the lowest use of Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) right to know applications in the country in the year to September 2023. The Constabulary is also working to improve the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders.

Success looks like the Constabulary increasing its use of protective powers and orders to proactively keep people safe, so that Hertfordshire is top quartile nationally.

For the public this will mean that people are protected from harm and that the use of protective powers and orders contributes positively to tackling violence against women and girls.

STRATEGIC POLICING REQUIREMENT

The national strategic policing requirements are set by the Home Secretary. Every Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable must have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR).

The SPR defines threats which all police forces must address either locally or by working together. Some of the SPR threats require a cross-border policing response and are of national importance. These significant policing capabilities include national security, public disorder response and cyberattacks, including hostile state threats that require a response beyond local police forces.

There are nine regional crime units across England and Wales that collaborate to deliver the national response to these threats. The national coordination of counter terrorism policing, international serious organised crime and some cyber investigations are managed by specialist teams including the National Crime Agency and the National Cyber Resilience Centre.

Police and Crime Commissioners are a significant part of the national delivery of policing, playing key roles in governance and finance to enable policing to tackle these threats effectively.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I must ensure Hertfordshire Constabulary is effectively tackling the threats in the SPR, which are:

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Terrorism
- Serious and Organised Crime
- National Cyber Incident
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Public Disorder
- Civil Emergencies

During my term of office, I will hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering the Strategic Policing Requirement set out by the Home Secretary.

FINANCE AND ESTATES

Finance

The public's top priority in the survey and consultation I carried out in the summer for the Police & Crime Plan was improved police visibility and tackling anti-social behaviour. My 2025/26 budget helps the Constabulary respond to that by:

- Permanently increasing the police officer baseline to 2,405 officers, an increase of twelve officers from the previous baseline
- Putting more resources into neighbourhood policing, with expected growth in neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs, with the precise mix still to be agreed with the Home Office

Just over half (56%) of police funding in Hertfordshire comes from Government grant with the remainder (44%) coming from the policing precept from the council tax.

In common with many public services, the costs facing policing are increasing faster than the resources available to meet them. This year alone, the well-deserved pay rise for police officers and staff has not been fully funded by the Government. Despite Ministers promising to fully compensate policing for the increases in employer's national insurance contributions, this has not happened and the NIC grant falls short of the Constabulary's increased costs. And in common with other private and public sector organisations, non-pay costs such as premises, utilities and business rates continue to rise significantly. After the grant settlement (including the Government's assumption about precept increases), savings of £7.25m are needed to balance the budget. These include, amongst others: savings from non-pay, BCH and OPCC budgets and removing police staff vacancies in non-operational roles.

There are some significant pressures facing the policing budget in Hertfordshire. CIPFA analysis carried out in March 2024 showed that Hertfordshire's policing budget was the 7th least resilient of the 43 police forces nationally. Work will be required over the medium term financial plan to address this. I will also lobby Government for a more sustainable and strategic approach to funding.

Estates

With the Chief Constable, I will carry out an in-depth review of the police estate to form a new Estates Strategy. The redevelopment of Police HQ and the additional, modern space this provides will mean many significant change for where some teams in the Constabulary are based. Aspects of the estate will therefore need review and change to improve affordability and match current operational requirements. I will also consider the relationship that the estate has to police visibility, public contact and connection with communities.

Infrastructure funding

Hertfordshire is expected to grow significantly in the coming years with around 100,000 new homes planned by local authorities. At the moment, developer infrastructure contributions are not being secured to mitigate the impact of new development and population growth on policing. This needs to change. I will take learning from other counties who have secured infrastructure

contributions from developers to introduce new policy to secure such contributions in Hertfordshire.

Sustainability

Government ‘net zero’ targets will impact policing along with other public sectors. The precise deliverability of policies such as electric vehicle mandates in policing are currently unknown and needs to be resolved at a national level.

At a local level, I will work with the Chief Constable to consider sustainability improvements and reductions in carbon footprint from the Constabulary’s operations, working alongside partners on Hertfordshire-wide strategies on sustainability.

Grant funding and commissioning

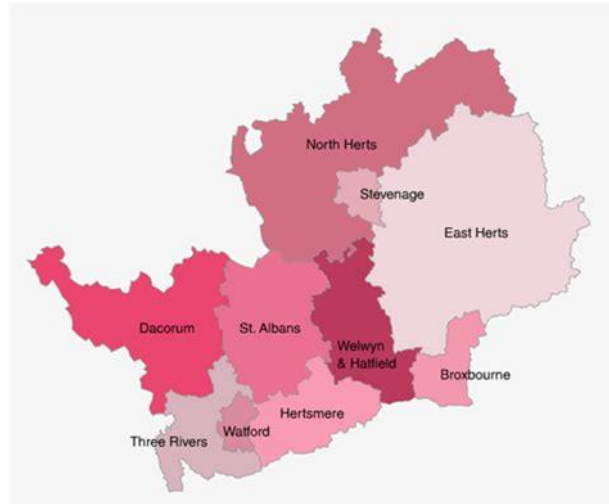
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PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Community Safety Partnerships

Hertfordshire's local policing model is designed around the boundaries of the local authorities. Each area within Hertfordshire has a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) comprising local partners working together to address crime, disorder and ASB in their communities. No single agency can address all drivers of crime and ASB, and CSPs help to facilitate effective partnership working that makes our communities safer.

My Plan sets the strategic direction for tackling crime and ASB across the county. My office will continue to work closely with CSPs to ensure my priorities reflect local needs and are delivered in a way that delivers the most benefit to local communities throughout Hertfordshire.



Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board

The Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board (HCJB) brings together key criminal justice partners, including the Crown Prosecution Service, His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service, HMP The Mount, Probation, Witness Services, and the Youth Justice Service. In my role as Chair, I support the strategic direction of the Board in coordinating an efficient and effective local criminal justice system for Hertfordshire. Delivery of the HCJB Strategy is supported by thematic subgroups, made up of statutory, voluntary, and third sector partners.

Collaboration Agreements

Hertfordshire participates in a range of collaboration agreements with other forces, chiefly the strategic alliance between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (known as 'BCH') and regional agreements between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk (known as '7 Force'). These agreements deliver a combination of back office and frontline policing functions on a collaborated basis.

As part of my holding to account duty, I will ensure that any form of collaboration in which Hertfordshire takes part delivers on my core objective: a more effective and efficient policing service to the public.

Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU)

Created in 2010, ERSOU is funded by my office via the Constabulary along with six other eastern region police forces. ERSOU includes a regional organised crime unit (ROCU) and counter terrorism policing (CTP). These two units have separate aims, the ROCU aims to disrupt organised criminals operating across Hertfordshire and the local six force areas, and the CTP unit manages the threat of terrorism operating across Hertfordshire and the rest of the region.

Partner Consultation and Strategic Alignment

To develop this plan, we consulted with a range of partners and the public. We spoke directly with victims through our commissioned services. We engaged with over 3700 members of the public across a range of demographics. We held over 50 consultation meetings with partners to elicit their views and steer and ensure alignment with other local strategies. These included:

Police – from chief officer to individual teams

PCP – the Panel said, we did

CSPs – CSPs said, we did

Probation

Courts

NHS

CPS

Local authority

Public Health

Local government

Hertfordshire Fire Service & their CRMP

Public – the public said their key issues were violence, ASB,

Victims

Businesses

The voluntary and community sector

Neighbouring OPCCs

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Public's voice in policing

As I was elected by the people of Hertfordshire, my primary focus is to effectively represent the voice of the people. Public consultation has formed the basis for my plan, and I have prioritised anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime, violence and vulnerability, strengthening local policing and improving the police service. Throughout the next four years I want to directly engage with all the communities across Hertfordshire: rural, urban, business and neighbourhood to ensure I keep track of public sentiment and address concerns and priorities into the ongoing delivery of the plan.

Reaching out to Hertfordshire

I will work with my office to proactively reach out across Hertfordshire to listen to the views of a wide range of groups across the county, including those who are lesser heard. It is important that everyone impacted by crime is able to have their voice heard and be effectively represented. This engagement will be undertaken with and in partnership with faith groups, support groups, community networks, businesses, local government and many others.

Hertfordshire Youth Commission on Policing and Crime

I have established the Hertfordshire Youth Commission on Policing and Crime to give young people in Hertfordshire a strong voice in how young people's safety and interactions with the police are addressed. The Commission will be composed of a core group of around 25 young people who will lead the project over the coming year to capture the views of thousands of young people in Hertfordshire on policing, crime, ASB and community safety. The project will culminate in a comprehensive report with recommendations to me and the Chief Constable. I will ensure that those recommendations are addressed so the Commission's work has a tangible and lasting positive impact on young people's experiences and perceptions of personal safety, crime and the police in Hertfordshire.

GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY & SCRUTINY

Accountability & Performance Meetings

The Commissioner holds regular webcast public meetings to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Hertfordshire police. During the live webcasts every month, the PCC scrutinises the delivery of policing in Hertfordshire, asking questions about performance and on topics of high public interest. The meetings enable the PCC and the Chief Constable to publicly demonstrate accountability, transparency and value for money over a broad range of police functions and decisions. These meetings will also be used for the Chief Constable to demonstrate progress made against objectives set out in the Police & Crime Plan.

The Accountability and Performance Meetings take place at Police Headquarters in Welwyn Garden City and can be watched online by following a web link. Recordings are also available to view in the links below after the meeting for those who can't watch live. Police and Crime Commissioners have a statutory duty to hold Chief Constables to account for their running of the force as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Holding to account meetings have always been held in Hertfordshire but have not previously been held in public.

Internal boards focusing on strategy, resources and performance

I ensure my office has representation across key boards within the Constabulary to gather insight into crime and victim trends and to help me hold the Constabulary to account on the priorities within my plan. Members of my senior team including my analytical leads attend the force's Strategic Performance Board, which oversees data-led strategic intent and performance.

As VAWG and Domestic Abuse are priorities for me, my office also holds a key role at the force's internal Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meeting, ensuring the voice of the victim is at the heart of what we do, insight informs my strategy and priorities and we can hold the Constabulary to account. The office also sits across the Victim & Vulnerability Strategic Board, Op Rinse (Shoplifting Strategy), Op Stride (Stalking Strategy) and the Right Care, Right Person board which governs the initiative to ensure police officer time is used effectively when supporting people in mental health crisis.

I have established a Resources Board to provide oversight and scrutiny of finance and estates matters.

Scrutiny panels

My office operates community scrutiny panels – on Stop and Search, Use of Force, and Body Worn Video. Made up of members of the public who live, work or study in Hertfordshire, the panels support my holding to account duty by independently reviewing whether important but often intrusive police powers are being used in an appropriate, proportionate, and ethical way by Hertfordshire police officers.

All panel members voluntarily give up their time to perform this public service and I am grateful to them for the work they do.

If you are interested in joining a community scrutiny panel, you can find out more by visiting www.herts-pcc.gov.uk/getting-involved/

Complaints

The OPCC is responsible for the initial handling of complaints and for handling suitable complaints outside of Schedule 3 to the *Police Reform Act 2002*, which is sometimes referred to as ‘service recovery’. This provides a more customer focused approach through timely handling. The process facilitates a more transparent and independent complaints system, enabling effective local oversight. The complaint resolution team is able to identify patterns of dissatisfactions within victim complaints, by area, by crime type and various other trends to address systemic issues and help improve service delivery to the public.

Independent Custody Visitors

The Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme is a volunteer programme that monitors the treatment of people in police custody. It is a legal requirement for Police & Crime Commissioners to ensure independent custody visits take place. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner facilitates a Hertfordshire based ICV scheme so that visits are conducted at custody suites in Stevenage and Hatfield.

Volunteers are independent of the police service and visit police stations unannounced and at any time of the day or night. They will inspect the upholding of detainee rights, their wellbeing and health, as well as auditing the condition of the custody suites. It is the PCCs statutory responsibility to respond to any concerns raised.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Home Secretary

The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for all Home Office business including policing. The Home Secretary and their Office set the Strategic Policing Requirements for Police to follow nationally, these include both national and international priorities for police. The Home Secretary also funds a range of initiatives to successful Police and Crime Commissioners to carry out innovative work locally such as Hotspot Policing and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions.

Police & Crime Commissioner

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing. PCCs aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their police force area. They are elected by the public to hold Chief Constables and the force to account, making the police answerable to the communities they serve. PCCs ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible and are improving local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust. They work in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

Under the terms of the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), PCCs must:

- secure efficient and effective police for their area.
- appoint the Chief Constable, hold them to account for running the force, and if necessary, dismiss them.
- set the police and crime objectives for their area through a police and crime plan;
- set the force budget and determine the precept;
- contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary; and
- bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up.

Chief Constable

The Chief Constable has overall responsibility for leading the Constabulary, creating a vision and setting direction and culture that builds public and organisational confidence and trust, and enables the delivery of a professional, effective and efficient policing service. Strategic direction for the force must have due regard for the Police and Crime Plan, and the Chief Constable is held to account on their progress against the Plan. The Chief Constable holds direct accountability for the operational delivery of policing services and the effective command and leadership of the policing response to crime, and major and critical incidents.

Police & Crime Panel

The Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel has been established to scrutinise, challenge and support the work of the Commissioner. The Commissioner is required to consult with the Panel on his plans for policing, as well as the precept (the money collected from council tax for policing) and certain key appointments. Broxbourne Borough Council is the host local authority for the Panel and provides administrative and other support to the Panel and its members. All [agendas, papers and minutes](#) from previous Panel meetings are available.