



Police and Crime Panel – November 2025

Briefing on Safer Town Centres Initiative

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan 2025-29: *Fighting Crime, Making Hertfordshire Safer* sets out a clear strategic ambition to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in town centres to ensure they are places where businesses want to invest, and people want to spend their time.

The PCC launched the Safer Town Centres initiative in June 2025 to coincide with the Home Office programme. The initiative ran for 3-months (30 June 2025 to 31 September 2025) and was delivered in partnership with Hertfordshire Constabulary and district councils across 18 town centres and 3 high priority parks across Hertfordshire¹ (please see the attached summary report). It aimed to:

- implement measures to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour
- restore community confidence by doing this
- bring together police, local councils, trading standards, charities and other groups to deliver a partnership approach to crime prevention and community safety

The initiative sought to build on the success of Operation Hotspot which has reduced crime, ASB and violence in town centres by 14.5% over the previous 12-month period.

A review of the data for the summer period tells us that the initiative contributed to making our town centres a safer place for residents of Hertfordshire to live, work and spend time. Notable impact includes:

- **6% reduction in overall crime**
- **6% reduction in theft shoplifting** – meaning 144 fewer offences in our shops and businesses.
- **28% reduction in criminal damage**, resulting in 36 fewer victims over the summer period.
- **Halved** the number of public order offences, meaning 50% fewer people suffered abuse or hate.
- **13% fewer business burglary reports** - shops were safer and retail staff less at risk.
- **66% fewer reports of cycle theft**, an issue often of concern for local residents.

A recent presentation to the Home Office showed that Hertfordshire had performed very positively and stood out when compared to other parts of the country.

¹ Town centres/areas which are eligible for funded activity are: Berkhamsted, Borehamwood, Bishop's Stortford, Harpenden, Hatfield (Galleria), Hemel Hempstead, Hertford, Hitchin, Hoddesdon, Letchworth Garden City, Rickmansworth, St Albans, Stevenage (Forum, Old Town), Waltham Cross, Ware, Watford (High Street), Welwyn Garden City. High priority parks are Hartham Common (Hertford) & Cassiobury Park (Watford).

The Public Surveys (pre and post the interventions) showed positive change and improvement over the 3-month period around safety and visibility. It confirmed that the Safer Town Centre initiative provides a strong foundation for further action to build trust and enhance safety.

Following the successful Safer Town Centre initiative, the PCC will be supporting the 'Winter of Action' initiative which builds on the summer success over the period from 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026 to support the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. This phase is designed to sustain the momentum that has been achieved over the summer while adapting to seasonal pressures in town centres - busier retail activity, festive events, increased socialising, and heightened risks of shop theft, crime and disorder as part of the night-time economy and violence against women and girls – guided by local intelligence and partnership insight.

Attachment - Safer Town Centres Initiative: Review and Outcomes (November 2025)