



**Crime & Disorder Scrutiny
Committee**

Members of the **Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee** of **Gravesham Borough Council** are summoned to attend a meeting to be held at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1AU on **Thursday, 26 October 2023 at 7.30 pm** when the business specified in the following agenda is proposed to be transacted.

S Walsh
Head of Democratic Services

Agenda

Part A

Items likely to be considered in Public

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)
3. Declarations of Interest
4. To consider whether any items in Part A of the Agenda should be considered in private or any items in Part B in public
5. Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference (Pages 11 - 12)
6. Tackling Nuisance Bikes and Vehicles Verbal Report
7. Safer Streets Project (Pages 13 - 24)
8. Policing Update Verbal Report
9. Suggestions for future Topic Reviews Verbal Report
10. Latest published Minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel (Pages 25 - 32)

Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend Kent DA12 1AU

11. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

12. Exclusion

To move, if required, that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from any items included in Part B of the agenda because it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted that if members of the public are present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. Part B Items likely to be considered in private.

Part B

Items likely to be considered in private

None.

Members

Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)

Cllr Lyn Milner (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 Deborah Croxton
 Aaron Elliott
 Gary Harding
 Jo Hart
 Karina O'Malley
 Leslie Pearton
 Tony Rana
 Christina Rolles
 Ektaveen Thandi
 Frank Wardle

Substitutes: To be notified

Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee**Tuesday, 14 March 2023****7.30 pm****Present:**

Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)
Cllr Lyn Milner (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 John Caller
 Dakota Dibben
 Aaron Elliott
 Brian Francis
 Frank Wardle

Simon Hookway
Kath Donald
Will Lay
James Beautridge
Nikki Escudier
Stuart Wickens
Ben Clarke

Assistant Director (Communities)
Strategic Manager (CSU)
Chief Inspector, Kent Police
Inspector, Kent Police
Area Manager for Dartford and Gravesham, KFRS
Station Manager – Northfleet, KFRS
Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

48. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Leslie Pearton, Cllr Tony Rana and Cllr Brian Sangha.

49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 27 October 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

50. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

51. Community Safety Partnership - Response to C&D Topic Reports

The Assistant Director (Communities) explained to Members that following the completion of both the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence and Town Centre Crime Topic Reviews, the Committee agreed a series of findings and recommendations to be reported to the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) at its next meeting.

The report provided Members with the response of the CSP to the recommendations made and the steps that were already being and would be taken to progress them further information on the recommendations could be found on pages 12 to 14 of the report.

The Assistant Director (Communities) further informed Members that at the previous night's Community & Leisure Committee meeting, a report was considered on the new Serious Violence Duty Policy Statement. Members of this Committee may find that report interesting and were encouraged to read it as it outlined the responsibilities of the Council as a specified authority following the enactment of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 to work collaboratively to tackle serious violent crime. The Council would work closely with its partners through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to manage the Council's obligations under that duty to tackle serious violent crime. The Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee will have a role in scrutinising how the CSP addresses this duty.

The Committee were happy with the responses to the recommendations by the Community Safety Partnership and Members that were on the Committee following the election in May were implored to ensure that the actions were correctly implemented.

The Chair added that Members was able to revisit areas previously considered at the Committee and discuss the topic reviews again in the future to consider any further actions required as well as monitor the progress of any outstanding actions.

The Strategic Manager (CSU) advised that a report detailing the work that had been achieved so far could be submitted to the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee in October 2023.

Members noted the response of the CSP to the recommendations made by the Committee's Topic Reviews.

52. Policing update

The Committee were given an oral update on Police work in the Borough by Inspector James Beautridge from Kent Police.

The Inspector, Kent Police further outlined the following key points on various areas of crime:

Violent Crime

- The overall level of violent crime in Gravesham remained low in relation to the other Boroughs in Kent but the media tend to increase the public's safety fears of Gravesend with stories that weren't factually true.
- There was one specific recent example of a serious crime which Members may already be aware of; a serious incident occurred in Parrock Street in which a knife was used, and a vehicle was set alight. Six offenders were arrested within the hour of the incident and four of them are currently in remand in prison awaiting a court date for their trial. In light of that incident, foot patrols with officers in uniform were increased in the area over the following few days to reassure the public and section 60 powers were enacted which allowed officers to search suspicious people in the town for any weapons.

Town Centre Policing

- Car theft rates had risen in the Town Centre related to a spate of specific incidents; the offender's modus operandi was breaking the windows of cars and stealing valuables from within the car. The Town Centre Police Team conducted extensive inquiries with victims, acquired ring doorbell footage, CCTV footage and investigated any stolen bank cards. Following a week of those extensive inquiries, the offender was identified and revealed to be a person travelling from London to Gravesend to commit the crimes; the offender was charged, sentenced and was now in prison
- An armed robbery occurred in Valley Drive; a man entered a shop and robbed the shop while brandishing a knife. The Town Centre Policing Team was deployed and within half hour of the crime, the suspect was located and is now in prison
- The Town Centre Police Team, consisting of two PC's and two PCSOS, had made 58 arrests in the six months which amounted to 114 charges for a range of offences
- Some concern was raised by the public regarding the Town Centre Policing Teams being disbanded under the new Neighbourhood Policing Plan however that was not the case; the new town centre wards would still have a certain number of PC's assigned to each ward, but it would be different officers than assigned currently. It would be a mixture of experienced officers and new recruits

Southern Valley Golf Course

- The site was abandoned, and the Police had received daily reports from residents that off road bikes were causing a nuisance on the site. Reassurance foot patrols had been carried out and since the site had been secured, there had been no more reports of nuisance off road bikes

Prevention/Youth Work

- Officers had given talks to local schools on the dangers of selling and taking drugs, county lines exploitation and criminals using young people's bank accounts to launder money. The feedback received from the schools was positive and the young people were very interactive with officers
- Officers were working with school staff to manage concerns around exploitation of young people by county lines dealers

Rural Policing

- The current rural PCSO had left the force and a new PC officer was due to start in June 2023 but she had already actually started her new role; the PC officer will continue to visit local shops and farms in the rural parts of Gravesham to introduce herself; the PC had been well received by the community so far
- The PC officer was one of thirteen beat officers who had specific wards and would increase the visibility of the Police in the Borough from June onwards

Lawrence Square

- There had been signs of youth exploitation in Lawrence Square by a prolific individual; Kent Police had worked with the Council and youth services to engage with the young people there which, combined with increased visibility of uniformed officers, had reduced anti-social behaviour reports.

Queen Street

- Due to reports of nuisance street drinkers, increased foot patrols were carried out in Queen Street. Kent Police also visited local shops with the Council's Licensing Department to warn them not to sell strong alcohol to the nuisance drinkers

The Chief Inspector, Kent Police concluded that crime, as a whole, was down across the District and criminal charge rates have risen which showed that Policing in Gravesham was headed in the right direction.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Inspector and Inspector for Kent Police explained that:

- The vehicle set alight during the incident in Parrock Street was one of the offenders' vehicles; the incident was isolated to two conflicting groups and there was no threat to the public. The reason for the groups conflict was currently unknown
- In response to a Members suggestion regarding managing traffic in the area following the incident in Parrock Street, the Inspector advised that the officers did the best they could immediately following the situation but they would take her feedback on board
- Under the new neighbourhood policing model there would be six PCSO's operating in Gravesham; the number had increased as two PCSO's had been inherited from Medway
- There were no PC's currently assigned to wards; following the new policing model there would be 13 PC's assigned to the new wards in Gravesham from June 2023 and they would be a mixture of new recruits and experienced officers. The website for Kent Police will include details on the PC's that had been assigned to each ward
- The new policing model was a historic way of policing by putting unformed officers on the streets; the Chief Constable of Kent Police had reviewed the neighbourhood policing model and felt that having officers 'on the beat', seen by the public and deterring criminals, was the most effective style of policing
- The public would be able to call the PCs on their Kent Police issued mobile phones, but they would not be around 24/7 to take calls; the public were still advised to call 999 if it was an emergency and 101 if action was required but it was not an emergency

The Committee raised concern about the public trust in the Police since the recent arrests of officers that had carried out serious violent crimes on women and queried what Kent Police would do to maintain the public trust in them and how it was ensured that officers were of a professional standard.

The Chief Inspector, Kent Police appreciated the Committee's concern and explained that the recent cases of corruption reported in the media had been in the Metropolitan Police and the Kent Police were a different force with far fewer incidents. Kent Police's vetting of new recruits had been recognised for being of the highest standard and regular checks were continued on officers throughout their time as a Police Officer. Multiple events to reassure the public had been held including 'Violence against Women' walk and talk events in which a number of Walk and Talk events were organised across the county so that officers could engage with as many women as possible and discuss how to reduce risk to them. In addition, the Counter Corruption Strategy and the forces processes were updated regularly to ensure the highest standard; the Chief Inspector concluded that the vast majority of police officers were hard working professional officers.

The Strategic Manager (CSU) further added that Gravesham had the highest rate of reported domestic abuse cases; the figures at 23 February 2023 showed that, compared to the previous 12 months, Gravesham was the only district in Kent that continued to see an increase in the number of reported domestic abuse cases. The continued increase of report rates was a sign of the ongoing confidence of women and girls in Gravesham to come forward and report their abusers to the Police. In response to a Member's question, the Strategic Manager (CSU) was unsure if the charge rate for domestic abusers had also risen in line with the reported cases but would investigate and circulate the information to the Committee.

In response to a Member's question about Members being informed of serious incidents in their wards, the Chief Inspector advised that the most effective communication method was for him to continue to inform the Chief Executive of any serious crime in the Borough and then the Chief Executive would cascade the information to Members.

The Chair thanked the Inspector and the Chief Inspector for their presentation and asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to their Policing Teams.

53. Kent Fire & Rescue Service update

The Committee were given a presentation on the operational activity and prevention work of the Kent Fire & Rescue Service in Gravesham for 2022-23.

The presentation had been published and could be accessed through the below link:

- [Kent Fire & Rescue Service Presentation](#)

Following the presentation, the Kent Fire & Rescue Service Managers answered Members' questions:

- The Kent Fire & Rescue Service educated young people at schools and that included education on fire safety, misuse of flammables, the danger of fires and seasonal activity related to fires such as Halloween and bonfire night etc. The Area Manager for Dartford and Gravesham, KFRS was happy to look into the education schedule and see if schools were approached before Halloween/Fireworks Night to specially discuss the dangers of fireworks in order to deter ASB behaviour. Future education sessions at schools could also utilise Kent Police messaging around the dangerous use of flammable products
- The Building Safety Team were responsible for looking into premises where flammable products were being sold and were able to give advice to shop owners or warnings about the selling of age-related products to underage children. Members were encouraged to report any shops that they were concerned about selling age related products to underage children to the Building Safety Team. The contact information for the team was available through the Kent Fire & Rescue Service website
- The Building Safety Team carried out some work investigating problem premises last year with the Council
- Following the fire at the New Inn on Queen Street, the KFRS would have only been involved in the emergency phase, the building was then handed over to the responsible person during the recovery phase. Due to the building being Listed it

required additional steps to be taken by the property owner which delayed any additional work being undertaken following the KFRS making the building safe. The building remains had to be preserved and experts were brought in to decide the best way forward without further damaging or destroying the building; options such as pushing in the walls and flattening the building were not allowed due to it being Listed. Preserving Listed Buildings was a very complicated process and would have been a reason for the delays in continuing any work to the building after the fire

- The Building Safety Team were aware of all the stacked-up tyres at the Canal Basin, and they had already visited the site and tested all of the hydrants. Staff from the Northfleet Station had revisited the site a week ago and taken further pictures of the stacked tyres and forwarded them to the Building Safety Team again so that they could continue to look into and determine what action could be taken
- Information sharing between organisations was essential in the long term and the Kent Fire & Rescue Service had a great relationship with the Council and the Community Safety Partnership
- The Kent Fire & Rescue Service would not refer to an injured party as a customer, they would be referred to as a casualty or a patient if they were involved in any sort of medical care
- Very few calls made to the Kent Fire & Rescue Service were malicious however there were many calls classed as 'false alarms' which were for things such as burnt cooking which had set an alarm off or a bonfire that was an attended event. The calls were well intended by worried callers, but they did not require any action by the Kent Fire & Rescue Service. Generally, those callers classed as 'false alarms' would receive fire safety advice from a member of staff to make sure it didn't happen again
- There is a number on the website to arrange home safety visits, but the majority of the visits were arranged through the engagement team at local events, meetings, and local interactions with people. Operational crews also gathered information and data on properties with over sixties living in so that the engagement team could visit them and offer them a home safety visit. Houses were knocked on three times at different times and if no one answered following three separate door knocks then a sealed letter was posted to them promoting what the team did and a direct contact number for them to call to arrange a visit

The Station Manager – Northfleet, KFRS apologised for not including information pertaining to the rural areas of Gravesham and agreed to include the statistics and mapping of fires in the rural areas at the next update to the Committee.

Concern was raised by a Member regarding street art on the flank wall of a tattoo shop on the corner of Trafalgar Road, Gravesend that is located opposite a primary school and had a piece of graffiti on the face of the shop depicting a man smoking cannabis. The Chair agreed it was a cause for concern and should be raised with Planning Enforcement who would be able to determine the correct course of action for the graffiti to be removed.

The Chair asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to staff at the Kent Fire & Rescue Service for their hard work.

54. Minutes of the latest published Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (and link to Full Agenda to be provided).

The Committee were presented with the minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel meeting held on Tuesday, 06 December 2022.

The Chair advised that the minutes of the most recent meeting held on 01 February 2023 were available on the KCC website. Cllr Mochrie-Cox was the Council representative on the Panel, and he was happy to take questions from Members to the Panel meetings.

The Committee noted the minutes.

55. Exclusion

Resolved pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded during the following item of business because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that, if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

56. Community Safety Partnership - Strategic Assessment

The Committee was reminded that the report was a confidential document, and no information was to be shared with anyone outside the Committee.

The Committee was provided with a Summary of Key Findings of the annual Strategic Assessment prepared on behalf of the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Assessment primarily considered levels of crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other issues pertinent to community safety for the 12-month period ending 30 September 2022 and drew comparisons with levels recorded in both the years of the pandemic as well as the pre-pandemic year ending 30 September 2019. Gravesham's position was considered against that of other Kent Districts and Medway and where possible, data had been provided by Council Ward to enable a better understanding of issues that may be more prevalent at a local level.

The Strategic Manager (CSU) advised that the data was six months out of date and provided Members with more recent figures.

The Committee held a robust discussion on the figures, the perception of Gravesend Town Centre and the need to promote the good work of the Police and the Council in order to make people feel safer about coming to the Town.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Manager (CSU) for a comprehensive report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:00pm.

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Annex 1.21: Terms of Reference for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

The Council has appointed the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee as set out below.

Membership: 10 Members of the Council. In addition, the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 allow the Committee to co-opt people and to give them voting rights. This power will only be exercised with the approval of the Council.

Terms of reference

1. To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.
2. To require information to be provided by partners, and require attendance at meetings.
3. To require partners (responsible authorities and cooperating partners) to respond to reports within 28 days and 'have regard' to recommendations.
4. To make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.
5. To deal with Councillor Calls for Actions (CcfAs) which relate to crime and disorder matters. This was previously referred to in the report submitted to Council in respect of CcfAs (para 4.2) on 6 October 2009.
6. To act as a Crime and Disorder Committee constituted pursuant to section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

Notwithstanding the power to co-opt members, the Committee may in any case invite such other persons as appear appropriate to attend and take part in deliberations without the right to vote, subject to the nondisclosure of confidential and exempt information (as defined in the Access to Information Rules set out in Annex 2.2 to this Constitution).

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 27 June 2023.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill OBE (Chairman), Mr G Sandher MBE (Vice Chairman), Cllr M Blakemore, Mrs E Bolton, Cllr P Cole, Cllr P Feacey, Cllr Mrs J Hollingsbee, Cllr E Jayes (substitute for Cllr R Palmer), Mr J Meade, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr C Nolan, Cllr T Osbourne, Cllr N Warne and Cllr R Wells

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive), Mr R Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer), and Mr N Wickens (PCC's Head of Policy Coordination and Research)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Ms L Tricker (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**89. Election of Chair**

(Item 2)

1. The Scrutiny Research Officer asked for nominations for Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
2. Cllr Hollingsbee proposed and Cllr Feacey seconded that Mr Hill be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Mr Hill be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

90. Election of Vice-Chair

(Item 3)

1. The Chair proposed and Cllr Wells seconded that Mr Sandher be elected Vice Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Mr Sandher be elected Vice Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

91. Membership

(Item 4)

1. The Scrutiny Research Officer outlined the following changes to the membership of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel:

- Cllr Connie Nolan has replaced Cllr Ashley Clark (Canterbury)
- Cllr Charlotte Zosseder has replaced Cllr Oliver Richardson (Dover)
- Cllr Mike Blakemore has replaced Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee (Folkestone and Hythe)
- Cllr Lauren Edwards has replaced Cllr Habib Tejan (Medway)
- Cllr Perry Cole has replaced Cllr Peter Fleming (Sevenoaks)
- Cllr Heather Keen has replaced Cllr George Kup (Thanet). Noted that Cllr Keen will be unable to take her seat so a replacement will be found.
- Cllr Tristan Osbourne has replaced Cllr John Burden (Medway co-optee)

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the changes in membership.

POST MEETING NOTE: Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee and Cllr Jordan Meade joined the Panel filling the Conservative vacancies.

92. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
(Item 6)

No declarations were made.

93. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 18 April 2023
(Item 7)

Mr Sandher stated that he had attended the meeting but had not been included on the official minutes. It was confirmed this amendment would be made.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

94. Neighbourhood Policing Review
(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner presented the report which outlined Kent Police's Neighbourhood Policing Review which had begun 15 months ago under the previous Chief Constable. He said he had received an assurance from the previous Chief Constable that the model would be good as, if not better than the previous one. Acknowledging the loss of PCSOs was regrettable and not a choice he would have made if the circumstances different, he added it was one where he thought communities would see benefits in having police officers instead. The proposed model and implementation would be structured around five main pillars: the Beat Team with ward-based police officers replacing PCSOs on an almost like-for-like basis; the Child-Centred Policing Team which would work with schools and youth centres had seen a small uplift in officers and the number of PCSOs retained; the Neighbourhood Task Force which continued to evolve the Task Force model, but for every district and where PCSOs would remain; the Rural Task Force which was previously considered a central team but was now part of the model and would help develop links with the ward-based Beat Officers; and the Prevention Hub which would focus on anti-social behaviour and licensing at a

county level to support Districts and Divisions. He explained that a number of PCSOs would regrettably be lost under the new model to reduce spend and use the council tax precept effectively, but some PCSOs would be replaced with police officers, and the force would continue to consider areas with the greatest need and the level of resourcing they received. Advising that every ward would have a named police officer, the Commissioner said there was a need to clearly define what the ward was and this would be communicated to councillors and members of the public as soon as possible. Some ward-based police officers had already begun their role, but implementation of the model would be phased until 2024. He affirmed that the ward-based police officers would be better ringfenced and Kent Police would work to ensure they remained in their areas as much as possible.

2. The Chair thanked the Commissioner for his assurance that wards would be clearly defined, and this would be communicated. He felt that it was important for the new ward-based police officers to build a connection with their communities, as PCSOs had previously done. He sought assurances that ward-based police officers could successfully tackle low-level crime and assist vulnerable people. He also asked how long the new police officers would remain in their posts, and if they would be communicating regularly with elected ward members. The Commissioner explained that it was very important to maintain a local beat. The new training programme for neighbourhood policing would also teach new officers the different skills they would need including problem solving and working with the community, and these officers would have more powers than PCSOs so would have increased intervention abilities. He agreed that continuity of police officers in the community was important, so Kent Police had tried to encourage officers to apply for new neighbourhood policing roles where they had previously expressed an interest in this field of work.
3. A Member shared their concern regarding the continuity of ward-based police officers and asked how long a police officer would remain, and if data regarding how often they were moved from their ward could be reported publicly. The Commissioner confirmed that a police officer could be moved if needed, but data regarding this issue could be shared at the Performance and Delivery Board once the model was embedded. He added that several of the new ward-based police officers were formerly PCSOs so already had longstanding links with their communities.
4. The Vice Chair sought reassurance that Kent would not be impacted by the long lead in for implementation of the full model, which was scheduled for September 2024. He also asked that the ward-based police officers link in with charities, business organisations and faith groups to better understand their communities. The Commissioner explained that September 2024 was a worst-case scenario, and the goal was to have an increasing percentage of roles filled at key dates up until early 2024, and this would be monitored closely. He added that ward-based police officers would be engaging with their communities through groups such as NextDoor and My Community Voice, as well as directly. The Vice Chair asked what would happen when the ward-based police officer was on annual leave or sick leave. The Commissioner agreed that it was important for residents, in the absence of their ward-based police officer, to be able to contact somebody. He agreed

an action to understand what would happen in the scenario of absence or illness of a ward-based police officer, and who residents could contact.

5. The Commissioner explained, following a question from a Member, that 101 received approximately 30,000 calls per month and used to be the predominant method of communication with the police, but it was now 999. The new Chief Constable was working with the Commissioner's office to improve accessibility to 101 and reduce call attrition to less than 10% using a flex resourcing model during peak times, which was successfully reducing wait times and providing residents with a better service. The Performance and Delivery Board was regularly monitoring 101 and it was important that members of the public knew that 101 was an option to report non-emergency enquiries.
6. A Member asked if implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Model could be brought back to the Panel throughout the year. She also queried the morale in the neighbourhood policing model, and if some staff had already moved roles. The Commissioner confirmed that he was happy to bring regular updates to the Panel, as the implementation progressed. He also confirmed that the review had impacted morale amongst some officers and staff who had left for other roles such as with Border Force. The length of time from the announcement of the review to its implementation had meant some officers had chosen to leave, but there were no compulsory redundancies, although some staff had chosen voluntary redundancy. He acknowledged the challenge of improving morale, as this was the largest review since 2017, but many impacted staff had received their preferences and the role they sought.
7. A Member stressed the importance of communication when undertaking reviews, particularly communications with PCSOs. The Commissioner agreed that initial communications with PCSOs regarding the review had been poor, and the force had tried to retain as many PCSOs as possible or train them to become police officers. He agreed that there were communications lessons to be learnt from the review.
8. The Commissioner confirmed, following a question from a Member, that the Chief Constable was working to embed a culture change in neighbourhood policing through increased supervision, support and opportunities for officers. He explained that the force was also considering changes to ways of working through remote deployment, meaning police officers would not need to go back to their police station to do paperwork and could work from anywhere with a secure Wi-Fi connection, such as fire stations or parish council offices, as well as working from other police stations not in their ward.
9. The Chair confirmed that an update on neighbourhood policing would come back to the Panel, and it was agreed that a report would be presented at April's meeting, but verbal updates could come before then if necessary.

RESOLVED to note the report and agree to a further update at the April 2024 meeting.

95. Update on Fraud

(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner presented the report which highlighted the prevalence of fraud, as it equated to 40% of all crime reported. The outcomes of fraud in Kent were better than other comparable areas due to increased investment in the Serious Crime and Economic Crime Unit. He explained that Action Fraud remained the main reporting tool for fraud crime, but only 5% of reports made to Action Fraud were passed to the police for investigation, as many were filtered out due to high criteria for submission. The fraud teams within Kent Police worked closely with partner organisations such as local council's and trading standards teams, as well as with the police's prevention team to support businesses and raise public awareness of fraud. Victim support for fraud was co-ordinated at both a national and local level, and forces worked together to share best practice. The Commissioner confirmed that the national Fraud Strategy had been published in May which introduced a new Fraud Squad and increased international working, and an update had been received at the Performance and Delivery Board. He summarised and stated that there remained challenges with fraud as not enough cases were passed from Action Fraud to the police and confidence in Action Fraud amongst the public remained low.
2. The Chair echoed the importance of partnership working, and asked what work could be undertaken at a local level to improve confidence in the police's handling of fraud. The Commissioner agreed that local fraud detection was needed, but the National Fraud Strategy and improvements to Action Fraud should improve residents' confidence.

RESOLVED to note the report.

96. Violence Against Women and Girls Inquiry - update

(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report highlighting that his office had undertaken an inquiry on the issue, including a large survey and a big data exercise. The results from the big data exercise had been reported in a previous paper to the Panel but had found key indicators for who was more likely to perpetrate violence against women and girls. A roundtable meeting had been held to scrutinise the proposals and recommendations from the inquiry before the outcomes were published last year which were now being implemented. The Commissioner highlighted some of the recommendations from the inquiry that were being delivered such as officer verification checks; the launch of the StreetSafe tool; and more comprehensive safeguards. He explained the Walk and Talk events and the launch of his Victim Voice initiative, as well as school intervention programmes and victim satisfaction surveys. He summarised and felt that there had been good progress implementing some of the recommendations, but there was a need to refocus efforts on others. He added that the national Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy currently included men and boys but felt that there needed to be a separate national strategy for men and boys and separate funding

streams.

2. Mr Meade declared an interest that he was the Chairman of the Gravesham Street Pastors Charity, which had been mentioned in the report.
3. A Member questioned what work was being undertaken to ensure the Walk and Talk events were reflective and representative of the local community, and what outreach could be done to include young people in these events. The Commissioner agreed that early Walk and Talk events had not been impactful as they had not been representative of the community, and this had been due to poor communication. He stated that the team were now using Twitter, Facebook, NextDoor and My Community Voice to promote these events and increase numbers of people attending. He added that the Walk and Talk events were also being more proactive and were directly engaging with members of the public, and being held in busier areas.
4. The Commissioner, in response to a question from a Member, stated that the team were now working to improve the follow-up to crimes and the investigation of crimes against women and girls, as these areas would improve residents' confidence in the police. The team worked closely with the Crown Prosecution Service to receive pre-charge advice, but the charge rate for rape and sexual assaults remained low. The Commissioner stated that Violence Against Women and Girls was a priority in his Police and Crime Plan which was a standing item at the Performance and Delivery Board, and that he met regularly with the Chief Constable to discuss the implementation of the recommendations from the inquiry.
5. A Member expressed concern that young people were not engaging with programmes for schools, and asked if the police were the right organisation to be running the Schools Intervention Programme. The Commissioner stated that this issue had been recognised amongst the force, and lockdowns during the pandemic had affected young men's behaviour, particularly an increase in misogyny and sexualisation of women on social media. He stated that the police worked in partnership with organisations such as the St Giles Trust to deliver programmes in schools and provide targeted responses to developing trends.
6. A Member highlighted the Kasey report and attitudes towards women amongst police officers and asked if Kent Police had undertaken any work regarding this. The Commissioner stated that Kent Police had responded to the Casey report by uplifting the central vetting and counter-corruption teams, as well as introducing an internal whistleblowing procedure. He stated that some officers in Kent Police had been disciplined or sacked following internal investigation in response to the Kasey report. Verification checks had been implemented immediately after the murder of Sarah Everard and this service had been used by members of the public.

RESOLVED to note the update.

97. Questions to the Commissioner
(Item D1)

Question 1

As per the Commissioners Police and Crime Plan can the Commissioner detail and explain how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for the perceived lack of Kent Police resourcing and focus in tackling the ongoing issue of ASB in our communities and our town centres with specific focus on motorbikes, mopeds, e-scooters, e-bikes and so call off road 'dirt' bikes which is perceived by residents to be of little or no priority to Kent Police with ongoing incidents and cases continuing for weeks, months and sometimes years.

(Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, Gravesham Borough Council)

1. In response to the question, the Commissioner assured the Panel that he continued to hold the Chief Constable to account through the Performance and Delivery Board. He stated that as part of their Safer Summer campaign, the force would be prioritising anti-social behaviour (ASB), road safety and related issues, adding the Deputy Chief Constable had provided and assurance that a plan was also being put together around ASB caused by off-road motorbikes specifically. Noting that Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were being sought in Medway and Dartford regarding this issue, he confirmed that it was a priority for the police moving forward. He stated that e-scooters were not road-safe or road legal, and this would be enforced through the police, adding his view was that they should be seized and crushed as he did not there to be a perception that they had effectively been decriminalised. Noting that enforcement powers around anti-social use of vehicles were the responsibility of the police, he said that a partnership approach was also often helpful to prevent activity such as the erection of gates and pursuit of PSPOs.

Question 2

Trust in the Police is very important to the public and recently Andy Cooke, Head of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) said that 'trust in the police was hanging by a thread and forces are failing to act on recommendations'. Can the commissioner outline to us how he is holding the Chief Constable to account on addressing this and what results he has seen as a result of holding the Chief Constable to account on these?

(Mrs Elaine Bolton, Independent Member)

2. Following the question, the Commissioner confirmed that trust and confidence in the police was paramount. He stated that he was holding the Chief Constable to account through HMICFRS reports, which provided independent assessments and had seen areas of improvement. He felt there was more work to do, for example improvements in the force control room; timely investigations being completed; improved working with the Crown Prosecution Service.

RESOLVED to note the responses to questions.

98. Future work programme
(Item E1)

RESOLVED to note the report.

99. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meeting held on 15 March 2023
(Item F1)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Board held on 15 March 2023 be noted.