



To: Police Accountability Board

From: Chief Executive

Date: 26 February 2026

SAFE COMMUNITIES DEEP DIVE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share the draft Deep Dive Report into delivery against the priorities in the **Safe Communities** pillar within the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Plan 2025-28 (the “Plan”) with the Police Accountability Board (“the Board”).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board is recommended to review and approve.

3. Background – SAFE COMMUNITIES

- 3.1 Successful delivery of the Police and Crime Plan relies on a shared ambition between the Constabulary, external partners and stakeholders. The Commissioner continues to hold the Chief Constable to account through his Police Accountability Board (“PAB”) (formerly known as his Business Co-ordination Board) which enables him to fulfil his core statutory duty.

4. Delivery against the priorities

4.1 **Police Officer Visibility** – the Constabulary remains committed to neighbourhood policing ensuring all residents have a named police officer dedicated to their area and that they respond to public enquiries relating to local concerns within 24 hours. The full contact details of Neighbourhood teams are published clearly with photos on the Constabulary website and searchable by district area and postcode. Between June 2025 and January 2026, the Constabulary received £749,456 from the Neighbourhood Guarantee with thirty additional officers now aligned to neighbourhood policing teams across the county.

As set out in the Delivery Plan Report in September 2025, a refreshed approach to neighbourhood policing in [Peterborough city centre](#) was launched in July 2025. Quarterly engagement events regularly promoted through the Constabulary's social media channels enable local people to meet their neighbourhood policing teams to raise concerns and help shape future priorities. Safer Schools Officers have recently been integrated into these local teams. This increases police visibility in communities and provides expertise in tackling local problems facing young people.

At the Commissioner's PAB in January 2026, the Constabulary reported on progress against the national [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee](#). Between October and the end of January 2026 **an additional 12,550 hours of visible patrols** were carried out by police officers or PCSOs in hot spot areas. These additional patrols were funded through the Hot Spot Action Fund ensuring that police are visible in the hottest locations at the hottest times.

A typical snapshot of weekly neighbourhood officer activity can include city and town centre patrols, visits to schools, speed checks and meetings with local MPs. Other examples of positive outcomes include:

- Officers from Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood Team responding to reports of a man walking through the town covered in blood on 13th February. Thanks to quick work, those suspected to be involved were identified and located. After safely stopping their vehicle – which included the use of a stinger – all three occupants were

arrested at the scene. One man has since been charged with GBH and is now going through the courts.

- Peterborough Neighbourhood officers joined forces with Peterborough City Council enforcement officers in January at Wellington car boot sale due to ongoing concerns about the sale of suspected stolen items. A haul of goods worth just over £8,000 was seized with investigations ongoing.

With more than 45,000 community engagements with members of the public between June 2025 and January 2026, examples of outcomes include 312 arrests, 194 stop searches, 230 ASB Powers used and 91 Public Space Protection Orders given.

The below table includes a breakdown of additional visible patrol hours across each of the hot spot locations.

Hotspot	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Total
Cambridge City Centre	60	144	68	165	233	156	430	375	355	1,985
Cambridge - Regent Street	10	23	11	24	47	31	52	42	2	243
Cambridge - Grafton Centre	2	20	11	22	56	25	37	58	21	251
Ely - City Centre/Riverside	0	125	133	83	157	154	123	211	87	1,073
Wisbech Town Centre/Norfolk Street	5	53	26	16	32	71	151	204	129	686
Huntingdon Town Centre	0	46	30	51	75	81	81	158	58	580
St Neots Town Centre	0	0	29	32	86	48	94	120	248	656
Peterborough City Centre	45	194	157	84	144	262	387	340	167	1,779
Peterborough - Viersen Platz/Rivergate	0	21	26	34	30	32	21	42	9	214
Peterborough - Lincoln Road	7	22	46	51	77	106	57	129	45	539
Peterborough Knife Hex	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	25	63	95

- 4.2 **Improving response and communication** - significant improvements in call handling performance (an area previously identified for improvement by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services) have taken place over the last two years. Work to improve call answering times has led to sustained improvements in the average wait time to two seconds for 999 calls over the twelve months to December 2025, (down from four seconds a year ago). The long-term trend of 101 call volumes continues to fall with the twelve months to December 2025 seeing 4.6% fewer calls than the previous year with the average caller wait time improving from seven seconds to six seconds.

Police response times improved with the Constabulary achieving an average 'immediate grade' response time (incidents requiring an 'immediate' response include threats to life or serious crimes in progress) of 16 minutes over the twelve months to December 2025 – a one-minute improvement from the 12 months to December 2024 (17 minutes) and within the force's self-imposed target of 17 minutes. In addition, the average time to respond to a 'priority grade' incident (serious incidents requiring a prompt police presence but with no immediate threat to life) was 48 minutes - a significant improvement from 59 minutes during the same period in 2024.

The Commissioner receives regular updates from the Constabulary on **improvements in technology**. This includes a regional project to appoint a supplier to develop a new Record Management System. The business-critical system will facilitate all day-to-day policing business including crime and intelligence recording and custody and case preparation. Work is ongoing to develop a new telephony system which includes an automated process to capture call handling performance following a commitment to respond within 72 hours. The Constabulary currently has an interim process in place which is in part manually populated. Between July and September 2025, 90 phone enquiries were directed to local officers, one hundred per cent of calls were returned successfully, 60 per cent of calls were returned within 72 hours and 40 per cent outside the 72 hours window. It is worth noting that a call is not officially recorded as "returned" until the officer can speak with the caller. The Constabulary is developing a more sophisticated performance recording system to allow for calls returned but not answered to be represented in the data.

Firearms licensing - the timeliness of processing firearms and explosive licences licenses is an issue which continued to be highlighted to the Commissioner through his mailbox, during engagement events and through regular public contact in particular with those living in rural communities. The firearms licensing function has not provided a good standard of service to the public over a prolonged period because of unacceptable systemic issues.

Over the last twelve months, the Commissioner has continued to press for improvements on behalf of the public and scrutinise performance through his holding to account meetings with the former and current Chief Constable and through the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH) Strategic Alliance.

Following the recent '[accelerated cause for concern report](#)' from HMICFRS, the Commissioner is committed, alongside Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioners and the three Chief Constables to implementing the recommendations as speedily as possible – particularly those relating to risk. Implementation and outcomes continue to be monitored with an action plan in place to tackle the back log.

4.3 Securing a fairer deal for our police service – campaigning for a fairer funding for policing the county remains a key commitment for the Commissioner. While the government's recently announced Police Reform White Paper includes a commitment to review the way in which police funding is allocated, the current formula continues to create wide disparities of wealth between forces, with areas like Cambridgeshire – the fourth lowest funded in the county continuing to rely on local tax payers to 'prop up' policing services through the policing part of council tax (the "precept"). The Commissioner continues to highlight this disparity at every opportunity – with the policing minister, local MPs and stakeholders, Panel members and the public (through his recent Precept survey). While the majority of people responding to the Commissioner's survey agreed with his proposed increase, there were several views provided around the inadequacy of funding.

4.4 Preventing crime – to be updated following PAB.

4.5 Continue to listen to the views of the public – public engagement remains a core priority for the Commissioner. Knife crime, county lines and road safety were topics young people at three local schools raised when he asked them about their concerns during a round of visits to lessons at Hampton Gardens in Peterborough, Abbey College in Ramsey and Hinchingsbrook School in Huntingdon.

The Commissioner engaged with older residents through forums such as U3A, discussing his responsibilities and listening to concerns. Supporting this work, his Communities Policy Officer has attended Fenland's Golden Age Fair on two separate occasions and has facilitated community insight sessions with groups such as the Cambridgeshire Deaf Association and the Hong Kong community, providing safe spaces for open discussion, addressing local concerns, and challenging common myths about policing and the Commissioner's role.

In addition, members of the Commissioner's office routinely attend partnership meetings with local stakeholders to identify emerging issues and agree collective approaches to supporting communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This includes regular representation at community meetings held in new communities such as Northstowe, Milton and Cambourne outside Cambridge to listen to residents' concerns.

To mark National Volunteers' Week in June 2025, the Commissioner's team ran a week-long social media campaign to raise awareness of the many volunteering roles played by members of the community to keep our communities safe – whether Independent Custody Visitors, those who check on the welfare of police dogs, or those who volunteer for the Community Scrutiny Panel (CSP). The recruitment campaign was boosted following attention from BBC Online and attracted record numbers of interest - resulting in full Panel membership with a waiting list.

Listening to the views of people who live and work in rural communities

– the Commissioner and his team regularly meet with Cambridgeshire Countryside Watch who act as a vital link between the police and rural communities, providing eyes and ears on the ground, as well as helping to strengthen trust, improve communication and support preventative activity such as target hardening and increased reporting. In partnership with the Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT) and neighbourhood policing teams, the Commissioner also attended a round-table event with local farmers, providing a space to raise concerns and discuss the complexities of crime in rural communities particularly around county borders.

In September 2025, the Constabulary reaffirmed its commitment to tackling hare coursing by re-launching a robust crackdown on this and associated criminality. Working in partnership with Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, and the National Police Air Service, the force continues to take co-ordinated action under Operation Galileo to tackle the illegal activity.

The Constabulary's RCAT – led by one sergeant, eight constables, one PCSO and five Countryside Watch coordinators continues to work with partners to manage the prevention and detection of agricultural, environmental, heritage, illegal hunting, and wildlife crime.

Almost a year to the date when Cambridgeshire was targeted by unprecedented criminality related to hare coursing (January 2025), police quickly responded to multiple reports of the illegal activity following multiple reports of men and children poaching and trespassing with dogs on farmland just off Haddon Road in Haddon.

With assistance from the National Police Air Service (NPAS), the force's Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT) tracked the group as they moved through a wooded area opposite the A1(M). Several vehicles and items associated with poaching were seized. In total, forty individuals were dispersed from the area and will now be investigated for a number of rural and wildlife offences.

Business community - regular engagement with local business owners enables the Commissioner to understand emerging issues. Working closely with the Constabulary and town centre partners through shadowing foot patrols and visits to local businesses, the Commissioner maintains strong links with Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire Businesses Against Crime. These teams are based within the county's CCTV office providing a vital conduit between local businesses and policing by sharing intelligence affecting both the daytime and night-time economies. This collaborative approach is further demonstrated by the recent funding of the 'I Am Des' campaign, delivered with the Vision Zero Partnership, which works with pubs across the county to reduce drink driving by offering free or discounted drinks to designated drivers in registered premises.

Digital engagement – in the past 11 months the Commissioner’s team has ensured the concerns of local communities have guided his holding to account with the force but also shaped his digital engagement. Examples include timely Facebook posts such as signposting victim and witnesses impacted by the Huntingdon Train incident which took place on 31st October which reached over 21,000 people and just shy of 2,000 views on an Instagram post on the Commissioner’s support for ‘Project Grain Store’ driving home the importance of safety on rural roads. Timely content continues to be shared with stakeholders and influencers via the Commissioner’s LinkedIn account: just over eight hundred people read the Commissioner’s response to the government’s White Paper on Police Reform, and the same number viewed his response following the Huntingdon Train incident.

Messages and updates were also regularly targeted at the six district communications teams, with Parish Councillors, MPs and key partners for internal and external distribution.

More than 3,000 people continued to receive the PCC’s regular newsletter with additional thematic newsletters covering progress against his Plan – including early intervention and prevention, supporting victims and witnesses and keeping communities safe. With a current open rate of 30%, the Commissioner’s team continue to explore more effective channels and have recently updated subscriber topics to increase engagement.

The Commissioner continued to hold the Chief Constable to account through his PAB meetings for effective engagement between the Constabulary and the communities it serves.

Over the last 12 months, increased use of digital engagement by the Constabulary has led to increased reach. Three posts about the impact ‘silent 999s’ have on the Force Control Room reached 1.9 million people and four posts about the Herbert Protocol – designed to help locate individuals with dementia that go missing - reached 1.1 million.

Additionally, the Constabulary’s continued support for Channel 4’s **‘24 Hours in Police Custody’** continues to reach significant viewing numbers with 3.4

million people watching the first episode which covered the investigation into stalker Craig France.

Public contact – members of the public continue to be encouraged to contact the Commissioner about their concerns via telephone or email or in response to surveys. The totality of correspondence informs the Commissioner's programme of engagement and holding to account. It also enables a regular overview of emerging areas of concern and provides a temperature check of community safety. Between April 2025 and the middle of February 2026, the Commissioner received and responded to a total of **seventy-three pieces of correspondence pieces**. Frequently recurring issues included firearms licensing (which is mentioned in 7.1). Of the 738 enquiries, 284 and were operational issues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	
Contact Officer(s)	Catherine Kimberley, Head of Engagement and Communication.