

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Alasdair Keddie (Chair), Louise Bown (Vice-Chair), David Flagg, Simon Gibson, Louie O'Leary, Karen Rampton, Tony Trent, Sarah Williams and Carl Woode

Apologies: Ben Sargeaunt and Cllr Peter Sidaway

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Simon Bullock (Chief Executive, OPCC), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Adam Harrold (OPCC Director of Operations), John Miles (Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), David Sidwick (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Julie Strange (OPCC Chief Finance Officer)

58. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24th July 2025 were confirmed and signed.

59. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

60. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

61. Q1 Monitoring Report - (00:01:51) on the recording

The PCC reported on progress against the six priorities outlined in the Police and Crime Plan. Crime levels remained low, continuing a positive trend. Hotspot policing initiatives in Bournemouth and Weymouth had proven effective, with notable reductions in violence and increased visibility through targeted patrol hours. A specific operation on the B317 Coast Road led to several speeding drivers being apprehended, reflecting effective road policing. Addressing dwelling burglaries remained challenging. Police cadets had been involved in visibility efforts, and resources were balanced carefully to meet demands.

999 response times had improved. Extra funding allowed the recruitment of more officers by year-end, although Dorset remained one of the lowest-funded forces nationally. The PCC expressed gratitude but urged for further improvement. Community Contact Points were launched to enhance public engagement, supported by a newly formed Engagement Board. Concerns remained around 101

response times, particularly in secondary call handling. Improvements were underway.

Efforts to combat violent crime and high harm included focus on gateway drugs, support for knife crime reduction, and targeted interventions for at-risk 18-year-olds. While Dorset lacked a formal Violence Reduction Unit, work was underway to replicate its benefits.

Rural crime had decreased. Operation Galileo continued to safeguard county borders. Dorset Police led regional rural policing meetings and enhanced collaboration. Fly-tipping enforcement was boosted by the appointment of a dedicated Fly-Tipping Investigator, enabling more vehicle seizures and increased fines. Successes were noted in tackling agricultural crime and organised rural theft. Focus areas included a victim-led restorative justice service. Ongoing support for victims, including a Victims Champion post. A Youth Participation Strategy was launched, aiming to keep young people safe and engaged in education.

Dorset remained the second worst-funded force nationally. The PCC reiterated efforts to raise this issue with government and key stakeholders. Budget reprioritisation was underway, aiming to ensure the force could continue to deliver on its commitments despite financial pressures.

Questions from the Priority leads and Panel Members for Priority one – Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (00:17:08) on the recording

- Cllr Trent raised concerns about rising serious casualty figures despite a fall in fatal injuries. A change in reporting standards was noted as a possible cause.
- In response to questions from Cllr Woode, it was clarified that performance trends were only reset after three consecutive improving quarters.
- Cllr Keddie suggested further inquiry into casualty data trends for inclusion in future workplans.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members for Priority two – Make Policing More Visible and Connected (00:26:32) on the recording.

- Cllr Bown expressed dissatisfaction with 101 response times and asked for insight into what change could reduce figures. The PCC cited staffing, training, and seasonal surges as key challenges. Recruitment, retention, and a bid for funding to upgrade systems were in progress.
- Cllr Rampton questioned Dorset's comparative performance; the PCC confirmed there were no national statistics but aimed to reduce 101 waiting times to under 10 minutes by 2027.
- It was noted that seasonality had a significant impact on service delivery, particularly in relation to training needs during the summer months. The seasonal nature of demand was acknowledged as an important consideration.
- Cllr Woode queried what measures were in place under the Spotlight section, including the number of patrols, arrests, civil orders, and stop and searches.

- A question was raised regarding whether performance was at the expected level. It was confirmed that, given the current funding, the service was performing as hoped.
- Cllr Gibson requested clarification on the police Engagement Board – its purpose, membership, and current actions. It was explained that the board was force-run and attended by senior staff, including heads of communications. It aimed to ensure consistency across all areas.
- Cllr Gibson welcomed the progress and emphasised the importance of community contact points, particularly in making people feel safer in the evenings. In response, it was agreed that community contact points should play an effective and consistent role, which was one of the reasons for the board's existence.
- Cllr Keddle suggested the possibility of developing ideas through panel members, noting their collective insight. In response, it was emphasised that the role was to represent a wide range of voices across Dorset and BCP, and that engagement with multiple councillors was preferred over consulting individuals.
- Cllr Bown raised concerns around victim satisfaction, noting that low satisfaction could discourage reporting. A question was posed on how victims could be reassured. The response outlined that victim satisfaction remained the weakest area, although there was steady improvement. Reports had increased: 999 calls were up 6%, 101 calls up 2%, and website use had risen. A new post had been created to support approximately 1,500 victims annually. Despite some funding losses which removed two elements of victim support, a co-funded Victim Champion had been established to help address gaps.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members for Priority three – Fight Violent Crime and High Harm (01:00:42) on the recording.

- Cllr Rampton requested further detail on ketamine-focused events. The PCC confirmed a comprehensive, cross-county prevention strategy was underway.
- Cllr O'Leary and Cllr Keddle raised issues surrounding drug criminalisation and public health responses. The PCC acknowledged the limitations of punitive measures alone and called for improved sentencing guidelines and early interventions.
- Questions on housing associations' role, county lines disruption (Operation Scorpion & Viper), and the new A&E Navigator scheme were addressed, with the PCC confirming active collaboration and support for all initiatives.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members for Priority four - Fight Rural Crime (01:53:10) on the recording.

- The PCC outlined oversight of firearms licensing, stressing adherence to authorised practice and regular reporting.
- Cllr Flagg and others sought updates on night-time thefts and poaching. Legislation targeting wildlife cruelty was noted, and cross-border collaboration continued.
- High-powered catapults were identified as a growing concern; support was expressed for tighter regulation

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members for Priority five - Put Victim and Communities First (02:07:09) on the recording.

- The PCC acknowledged an increase in self-appointed policing groups. Stronger messaging was planned to clarify official processes.
- Questions on protest policing highlighted impacts on officer abstraction and budget, which the PCC confirmed were being reviewed in future planning.

Questions from the Priority Leads and Panel members for Priority six - Make Every Penny Count (02:23:54) on the recording.

- Cllr Keddie queried Dorset's low funding levels and disproportionate council tax burden. The PCC outlined ongoing lobbying efforts with MPs and national bodies.
- Cllr Bown asked which MPs were supportive; the PCC declined to name individuals.
- A unanimous vote supported a letter from the Panel backing the PCC's funding appeal.

Road safety update: Operation snap – (02:34:10) on the recording

The PCC reported on the continued development and impact of Operation Snap, a community-driven initiative which allowed residents to submit photographic or video evidence of careless or reckless driving. Managed by the Dorset Road Safe partnership, the initiative aimed to reduce deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads by enabling public involvement in road safety enforcement.

Since its launch in 2020, Operation Snap had processed 647 submissions in its first year, with numbers increasing significantly to over 2,000 submissions in 2024. This growth was attributed to increased public awareness and the wider use of dashcams and helmet cameras. As a result, enforcement outcomes had improved, with over 3,000 road users facing consequences to date. The PCC noted that the initiative empowered communities to take an active role in policing and contributed meaningfully to improving road safety.

However, challenges remained, particularly around the processing of submissions. The initiative currently lacked a dedicated team, and the responsibility fell to staff from the ticket office and driver awareness teams. High volumes of evidence could not always be processed efficiently, due to financial and staffing constraints. The PCC confirmed that AI solutions were being explored to improve capacity and turnaround times. Despite these limitations, Operation Snap continued to be a valuable and growing resource, supporting ongoing efforts to reduce road harm across Dorset.

Cllr Gibson queried whether parking offences fell within the remit of Operation Snap. Cllr Trent suggested that greater focus should be placed on the outcomes of driver awareness courses, although it was noted that income from the scheme could not be ring-fenced for this purpose. Further concerns were raised regarding the increasing volume of submissions, potential backlogs, and the absence of formal service-level agreements.

Cllr Rampton questioned how outcomes from the initiative were being measured. In response, the PCC stated that Dorset remained one of the safest counties in the country and that the initiative contributed to this standing. It was also confirmed that integration of Operation Snap data with broader intelligence systems was under active consideration

In accordance with Procedural Rule 8.1 the committee voted to extend the duration of the meeting.

62. Road Safety Update: Operation Snap - (02:34:10) on the recording

The PCC reported on the continued development and impact of Operation Snap, a community-driven initiative which allowed residents to submit photographic or video evidence of careless or reckless driving. Managed by the Dorset Road Safe partnership, the initiative aimed to reduce deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads by enabling public involvement in road safety enforcement.

Since its launch in 2020, Operation Snap had processed 647 submissions in its first year, with numbers increasing significantly to over 2,000 submissions in 2024. This growth was attributed to increased public awareness and the wider use of dashcams and helmet cameras. As a result, enforcement outcomes had improved, with over 3,000 road users facing consequences to date. The PCC noted that the initiative empowered communities to take an active role in policing and contributed meaningfully to improving road safety.

However, challenges remained, particularly around the processing of submissions. The initiative currently lacked a dedicated team, and the responsibility fell to staff from the ticket office and driver awareness teams. High volumes of evidence could not always be processed efficiently, due to financial and staffing constraints. The PCC confirmed that AI solutions were being explored to improve capacity and turnaround times. Despite these limitations, Operation Snap continued to be a valuable and growing resource, supporting ongoing efforts to reduce road harm across Dorset.

Cllr Gibson queried whether parking offences fell within the remit of Operation Snap. Cllr Trent suggested that greater focus should be placed on the outcomes of driver awareness courses, although it was noted that income from the scheme could not be ring-fenced for this purpose. Further concerns were raised regarding the increasing volume of submissions, potential backlogs, and the absence of formal service-level agreements.

Cllr Rampton questioned how outcomes from the initiative were being measured. In response, the PCC stated that Dorset remained one of the safest counties in the country and that the initiative contributed to this standing. It was also confirmed that integration of Operation Snap data with broader intelligence systems was under active consideration

In accordance with Procedural Rule 8.1 the committee voted to extend the duration of the meeting.

63. Enhanced Video Response - (02:57:35) on the recording

The PCC presented positive results from the rollout of Enhanced Video Response, allowing video-based victim support and evidence collection which offered faster (19 days quicker) and more satisfactory service (83% satisfaction vs. 60% for traditional response). The PCC acknowledged that it wasn't suitable for missing persons or road traffic incidents but acknowledged that it helped officers maintain wellbeing and achieve a better work-life balance as well as provided higher job satisfaction. Cost, infrastructure, and public awareness remained key challenges, however, EVR delivered faster responses and had cost saving benefits.

Strong support for the EVR programme was expressed by the panel. While concerns were raised regarding rural connectivity and the potential impact on service delivery, no specific issues had been reported to date. The PCC confirmed that the increased efficiency in officer time made possible through EVR could positively contribute to broader goals around officer visibility and public reassurance.

64. Complaints Update - (03:11:08) on the recording

The Panel was informed of two complaints. The first complaint had been investigated, was not upheld, and no further action was required. A second complaint had only recently been received and had been passed to the Monitoring Officer for consideration.

A new membership for the Complaints subcommittee had not yet been actioned but was being considered a priority.

65. Forward Workplan - (03:11:52) on the recording

The forward workplan was noted.

66. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

67. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.05 am - 1.19 pm

Chairman

.....