



**Use of Force Scrutiny Panel Meeting
Thursday 22nd May 2025, 10am – 1pm
University of Hertfordshire
Minutes**

Attendees

Chris Cowdrey (Chair)	CCo	Paulette Reed	PR
Andrew Hatton	AH	Anne Griffiths	AG
Mohammad Islam Ruman	MIR	Eddie McCarroll	EMc
Russell Dyke	RD	John Gillett	JGi
Elaine Dyke	ED	Daren Power	DP
Asha Vesudevan	AV	Zoe Wright	ZW
Joanne Godfrey	JGo	Mamadou Bah	MB
Nicola Hunt	NH	Nick Rowlands	NR
		Lorraine Edwards	LE
Insp Clare Cray	Herts Constabulary		CCr
James Coady	OPCC		JC
Catherine Boon	OPCC		CB
Sue McNeill (Minutes)	OPCC		SMc

Also present:

Mark Rycroft & Kofi Addo (lecturers, Herts Uni) Amy Martin & Mohammad Miah (students, Herts Uni), PC Field and PC Harrison.

1	Welcome and introductions
1.1	The Chair (CCo) opened the meeting and welcomed the panel, officers and observers. He thanked the University of Hertfordshire for hosting the meeting.
1.2	Apologies were noted from Supt Owen Pyle, Ch Insp Ricky Bartlett, Sgt Adrian Pikett, Dennis Elam, Megan Holland, Martin Jackson, Tara Bullworthy, Andrew Taylor, Jeffrey Burke, Lesley MacArthur, Godfrey Minsky, Valerie Shrimplin and Phil Diamond.
2	Minutes, actions and matters arising from the last meeting
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed (pack item 1) and the action tracker was updated (item 2.) No feedback from the Constabulary was required.

3	Use of Force Dip Sampling Feedback
3.1	CCo reminded that officers were present for operational guidance only. The panel decision should be made prior to asking for advice. The scrutiny took place between 10.25am-12.25pm.
3.2	Group A
3.2.1	Item 1: Taser, PAVA, Baton The report matched the risk assessment. Good use of baton. The panel raised concerns regarding one officer who had straddled the detainee’s head. Concerns were also raised regarding how close the detainee was to the curb. It was agreed that it was a good controlled take down to the ground. Although the panel was split in its grading decision, final grade was awarded by majority. Green 1
3.2.2	Item 2: PAVA Although the footage was unclear, the panel felt that the incident was well contained. The statement provided was accurate. Green 1
3.2.3	Item 3: Spit Guard, Handcuffs, Ground Restraint (in Custody) Good clear communication. The use of the spit guard was necessary. The panel questioned whether the detainee could have kicked the officer as he exited the police van, and if the officer’s knee in the detainee’s back was necessary. Green 1
3.2.4	Item 4: Taser The panel questioned why the detainee was stopped in the first instance. The report was very detailed and matched the footage. Short and simple communication between the police and detainee. Green 1
3.2.5	Item 5: Baton Suitable use of the baton as a lever. Two officers were hurt during this incident. Aftercare of the detainee was acceptable, but the panel felt it could have been addressed faster. Communication could have been better. Panel split but decision awarded by majority vote. Green 1
3.3	Group B
3.3.1	Item 6: Taser The statement was excellent. The panel had no issues with the level of force used. Green 1

3.3.2	Item 7: Ground Restraint Clear report. Good conduct of officers. Green 1
3.3.3	Item 8: PAVA, Unarmed Defence Tactics, Handcuffs A very full, clear report was provided. The panel felt that even though members of the public swore throughout the engagement, it was not necessary for officers to use expletives. Green 1
3.3.4	Item 9: PAVA, Baton, Handcuffs A very good statement was provided. Officers took on board the injuries expressed by the detainee. There was a good status commentary on the footage. A good use of force, although the panel believed the baton perhaps needed to be more forcefully deployed. Both the statement and footage were graded as excellent. Green 1.
3.3.5	Item 10: Spit Guard Calm officer, good communications. Green 1
3.3.6	Item 11: Taser, Handcuffs The panel felt that the statement should have explained background to the incident to provide context. The initial approach from officers was too loud and they appeared to go in too hard and aggressive. However, the use of taser was effective and aftercare was excellent. The statement had too many acronyms and didn't give the full picture to those reviewing. The panel was split in its decision but graded by majority vote. Green 2
3.4	General comments: The panel highlighted issues relating to the use of templates when creating statements, particularly when not explaining context and providing irrelevant information.
3.4.1	The panel had expressed several concerns relating to one incident involving a motor vehicle chase. Once graded, CCr advised the subgroup that the incident had already been reviewed by the Constabulary and referred to the Professional Standards Dept (PSD.) The matter was returned to be dealt with and any learning to be fed back at a local level. In PSD's view, the conduct did not meet the threshold for investigation at that level.
4	Constabulary and OPCC Updates
4.1	Constabulary update: CCr reminded the panel that officer training needs analysis had been conducted, which included suggestions from scrutiny panel members. These, along with identified operational needs, have been incorporated into the current training package.

4.2	<p>OPCC update: JC shared a presentation (pack item 3) and updated the panel on the progress of the Communication and Engagement Plan, the primary objectives of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness • Create opportunities for younger people • Increasing diversity of panel membership (by age and ethnicity) <p>Progress to date and next steps were highlighted in the presentation. JC reminded that any panel member wishing to participate in a working group to guide strategy implementation should contact either James.Coady@herts-pcc.gov.uk or Susan.McNeill@herts-pcc.gov.uk</p>
4.3	<p>Both NH and JG noted that the youth engagement focused on young people in education and suggested that consideration should be given to reaching a wider base of young people outside of the education system. JC advised that the current focus had been determined by office capacity but added that expanding the mock panel programme would be a future consideration.</p>
4.4	<p>As several members are new to the panel, the Communication and Engagement plan will be recirculated.</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note: the updated plan will be circulated separately to members of all scrutiny panels.</i></p>
5	Any Other Business
5.1	CCo reminded the panel that any suggestions for future deep dives would be welcomed.
5.2	No other items raised. CCo closed the meeting.
6	Date of next meeting: Monday 28 th July 2025, 5.30pm – 8.30pm, Titan Court, Hatfield.