



Use of Force Scrutiny Panel Meeting
Thursday 27th November 2025, 10am – 1pm
University of Hertfordshire, De Haviland Campus
Minutes

Attendees

Jeffrey Burke (Chair)	JB	Paulette Reed	PR
Andrew Taylor	AT	Lesley MacArthur	LMc
Andrew Hatton	AH	Godfrey Minsky	GM
Mohammad Islam Ruman	MIR	Anne Griffiths	AG
Tara Bullworthy	TB	Valerie Shrimplin	VS
Zoe Wright	ZW	Eddie McCarroll	EMc
Nick Rowlands	NR	Phil Diamond	PD
Lorraine Edwards	LE	Daren Power	DP
Nigel Marshall	NM	Jamal Pasha	JP
Chief Constable Andy Prophet	Herts Constabulary		APr
Supt Ben Wright	Herts Constabulary		BW
Sgt Adrian Pikett	Herts Constabulary		APi
Amie Birkhamshaw	OPCC		AB
Charlotte Rainer	OPCC		CR
Eleanor Makoni	OPCC		EM
Scott Hague	OPCC		SH
Sue McNeill (Minutes)	OPCC		SMc

Also present: Harvey Marshall, Kazam Hussein, Kofi Addo, Insp Carter, Ch Insp Collins, PC Bartley, PC Harris, PC Woodward and PC Thomas.

1	Welcome and introductions
1.1	In Chris Cowdrey's absence, Vice Chair Jeffrey Burke, (JB) opened the meeting. He welcomed the panel, officers and observers, particularly Chief Constable Andy Prophet, Nigel Marshall (new panel member), Harvey Marshall (under 18 observer who expressed interest in the role of scrutiny in support of his studies,) Kazam Hussein and Kofi Addo (University of Hertfordshire.) Also, a warm welcome was given to Charlotte Rainer, Eleanor Makoni and Scott Hague, new members of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. JB thanked the University of Hertfordshire for hosting the meeting.
1.2	Apologies were noted from Chris Cowdrey, Martin Jackson, Nicole Moran, Linda Martin, Russell Dyke, Elaine Dyke, Asha Vesudevan, Nicola Hunt, John Gillett, Ch Insp David Cooke and Insp Clare Cray.

1.3	JB advised the panel that Megan Holland had resigned from both the Stop & Search and Use of Force Panels as she had secured a new job. He asked for thanks to be formally recorded in the minutes and wished her well in her future career.
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.)
3	Abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners
3.1	AB advised the panel that on 13 th November 2025, the government announced that standalone PCCs will be abolished at the scheduled end of term of office (May 2028.) This was outlined in the White Paper detailing the intention for elected mayors to hold the PCC functions as well as the fire and rescue functions and new powers relating to the economy, infrastructure, skills and transport.
3.2	Hertfordshire leaders had already written to the government requesting a mayor for the county from 2028 and work is underway to ensure the model works effectively for policing. For now, it is business as usual. The statutory responsibilities that the PCC holds and the OPCC supports have not changed. The Police & Crime Plan priorities are unaffected.
3.3	Panel discussion included the transition process (whether OPCC panels would be adopted by the mayoral office or dissolved,) engagement with the strategic authority prior to handover, potential loss of processes and learning, mayoral election dates, the national attitude towards the scrutiny function and standardised training. Panel members suggested that, at a time appropriate to the transition process, relevant parties should attend panel meetings to understand the function, relationships and successes to date.
3.4	AB advised that all concerns were legitimate and would form part of the consideration for the transition of the wider office structure, roles and responsibilities. More information will be provided to the panel in due course.
4	Introduction: Chief Constable Andy Prophet
4.1	APr introduced himself to the panel and spoke of the Constabulary's mission: prevent crime and harm, catch criminals and solve crime, help vulnerable people. He explained that the use of coercive powers (stop & search and use of force) was an important tactic in achieving and improving outcomes. He added that the scrutiny function was vital in understanding how well those police powers were being used and help increase public confidence and trust.
4.2	The topic of firearms was discussed and AP assured there were no plans for British police officers to carry weapons as standard. A Beds/Cambs/Herts collaborated Firearms Unit existed to deal with the rare occurrences of firearms being involved in the commission of offences. JB reminded members that

	firearms incidents rarely featured in the scrutiny selections. APr added that, statistically, Hertfordshire was considered a safe county and that the mission statement covered steps and processes to maintain and improve Hertfordshire's position.
5	Digitising the Feedback Form
5.1	With a view to increasing office efficiency and effectiveness, SH advised the panel that a digital feedback provision was in development. Briefly, a simplified version of the forms would be accessible via dedicated tablets and feedback, once submitted, would automatically populate a system accessible by both the OPCC and Constabulary. He added that it was likely to be trialled in the new year with the full support of the office throughout the process.
6	Use of Force Dip Sampling Feedback (U18s)
6.1	JB reminded that officers were present for operational guidance only. The panel decision should be made prior to asking for advice. Although the scrutiny focused specifically on force used on individuals under the age of 18, officers confirmed that no additional considerations were necessary as the same regulations applied. The scrutiny took place between 10.50am -12.15pm.
6.2	Group A
6.2.1	Item 1: Handcuffs (referral from S&S Panel) The officer was very polite and the circumstances were well-explained to the detainee. Minimal force was necessary and used. The officer's actions were justified and good. Green 1
6.2.2	Item 2: Handcuffs (referral from S&S Panel) When communicating, the officer used a good tone and developed a rapport. He ensured the situation did not escalate. The panel noted the officer's diplomatic handling of securing self-identified ethnicity. Green 1
6.2.3	Item 3: Handcuffs and Limb Restraint (Pre-custody incident) Male officers were first on scene to deal with the incident, but a female officer was later called to conduct a search. The detainee was a safeguarding/unknown risk, and officers continually attempted de-escalating tactics as she was aggressive. One officer called the detainee "darling," and, whilst the panel accepted this was with good intention, they felt it was not professional. It was clearly a very challenging situation which resulted in a split panel decision. By majority the grading was agreed as Green 1.
6.2.4	Item 4: Handcuffs and Ground Restraint (Custody CCTV)

	Minimal restraint was necessary and applied. Several attempts were made to protect the detainee. Once the handcuffs were removed, she again tried to self-harm. Officers deployed a gentle restraint. They were empathetic and patient throughout. Green 1
6.2.5	Item 5: Handcuffs A very brief statement was provided for context. Unarmed defence tactics were also deployed when forcibly escorting the individual. The panel noted that it was a chaotic scene and the officer dealt with the situation well. Green 1
6.3	Group B
6.3.1	Item 6: Handcuffs The panel was split in its view on the escalation of force. Some felt that not enough time was spent establishing whether further attempts at communication could have avoided force being used. Others believed the risk of harm to officers was high and the detainee's movements posed a flight risk. The situation was quickly de-escalated once it was established that the detainee was not the offender sought, and good aftercare was applied. The panel decision was split but by majority agreed Green 1 .
6.3.2	Item 7: Handcuffs and Taser The detainee was evasive, and the panel felt that the incident was dealt with well. Green 1
6.3.3	Item 8: Handcuffs Good de-escalation tactics were employed. Green 1
6.3.4	Item 9: Handcuffs and Unarmed Defence Tactics It was clear to the panel that force was necessary due to the detainee's behaviour. The use of handcuffs was justified and proportionate. Green 1
6.3.5	Item 10: Handcuffs and Taser The panel noted that force had been applied before the officer's BWV camera had been switched on, although no issues were raised. The structure of the report provided was not helpful to the panel as insufficient detail was included. Green 1
6.4	General comments: Some incidents took longer to review than others as the panel was split in its decision and it was important to capture all views in the feedback. Some good examples of de-escalation tactics and duty of care noted. The panel felt that several of the incidents were chaotic situations where officers demonstrated restraint in their approach and gentle handling where possible.
6.5	The panel accepted that, at the point where force was being used, the footage reviewed could relate to later in an incident. The camera announcement may have been given at the start of the engagement, but it was not seen on any of the footage reviewed. The panel suggested that making clear that the engagement was being recorded could positively impact the detainee's behaviour.

6.6	<p>Acknowledging that this was a deep dive into force used against Under 18s, there followed considerable discussion as to whether such incidents should be reviewed regularly (two per meeting as with custody footage.) As the deep dive topics were generally selected by the Data Subgroup and Chair, it was agreed that CR (scrutiny lead) would liaise with CCo for discussion at the next panel meeting.</p> <p>Action: OPCC (CR) to raise the issue of regular review of force used against Under 18s with panel Chair.</p>
7	Constabulary Update
7.1	<p>APi briefed the panel on the rollout of Taser 10, which will be provided to officers when they attend refresher training. The new equipment has a longer operational effective range. The current taser is a cartridge-based system with each holding two probes, whereas the new model discharges 10 individual probes, and provides audible and lit warnings when the taser is in use.</p>
7.2	<p>APi reminded the panel that a previous change to the Use of Force Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) mandated the preparation of statements when force has been used. A software change to TuServ allows officers to add their rationale for low level force (handcuffs, etc) to be added to a free text box, negating the need for a separate statement. This has been reflected in the SOP.</p>
7.3	<p>For transparency, APi advised that the Use of Force data shows two fatalities. These were Hertfordshire officers from Joint Protective Services attending an incident in Bedfordshire where the subject subsequently died from self-inflicted injuries.</p>
8	Any Other Business
8.1	<p>APi advised the panel that this was to be his last meeting as he was changing roles within the Constabulary. JB thanked him on behalf of the panel for his commitment and support for the last two years.</p>
8.2	<p>No other items were raised and JB closed the meeting.</p>
9	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 28th January 2026, 17.30-20.30, Titan Court, Hatfield.</p> <p><i>Please note this meeting has changed to an in-person only event.</i></p>