

Everybody's Business - Summary

The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan for Hertfordshire

2022 - 2027

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping squares in various shades of green and yellow, arranged in a grid-like pattern on the right side of the page.

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This is a shorted summary of the Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan for Hertfordshire, the full version can be viewed and downloaded at

www.hertscommissioner.org/your-pcc/community-safety-criminal-justice-plan

Foreword by PCC David Lloyd



Hertfordshire is a safe place to live and work, and I am determined to make sure that stays the case, to ensure we work with others to prevent crime and focus on those hotspots where crime and harm is a particular problem. This plan builds on previous versions but still has the same six core elements: keeping crime low, supporting victims, recruiting more officers, protecting local policing, maximising efficiency and delivering value.

The world has changed since the first Covid lockdown in March 2020, and the Plan reflects that. It is an evolution of my thinking and builds on previous achievements. It fully supports the Strategic Policing Requirement and National Policing Measures, as well as the hugely important need to combat violence against women and girls. Hertfordshire now has more police officers than we have ever had before. That gives us the opportunity to focus on crime prevention, cutting crime off at the roots, targeting problem areas and intervening early to ensure our young people don't fall into crime in the first place.

Response by the Chief Constable

I continue to be immensely proud of the policing service that our officers, staff and volunteers deliver for communities across Hertfordshire. I am passionate about the huge opportunities that a Prevention First approach will deliver for the public of Hertfordshire and delighted this is strongly reflected in the Plan. By understanding why operational and organisational issues occur and through applying evidence-based policing, including working with other organisations as necessary, we can reduce demand and in turn continue to reinvest our previous resources to deliver an even better policing service.

Crime Prevention – Taking an Evidence Based and Prevention First approach to Policing

Taking a Prevention First Approach

I have asked the Chief Constable to develop a transformative approach to crime prevention and I will ensure he is properly funded and resourced to do so. I want to understand the costs and benefits of undertaking prevention activity and will ask the Constabulary to use an approved cost-benefit tool to measure the impact on crime prevention and problem solving.

Embedding an Evidence-Based Policing Approach

The only important measure in crime prevention is what works. I will develop a Hertfordshire harm index to include crimes described as low level, breaching the peace or anti-social behaviour, which can predict future harm and vulnerability. The Constabulary will use that evidence to trial a hotspot policing approach, which uses high visibility patrols concentrated in small areas at specific times of the day.

Protect local policing

Local policing, with more police officers and higher visibility on the streets, is your priority and my priority. Each of Hertfordshire's 10 districts and boroughs will have at least one major police station where the core police team are based, supplemented by smaller local stations where required.



Criminal Justice

Awaiting Justice

Justice delayed is justice denied. Court backlogs are rising, placing huge pressure on victims, witnesses, and defendants, and results in some cases not being taken forward. We must do better. That is not about getting involved in judicial decisions or judicial discretion, but about how the system can support the courts to improve the service provided to those who use it.

We have always been at the forefront of using technology to create efficiencies and speed up justice, and I will make best use of the Government Digital Service trial to continue doing just that.

Democratic Oversight

Currently, there is no local democratic oversight of the justice system. Without a system owner, there is a lack of oversight and focus on performance, improvement and outcomes for service users. Police and Crime Commissioners are well placed to have a leading role in this.

I will continue the focus on support for victims and witnesses, and will improve access to expert advice for victims, particularly in the area of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault. I have already introduced a Rape Scrutiny Panel and will build on that by commissioning a comprehensive review of the journey of the rape victim through the criminal justice system.



Out of Court Disposals

Early intervention is key to prevention. Whilst our first approach is to discourage people from engaging in criminality at all, there is a further opportunity to use Out of Court Disposals to steer people away from crime when they have committed their first criminal offence. These interventions are sometimes seen as time consuming and costly, but they are a long-term investment which pays dividends in reducing crime, reducing demand, and thereby reducing costs to the police and the wider criminal justice system.

Improving the response to victims of sexual abuse

I am absolutely committed to ensuring victims of all forms of sexual abuse are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity. In 2021 I arranged for specialist sexual abuse services to be more accessible within communities. New changes to standards give an opportunity to consider the accessibility of the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre. Going forward, I will ensure we embrace innovation to establish a centre of excellence of which we can all be proud.

Addressing and responding to domestic abuse

In line with Prevention First, we work closely with Hertfordshire County Council and other partners to ensure tackling domestic abuse is a whole county endeavour. The new Domestic Abuse Act places a duty on us to collectively tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls and to deliver effective interventions to stop or prevent the escalation of violence. The Act also introduces Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and I will ask the Chief Constable to devise a plan to show how a whole system approach can best use these notices. I have invested in programmes to address offender behaviour and will continue to do so.



Beacon, Hertfordshire's victim care centre, has piloted rapid support to victims of domestic abuse which resulted in high levels of engagement, improved prosecutions, and reduced risk and repeat victimisation. I will extend this to all safeguarding victims of crime.

Violence Prevention

Hertfordshire is a safe place to live and work but it is not immune from serious violence. We are taking a public health, partnership approach, recognising that serious violence links to safeguarding, criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, modern slavery, and missing persons.

I have invested to expand the No More Service and Youth Action Panels across the whole of the county. We have made a good start in identifying hot spots and trends through our Hertfordshire Violent Assault Dataset. I want to go further by overlaying this information with police data to target our prevention activity.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

The scourge of violence against women and girls is rightly a national priority, and it will remain a priority for Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire has already undertaken a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and personal safety survey on violence against women and girls. I want us to use this to build a multi-agency action plan underpinned by a public health approach to tackle systemic issues and address the root causes of violence against women and girls. Whilst 83 per cent of respondents that I surveyed in 2021 across Hertfordshire said they felt safe, there are some spaces, such as local parks, where people feel particularly unsafe. I will make use of continued Safer Streets funding to invest in preventative measures and design out crime in these spaces.

Tackling the supply, demand and misuse of drugs and alcohol

The drugs market is a key driver of crime, and heroin and crack cocaine addiction is linked to almost half of all acquisitive crime, including burglary, robbery and theft, and drugs contribute to almost half of all homicides. Our Drug and Alcohol Strategy takes a whole system approach to supply chains and county lines, but drug related deaths continue to rise, as they have across the country.

I want us to continue our approach of breaking supply chains and disrupting the drug economy. I want us to raise awareness of cuckooing so that the public know what it is and how to spot the signs, so we can work together to safeguard vulnerable people.

We need to address alcohol misuse across the county, particularly that related to the night-time economy and violence. I want to see all partners further develop the Drug and Alcohol Strategy to include how we will prevent and minimise alcohol-fuelled violence.

Improving our response to Mental Health

There has been an increased focus on mental health during the pandemic, and in Hertfordshire it is estimated that 15 per cent of all incidents attended by the police involved someone with mental ill health. We need to do more as a system to prevent people from reaching crisis in the first place, identifying vulnerability and targeting support and interventions.

The police spend a significant amount of time with Section 136 patients. This cannot continue. I want all partners to examine the options for outsourcing the conveying of mental health patients by ambulance.

Preventing and Tackling Hate Crime

Whilst hate crime reporting is improving, I am concerned that our knowledge and understanding of hate crimes is limited. I want to ensure that reporting is improved and that we collect and analyse the data to enable targeted prevention and engagement.

Hertfordshire has one of the highest prosecution rates for hate crime across the country. This is to be celebrated, but we must do more to restore public confidence.

Fighting Fraud and Cybercrime

Fraud represents an estimated third of all crime, from banking fraud to scam emails. My cyber essentials assessment for small and medium sized businesses has been well received. Our Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit continues to disrupt serious and organised crime. Locally, our Hertfordshire Serious Fraud and Cybercrime Unit investigates serious and complex fraud where there is suspected Organised Crime Group involvement, and I have asked the Chief Constable to further invest in its capacity to improve criminal justice outcomes.

Preventing and Reducing Reoffending

We know that a large proportion of crime is committed by a small number of perpetrators. I am pleased that Hertfordshire was one of the government's pathfinders to use new electronic monitoring technology to manage offenders better outside of custody. I will assess how the pilot has impacted in deterring and preventing repeat offending and how it can be used as an effective tool in the future.

On a typical day in Hertfordshire, we have just 7 residential burglaries, which is very low for a county of our size. The Constabulary offer victims of burglary a good standard of service. I want to ensure we take an evidence-based, hot spot approach to burglary prevention.

For many ex-offenders, leaving prison can be a difficult time. Nationally, 80 per cent of ex-offenders released from prison re-offend within three years of release, with a high proportion re-offending in the early days following



release. I want to see all criminal justice agencies working together to explore the opportunities for pre-release key workers to engage with offenders whilst in prison and through the gate, delivering a plan and access to services. Hertfordshire's Youth Offending Service is one of the largest in the country and one of the most successful in preventing young people ending up in a lifetime of crime. I want to see stronger collaboration between the Youth Offending Service, the local policing teams including Police Community Support Officers, and the Schools and Gangs team, to ensure we focus on prevention and improvement in outcomes for young people.

Strategic Policing Requirement and National Policing Measures

The Home Office requires us to have due regard in the Plan for the Strategic Policing Requirement and ensure that we protect the public from threats that go beyond county boundaries. I remain committed to ensuring sufficient funds are available to cover Hertfordshire's contribution to a national response, and will meet the Strategic Policing Requirement and national policing measures. I will hold the Chief Constable to account in relation to the Constabulary's performance.

Fairness, Equality, and Confidence in Policing

Embedding a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical behaviour

Our police force does a magnificent job and is made up of some of the most professional and dedicated people I have ever worked with. I pay tribute to the way the vast majority of our officers approach their very difficult jobs. However, sometimes things go wrong and, even in Hertfordshire, a small number of our officers have let the service and the public down.

It is important that we ensure that officers continue to be motivated by the right values and ethics and that they demonstrate this in their work. Our Professional Standards team has taken huge steps to prevent police misconduct, rolling out training programmes to reinforce ethical behaviour. I want to go further and will ask the Chief Constable to undertake an organisation-wide review around conduct issues.

I welcomed the changes to the police complaints and disciplinary system and my office has taken on direct responsibility for handling complaints independent of the Constabulary. I will use our findings to provide feedback to the Constabulary to enable them to learn from their mistakes.

Demonstrating fairness and addressing disproportionality

I do not believe that Hertfordshire police behave in a systematically discriminatory or racist manner and neither the Chief Constable nor I tolerate such behaviour. However, there is a significant proportion of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities who do not believe they are treated fairly by the police. I will commission a review to understand whether tactics such as stop and search are used disproportionately or in a discriminatory way and I will improve the diversity of my independent Scrutiny Panels so that communities across Hertfordshire have a role in helping to improve policing.

Improving the diversity of the police

The Constabulary has done an excellent job in recruiting from across our communities through the Police Uplift Programme. We must continue to go further, and I am determined that we have diversity represented throughout the ranks in policing and that there is regular monitoring of those who are leaving the force to understand the reasons and implications on diversity.

Welfare of officers and staff

I recognise that policing is a stressful job and officers are faced with some of life's most challenging situations daily. I would like to address gaps in officer and staff awareness, education and data collection so that we embed clear, consistent evidence-based standards throughout policing in welfare and wellbeing.

Representing the Public

Continuing to build excellent customer service

The public expects and deserves a police service that is responsive, approachable and keeps them updated. There have been considerable improvements to day-to-day public contact, providing feedback, and seeking the public's views about service. I will ask the Chief Constable to roll out victim empathy training to call handling staff and provide reassurance that processes are in place to hear from those who come into contact with the force control room to assess satisfaction levels.

I want to see further improvements in how the public interact with the police and I will ask the Chief Constable to look at how we can make officers more accessible.



Road Safety

One of the main issues I hear about from the public is road safety. That is why I have invested in four Road Safety Camera vans that are deployed across the county to locations that the public tell me are of concern, issuing advisory letters to drivers about their speed to encourage behaviour change. I will monitor the DriveSafe 20mph pilot to assess its impact. I continue to address my intention of looking at reducing the number of road accidents caused by tiredness and am planning a series of interventions.



Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is often a precursor to more serious offending. It can bring misery, disturb sleep, cause anxiety and leave victims feeling unsafe and afraid. We have had year-on-year reductions over the last 10 years across all types: Personal, Nuisance and Environmental, but we must continue our efforts to maintain this.

One of the key strands of Prevention First is preventing the escalation of crime by dealing with it when it first arises. I want to see all agencies examining and addressing the causes of anti-social behaviour.

Addressing Rural Crime

Rural crime is frequently raised with me by farmers and landowners. I am pleased that the Constabulary's dedicated Rural Operational Support Team focuses on preventing and tackling rural crime. I want to see a refreshed Rural Crime Policing Strategy that sets out the plan for the coming years.

Tackling and Preventing Fly Tipping

I will continue my fly tipping fund, supporting private landowners to remove rubbish in areas not covered by the Councils. I want to see the Constabulary making best use of intelligence so that we stand the best chance of bringing perpetrators to justice.

Community Safety Partnerships

Each area in Hertfordshire has a Community Safety Partnership made up of local partners to address local issues. I want them to be more visible and transparent, and I want to see them monitor the top crimes in their area and put in place plans for their reduction.

Growing Volunteering

My Plan is called Everybody's Business because I believe we all have a role to play in keeping Hertfordshire safe. We offer opportunities for citizens to do their bit through the Special Constabulary, Police Cadets, DriveSafe, Neighbourhood Watch, Independent Custody Visitors, Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel, Use of Force Panel, and our Police Dog Visitors scheme. I will look to expand the number of volunteers to assist in sifting the ever-growing amount of digital evidence which the public are making available. In addition, I will set up an independent Use of Police Powers Panel to scrutinise Body Worn Video.



Digital and Commerciality

The Digital Policing Strategy will inform the Constabulary's services, culture and operating models over the coming years, and will meet the needs of changing public and social demographics as well as addressing the associated changes in crime trends. However, digitalisation remains a high area of risk, and I will ensure that funds are available to ensure the required growth, particularly in high harm areas such as cyber-crime and digitally enabled sexual exploitation and fraud.

Driving Efficiencies and Effectiveness through Collaboration

Collaboration is good for resilience, efficiency, and effectiveness and so there will be no red lines on collaboration other than that Hertfordshire residents must not be paying more for a combined service than they would if it were stand alone. Where appropriate, I will collaborate with all tiers of government, all arms of the emergency services, all parts of the Criminal Justice System, and the private sector.

I believe there is more that can be done to create efficiency and achieve value for money by working more closely with the private sector. Service improvements, innovative practice, and addressing shortages in skills, knowledge and capacity, can be achieved by doing the same in policing.

Police Estates

Working with the Chief Constable, I have had a hard look at how we can make best use of public property and the police estate. Over this term of office, I will make sure we have a clear estates strategy driven by what the public tell me matters. That is visible, local and accessible police stations. I will ensure the estates programme delivers on this, meets operational need, and is sustainable.

Reducing Business Crime

Business crime accounts for 18 per cent of all recorded crime in Hertfordshire. Whilst this is high, national research suggests that a significant proportion goes unrecorded. I have commissioned a strategic needs assessment to build an evidence base better to understand levels of under-reporting, perceptions of vulnerability, and levels of awareness around crime prevention to support a Prevention First approach.

I will work closely with our Independent Business Advisory Group to ensure that business crime is understood and addressed.





David Lloyd

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