

Decision by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

Item: Summer Town Centre bids

Date: 8th September 2025

Background: Review of bids for town centre safety initiatives.

Paper: Safer Town Centres Fund 08 Sept 2025

Decision: Shop Watch Radios and Watford Town Centre Safety & Resilience Programme Approved by the PCC



MEETING	EMT						
DATE	08 September 2025						
TITLE OF REPORT	Police & Crime Commissioner Safer Town Centre Grant Scheme						
SUBMITTED BY	Karl STONEBANK - Grants & Funds Manager (GFM)						
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To consider recommendations from the GFM in relation to bids received						
DECISION(S) REQUIRED	To agree allocation of £9600 grant funding						
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p><u>2025/26 Grants Fund Budget</u> <i>(see appendix A for detailed breakdown)</i></p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Balance as of 01 April 2025</td><td>£1,133,600</td></tr><tr><td>Commitments</td><td>-£492,737</td></tr><tr><td>Estimated uncommitted balance</td><td>£640,863</td></tr></table>	Balance as of 01 April 2025	£1,133,600	Commitments	-£492,737	Estimated uncommitted balance	£640,863
Balance as of 01 April 2025	£1,133,600						
Commitments	-£492,737						
Estimated uncommitted balance	£640,863						
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	<i>n/a</i>						
EQUALITIES IMPACTS	<i>None identified</i>						
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION EXEMPTION SECTION IF APPLICABLE	<i>n/a</i>						

INTRODUCTION

1. The Commissioner is asked to approve recommendations in relation to bids received with the Safer Town Centres Grant Scheme (the 'scheme').

BACKGROUND

2. The 'Police & Crime Plan 2025-29' contains a focus on safer neighbourhoods and tackling crime & anti-social behaviour (ASB). This is illustrated by the following actions within the plan:

Within Priority 1 Make Hertfordshire Safer/Safer neighbourhoods

- Fund 'safer streets' interventions at neighbourhood level, securing match funding where possible, to undertake proactive, place-based crime reduction
- Focus on town centres to ensure they are safe places where businesses want to invest, and people want to spend their time

Within Priority 3 Tackle Crime & Anti-social Behaviour/Night-time economy

- Work with local authorities and venues to ensure our towns remain safe places for people to enjoy themselves

3. Improving safety in town centres is a key priority for the Commissioner. In response to public demand for more visible and responsive policing, including tackling ASB and disorder in communities, the Commissioner launched Operation Hotspot in 26 hotspots, primarily town centres.
4. In its first year, Operation Hotspot delivered over 26,000 of additional high visibility police patrols, cutting crime, ASB and violence by 14.5%.
5. The Commissioner is now collaborating with the police, local authorities, and business groups to build on this progress, with a concerted programme of activity to make Hertfordshire's town centres/priority parks safer.
6. A major new initiative, Summer Town Centres for Hertfordshire, started on the 30th of June 2025 and run until the 31st of September 2025.
7. To support this work, the Commissioner is has offered statutory, third and business sector the opportunity to bid for funding to implement measures to tackle issues in those areas.
8. Town centres/areas which are eligible for funded activity are:

Berkhamsted, Borehamwood, Bishop's Stortford, Harpenden, Hatfield (Galleria), Hemel Hempstead, Hertford, Hitchin, Hoddesdon, Letchworth

Garden City, Rickmansworth, St Albans, Stevenage (Forum, Old Town), Waltham Cross, Ware, Watford (High Street), Welwyn Garden City. High priority parks are Hartham Common (Hertford) & Cassiobury Park (Watford).

9. Examples of the types of measures that could be funded include physical improvements to safety/security in town centres/parks, projects designed to reduce retail crime or ASB, projects to improve safety in the nighttime economy (NTE), and youth diversionary projects.
10. The Commissioner also wants to support innovative projects based on local collaborations and partnerships that can make a lasting difference to communities in terms of safety.
11. Project exclusions include:
 - General fundraising appeals
 - Core/every day running costs
 - Retrospective funding
 - Funding for CCTV cameras or ANPR equipment
 - Funding for patrols by Constabulary or local authority wardens
 - If the proposed project should be delivered using other public funding or replicates publicly funded service(s), it will not be considered
12. Up to £15,000 can be bid for by the Constabulary, District/Borough Councils, Town/Parish Council or Community Safety Partnerships. Exceptionally strong/impactful bids for greater amounts would be considered if match funding is offered.
13. Up to £6000 can be bid for by Community/Voluntary & Charitable Groups or Business Sector Organisations.
14. An indicative figure of £150,000 is anticipated to be spent within the scheme. To date, £31,007 has been awarded to the following projects:

Project Name/Lead	Summary	Priority own/Area	Award
<u>North Herts</u>			
Women's Safety Charter / North Herts Council	1) Accreditation scheme in NTE promoting/prioritising women & girls' safety in licensed premises 2) Promotional video: to sell scheme to premises/positive press through comms/socials	Hitchin Baldock Letchworth Royston	£4000
Hitchin Safer Town Centre Initiative North Herts NPT	Overtime patrols during NTE alongside implementation of Women's Safety Charter. Fri or Sat night. 2 PCs to complement	Hitchin	£4032



	work done with signed up licensed premises. Premises to be visited to check compliance.		
<u>Watford</u>			
Mounted Section in Watford / Watford NPT	2 officers on horseback, patrolling Cassiobury Park on 2 Saturdays during height of summer season (9 th Aug Park Run, 30 th Aug Pride in the Park)	Cassiobury Park	£6000
<u>East Herts</u>			
OP Vigilant overtime during week of VAWG Action Bishops Stortford & Sawbridgeworth NPT	Overtime deployment in area with busy nighttime economy during week of VAWG Action: 23rd Aug busier due to bank holiday. Will enable NPT to keep Hertford officers within Hertford who will be as busy. Will release Comms under Safer Town Centre banner	Bishops Stortford & Sawbridgeworth	£1975
<u>Herts-wide</u>			
Operation Ironworks Hertfordshire Constabulary	1) 10 knife amnesty bins across Herts in public spaces. Bins to have PCC/Police logo & QR code to direct public to charities / places of safety/how to report crime/prevent harm. 2) 60 Bleed Control Kits	Across Herts	£15,000

New bids for consideration

15. Appendix B contains details of latest bids received that require a decision.
16. The table below contains summary bid information and the results of scrutiny by OPCC Safer Town Centres project team/other Safety partners.

Project Title Applicant/Ask	Project Summary
Making Hertfordshire a Safer Place to Live Mediation Hertfordshire / £6000	Supporting disputing parties referred by Police/Safety Partners Invite parties to have an individual meeting with a mediator to explore their experience of dispute/find out more about process. Followed by joint meeting between both parties to resolve differences in a safe and supported environment. Where only 1 party to the dispute wishes to engage with service, we provide conflict coaching to the individual that requires support, helping them to reframe the dispute, be signposted for more specific support and feel supported during difficult times.



<u>Scrutiny Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Applicant states that early resolution of conflict can prevent escalation and further Police involvement, thereby saving costs.- Is not aligned to work in/around Town Centres- OPCC currently considering bid from applicant within small grant scheme	
Southern Maltings Youth Led Events Ware Arts Centre Ltd / £6000	Monthly Friday Night Teen Drop-in Sessions in 2026 Following consultation/surveys within local Secondary Schools, we have been running a pilot project since Feb 2025 offering our venue one Friday evening/month for 13- to 17-year-olds. They can take part in activities that appeal to them including silent discos, DJ nights, karaoke with a youth band night, Halloween, and a Silent disco with 3 young DJ's doing the sets due in Oct/Nov 2025.
<u>Scrutiny Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Police NPT report that they regularly attend engagement events at the Centre and that the project responds to ASB in the town is committed by juveniles- There are hire costs of £200 and activities of £350/session- Delivery is long-term (beyond the summer)- Is monthly delivery enough, if issues happen every Friday; the Centre has indicated it will be a challenge to do more than 1 session/month	
Shop Watch Radios Three Rivers NPT / £4320	Increase in number of Shop Watch Radios in Rickmansworth 8 radios initially issued to major retailers in the Town centre who suffer significant thefts. They will also be issued to staff at the station where our offenders often go after committing offences. This would be a 12-month trial to evaluate how effective they are at reducing crime and increasing detections within the town centre.
<u>Scrutiny Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measures implemented seek to tackle crime/ABS in priority town and make them safer places where business want to invest/people want to spend time- Aligned to both Priority 1: Make Hertfordshire Safer/Safer neighbourhoods & Priority 3: Tackle Crime & Anti-social Behaviour/Night-time economy of Plan- Watford NPT used Hotspot funding to increase number of radios in Town Centre. They found this was most effective when their BID led on identifying/supporting businesses rather than just free offering to businesses. They sign up to the scheme and agree to use the Disc crime info database	
Community Safety First: St Albans Town Centre Neighbourhood Watch St Albans district / £9100	Comprehensive community safety programme In St Albans, London Colney & Harpenden: focus on crime prevention, community engagement, improved confidence in Police 10 Engagement/Sign-up events and a major Town Centre Safety Fair, bringing together Safety Partners for visible public engagement Distribution of over 1,000 crime prevention kits (purse bells, card defenders, cycle locks, UV property markers, shed/gate locks). Printed and digital campaigns to raise awareness of burglary, fraud, scams, antisocial behaviour, and town centre safety.

<u>Scrutiny Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £9100 greater than the £6000 maximum for third sector organisations - Is not solely focused on safety in/around town centres and would be in towns not within the focus of the grant scheme - Delivery is long-term (beyond the summer) 	
Watford Town Centre Safety & Resilience Programme Watford Town Centre BID / £5280	Deliver conflict management training to 48 shops/businesses Based on clear, ongoing evidence of demand from local businesses and does not duplicate existing provision. Businesses highlight crime/safety as the main concern and they tell us they would benefit from targeted, practical conflict management training to support their frontline staff in dealing with ASB, aggression, and shop theft. Training aimed at managers or supervisors so they can cascade the learning to a wider audience.
<u>Scrutiny Feedback</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures implemented seek to tackle crime/ABS in priority town and make them safer places where business want to invest/people want to spend time - Training would be delivered at different times/days to ensure wide as possible take up by businesses 	

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

17. That the Commissioner approves £9600 from the grants budget towards the following two bids below:

Project Title Applicant / Ask	Rationale/Condition
Shop Watch Radios Three Rivers NPT / £4320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aligned to both Priority 1: Make Hertfordshire Safer/Safer neighbourhoods & Priority 3: Tackle Crime & ASB/NTE of Police & Crime Plan - Initiative supports businesses in priority town and in lead up to busy Festive Season <u>Condition:</u> that they consider using process used in Watford
Watford Town Centre Safety & Resilience Programme Watford Town Centre BID / £5280	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aligned to both Priority 1: Make Hertfordshire Safer/Safer neighbourhoods & Priority 3: Tackle Crime & ASB/NTE of Police & Crime Plan - Initiative supports businesses in priority town and in lead up to busy Festive Season

18. That the Commissioner declines the following three bids.



Project Title Applicant/Ask	Rationale
Making Hertfordshire a Safer Place to Live Mediation Hertfordshire / £6000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measures implemented are not focused on town centres- OPCC currently considering bid from applicant within small grant scheme
Southern Maltings Youth Led Events Ware Arts Centre Ltd / £6000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Project will take place in 2026- Monthly delivery is not considered sufficient to have an impact of any ASB taking place
Community Safety First: St Albans Town Centre Neighbourhood Watch St Albans district / £9100	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measures implemented not solely focused on safety scheme priority towns- Could have tried to get venues at reduced rate/free of charge- £9100 ask is greater than the £6000 maximum for third sector organisations



Appendix A: **2025/26 Grants Budget, £**

Summary		sub-totals
	2025/26 CS&CJ Total Budget	1,133,600.00
	Group A - Statutory Commitments Awards	-121,000.00
	Group B - Fly Tipping on Private Land Scheme 2025/26	-20,000.00
	Group C – Safer Town Centres Fund 2025/26	-31,007.00
	Group D – 2025/26 Other Commitments	-320,730.50
	Commitment & Income sub-total	-492,737.50
	Estimated uncommitted balance	640,862.50

Detailed

Group A - 2025/26 Statutory Commitments Awards	
HCC Family Safeguarding Team DA Workers/SH Practitioner	-86,000.00
HCC Herts Youth Justice Data Analyst	-35,000.00
Sub-total	-121,000.00
Group B - Fly Tipping on Private Land Scheme 2025/26	
Total budget for 2025/26	-20,000.00
Sub-total	-20,000.00
Group C – Safer Town Centres Fund 2025/26	
Watford Mounted Police	-6,000.00
North Herts Women’s Safety Charter	-4,000.00
Operation Ironworks	-15,000.00
Hitchin Safer Town Centre Initiative	-4,032.00
OP Vigilant overtime during week of VAWG Action	-1,975.00
Sub-total	-31,007.00
Group D - 2025/26 Other Commitments	
Chrysalis Contribution	-150,000.00
Senior Policy Advisor	-27,000.00
Chrysalis 24/25 underspend into 25/26 for Stalking Intervention	-40,000.00
Fairness in Justice Project (final year of funding)	-33,028.00
Graduate placement contribution	-20,000.00
Youth Panel Project (part 2 of 2 payment)	-16,912.50
HACRO 2025/26 Contribution	-16,000.00
Comm Saf Grant Late Award: Future Living	-5,760.00
Comm Saf Grant Late Award: Resilient Connections	-6,000.00
East Herts/NPT Ceasar Scheme: 50% Discount	-5,000.00
Grovehill CHB (Crimestoppers)	-1,030.00
Sub-total	-320,730.50

Appendix B Safer Town Centre Grant Scheme Bids Under Consideration

Project Name/ Lead Organisation	Town(s) / Area	Delivery Details	Ask, £	Key Milestones	KPIs	Sustainability / Exit Strategy
Making Hertfordshire a Safer Place to Live / Mediation Hertfordshire	from Watford, Three Rivers, Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne, and Hertsmere	Following referrals from Police/safety Parter, invite parties to individual meeting with a mediator to explain their experience of the dispute/help them find out about mediation process. After, parties will be invited to a joint meeting to resolve differences in safe / supported environment. Following joint meeting, follow up with parties/would benefit from additional sessions. Where only 1 party to the dispute wishes to engage, we provide conflict coaching. Conflict coaching provides listening ear to those experiencing adverse effects of conflict, helping them reframe the dispute, receive specific support/ feel supported.	6000	6,000 would cover 10 Police / Community Safety Officer referred cases. Whilst we generally ask for 12 months to complete these we anticipate that the cases will be used up much sooner than that. We currently have a waiting list for the areas previously stated.	At conclusion of cases, obtain feedback from clients/4 questions 1. Following recent mediation session do you feel more able to deal with difficulties? 2. Do you feel better coping with any relationship difficulties that you might face in the future? 3. Do you feel more confident seeking external support if problems arise? 4. Do you feel better able to maintain and manage relationships with others?	None (they do ask for funding from District/Borough Councils each year)
SMYLE - Southern	Ware	Prior to trailing SMYLE, we spoke to young volunteers and did surveys	6000	We have reserved dates from Jan 26	Attendees book online or register at the door,	We would hope by the time that this



Maltings Youth Led Events / Ware Arts Centre Ltd (trading as Southern Maltings)		in the local Secondary Schools. We have run a pilot project since Feb 2025 offering our venue one Friday evening/month. To date we have run some Silent Discos, DJ nights, Karaoke and run to November we plan a youth band night, Halloween, and a Silent disco with 3 young DJ's doing the sets. The sessions are marketed through School newsletters and on social media - usually parents book the places. During our pilot we have not charged for the events to build interest and make the events accessible. We want to continue this for the whole of 2026.		to Dec 26 - allowing 1 Friday night/month (this may be adjusted as some key times are not popular e.g. exam times). Timing is 7.30- 10.00	so we have contact details Booking numbers for each event Discussions with the attendees at each event to get feedback plus suggestions of other themes	grant has been utilised that we are able to apply for funding that will cover us county wide to deliver our services
Shop Watch Radios Three Rivers NPT	Rickmansworth	8 Shop Watch radios initially to be issued to the major retailers in the Town centre who suffer significant thefts. They will also be issued to staff at the station where our offenders often go after committing offences. This would be a 12-month trial to evaluate how effective they are at reducing crime and increasing detections within the town centre.	4320	01/10/2025 Go live 01/12/2025 Review of scheme 01/03/2025 Review of scheme	The KPI's would be hopefully a decrease in Shoplifting crime and ASB in the town centre but also an increase in detections.	These radios are rented from Radio tronics. The company work with us and the retailers around the onward rental costs which would be paid by the retailers moving forward. If after 12 months the retailers do not want to pay



						then the radios are returned and the scheme ends.
Watford Town Centre Safety & Resilience Programme / Watford Town Centre BID	Watford	<p>Deliver conflict management training to 48 shops/businesses based on clear, ongoing evidence of demand from local businesses. Watford BID engages directly/regularly with business community through annual surveys, monthly Business Against Crime/Pubwatch meetings, 1-to-1s, and collaborative forums. These channels consistently highlight crime/safety as the main concern for businesses operating in the town centre. Specifically, businesses repeatedly tell us they would benefit from targeted, practical conflict management training to support their frontline staff in dealing with ASB, aggression and shop theft. Training aimed at managers/supervisors so they can cascade the learning to a wider audience. Our project is designed to fill this gap, responding directly to the needs of those who are most impacted by ASB and</p>	5280	<p>4 sessions to be offered, 1 per week throughout October ahead of busy Christmas period which often sees a rise of ASB, retail theft and drug/mental health concerns. However, the training can be delivered anytime and would be beneficial</p>	<p>Nos. sessions delivered (Target: 4) Nos. of businesses engaged (Target: 48) Attendance figures/session (Target: 12/session) Participant satisfaction rate (Target: 90%+ based on post-training surveys) Increase in staff confidence in dealing with conflict and ASB (Measured via pre- and post-training self-assessments) Reduction in ASB-related reports or Police callouts from participating businesses Positive change in business perception of safety in the town centre (Measured via</p>	<p>If Watford BID secures third term for 2026 - 31, they intend to allocate core budget to fund future conflict management training. This will ensure the skill set remains embedded across the town centre and can be refreshed regularly for new staff or evolving challenges. Additionally, ongoing in-kind support from partners such as Harlequin Watford, Herts Constabulary and the CSP help maintain delivery at minimal cost. Future sessions may also explore co-funding models or</p>



		crime. Feedback from businesses cited a lack of confidence in handling difficult situations. When asked what support would help, businesses identified conflict management training as essential to improving staff wellbeing/retention.			follow-up surveys and annual BID business survey)	contributions from businesses who see direct benefit
Community Safety First: St Albans Town Centre / Neighbourhood Watch St Albans district	St Albans & District Area	<p>Delivery of comprehensive community safety programme in St Albans, London Colney & Harpenden with focus will on crime prevention, community engagement, and improved confidence in policing.</p> <p>Key activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -10 engagement/sign-up events in town centres/local venues, run jointly with Police Crime Prevention teams. -Town Centre Safety Fair, bringing together Neighbourhood Watch, Police, Council, and local partners for visible public engagement. -distribution of 1,000+ crime prevention kits (purse bells, card defenders, cycle locks, UV property markers, shed/gate locks). 	9100	<p>Sept 2025 – Launch event, London Colney with Police.</p> <p>Oct–Dec 2025 – 3 community engagement/sign-up events St Albans, Harpenden</p> <p>Dec 2025 – Promotion/ awareness activities linked to Xmas period</p> <p>Jan–Mar 2026 – 4 further community events distributing prevention kits.</p> <p>Spring 2026 – St Albans Centre Safety Fair bringing together Police,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Nos. engagement events (target: 10+) & attendance recorded. -Delivery Town Centre Safety Fair with partner participation. -Nos. prevention kits distributed (target: 1,000+). -Increase Herts Connected sign-ups (target: 500+ new sign-ups). -Volume printed / digital campaign reach (target: 5,000+ residents/businesses engaged). Feedback from residents, businesses, and vulnerable groups 	<p>After the grant ends, the project will be sustained through Neighbourhood Watch volunteer support, continued in-kind contributions from Hertfordshire Constabulary and St Albans District Council, and small-scale local fundraising. We will also explore future OPCC funding opportunities and business sponsorship to maintain community engagement and safety activities</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Printed/digital campaigns to raise awareness of burglary, fraud, scams, ASB, and safety.-Increased sign-ups to Herts Connected, ensuring residents/businesses receive timely alerts.-Targeted outreach to businesses and vulnerable groups, ensuring a broad reach across the community.		<p>Council, NHW, and community partners.</p> <p>June 2026 – Final 2 engagement events/outreach to businesses, focusing on fraud prevention & NTE</p> <p>July 2026 – Project review/evaluation with partners; final outcomes report, including number of sign-ups, kits distributed, and residents engaged</p>	<p>on confidence & awareness of crime prevention.</p> <p>Police data on reports of ASB, retail crime, and town centre incidents (tracked through local policing team and RAG briefings).</p> <p>A final evaluation report produced, summarising outcomes, learning, and recommendations for sustainability.</p>	
--	--	---	--	---	---	--