Newsletter from Police & Crime Commissioner Jonathan Ash-Edwards

Dear {FIRST_NAME},



Burglars more likely to be caught in Hertfordshire than anywhere else in the country.

The biggest reduction in robbery offences of anywhere in England & Wales.

Operation Hotspot patrols continuing despite Government funding being cut.

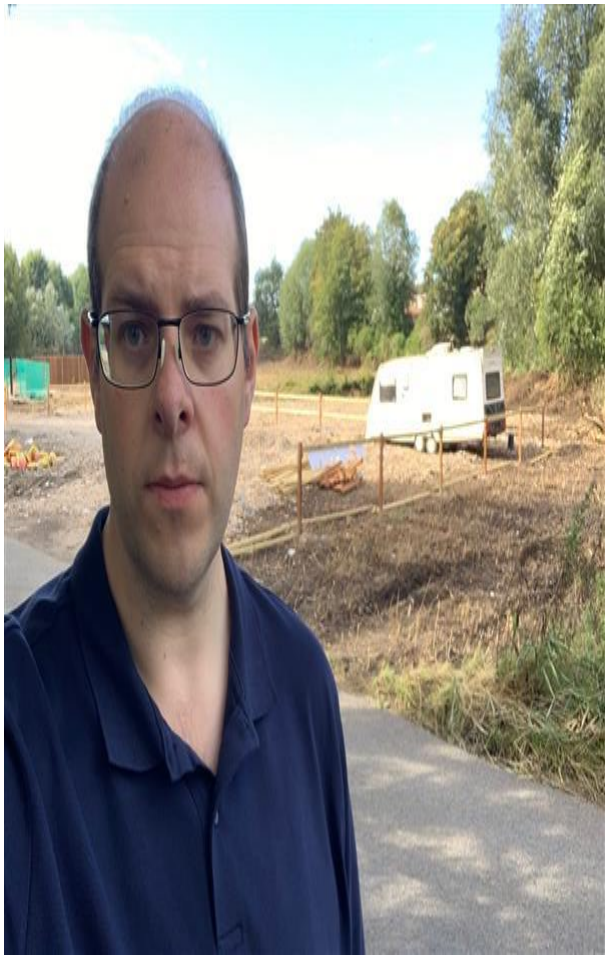
There is lots more to do, but Hertfordshire is seeing really good progress in the fight against crime and delivery on the things you've told me are important.

This month, I've also called for changes in the law where I think it isn't working for Hertfordshire communities and vulnerable children in our county. Read more below on why I think we need to give the police new powers to protect the green belt from large scale unauthorised development.

And with new analysis by my office showing over 80% of child sexual abuse image offenders dodge prison, I think it's time for the criminal justice system to crack down on paedophiles.

As ever, please get in touch at commissioner@herts-pcc.gov.uk if there is anything you'd like to raise.

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire



'You cannot rip up the countryside and ask permission later': PCC calls for new police powers to stop major illegal development

Two incidents over Bank Holiday weekends this year have seen significant unauthorised development activity taking place on green belt land in Flamstead and Sawbridgeworth.

In both cases, large quantities of aggregate and building materials were brought onto land, heavy machinery was used and extensive groundworks began, causing considerable concern among local residents.

Police attending the scene have limited powers to intervene as planning enforcement is a local authority function.

I believe the law needs to be changed, and more police powers granted and have written to Housing Secretary Angela Rayner to make the case for:

 A new **72-hour Emergency Stop Power** for police, allowing officers to halt substantial development, backed by power of arrest, where there are reasonable grounds to believe planning permission has not been granted. This would give councils time to take enforcement action.

 New **police powers to enforce Temporary Stop Notices** issued by councils, including powers to stop works, arrest those breaching a Stop Notice and immobilise or seize vehicles and machinery.

 A new criminal offence of **Aggravated Intentional Unauthorised Development**, targeting those who knowingly carry out major works with the intention of circumventing planning enforcement - including gaming the system over Bank Holidays.

I don't want police officers becoming planning officers: planning enforcement rightly sits with local councils. Nor would these proposals target householders who make an innocent mistake. But there has to be an emergency brake in the most serious and blatant breaches of the planning system.

The principle is straightforward; nobody should be able to game the planning system by ripping up our countryside first and asking for permission later.

I hope to meet with Ministers soon to make the case for these proposals.

Read more here

Continuation of crime hotspot patrols secured after Government funding cut



50,000 hours of additional high visibility police patrols. Hundreds of arrests. Thousands of uses of anti-social behaviour powers. Knives and drugs taken off the streets.

Operation Hotspot has made a massive difference over the last two years delivering increases in police visibility in town centres and crime hotspots. And the results have been worth it with town centre crime down as a result.

A few months ago, I told you that the Government had cancelled the funding we were using in Hertfordshire to fund these additional patrols.

I have been determined to ensure Hertfordshire didn't lose the benefits from Operation Hotspot.

The public want to see more visible policing and they want action against crime and anti-social behaviour.

So, I have worked with Hertfordshire Constabulary to find the funding locally to continue these patrols and I'm pleased to say they are back up and running. The

Chief Constable and I joined a hotspot patrol with local officers earlier in the month and it was great to see the impact the patrols are having.

Read more here



More than four in five offenders convicted over child sexual abuse images avoid prison. It's time to crack down on paedophiles.

Over 80% of offenders convicted of taking, making, distributing, or publishing indecent images of children do not go to prison.

Read that again.

These are offences involving images and video of children, often incredibly young, being sexually abused and exploited. Yet new analysis that I've done of Ministry of Justice sentencing data shows that just 17.9% of those convicted in 2025/26 received a custodial sentence.

The same data shows how warped the criminal justice system's priorities are. Someone convicted of going equipped to steal (but not actually stealing) was almost twice as likely to be sent to prison.

It's time to crack down on paedophiles and put children's safety first.

Read my article for LBC Online here

More burglars caught in Hertfordshire than anywhere else in the country



Burglary is low in Hertfordshire but it's a horribly invasive crime. Early on in my time as Police & Crime Commissioner, I heard victims' frustrations about burglary outcomes and made it a priority in my Police & Crime Plan.

I'm delighted to report that Hertfordshire Constabulary has made significant progress in improving burglary investigations.

So much so that in the first quarter of this financial year, Hertfordshire Constabulary solved more burglaries than any other police force in England & Wales.

The number of residential burglaries resulting in an offender being charged was triple the same period last year making Hertfordshire the most improved police force for solving burglary.

Unsurprisingly, arresting more burglars also means that burglary is falling across the county, with a 16% reduction in burglary reports in the same three-month period.

Proactive crime fighting in Hertfordshire is delivering results, putting more burglars before the courts, cutting crime and delivering a better service to victims.

There is no room for complacency, but this is very good news for Hertfordshire residents and a credit to the police officers and staff whose hard work has delivered results.

Read the full story here

And Hertfordshire is leading the way in cutting the number of robberies

Finally, data just in for last year (2025/26) showed that Hertfordshire recorded the largest reduction in robbery offences anywhere in the country, covering both personal robbery and business robbery offences.

Robbery offences in Hertfordshire fell by 13% over the year, bucking the national trend which saw robbery increase by 10% across England and Wales. Only six police force areas nationally recorded any reduction in robbery offences.

Four Hertfordshire districts and boroughs were also among the top ten local authority areas nationally for reductions in robbery. Watford recorded the biggest reduction in the country, with robbery falling by 39% and Dacorum, St Albans and North Hertfordshire were also in the top ten largest reductions.

I'm particularly pleased about the impact that has been had in Watford, following a spate of muggings and robberies in and around Cassiobury Park, which was added to Operation Hotspot as a result. These results show those additional patrols have made a real difference in making the area safer and deterring offenders.

Read more here

Message Sent By
Jonathan Ash-Edwards