



NOTES OF THE PUBLIC SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27TH MAY 2025 IN WYVERN HOUSE, WINSFORD.

Present: D Price, Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)
C Armitt, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

G Southern, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
D Taylor, Chief Executive
J Whalen, Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner
C Gilbody, Head of Scrutiny & Planning
J Hare, Head of Communications and Engagement

Cheshire Constabulary

M Evans, Assistant Chief Constable
A Ross, Assistant Chief Constable
P Woods, Head of Performance & Planning
V McMahon, Staff Officer

There were also six members of the public present.

1.0 Introduction

The Commissioner welcomed all to the meeting.

The Commissioner referred to the distressing events that unfolded during the Liverpool FC victory parade the preceding Sunday, and extended thanks and appreciation to the blue light services, which included Cheshire officers providing mutual aid, who responded to the incident with professionalism and bravery.

2.0 Minutes

The minutes were agreed. There were no outstanding actions to review.

3.0 Thematic Session – Neighbourhood Policing

The PCC invited the Deputy Chief Constable to provide an overview of the force's approach to the National Policing Guidelines (NPG).

- The DCC confirmed that Cheshire's neighbourhood policing model, which has been updated is fully aligned with the Police and Crime Plan (P&CP), and that recent Value for Money (VfM) profiles demonstrates well though through investment.
- Dedicated Police Constables and PCSOs are now embedded across 122 wards, placing Cheshire ahead of national policing guidance.

- The DCC reported a reduction in crime and fewer victims over the past 12 months, describing this as a positive and sustainable trajectory.
- Call handling performance has significantly improved and is now well within national standards.
- The DCC outlined a wide range of community engagement and prevention activities, including initiatives focused on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- External data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) confirms that public perception of Cheshire Police remains strong

4.0 Commissioner's Questions

Q1: PCSOs and Police Officer Numbers

- DCC Response: PC numbers have increased, which has afforded greater deployment flexibility, particularly in response to public order and national mobilisation (required under the Strategic Policing Requirement). PCSOs have not increased, but a change to future funding may allow for this to be re-evaluated.
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Q2: Drivers of Public Confidence

- DCC Response: Cheshire is now a hostile environment for criminals, supported by strong roads policing keeping crime out of the area. Along with a consistent message to staff delivered through the Constabulary's plan on a page, has embedded a robust operational approach. These factors contribute to high public confidence. Social media communicates positive work and serves as a deterrence.
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Q3: Performance and Public Perception

- DCC Response: Comparisons are challenging due to Cheshire's unique context. However, additional court capacity, including the Domestic Abuse Court, has improved outcomes and engagement.
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Q4: Citizens Assemblies and Local Concerns

- DCC Response: Once Citizens Assemblies (CAs) are complete, they will provide a narrative to work with, offering a "You said, we did" approach.
 - PCC Comment: CAs offer a valuable platform for engaging hard-to-reach communities and involving them in informing decision-making.
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Q5: Respect and Public Perception

- DCC Response: The force is firm, fair, and consistent. Even those subject to arrest or use of force are treated with professionalism, however those who do not abide by the law will always be challenged. He added high respect scores reflect compassionate victim care.
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Q6: Abstractions and Visible Policing

- DCC Response: Apparent drop in visible policing is due to a data anomaly (monthly vs. annual comparison). A 10% abstraction cap is self-imposed and externally scrutinised. Neighbourhood officers are generally protected from large event deployments.
 - PCC Comment: This reassures the public of consistent local service.
 - Additional Note: Special Constables play a key role in supporting major events and The Home Office is reviewing Cheshire's abstraction reporting for potential national rollout.
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Q7: Community Awareness of Local Officers

- DCC Response: Officer-to-ward mapping is prioritised, though there can be lags due to ill health, promotions etc. PCSOs offer more stability; PCs often move roles for career development. A two-year tenure is encouraged but not enforced.
 - The public values PCSOs, and many who become PCs retain valuable local knowledge.
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Q8: Community Voice and Priority Setting

- DCC Response: The “Residents’ Voice” tool is effective in identifying and addressing local concerns.
 - PCC Comment: Citizens Assemblies can complement this by reaching underrepresented groups.
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Q9: Training Rollout

- DCC Response: Full training for new officers will be completed within 12 months, with interim contingency plans in place. There has been a 19% increase overall in neighbourhood policing roles, 28% of those being officers.
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Q10: ASB Surge Planning

- DCC Response: Tailored plans are in place for known ASB peaks (e.g., Halloween, summer holidays). ASB often overlaps with petty crime and criminal damage. Partner engagement in this area is improving but still limited.
 - PCC Comment: Local hotspot policing initiative will help increase visible presence in key areas.
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Q11: Safer Town Centres and Rural Impact

- DCC Response: Focus will be on all town centres, not just major ones. The approach mirrors successful urban crime strategies used previously.
 - PCC Comment: Important to ensure rural areas are not adversely affected.
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Q12: Public Awareness of 999/101

- DCC Response: 999 should be used for crimes in progress, serious road traffic collisions, or fear of violence, otherwise use 101. If unsure, call 999. Public should feel confident using both services.