Community Scrutiny Panel

Title: OPFCC Corporate Update

Date of Meeting: July 2025
Agenda Item No: 05b
Originating Officers: Gill Shearer, OPFCC Chief Executive

This update provides the Community Scrutiny Panel with a headline summary of recent developments within the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

1. Devolution

On 17 July 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution announced that the Devolution Priority Programme who was taking forward proposals to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities had completed public consultations in each area being considered.

Following an assessment, they confirmed that the relevant statutory tests to establish Mayoral Strategic Authorities in all six areas have been met. Subject to the constituent councils' consent, legislation will be brought before Parliament in order to establish each of the six institutions early in 2026, devolving further powers to local leaders and those with local knowledge, to drive economic growth and empower communities with investment to support their work.

Four inaugural mayoral elections will take place in Greater Essex, Hampshire & the Solent, Norfolk & Suffolk, and Sussex & Brighton, and will be held in May 2026.

Following a request from the local authority leaders in Cumbria, and Cheshire & Warrington, the Government has agreed to align inaugural mayoral elections with the vast majority of local elections in May 2027, simplifying the elections for voters and saving taxpayers' money.

Mayoral elections held in 2026 will take place under the First Past The Post (FPTP) voting system, as is currently the law. The recently tabled English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill would move future Mayoral (and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections) to the Supplementary Vote (SV) system, which was in place prior to 2023. Subject to parliamentary approval, this would be relevant for the proposed 2027 Mayoral elections onwards.

2 Safer Streets Summer Initiative (formally Keeping Town Centres Safe)

The Safer Streets Summer Initiative is being run from 30 June 2025 until the end of September 2025. The aim of the Government initiative is to have a dedicated focus on town centres to drive down retail, street crime and anti-social behaviour this summer.

The Cumbria Office of Police and Crime Commissioner along with Cumbria Constabulary, Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and non-statutory partners will drive activity aimed at reducing crime and disorder in our town centres this summer. The following town centres in have been identified as priority areas; Carlisle, Whitehaven, Workington, Kendal, Barrow-in-Furness, Penrith and Ulverston.

The summer months can be an incredibly busy time with large numbers of people visiting and attending events. The aim of the campaign is to keep communities safe, provide visible policing to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour; and build trust and confidence in the police.

Some of the work that will be promoted throughout the next three months include: the work of the Restorative Hope Workers; the benefits of the Commissioner's Community Fund for local groups; partners' use of fines, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO), and use of Community Protection Notice; youth engagement activities and diversionary activities; work with local drug and alcohol treatment services; work with local businesses to tackle retail crime; tackling knife crime; and protection and prevention measures in place to protect those enjoying the county's night-time economy.

3. Operation Enhance – Hotspot Action Acton Fund 2025-26

Following the government's decision to run a Hotspot Policing Programme for a second year, the Commissioner's Office secured another £1m from the Home Office Hotspot Action Fund. For 2025/2026, the government has widened the category to include a reduction in knife crime as well as antisocial behaviour and serious violence. This is to support the government's priority to halve knife crime over the next 10 years.

The main requirement for the second year is to deliver a minimum of 9,000 hours of visible uniformed patrolling within identified hotspot areas, starting from 1st July 2025. The 9,000 hours will capture patrols from other Operations, such as Operation Festive, as well as business as usual patrolling and dedicated overtime patrols. Cumberland Council are supporting once more, with Enforcement Officer patrols and the Saturday night Welfare Hub in Carlisle town centre.

Applying the new criteria, 15 hotspots have been identified, down from 18 the previous year. These hotspots contain 22.7% of all antisocial behaviour in Cumbria, 22.9% of all serious violence and 20.4% of all knife crimes.

Basic Command Unit	Location
Cumberland	Carlisle Botchergate
	Carlisle High Street
	Carlisle, London Road
	Whitehaven Town Centre
	Whitehaven Castle Park
	Cleator Moor
	Workington
	Maryport Town Centre
Westmorland & Furness	Penrith
	Kendal
	Bowness on Windermere
	Ulverston
	Barrow Town Centre
	Barrow Hindpool
	Barrow Ormsgill

Operation Enhance has had a wider effect on crime rates with burglary reports dropping from 17 to 12 (29.4% reduction), possession of weapon offences dropping from 14 to six (57.1% reduction) and sexual offences decreasing from 26 to 20 (23.1% reduction).

As in the previous year, there will be further opportunity to apply problem-oriented policing profiles to offer solutions to some of the issues identified within the hotspots. This work will continue to be supported by the Local Focus Hubs using the OSARA model.