NOTES - SCRUTINY MEETING (CRIME IN CLEVELAND - CRIME RATES, RESPONSE TIMES, INVESTIGATION TIMELINESS AND CRIME OUTCOMES) - 7 OCTOBER 2026

Cleveland in Context

- It was important to set the context of crime in Cleveland, the Force detailed the socio-economic and demographic factors placing a significant demand on Force services, which included:
    - **Cultural diversity:** A high number of supported asylum seekers, alongside growing ethnic and cultural diversity.
    - **Health and wellbeing:** An ageing population, low life expectancy, high suicide rates, high levels of teenage pregnancy, high prevalence of mental health disorders, high levels of drug and alcohol misuse and high rates of hospital admissions linked to violence.
    - **Force area profile:** Although geographically small, Cleveland is one of the most densely populated force areas in the country and contains some of the most deprived communities nationally. The Force experiences demand comparable to much larger metropolitan forces and is most similar to Merseyside, Northumbria, South Yorkshire, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Durham. While the Metropolitan Police Service is not part of Cleveland's Most Similar Group (MSG), Cleveland is now included within the Metropolitan Police's MSG, reflecting increasingly comparable demand characteristics. The force area experiences some of the highest crime and incident rates nationally and the second-highest number of expected SDS40 prison releases per officer. Additional demand arises from the area's industrial and strategic infrastructure, including a significant petrochemical industry, a nuclear power station, Teesport, and two football stadiums, one of which regularly hosts large-scale events. Partner agencies also face funding pressures, resource constraints and performance challenges.
    - **Education and employment:** Low educational attainment, high levels of income deprivation and unemployment and significant levels of school absence.
    - **Housing and vulnerability:** Areas of entrenched deprivation and 'left behind' neighbourhoods, a high proportion of Band A properties, approved premises accommodating registered sex offenders and a high number of looked after children.

Funding and Resource Challenges

- To effectively police Cleveland, the resources available to the Force must be commensurate with the significant socio-demographic challenges and levels of demand it faces. However:
    - In 2026/27, Cleveland received the lowest cash increase in funding of any police force in England and Wales.
    - The Force continues to experience the largest reduction in officer numbers compared with historical workforce levels across all forces.
- The opportunities presented through Operation Uplift have been fully maximised, supported by robust demand modelling and strategic workforce planning to ensure resources are deployed where they are needed most.
- The Force continues to actively pursue and exploit additional funding opportunities.
- Despite these efforts, demand modelling indicates that the Force does not have sufficient resources to meet the current and projected levels of demand across the Cleveland area.
- His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Andy Cooke, highlighted the inequity of the current police funding model in the State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, stating: "*The system of police funding is outdated and unfair. Funding should be distributed so it goes to where it is needed most. But currently, this isn't the case …. Cleveland is the force with the lowest number of officers compared to its number in March 2010. It has experienced a reduction of 12 percent. This is worrying, considering its policing area contains some of the most deprived communities in England and Wales.*"
- The Chief Constable has written to both the Home Secretary and the Policing Minister seeking additional funding, highlighting the positive impact that mutual aid deployments have had on performance and service delivery. While the Force continues to pursue all available opportunities to secure

additional resources, recent mutual aid operations have clearly demonstrated the benefits that increased capacity can bring, enabling enhanced service provision, improved performance and greater resilience in meeting the needs of Cleveland's communities.

Question	Brief Summary of Evidence	Decision of PCC

1. What do current crime trends tell us about demand across Cleveland, and how is the Force responding? *(Please provide recorded crime volumes, offence trends, demand by area, emerging threats and 12-month trends.)*	• Following two consecutive years of crime reductions, monthly crime volumes began to rise in March 2025. Over the following 12 months, crime levels fluctuated but generally remained below the historical average until early 2026.
	• Since early 2026, crime volumes have increased significantly, with offences in the 12 months to August 2026 rising by 12.9% compared with the previous year. Despite this recent increase, current crime levels remain **6% lower than those recorded three years ago**.
	• Cleveland continues to record the highest crime rate in the country, a position it has held consistently since June 2020. Prior to this, Cleveland regularly ranked within the top five force areas nationally, alongside a number of metropolitan forces.
	• This sustained position reflects the significant and complex policing challenges faced across the force area, including high levels of deprivation, vulnerability and demand, and the complex risks present within the communities served by the Force.
	• In addition to the socio-economic and demographic challenges present across Cleveland, a number of factors continue to influence current crime levels:
	  • Crime Recording and Counting Rule Changes - Amendments have been made to the way offences are counted, recorded and classified and these continue to affect crime volumes for certain offence types. For example, business robbery has increased by 257% over the past 12 months, equating to an additional 506 recorded offences.
	  • Retail Crime - There have been significant increases recorded over the last year, particularly in relation to shoplifting, which has risen by 44% (approximately 3,600 additional offences). A substantial proportion of this increase is associated with offending patterns and reporting practices linked to the national retailer Sainsbury's.
	  • Operation Magnolia - The ongoing investigation into historical allegations of abuse at HMP Kirklevington, Stockton, dating from the 1960s to the 1990s, continues to impact recorded crime levels. To date, the investigation has resulted in more than 2,000 additional recorded offences, around 1,400 of which were recorded within the last 12 months. A notable increase in recording activity has been evident since December 2025.
	• The recording of offences arising from Operation Magnolia continues to have a significant impact on Cleveland's recorded crime rates. In the 12 months to August 2026, a total of 1,372 crimes were recorded as a direct result of the investigation, contributing to an overall total of 2,121 offences recorded during the life-time of the investigation.
		Assured
		
		The PCC was assured by the evidence provided by the Force. Despite the significant socio-economic and demographic challenges within Cleveland, alongside ongoing funding and resource pressures that continue to increase demand on policing services, the Force remains committed to improving performance and delivering an effective service to the public. The PCC recognises the considerable efforts being made to respond to complex and evolving demands, maximise available resources and target activity where it is needed most. The evidence presented by the Force makes a compelling case for increased funding, demonstrating that current resources do not reflect the scale and complexity of demand in Cleveland.

	• The offences recorded in the 12 months to August 2026 include 690 violence with injury offences, 614 violence without injury offences and 52 sexual offences, with 1,370 classified as victim-based crimes. As these offences relate to the retrospective recording of historical allegations, they have a significant impact on current crime statistics and contribute to increased recorded crime volumes, despite not reflecting current or emerging criminality within Cleveland. *Please note: Crimes recorded under Operation Magnolia have been identified using the occurrence location (HMP Kirklevington Grange) and offence dates spanning the 1960s to the 1990s. These offences are recorded in line with current crime recording requirements based on the date they are reported to police, rather than the date on which the alleged offences occurred. Consequently, the investigation continues to have a notable impact on crime recording and crime rate measures.*
	• Prison releases and recalls continue to place additional demands on policing and partner agencies, while increasing the potential risk to already vulnerable communities.
	• In addition, there has been a sustained upward trend in prison recalls over the past three years. This increase has become increasingly apparent since the introduction of SDS40 in September 2024, with recalls rising by 42% in the last 12 months and by 102% since summer 2024. This trend continues to generate significant demand across the criminal justice system and contributes to the increased complexity of managing offenders within the community.
	• The Chief Constable intends to write to Chief Constable Sacha Hatchett and the Ministry of Justice to highlight the disproportionate impact that prison release and recall policies are having on Cleveland.
	• One consequence of this increased demand is the continued pressure on custody provision. Ongoing capacity challenges can require detainees to be transported to neighbouring force areas to secure available detention space, placing additional demands on officers and resources and reducing operational capacity within Cleveland.
	• The Force considers this to be a significant source of unfunded policing demand and will continue to make the case for a funding and resource model that better reflects the scale and complexity of demand experienced locally.
	• Despite the additional pressures arising from increasing prison releases and recalls, the Force remains committed to prioritising those individuals who pose the greatest risk to Cleveland's communities. Through a continual focus on threat, risk and harm, resources are directed towards the most high-risk offenders, ensuring that communities continue to receive an effective policing response despite the growing operational challenges.
	• Cleveland Police was previously assessed by HMICFRS as 'Good' at preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, with inspectors noting that the Force:
	  • Prioritises prevention and is developing a culture of problem-solving.
	  • Works effectively with partners to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour.	

	• Has a strong understanding of antisocial behaviour and makes effective use of preventative powers. • Operates an effective neighbourhood policing model, listens to communities and works with them to make local areas safer. • Building on these strong foundations, the Force is: • Continuing its commitment to delivering effective neighbourhood policing, with a clear focus on problem-solving. • Refocusing the activity and deployment of proactive teams to target threat, risk and harm more effectively. • Strengthening governance arrangements for the management of offenders. • Seeking opportunities to maximise the use of proactive orders and other preventative powers. • Expanding the remit of the Dedicated Drugs Unit, which will become a High Harm Investigation Team. • Working proactively with partners to maximise crime prevention and problem-solving opportunities, including engagement with organisations such as Sainsbury's. • Through this work, the Force aims to further enhance its ability to prevent crime, protect communities and target those who pose the greatest risk of harm.	
2. How is the Force performing against response standards, and what is being done to improve areas of underperformance? *(Please provide response times by grade, incidents attended within target, performance trends and any identified performance risks.)*	• Detailed demand analysis is undertaken as part of the Force's annual planning cycle and informs challenging resourcing decisions. While HMICFRS has provided positive feedback on the Force's approach to demand analysis and resource allocation, there are simply insufficient resources in the organisation to meet demand. • Demand modelling identified significant resourcing pressures within both the Force Control Room and Response Policing. • In respect of performance data (based on the 12 months to the end of July 2026), attendance times continue to improve across all incident categories. • Emergency incidents: 82.6% were attended within target, representing an improvement of 1.8 percentage points compared with the previous year. Average attendance time reduced to 9 minutes 52 seconds, compared with 9 minutes 48 seconds in the previous year. • Priority incidents: 63.7% were attended within target, an improvement of 6.9 percentage points on the previous year. Average attendance time improved from 46 minutes to 36 minutes. • Priority 24 incidents: 86.3% were attended within target, an increase of 1.8 percentage points compared with the previous year. Average attendance time reduced from 210 minutes to 182 minutes. • In August, approximately 2,500 mutual aid officers were deployed to Cleveland. The additional capacity provided a significant boost to operational resilience, enabling the	

	Force to achieve its highest recorded levels of response performance. The increased resourcing also contributed to lower levels of workforce sickness. This clearly demonstrates the positive impact that additional resources can have on service delivery, workforce wellbeing and the timeliness of the response provided to the public.
	• In terms of scheduled attendance, these incidents are managed by the Primary Crime Investigation Unit (PCIU), which contacts the caller or victim within an appropriate timescale. As there is no prescribed service standard for these incidents, response times are determined on a case-by-case basis. The number of incidents managed through scheduled attendance continues to increase, rising by 34.5% (508 incidents) compared with the previous year.
	• In terms of appointments, these incidents are also managed on a case-by-case basis, with appointments arranged in consultation with the reporting person or victim. Consequently, there is no defined service standard. The number of incidents dealt with by appointment has continued to increase, up 7.1% (1,580 incidents) compared with the previous year.
	• Since January 2026, the Force has made extensive operational use of drone technology, completing 1,559 flights and supporting 1,289 operational deployments. During this period, drones have assisted in locating 75 missing people, 147 suspects and 104 vehicles, with a combined flying time of 435 hours and 43 minutes.
	• Since March 2026, drones have been the first unit on scene on 1,187 occasions, demonstrating their value in providing an immediate response and supporting operational decision-making. In a further 119 deployments, drone activity removed the need for any ground deployment, delivering efficiencies and reducing demand on frontline resources.
	• Notably, since the introduction of five drone docks and seven-day coverage in August, Cleveland has recorded the second-highest number of drone deployments nationally, behind only the Metropolitan Police Service, highlighting the Force's effective and innovative use of the capability to support operational policing.
	• Cleveland Police was previously assessed by HMICFRS as ‘Adequate’ at responding to the public. The inspection identified two areas for improvement:
	  • Improving the way vulnerability is identified and recorded on incident logs.
	  • Attending calls for service in line with published attendance times
	• Progress has since been made in both areas. Work to improve the identification and recording of vulnerability has been completed, while response performance continues to improve and remains a key area of focus.
	• To support continued improvement, the Force has undertaken a number of initiatives, including:
	  • Implementing a new approach to responding to reports of shoplifting, as presented at the Scrutiny Meeting held in July 2026.	

	• Enhancing the service provided to victims reporting crime online through channels such as Single Online Home and Live Chat. • Removing inefficient processes that delay risk assessment and strengthening the application of Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) to support effective and timely decision-making. • Maximising opportunities to provide crime scene preservation advice at the first point of contact e.g. through call handlers and the Victims' Journey programme. • Improving the Force's ability to manage fluctuations in demand and deploy resources flexibly in response to emerging pressures, e.g. through Operation IVY. • These improvements are designed to strengthen service delivery, improve responsiveness and ensure an effective and timely service.	
3. How timely and effective are investigations, and how does the Force ensure they are appropriately resourced and supervised? *(Please provide evidence relating to investigation timeliness, outstanding investigations, investigator workloads, supervisory oversight, and quality assurance arrangements.)*	• Detailed demand analysis of investigative capacity and capability across Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) has identified significant challenges in the Force's ability to meet investigative demand. • The volume and complexity of serious crime, much of which involves vulnerability, has resulted in an estimated shortfall of 55 detective posts across investigative functions, excluding major and serious crime teams. These pressures are compounded by a detective workforce gap that mirrors the national picture, with recruitment, retention and attrition continuing to present challenges. • The impact of these shortages is reflected in increased investigative workloads, longer investigation times and a corresponding effect on victim satisfaction. • To strengthen its response, the Force remodelled its investigative functions in December 2025 in line with the principles of Operation Soteria, establishing dedicated specialist RASSO and safeguarding teams to improve investigative resilience, enhance expertise and provide greater operational coverage. • In terms of current performance, investigation timeliness remains a notable strength for the Force. The average time taken to charge for victim-based crime is 13 days, substantially lower than both the England and Wales average of 40 days and the Most Similar Group (MSG) average of 38 days. This strong performance has been achieved despite increasing investigative demand and ongoing detective shortages. • Outstanding investigations continue to increase in line with wider demand. The Force currently has 6,856 live crimes and 725 outstanding suspects, with both measures showing an upward trend that reflects the increase in recorded crime. • Investigative workloads remain significant. The Force currently carries an average of 6.3 live crimes per investigating officer and 49.3 total crimes per officer, with the latter representing the second-highest workload nationally. This highlights the substantial demand being placed on investigative teams and the challenging environment in which they continue to operate.	

	• Supervisor oversight remains broadly stable, with 79.2% of crime reviews and 79.5% of PIP checks completed. While this is slightly below the Force's typical performance level of 82-83%, it reflects the ongoing pressures across investigative functions.
	• Thematic testing results for August 2026 continue to demonstrate performance above the 12-month average across all areas reviewed:
	  • Investigations: 76% of cases were assessed positively, compared to a 12-month average of 69%.
	  • Victim Care: 76% of cases were assessed positively, significantly above the 12-month average of 57%.
	  • Supervisor Reviews: 66% of cases were assessed positively, compared to a 12-month average of 62%.
	  • Suspect Management: 67% of cases were assessed positively, above the 12-month average of 65%.
	• These findings indicate continued improvement and upward trend in the quality of investigations, victim care, supervisory oversight and suspect management, with performance in each area exceeding the Force's longer-term average.
	• Cleveland Police was previously assessed by HMICFRS as 'Requires Improvement' in relation to investigating crime. The inspection identified the following areas for improvement:
	  • Achieving appropriate outcomes for victims.
	  • Completing victim needs assessments where appropriate.
	• Both areas remain under active focus, with performance continuing to improve.
	• More broadly, investigating crime remains a significant challenge across policing nationally. During the 2023-25 PEEL inspection cycle, this was identified as the area of policing performance requiring the greatest improvement, with the majority of forces receiving grades below Good. Even among the highest-performing forces, many were assessed as 'Requires Improvement' in this area.
	• The Force continues to focus on improving investigative quality, victim care and outcomes, while managing increasing demand, growing investigative complexity and ongoing workforce challenges.
	• At the Scrutiny Meeting held in May 2026, an update was provided on the activity being undertaken to improve investigative outcomes. The Force continues to strengthen its investigative capability through a programme of work focused on governance, supervision, workforce resilience and professional development.
	• Key areas of activity include:
	  • Strengthening governance and oversight through the Deputy Chief Constable-led Force IMPACT Board, the Assistant Chief Constable-led Crime Governance Group, and the Achieving Investigative Excellence (AIE) and Detective	

	Resilience workstreams. This is supported by a range of tactical groups focused on suspect management, offender management, and victims and witnesses. • Enhancing supervisory standards by increasing the focus on PIP sign-off compliance and supervisory reviews. Performance is monitored through Power BI, with the quality of supervision assessed through thematic testing. • Improving investigative resilience through the redesign of the detective resourcing model, informed by detailed demand analysis. This includes a focus on recruitment, retention, accreditation and wellbeing, ensuring investigations are appropriately allocated and workloads remain manageable wherever possible. • Developing investigative capability through specialist training aligned to national investigative standards. The Force's dedicated Detective Pathway programme has enabled the proportion of officers holding PIP2 accreditation to increase to 62%. Further improvements are anticipated in the coming months.	
4. What outcomes are being achieved for victims, what factors are influencing performance, and where is improvement required? *(Please provide information on charge rates, out-of-court resolution (OoCR) rates, victim attrition, victim satisfaction, outcome trends, and any factors affecting performance.)*	• As previously highlighted, HMICFRS identified the following areas for improvement during the last PEEL inspection: • Achieving appropriate outcomes for victims. • Completing victim needs assessments where appropriate. • At the Scrutiny Meeting held in January 2026, an update was provided on compliance with the Victims' Code and the work being undertaken to better support victims throughout the criminal justice process. This included: • Driving improvement activity through a dedicated Victims and Witnesses Group. • Strengthening performance management and oversight in relation to compliance with the Victims' Code. • Developing a Victim Needs Assessment Problem Solving Plan to address identified gaps. • Introducing a Victims' Portal, a secure online platform that will provide victims with case updates, direct messaging with the OIC, and access to support services. The current go-live date is 17 November 2026. • Improving case file quality to enhance victim outcomes and reduce failure demand. • Following that session, the PCC issued a judgement of 'Assured'. In addition, a further update was provided in May 2026 regarding the Force's use of Out of Court Resolutions, for which the PCC again issued a judgement of 'Assured', providing independent assurance regarding the effectiveness of the Force's improvement activity in these areas. • In terms of outcomes for victims, current performance highlights: • Solved crime rates continue to improve. In August 2026, the Force achieved a solved crime rate of 15.3%, while the 12-month average stands at 15.2%,	

	representing year-on-year improvements of 0.4 and 1.4 percentage points respectively. Performance is currently below the England and Wales average (15.5%) and the MSG average (16.0%). This demonstrates an increasing trend marginally below the national and MSG average. • Charge rates continue to improve and remain a key area of strength for the Force. In August 2026, the charge rate stood at 12.1%, with a 12-month average of 11.2%, representing year-on-year improvements of 0.8 and 1.2 percentage points respectively. Performance is currently above both the England and Wales average (10.8%) and the MSG average (11.7%), This demonstrates an increasing trend above the national and MSG average. • Victim attrition rates continue to reduce, indicating that fewer victims are withdrawing their support during investigations. In August 2026, the attrition rate was 18.8%, while the 12-month average stands at 20.9%, representing year-on-year reductions of 4.6 and 2.8 percentage points respectively. This demonstrates a decreasing trend, below the national and MSG average. • Victim satisfaction measures continue to show a positive direction of travel, with improvements recorded across all aspects of service. • Initial Contact: Satisfaction stands at 90.6%, an increase of 1.6 percentage points. • Actions Taken: Satisfaction is 75.0%, up 1.2 percentage points. • Follow-Up: Satisfaction has increased to 64.5%, up 0.7 percentage points. • Treatment: Satisfaction with how victims were treated by officers and staff stands at 89.9%, an increase of 1.0 percentage point. • Overall Satisfaction: Overall victim satisfaction has increased to 75.3%, representing a significant improvement of 4.0 percentage points compared with the previous year. • Victim satisfaction continues to improve across all measures, with particularly strong performance in relation to initial contact and victim treatment. • Whilst acknowledging the progress made to date, the Force recognises that a number of key challenges remain and will continue to be a focus of improvement activity. These include: • Developing a better understanding of the factors contributing to victim attrition and identifying further opportunities to reduce the number of victims disengaging from the criminal justice process. • Managing investigator workloads to support officer wellbeing, resilience and performance. • Evaluating the impact of the additional resources invested within the Digital Forensics Unit and ensuring benefits are realised.	

	• Maximising the appropriate use of Out of Court Resolutions and Civil Orders to support effective offender management and victim outcomes. • Continuing to work collaboratively with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) through the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and other governance arrangements to streamline performance measures, address barriers to performance and drive continuous improvement across the criminal justice system.	

5. How does the Force identify, oversee and improve performance across crime recording, response, investigations and outcomes?	• The Force's performance management arrangements include:
	  • A performance management strategy and framework aligned to the NPCC Hallmarks of Good Performance Management.
	  • A delivery framework structured around the Chief Constable's mission and Strategic Plan, ensuring activity is focused on organisational priorities.
	  • A strategic IMPACT dashboard that tracks progress against the Strategic Plan through a suite of key performance indicators and supporting diagnostic measures.
	  • A robust, tiered governance and accountability framework that promotes shared ownership, responsibility and accountability for performance across the organisation.
	• The Force's performance management arrangements are underpinned by a structured governance and accountability framework, aligned to the Cleveland Police Strategic Plan. This framework ensures clear oversight of performance, delivery against strategic priorities, and accountability at every level of the organisation:
	  • Tier 1 - Strategic Corporate Governance: The Executive Management Board, chaired by the Chief Constable, provides strategic leadership and oversight of the delivery of the Force's mission and Strategic Plan.
	  • Tier 2 - Strategic Assurance: The Force IMPACT Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, provides strategic performance oversight, challenge and assurance against organisational priorities and outcomes.
	  • Tier 3 - Delivery and Assurance: Thematic governance groups, chaired by Assistant Chief Constables, oversee performance and improvement activity across key priority areas, including Responding to the Public, Prevention and Problem Solving, Confidence and Legitimacy, Crime Investigations, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, and Specialist Capabilities.
	  • Tier 4 - Tactical Delivery: Command-led tactical delivery groups, supported by designated Force leads, drive operational performance and the delivery of improvement activity within their respective areas of responsibility.
	• In addition, there are business area and team-level performance conversations, together with individual Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) to ensure accountability, ownership and continuous improvement throughout the organisation.	

6. What are the Force's key performance risks, and how is progress against improvement activity being measured?	• The Force undertakes a bi-monthly Strategic IMPACT Assessment of performance, which is considered by the Force IMPACT Board. This process enables the identification, assessment and management of current and emerging performance risks, threats and opportunities, ensuring that appropriate action is taken where performance is deteriorating or improvement is required.
	• The assessment incorporates both a directional and delivery perspective. The directional assessment considers how performance is changing over time, using Statistical Process Control (SPC) as a key analytical tool to identify meaningful variation and emerging trends. This is supplemented by a range of additional sources to provide additional context and insight.
	• The delivery assessment considers whether the required level of performance is being achieved. Performance expectations are measured against one or more of the following:
	  • A national service standard or service level agreement.
	  • A local service standard or service level agreement.
	  • A defined performance target, threshold or benchmark, such as the national average or MSG average.
	• This approach provides a balanced assessment of both performance trajectory and current performance levels, enabling informed decision-making and effective performance management.	