

Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2023 AT BANQUETING HALL, SALISBURY GUILDHALL, MARKET PLACE, GUILDHALL SQUARE, SALISBURY SP1 1JH.

Present:

Cllr Steve Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Jenny Jeffries (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr Daniel Cave, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tony Pickernell, Denisa Ahmeti, Louise Williams and Cllr Vinay Manro (Substitute)

Also Present:

Philip Wilkinson OBE, MPhil – Police and Crime Commissioner
Naji Darwish – Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, OPCC
Rob Llewellyn – Director of Operations, OPCC
John Derryman – Strategic Planning and Performance Officer, OPCC
Maria Milton – Victims and Vulnerability Commissioning Manager, OPCC
Emma Morton – Head of Communications and Engagement, OPCC
Martin Nicholls – Head of Service Executive Office, Wiltshire Council
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

18 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Carol Shelley
- Cllr Kevin Parry (substituted by Cllr Vinay Manro)
- Cllr James Sheppard
- Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall

19 **Minutes and matters arising**

On the proposal of Vice-Chairman, seconded by Cllr Henning, it was resolved:

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 as a true and correct record.

20 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

21 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

22 **Public Participation**

The Chairman confirmed that questions had been received from Action Against Foxhunting that did not relate directly to the responsibilities and functions of the panel.

The Democratic Services Officer read out a statement on behalf of Mr Chris Caswill, in relation to Item 10 of the agenda and Minute 16 of the previous meeting. Mr Caswill encouraged the Panel not to water down the measures to promote the Panel when they reviewed their constitutional documents. He raised concerns about the timing of the agenda for this meeting being after the formal deadline for public questions and requested that the participation deadlines were also considered as part of the review.

A further public statement was made by David about the importance of community engagement, particularly with older residents.

23 **PCC Quarterly Update**

The Panel considered the quarterly update.

24 **HMICFRS PEEL PCC - Progress to Date**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Philip Wilkinson, OBE MPhil, gave a progress update about his scrutiny, challenge, and support of Wiltshire Police's Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection action plan. He also provided the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC's) assessment of the progress Wiltshire Police was making towards addressing the PEEL findings. During his update key points included:

- The PCC had met with His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for the Wales and Western Region, Wendy Williams CBE, who felt that some progress had been made towards the issues identified.
- The force had recruited a retired Assistant Chief Constable, Craig Dibdin, to focus solely on the areas of improvement required by the PEEL report.
- Oversight had been improved as the OPCC's Strategic Planning and Performance Officer, John Derryman, now sat on all of Wiltshire Police's performance boards. The number of performance boards had been reduced to give clearer direction. Each board was chaired by Chief Constable Roper.
- The PCC felt that his office had now moved from the 'challenge' phase to the 'active support' phase in helping Wiltshire Police through the Engage process.
- The PCC identified specific areas in which he felt that progress had been made, such as prosecution rates for rape going from the lowest to the highest in the South West region, as well as tackling the interconnected issues of drug issues and youth violence.

Cllr Cave arrived at 10:22am.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for the update and welcomed the progress identified in the report.
- Members stated that they would like a roadmap of the progress made including a timeline of key inspections and goals.
- The PCC noted that there had originally been several roadmaps. Wiltshire Police had now combined the information into a single document, which he hoped to share with the Police Performance Oversight Group on 5 April 2023.
- In answer to a query about the lack of progress made towards effective community engagement and problem solving, the PCC agreed that this was a concern but reassured the Panel that new processes had been put in place.
- When asked about the deployment of officers in the community, not in response to specific incidents, but to deter crime and provide reassurance to the public, the PCC emphasised the importance of ensuring that there was a sufficient number of officers on the front line. He highlighted that there would be 140 more officers by the end of the year than when he first took up the role.
- The PCC also outlined other steps to help build community links, such as each station being allocated a commander who would stay in post for at least two years. He explained that inspectors would regularly visit Area Boards.
- Two mobile police stations had been delivered which would visit smaller towns and villages to provide a visible presence. Area Boards would be asked where they would like to see the stations deployed.
- In response to a suggestion by Cllr Dr Mathew that retired police officers be encouraged to participate in engagement events in schools, the PCC stated that this was something that he would consider and emphasised that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) did visit schools.
- Given that extra recruitment would lead to an increase in the number of inexperienced staff, a hierarchy of leadership and management courses had been put in place.
- The PCC stated that he was keen to make recruitment processes more flexible to attract people leaving the military. He explained that the Ministry of Defence provided four months of training to service personnel due to leave the armed forces but that they could now do four months of training to join the police instead.
- The Panel noted that it would be good to have a balance of experienced and younger recruits, who might be able to identify better with people of a similar age group.

25 **Update from the PCC**

The PCC gave his update during the previous item on the progress made towards the PEEL report.

26 **Police and Crime Plan Highlight and Performance Report**

The PCC gave a summary of the progress made towards the delivery of the four key priorities in his Police and Crime Plan, including proposals for improvements to the police estate.

The PCC was pleased to report that Calne Police Station would be refurbished to become the home of the Rural Crime Team and a base for the local neighbourhood team. He explained that discussions were ongoing about purchasing six acres of land near Old Sarum and Salisbury Park and Ride to set up a base in the south of the county. The PCC stressed that purchase of the land was not yet complete and that proposals would be subject to planning. However, he was optimistic that he would be able to make an announcement in the coming weeks. He also noted that it might be possible to open a custody suite at the Salisbury site but that would be dependent on the operational requirements identified by the Chief Constable.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel thanked the PCC for the update and praised the honesty in the report.
- In response to a question about why 28 of the 66 performance measures were listed as declining, the PCC clarified that a measure would not be listed as improving unless there had been three consecutive months of improvement. He also stressed that he had seen improvements in leadership and morale.
- The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the OPCC, Naji Darwish, explained that delivering sustainable improvement in service performance went beyond meeting the specific requirements of the PEEL process. He stressed that improvements needed to be done in a holistic fashion so that they were linked to the PEEL improvements and met the goals of the Police and Crime Plan. He emphasised that many improvements would take time to implement so, whilst it was important to track progress month on month, it was also key to look at the longer-term direction of travel.
- The OPCC's Strategic Planning and Performance Officer noted that the report was widely shared within the force to ensure transparency.
- When asked about the decline in the volume of community intelligence, the PCC stated that he felt that a higher proportion of intelligence officers should be deployed on the frontline rather than at headquarters at this would help to build community engagement.
- The Vice-Chairman suggested that sending officers to attend parish surgeries would be a good way to build up the intelligence picture.

- The PCC highlighted that he made regular visits to Area Boards and that the Chief Constable was also keen to visit Area Boards when possible. Chief Constable Roper and the PCC had visited Calne Area Board on 7 March.
- The Panel stated that they would welcome the Chief Constable should she wish to attend one of their forthcoming meetings.
- It was reported by the PCC that tackling drug related knife crime would be a priority.
- The PCC was pleased to state that rural crime had reduced. The size of the Rural Crime Team had doubled and there was lots of engagement with the farming community.
- The OPCC was working closely with local councils on the Safety at Night Charter and in tackling issues such as speeding.
- In answer to a query about why the number of victims supporting prosecution was below the national average, the PCC reported that court time programming was an issue. The Chief Executive of the OPCC added that waiting times had returned to pre-pandemic levels but there were issues with the number of magistrates and the courtroom infrastructure in Swindon.

On the proposal of Cllr Cave, seconded by Cllr Dr Mathew, it was resolved:

Decision

To note the Police and Crime Plan Highlight and Performance Report.

27 Wider PCC Responsibilities - Victims and Vulnerability

Maria Milton, Strategic Lead for the Portfolio Area of Victims and Vulnerability, gave a presentation about the services available, including an enhanced service for vulnerable victims and a domestic abuse advocacy refuge in Swindon. She also outlined how services related to the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, their impact and how they were commissioned.

The strategic lead was pleased to report that they typically received positive feedback, stating that 78 percent of young victims that had gone through their service said that they were able to recover. She emphasised the importance of promoting the availability of services and ensuring that their approach was victim led.

She highlighted that one of the key challenges facing the service was commissioning, with a number of contracts due for renewal in 2023/24. She noted that it had not yet been confirmed whether the additional funding in the Ministry of Justice Victims' Grant would continue beyond March 2025.

Further details are available in the slides attached to the minutes or through the [Horizon Team](#).

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Panel thanked the strategic lead for the presentation and commended the work being done to support victims.
- The Chief Executive of the OPCC praised the wealth of work undertaken to support the criminal justice system and said that he would be happy to put members in contact with service representatives if they wanted further information.
- The PCC stated that he was in awe of the breadth of services being commissioned and the care and compassion shown by staff.
- When asked specifically about the services being put in place to support older people, the strategic lead explained that they would be supported through the Horizon service. A dedicated officer would be able to help them via a 'phone call or letter and did home visits.
- In response to a question about the support available for the victims of cybercrime, it was confirmed that support was available nationally.
- The strategic lead explained that they worked closely in partnership with the NHS and local authorities. Services were evidence led and feedback was shared with other agencies.
- It was reported that there had been a growth in the number of victims of stalking and harassment.
- When questioned about the reasons for the increased demand for their services, the strategic lead confirmed that there were a combination of factors, including an increase in certain types of crime. Take up varied depending on the type of service, with particularly high take up in cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- It was noted that there were challenges in forecasting the funding for the scheme in the longer term as it would be dependent on future grant awards.
- It was confirmed that the service benefitted from volunteers in restorative practice and the support service for older people.
- It was reported that schools were part of the coordinated community work taking place during the pandemic to ensure that at risk children were visited at home.

28 **OPCC Commissioning Plan 2023/24**

Due to officer availability, OPCC Commissioning Plan Item was heard ahead of the Victims and Vulnerability Item.

The OPCC's Director of Operations, Rob Llewellyn, gave a summary of progress on commissioning of non-policing services and plans for financial year 2023-24. He explained that services were commissioned to support services system wide, including the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan and the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board Strategy. Including successful bid funding the total commissioning budget was £4.561 million for 2023/24.

Louise Williams arrived at 11:25am.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Director of Operations was thanked for his report.
- In response to a query about how the impact of investment on the delivery of services was calculated, the director emphasised the importance of engaging with victims and ensuring they worked collaboratively with other agencies. He gave the examples of supporting offenders to leave custody and working with mental health practitioners as areas within system that could help to reduce impacts on other services.
- The director confirmed that commissioning plans were updated on an annual basis.
- The PCC stressed that frontline officers benefitted from being able to contact mental health specialists at headquarters.
- When asked about the impact of having to bid for funding on the overall direction of the service, the director explained that it did place constraints, such as having to spend funding within certain timeframes. He then emphasised the strong relationship that the OPCC had with local authorities, citing the recent success of their joint bid for Safer Streets funding.
- The director reported that next year there would be the opportunity for community groups to bid on a quarterly basis for funding from the PCC of up to £5,000. The OPCC was working closely with the Wiltshire Community Foundation to provide clarity about the bid process.
- The PCC was questioned about the communication he had with central government about funding, he stated that he did speak to ministers and held a monthly meeting with local MPs. He explained that a range of views were represented within the Association of PCCs about the police funding formula.
- The Chief Executive of the OPCC stressed that national funding would be determined by ministerial decisions and priorities.
- The Chairman encouraged members to contact their MPs about the police funding formula.

On the proposal of the Vice-Chairman, seconded by Cllr Pickernell, it was resolved:

Decision

To note the report on the OPCC's commissioning plans for financial year 2023/24.

29 **Forward Work Plan**

The Chairman referred the Panel to the forward work plan in Agenda Supplement 1.

It was noted that progress had been made on speed enforcement and it might be an area that the Panel would like to be updated on.

30 **Communications**

The Panel considered ways in which it could improve its communication with the public, including public participation guidelines in its rules of procedure.

31 **Update on Constitutional Matters**

The Chairman reminded the Panel that it had been a long time since they had last updated their constitutional documents. He highlighted that the documents would benefit from a review to make sure that they met current requirements, such as the deadline for public participation. He referred the Panel to the proposal in the agenda pack, suggesting that they be reviewed by Wiltshire Council's Constitution Focus Group in May. He then welcomed the thoughts of the Panel on the proposals and invited members to volunteer to attend the Constitution Focus Group meeting.

During the debate the Panel stated that they would welcome the opportunity to review the documents as part of efforts to improve their communication with the public. The Chairman, Cllr Henning and Cllr Pickernell then volunteered to attend the Constitution Focus Group in May to ensure that the Panel's views were represented in the discussion.

The Democratic Services Officer clarified that Protocol 12 of Wiltshire Council's constitution contained both the rules of procedure for the meeting as well as the panel agreement between Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. As the host authority Wiltshire Council, with the agreement of the Panel, would be able to update the rules of procedure. However, it was likely that the Panel agreement would need the separate approval of both local authorities. Additionally, any changes to the documents would require the approval of two thirds of the total membership of the Police and Crime Panel.

32 **Items for Communication to the Public**

The Chairman reported that Wiltshire Council's website had been updated to set out more clearly the role of the Panel in scrutinising the PCC. There was also additional information about the principals of good scrutiny, the Panel's funding arrangements and how the public can get involved.

Discussion turned to how the Panel could make information more easily available to the public. Suggestions included making the PCC's quarterly report more prominent on Wiltshire Council's website and making a precis of the report available on the webpages themselves. The Democratic Service Officer offered to investigate whether this would be possible on Wiltshire Council's website.

The Communications Manager at the OPCC offered to liaise with Wiltshire Council about promoting the Panel's meetings on social media.

33 **Future meeting dates**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 2:30pm in the Corn Exchange, Devizes.

Future meeting dates were:

- Thursday 14 September 2023, 10:30am – West Wilts Room, County Hall
- Thursday 14 December 2023, 10:30am – Committee Room 6, Swindon

The Chairman reiterated that accessibility would be a key factor in determining future meeting venues.

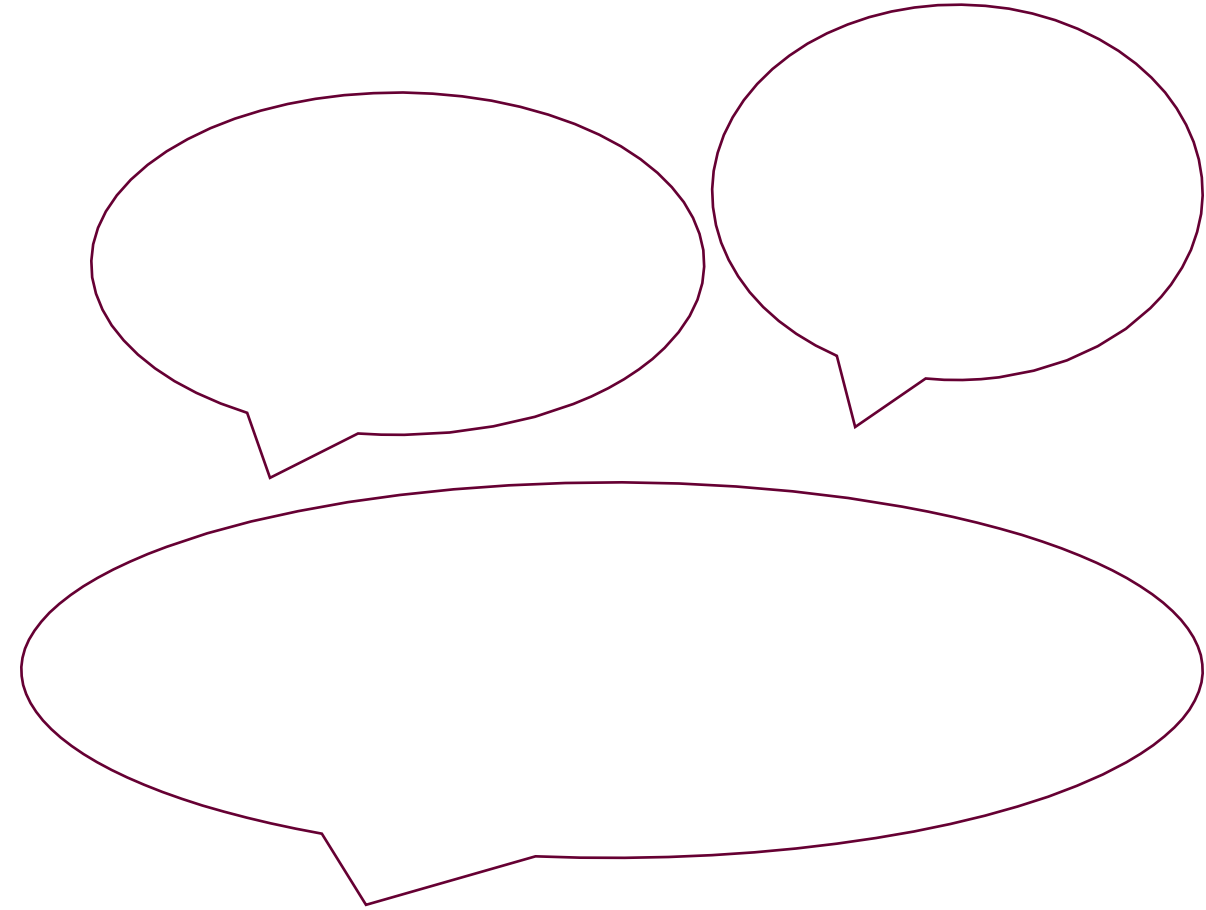
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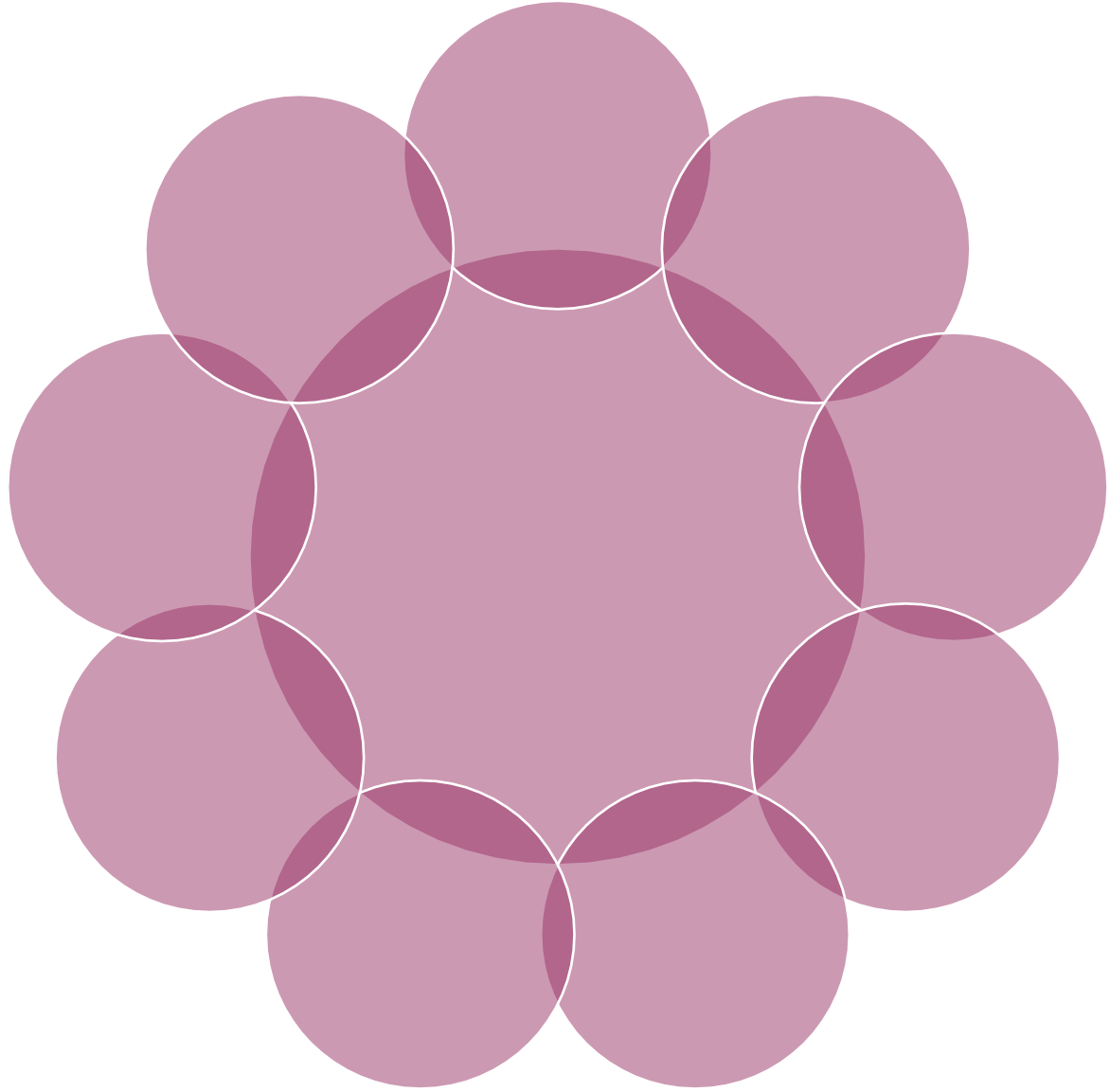
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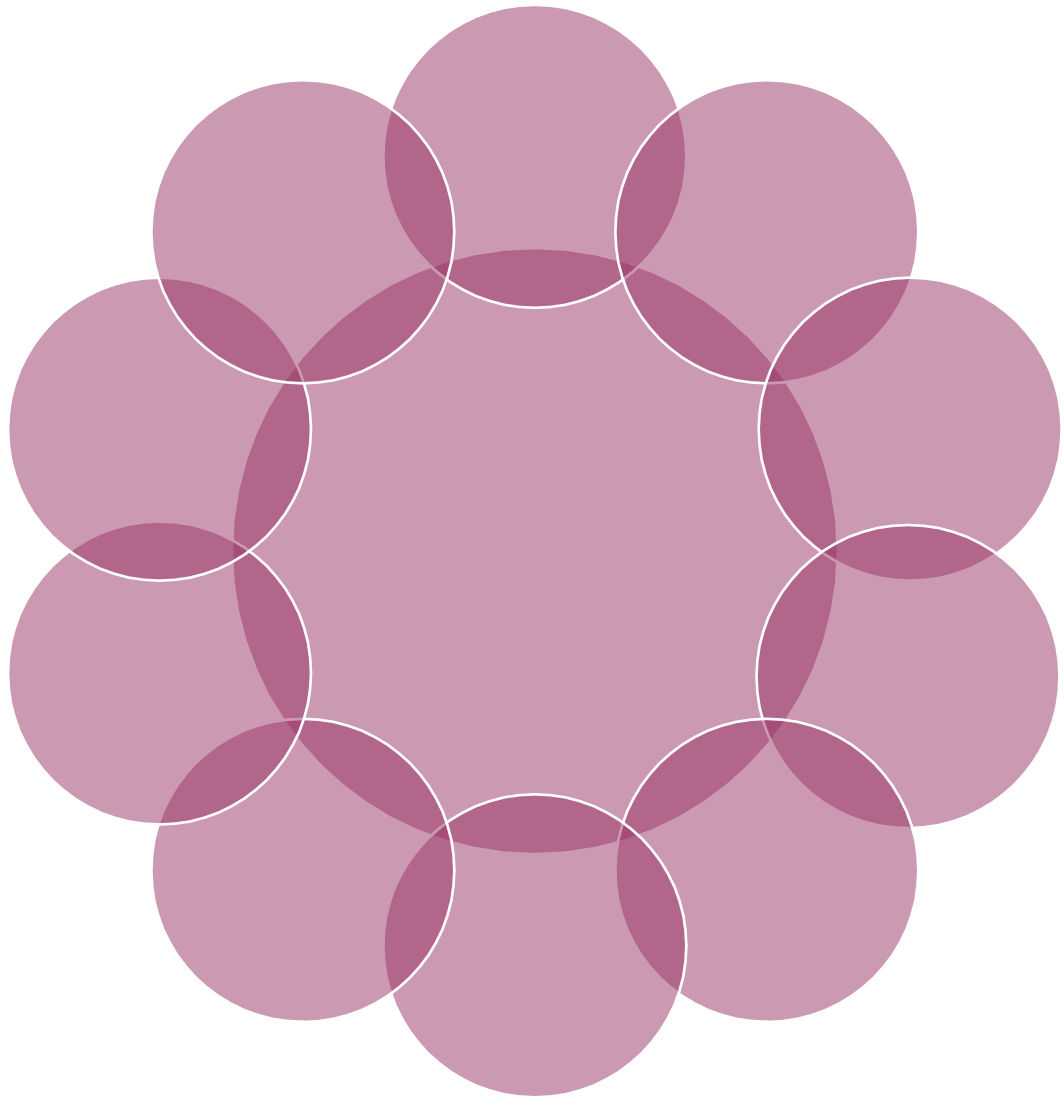
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