



**Matthew Barber**  
Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

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The Rt Hon Alex Norris MP  
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2026

Dear Lord Chancellor,

### **Potential Early Release of PC Andrew Harper's killers**

Like so many members of the public, serving police officers and, of course, Andrew Harper's family I was appalled to read the article in today's *Daily Telegraph* suggesting that two of Andrew Harper's killers would be released early under the Sentencing Act 2026.

Their dreadful crime led to passing of Harper's Law, something that many currently serving ministers rightly actively supported at the time. As a result, if Henry Long, Albert Bowes and Jessie Cole committed the same offence now, they would be subject to a mandatory life sentence. Yet, under the actions of this Government, two of his killers, Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole, are set to be released early.

This awful case serves to underline the flaws in the Sentencing Act 2026 more broadly. Blanket early releases for vast swathes of the prison population, and an increase in the threshold for a custodial sentence, mean that many criminals will simply never face proper punishment.

The new Prime Minister has apparently already indicated a willingness to review the legislation, and I would urge you to seize this opportunity to seek to uphold justice in this case and to mitigate some of the disastrous impacts of the Sentencing Act 2026.

I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss this case, and the wider implications of the Sentencing Act 2026. I urge the government to consider emergency legislation to address these egregious shortcomings in the legislation and consider what powers may be open to you through secondary legislation under Part 5 of the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Barber  
PCC for Thames Valley