

## AGENDA

### KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Dear Panel Member

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the **KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** will be held in the on **Tuesday, 4th February, 2025, at 10.00 am** when the following business will be transacted

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Gaetano Romagnuolo on 03000 416624

#### Membership

Councillor Peter Feacey	Ashford Borough Council
Councillor Connie Nolan	Canterbury City Council
Councillor Richard Wells	Dartford Borough Council
Councillor Charlotte Zosseeder	Dover District Council
Councillor Mike Blakemore	Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox	Gravesham Borough Council
Mr Mike Hill	Kent County Council
Councillor Eddie Peake	Medway Council
Councillor Perry Cole	Sevenoaks District Council
Councillor Richard Palmer	Swale Borough Council
Councillor Stuart Jeffery	Maidstone Borough Council
Councillor Pat Makinson	Thanet District Council
Councillor Des Keers	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Councillor Astra Birch	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Councillor Teresa Murray	Co-opted member – Medway Council
Mr Ian Chittenden	Co-opted member – Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mr Jordan Meade	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mrs Elaine Bolton	Independent Member
Mr Gurvinder Sandher	Independent Member

## **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

- 1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- 4 Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 18 December 2024  
(Pages 1 - 6)

### **B - Commissioner's reports requested by the Panel/offered by the Commissioner**

- B1 Appointment of Chief Constable (Pages 7 - 10)
- B2 Draft Police and Crime Plan and 2025-26 Precept Proposal  
(Pages 11 - 82)

To consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan, Precept proposal for 2025-26 and supporting financial information.

- B3 HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 - An Inspection of Kent Police (Pages 83 - 88)

### **C - Questions to the Commissioner**

- C1 Questions to the Commissioner

### **D - Panel Matters**

- D1 Future work programme (Pages 89 - 90)

## **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

**Monday, 27 January 2025**

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday 18 December 2024.

PRESENT: Mr M Hill OBE (Chairman), Mr G Sandher MBE (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Blakemore, Mrs E Bolton, Cllr M Boughton, Cllr P Cole, Cllr P Feacey, Mr J Meade, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr C Nolan and Cllr R Palmer, Mr R Streatfeild and Cllr R Wells.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr D Paul (PCC's Chief Executive ) and Mr N Wickens (Head of Policy Coordination & Research, OPCC).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer – Overview and Scrutiny).

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **129. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item A2)*

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Astra Birch, Mr Ian Chittenden, Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee, Cllr Stuart Jeffery, Cllr Des Keers, Cllr Teresa Murray, Cllr Eddie Peake and Cllr Charlotte Zosseder. Mr Richard Streatfeild substituted for Mr Ian Chittenden, and Cllr Matt Boughton substituted for Cllr Des Keers.

#### **130. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting**

*(Item A3)*

1. Mr Feacey declared that he was Chairman of Ashford Volunteer Centre.

#### **131. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 10 October 2024**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2024 were an accurate record.

#### **132. Neighbourhood Policing Review - Update**

*(Item B1)*

1. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report and said that the Kent Police's Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) Model was launched in June 2023 and consisted of:

- Beat Officers

- Neighbourhood Taskforces (NTF)
- Child-Centred Policing Teams (CCPTs) and
- Strategic Prevention Command (including a Prevention Hub and the Rural Task Force).

2. The Model was a substantial change for the force and was based on the rationale of boosting visibility and cutting crime in local communities while making financial savings.
3. The Model was based on meeting need and demand in local communities; over 200 Police Officers were posted into local neighbourhoods, with the allocation of other resources determined by local Chief Inspectors. Every Kent District now had its own task force.
4. Other developments included increasing the size of the Rural Task Force (RTF) by adding PCSOs, and a centralised anti-social behaviour hub. The rollout of the NHP Model was nearly complete; there were still a few PCSO posts that needed to be filled.
5. In terms of the benefits that had been realised through the NHP Model, the volume of engagement with communities had risen dramatically. Between July and October 2024, neighbourhood officers recorded attendance at:
  - 703 engagement events
  - 672 meetings
  - 144 surgeries
  - 792 school or youth visits and
  - 92 Parish Council meetings.
6. In addition, with support from the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the force had been allocated £1.5million from the Home Office Hotspot Response Fund to combat ASB and serious violence.
7. In answer to a question about how the Government's requirement to recruit more neighbourhood police officers would affect Kent's NHP Model, the Commissioner said he was awaiting the precise allocation, but based on the funding formula, he estimated an allocation of about £2.5million, which equated to about 30 to 35 officers or PCSOs. He also highlighted that the Government commitment would require the force to move officers and Special Constables into NHP roles.
8. In reply to a question about how the £7.1million savings from the implementation of the NHP Model had been realised, the Commissioner explained this was primarily through a reduction in PCSO numbers.
9. A Panel member asked a question about how the force tackled anti-social behaviour in town centres.
  - a. The Commissioner replied that there was a problem-solving plan in place to address those issues which was based on additional patrol visibility and the power to use dispersal orders.

10. A Panel member paid tribute to the Gravesend Safe and Free Environment (G SAFE) partnership for their outstanding work on tackling theft, violence and anti-social behaviour in the local community.

11. The Commissioner reported that, in the last quarter, there had been an increase of 3.3% in shoplifting offences compared to the same period in 2023. However, in the same period, 250 more suspects were interviewed, equating to a 22% increase, and 24% more people were charged. There was also a 41% increase in out-of-court disposals.

RESOLVED: To **note** the contents of the report and **require** a further update in Autumn 2025.

### **133. Divisional Policing Review** (*Item B2*)

1. The Commissioner explained that the review was developed to help improve Kent Police's front line capacity and capability, enhance the quality of investigations and provide an improved service to victims of crime. The Review brought together several projects and initiatives from across the force into one programme of activity in order to make best use of resources, manage risks, and develop benefits in a co-ordinated and structured approach.
2. The programme commenced in March 2023 and had been subject to extensive planning through the Force Change Team working with Chief Officers, the wider workforce and other key stakeholders.
3. The main changes under this model included:
  - Creating larger and more resilient teams that retained a focus on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) investigations, with detective oversight.
  - Combining Crime Squad and County Lines and Gangs Teams and moving under local Divisional ownership into new Proactive CID Teams to remove working barriers and improve local proactive capability.
  - Combining Rape Investigation Teams with High-Risk Domestic Abuse and Stalking Teams, as specialist serious sexual offence investigations required consistency and improvement in line with national best practice.
4. In reply to a question, the Commissioner said that, in this model, the number of detectives within the force would be increased.

A Panel member asked whether the force was still supporting Ask for Angela – a national scheme that helped anyone who was feeling vulnerable on a night out to receive the support they needed. The Commissioner confirmed the force was still supporting Ask for Angela and work was underway to ensure standards were being maintained.

RESOLVED: To **note** the report.

### **134. Road Safety - Update** (*Item B3*)

1. The Commissioner said that deaths and serious injuries on the roads were tragic and often avoidable events that had significant and life-long impact on the individuals, their families and the local community. Preventing road danger and supporting Vision Zero was one of the priorities in his Making Kent Safer Plan.
2. While it was encouraging that the number of road deaths had gradually decreased since 2021, the achievement of Vision Zero was still a long-term ambition.
3. The Commissioner was pleased that the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP), which he chaired, had senior officer and Elected Member representation from organisations including Kent Police, KCC, Medway Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and National Highways.
4. The Kent Police teams specifically tasked with road safety were:
  - The Roads Policing Unit (RPU), with 42 specialist officers who worked a 24/7 shift pattern and were trained in Advanced Driving and Tactical Pursuit and Containment.
  - The Road Safety Unit, with 8 officers trained to examine commercial vehicles.
  - The Camera Safety Team, with 6 members of staff who worked a flexible shift pattern to provide mobile and static speed enforcement across the county
  - A Serious Collision Investigation Unit, with 20 officers who investigated fatal or life changing collisions.
  - The Special Constabulary RPU, with 20 volunteer officers who were trained to the same standard as regular RPU officers and who used the same vehicles to respond to calls and promote road safety.
5. In terms of enforcement activity (including Fixed Penalty Notices, Traffic Offence Reports, summons and arrests), between October 2023 and October 2024, Kent Police dealt with:
  - over 72 ,000 people for excess speed;
  - about 1,700 people for driving while using a mobile phone;
  - about 2 ,180 people for not wearing a seatbelt; and
  - Over 2,000 people for driving whilst unfit due to alcohol or drugs.
6. With regard to Operation Voice – which involved RPU officers targeting high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators who regularly use motor vehicles, with the objective of minimising the risk they pose to their victims and other road users - this year, a total of 47 vehicles were stopped; 5 people were arrested for impairment offences and one person for domestic abuse-related matters. 53 Traffic Offence Reports were issued for road safety-related offences, and 3 drivers were reported for summons.
7. The Commissioner paid tribute to Community Speedwatch (CSW) - a road safety initiative coordinated by Kent Police and run by local communities with the aim of reducing deaths and injuries on Kent's roads. Over the past year, CSW had sent 12,708 warning notices to speeding drivers. 136 drivers were visited at their homes by Police Officers for education purposes, and a further 143 drivers were reported

to the DVLA for tax offences. Of note, 93% of drivers that received either a warning notice or a home visit had not been observed speeding again.

8. The road safety charity Brake had received about £40k funding from the PCC each year to support road victims. Brake provided a free, professional support service for road victims who had suffered a bereavement and/or physical injuries. To ensure that road victims and their families were able to access appropriate support, the OPCC had collaborated with Brake and Kent Police to change the referral mechanism to an opt-out process. This had resulted in a greater number of referrals, from 25 in the year preceding the introduction of the opt-out process, to 120 in 2023/24.
9. In reply to a question about the issue of those parking their motor vehicles on pavements and forcing pedestrians onto the road, the Commissioner said there were innovative solutions, such as the creation of bespoke pavement bays in London that enabled a vehicle to park with two wheels on the pavement whilst allowing enough space for pedestrians. Appreciating the problem it caused, the Commissioner advised to flag it to the local Beat Officers.

RESOLVED: To **note** the report.

#### **135. Verbal Update from the Commissioner** (*Item C1*)

1. With regard to the Rural Crime Board, the Commissioner reported that there had been investigative work around fly tipping, which was one of the key issues that residents had identified. The data on the number of incidents by Kent District would help to identify hotspots.
2. In relation to the Criminal Justice System, the total caseload had risen a further 14% compared to the pre-pandemic baseline of February 2020. Nationally, the increase was 9% over the same period. However, the total caseload was starting to level off for the following reasons: activity entering the system had stabilised as new force recruits were now in post; court utilisation had increased to 95% in recent months, compared to 74% in 2023 and 75% in 2022; following the early release of some prisoners, the Crown Courts had been able to carry out additional sentencing work; and newly trained legal advisors were now operating in the Magistrates Courts resulting in the number of court sessions increasing.
3. In terms of call handling, in the period November 2023 to October 2024, 99.7% of 999 calls were answered, and the average answer time was 4 seconds compared to 14 seconds the previous year. 96.7% of 101 calls were answered compared to 83% in 2023, and 45% in 2022. The average answer time was 33 seconds compared to 2 minutes 43 seconds the previous year. In the month of October 2024, 95.3% of 999 calls were answered in under 10 seconds, ranking Kent Police second nationally.

RESOLVED: To **note** the verbal update.

#### **126. Questions to the Commissioner** (*Item C2*)

- 1. I feel it is necessary to highlight the success we have seen, particularly in the rural villages within Swale and hopefully across Kent, with the allocated officers policing these areas. There has been a vast amount of work done with local schools, Parish Councils, and community groups. There has been a noticeable reduction in anti-social behaviour and petty crime in some areas. With Christmas fast approaching and the current financial difficulties that many people are experiencing, it would be beneficial if our town centres, particularly retailers and entertainment venues, could benefit from also seeing the extra noticeable, visible, and proactive policing.*

*How is the PCC holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure there is adequate policing within our town centres across Kent and Medway during the festive period?*

Cllr Richard Palmer, Swale Borough Council

1. The Commissioner replied that, in addition to the activities that he discussed earlier on in relation to the Neighbourhood Policing Model and to shoplifting, Kent Police would be running the Safer Winter campaign - with officers tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in town centres over the festive period. Over the Christmas period, there would also be more visible patrolling and more resources available, and Special Constables would be volunteering their time in order to support town-centre policing.

RESOLVED: To **note** the responses to the questions.

**127. Future Work Programme**  
(*Item D1*)

RESOLVED: To **note** the Future Work Programme and **contact** the Panel Officer with any items that the Panel would like to add to it.

**128. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meeting held on 2 October 2024**  
(*Item E1*)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Board meeting held on 2 October 2024 **be noted**.

**To:** Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel  
**Subject:** Appointment of Chief Constable  
**Date:** 4 February 2025

**Introduction:**

1. In December 2024, Kent's Chief Constable, Tim Smith, formally requested that he participate in the 'Retire and Rejoin' Scheme.
2. In accordance with the provisions set out in the Police Regulations 2003 and updated guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC), and College of Policing, the scheme is open to all police officers in England and Wales and is designed to retain skills, knowledge and experience within the police service at all ranks of policing.
3. The scheme allows for any police officer (including a Chief Constable) to formally resign as an officer before being re-appointed into the same rank. This process also suggests a break in service of at least one calendar month to ensure that pension entitlement can be abated without any impact on entitlement to lump sum or monthly payments. Participation in this scheme does not create any additional cost to the taxpayer.
4. As recognised by the former Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, the Retire and Rejoin Scheme can be utilised by police forces to encourage chief officers to stay longer in post. This position is also supported by other national bodies, including the NPCC, APCC, College of Policing, and the Chief Police Officers' Staff Association.

**Confirmation Hearing:**

5. Current advice from the Home Office, and consideration of precedents on how such appointments are made in other force areas, requires the appointment to be treated as a new appointment, falling within the scope of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA).
6. Section 38 of the PRSRA specifies that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for a police area is to appoint the Chief Constable of the police force for that area.
7. Schedule 8 of the PRSRA requires that a PCC must notify the relevant Police and Crime Panel of the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable. In such cases the PCC must also notify the Police and Crime Panel of the following information:
  - a. The name of the person the PCC is proposing to appoint ("the candidate")
  - b. The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment
  - c. Why the candidate satisfies those criteria
  - d. The terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed
8. The Police and Crime Panel has a statutory duty, under the PRSRA to hold a confirmation hearing for the appointment of the Chief Constable. The purpose of the confirmation hearing is to enable the Police and Crime Panel to review the proposed appointment and to make a report on it to the PCC. The report must state the outcome of the review by the Panel. In the case of the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, these outcomes are either:
  - A recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed.
  - A veto of the proposed appointment, if at least two-thirds of the Panel members vote in favour of making that decision.
9. If the Panel vetoes the appointment, the PCC must not appoint the candidate as Chief Constable.

10. In response to the report, a PCC must notify the Panel whether they accept or reject the Panel's recommendation.

**Process:**

11. Following the Chief Constable's application under the Scheme, the PCC confirmed in writing that he would support the Chief Constable's participation in the Scheme.

12. A formal meeting was held between the PCC and Chief Constable, with the PCC's Chief Executive in attendance, to outline his achievements and his strategic aims for the future of Kent Police.

13. Chief Constable Smith set out the following evidence of the changes that he had delivered within Kent Police since his appointment:

**Force Crime and Incident Response**

In 2022, the FCIR Command performance was in need of improvement; this was most evident in the attrition of 101 calls. There has been significant improvement, which continues, and addresses the systemic issues affecting the FCIR and service delivery to the public. Good performance and service delivery is now a consistent feature. The Force is placed 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> in all metrics being scrutinised as part of the 'Beating Crime Plan' and is meeting the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

**Neighbourhood Policing Model**

This change has led to the deployment of Police Officers as 'Beat Officers' across every ward in Kent. It is supplemented by resources focussed on youth intervention and prevention of crime and ASB, as well as proactive uniformed resources for each District committed to 'hotspot' areas. This change further supports the Police and Crime Plan, and provides the people of Kent with a visible, accessible police officer in every ward of the county. There has been positive public feedback and response to this change, and there is more planned investment into this model in the coming years.

**Criminal Justice and Crime performance**

With the significant challenge to Court capacity in Kent and prosecution changes, the performance focus of the Force has remained clear and consistent over the past two years. The Force's Performance Framework is mature and detailed to enable senior leaders to lead and drive performance. For many months, the Force has consistently reduced crime and ASB, as well as increased charged and solved rates. The Force has continued to work closely with the Courts and the CPS to minimise the impact of delays on victims of crime and there is a determination to build on this good performance. Under my leadership, the Force is currently working to agree a 'charging pilot' in Kent that would see further benefits for staff and the public. An example is the charge rate for shoplifting that is well above the national average and best in the SE region.

**HMICFRS PEEL Inspection**

The Force is preparing for the next round of inspections which will inspect Kent against an updated PEEL framework. There is much more to do, but in my time as Chief Constable Kent's position nationally has remained strong and improved during the last inspection cycle. Grade comparison is not a definitive factor but comparatively Kent is assessed as one of the top 10 performing Forces.

14. The Chief Constable also identified a number of future challenges for the Force over the next 3-5 years and the importance he attached to continuity of leadership during this period:

**Funding and Performance**

The Force now faced some of the gravest challenges seen during his 33 years of service. The financial situation Kent Police faced, due to the current Funding Formula and core policing grant, means the Force will have to do things very differently to keep delivering excellent service to the public. To preserve and indeed improve service delivery even further, major strategic pieces of work have been launched to capitalise on innovation (particularly IT), empower leaders across the Force, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and demands even further.

### Devolution

It is clear from the Government White Paper on Devolution that the strategic governance, oversight, and leadership of public services in Kent is likely to go through major changes in the next 3-5 years. Consistency in leadership of the Force through this period will be key to the success of any such change not just for policing, but for other public services Kent Police works in close partnership with - first and foremost, the Office of the PCC. He expressed his desire to commit to the role for this period to support the PCC and other leaders in the county through what will be the most radical change to Local Government structures since the 1960s. He emphasised the huge professional reward he gained from serving as Chief Constable, and supporting the 'Making Kent Safer' Plan.

15. The PCC has confirmed that he believes it is in the best interests of both Kent Police, and of Kent residents, to retain the skills and leadership of the Chief Constable, who is clear in his commitment to delivering the best service to local communities and keeping Kent safe.

### **Details of Appointment:**

16. The Chief Constable remains vetted to the required level, and would be appointed on the same terms as previously agreed, and in line with the Chief Officer Pay Structure for England and Wales. There would be no additional cost to the public purse.
17. Subject to the outcome of this confirmation hearing, Chief Constable Smith would retire on 28 February 2025 and re-join as Chief Constable of Kent Police on 1 April, with his pension abated. To maximise the effective governance of the Force, the PCC would waive the 3 months' notice period normally required to ensure this scheme can be implemented in an expedient way. He would be issued with a new term of appointment which would commence on 1 April 2025 and cease on 7 December 2029, to ensure that his overall term in post does not exceed the mandated 7 years.
18. Having considered all of the available options, the PCC decided that given the planned nature and limited duration of Chief Constable Smith's absence, as well as the desirability of ensuring operational continuity during this period, it would be appropriate to appoint Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Peter Ayling as Temporary Chief Constable during the period 28 February to 1 April 2025. He has met formally with DCC Ayling to confirm the nature of this potential temporary appointment, subject to the Police and Crime Panel's recommendation on Chief Constable Smith's reappointment.

### **Recommendation:**

19. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is required to review and make a decision on the proposed appointment followed by a report to the PCC.

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**To:** Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel  
**Subject:** Draft Police and Crime Plan and 2025-26 precept proposal  
**Date:** 4 February 2025

**Introduction:**

1. The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) (PRSRA 2011) sets the requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to issue a Police and Crime Plan within the financial year in which they are elected. The plan has effect from the day on which it is published to the last day of the financial year in which the next election is expected (or when a new plan is published following the election, if sooner).  
  
2. The purpose of a Police and Crime Plan is to communicate a PCC's vision and objectives. The Police and Crime Plan impacts upon a wide variety of stakeholders and has a number of intended audiences, including: the public; victims of crime and witnesses; police officers and staff; the Secretary of State; Police and Crime Panels; community safety partners; criminal justice agencies; and the private and voluntary sector.  
  
3. A Police and Crime Plan must set out the following:
  - the PCC's police and crime objectives;
  - the policing of the area which the Chief Constable is to provide;
  - the financial and other resources the PCC is to provide to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions;
  - the means by which the Chief Constable will report to the PCC on the provision of policing;
  - the means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing will be measured; and
  - the services, including any grants and conditions associated with them, which are to be provided by virtue of section 143 of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014<sup>1</sup>.  
4. PCCs are required to keep the plan under review and at any time, may issue or vary a Police and Crime Plan. In doing so, they must have regard to the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) which is issued by the Secretary of State and was published in February 2023.  
  
5. Before issuing or varying a Police and Crime Plan, PCCs must:
  - prepare a draft of the plan or variation;
  - consult the Chief Constable in preparing the draft plan or variation;
  - send the draft plan or variation to the Police and Crime Panel;
  - have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Panel in relation to the draft plan or variation;
  - give the panel a response to any such report or recommendations; and
  - publish any such response.  
6. In exercising their discrete functions, PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to the issued Police and Crime Plan.  
  
7. The PRSRA 2011 also requires PCCs to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the precept which is proposed to be issued for the financial year.  
  
8. The Police and Crime Panel must review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC, which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.  
  
9. This report fulfils the requirements set out in paragraphs 5 and 7.

<sup>1</sup> Those services that will secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction; or help victims, witnesses and other persons affected by crime and antisocial behaviour.

## **Development of the Police and Crime Plan:**

10. Under the PRSRA 2011 the PCC has a duty to consult with victims and the wider community in the development of his Police and Crime Plan and the priorities.
11. Mr Scott's consultation with residents and local communities began in the lead up to the May 2024 PCC election as part of his campaign activity. As a result of this engagement, he developed his manifesto, in which he made a commitment to cut crime, support victims, and build trust. He was re-elected for a third term in May 2024.
12. To build on his manifesto commitments, the PCC was keen to encourage further feedback from victims, communities and partner agencies. The Police and Crime Plan Survey was launched in July and ran until the beginning of December 2024. The aim was to reach out to, and hear from as many of Kent's communities as possible. In total, 6,767 responses were received, which against Kent and Medway's population of circa 1.9 million is considered statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (a commonly accepted level of probability). It was also the highest number of responses received in a Kent Police and Crime Plan survey to date.
13. A report outlining the survey methodology and the full results is attached as Appendix A (and can also be viewed [here](#) on the OPCC website).
14. Below is an overview of some of the key questions and a precis of the results (previous year's figures are included where comparative data are available):

Q1. On a scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel where you live? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)

- *Respondents across Kent and Medway felt 7.0/10 safe where they live*  
➤ 2023 = 6.3   > 2022 = 7.2   > 2021 = 7.0   > 2020 = 7.0   > 2019 = 6.4   > 2018 = 6.5

Q2. On a scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel in your nearest town centre? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)

- *Respondents felt 5.8/10 safe in their nearest town centre*

Q3. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (1 = not at all / 10 = very much)

- *Respondents across Kent and Medway trusted Kent Police 6.4/10*  
➤ 2023 = 6.0

Q4. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think Kent Police are performing? (1 = very badly / 10 = very well)

- *Respondents rated the performance of Kent Police 5.8/10*

Q6. Which of the following crime types do you feel are the most important?

- *Respondents could select up to six from a pre-defined list; the top five were:*
  1. Rape or sexual assault
  2. Knife crime
  3. Child sexual exploitation
  4. Violent assault
  5. Drugs

Q7. Do you agree with the PCC's current priorities for the Chief Constable?

	% strongly agree or agree
Prevent crime and antisocial behaviour	86.9%
Tackle violence against women and girls	84.7%
Protect people from exploitation and abuse	84.1%
Combat organised crime and county lines	86.9%
Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities	87.3%
Support victims	83.5%
Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero	75.4%
Protect young people and provide opportunities	78.8%

Q8. Have you experienced antisocial behaviour in the last year?

Yes, as a victim	15.5%
Yes, as a witness	39.6%
No	44.9%

Q13. Have you experienced any other type of crime in the last year?

Yes, as a victim	12.1%
Yes, as a witness	14.8%
No	73.1%

15. Whilst not mandatory, to monitor how representative the sample was of Kent and Medway's population, respondents were also asked to provide demographic information.

16. With regards to the survey results, the following is worthy of note:

- With an average of 7.0/10, respondents felt safer where they live than in 2023 (6.3/10).
- With an average of 6.4/10, respondents had more trust in Kent Police than in 2023 (6.0/10)
- The top two types of crime respondents felt were most important - Rape or sexual assault and Knife crime<sup>2</sup> - were consistent with previous years.
- There was strong agreement with the PCC's current Police and Crime Plan priorities.

17. The PCC would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to have their say on policing and crime in the county and have helped to shape the draft Police and Crime Plan.

18. As well as the results of the Police and Crime Plan survey, a number of other documents and factors were considered by the PCC, including:

- The requirements of the PRSRA 2011, in particular those relating to securing an efficient and effective police force and holding the Chief Constable to account.
- The Strategic Policing Requirement which sets out the national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter them.
- Feedback and observations from the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
- The Government's [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee](#), and pledges to halve knife offences and violence against women and girls in the next decade.
- The [Policing Vision 2030](#) which sets out the future for policing.
- Emerging local threats and risks.
- The priorities of local criminal justice bodies (as Chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board).
- The priorities and views of community safety partners, as well as wider stakeholders.
- The [Domestic Abuse strategy](#) for Kent and Medway, and Kent County Council's [Vision Zero Road Safety strategy](#).
- The National Crime Agency's [Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime](#), and the [National Policing Digital Strategy](#).
- His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's [Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales](#).
- Findings from a recent consultation with young people and their parents around online activity.

19. The plan also takes account of feedback from the hundreds of engagements undertaken by the PCC since being elected in 2021, as well as the thousands of pieces of correspondence received by his Office.

20. The Chief Constable has been fully consulted, and he and his team agree with the Commissioner's priorities and are keen to build a revised performance framework to demonstrate progress in delivering them.

### **The Kent Police and Crime Plan:**

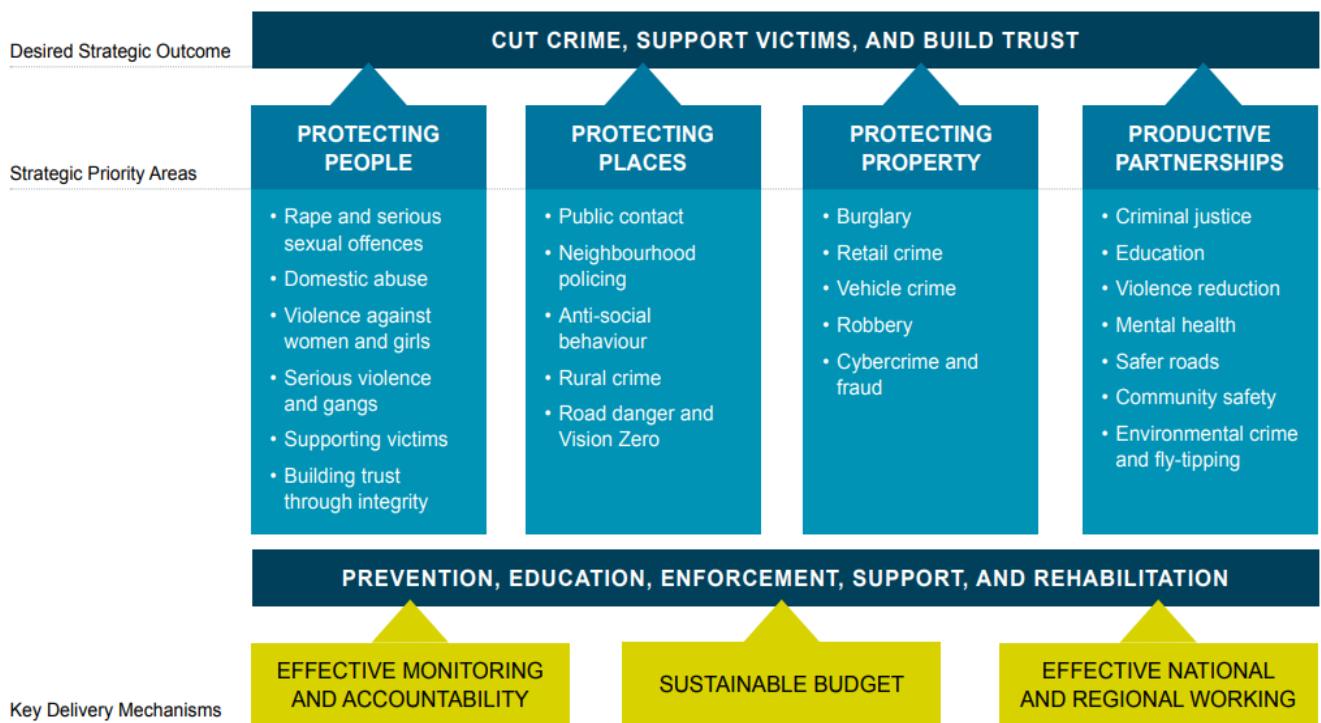
21. Attached as Appendix B is a draft of the PCC's 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'.

<sup>2</sup> In previous years, the equivalent option was worded 'Serious violence, including gangs / weapon offences'.

22. The plan sets out a framework for delivering the PCC's manifesto commitments to cut crime, support victims and build trust. The priorities centre around four key areas:

- Protecting People
- Protecting Places
- Protecting Property
- Productive Partnerships

23. By way of an overview, please find below the 'Plan on a Page':



24. The plan is a public facing, strategic document, and will be underpinned by a more detailed Delivery Plan. This will form the basis of a renewed Performance and Delivery framework (using a balanced and consistent suite of performance measures, trend and trajectory data) that will support the PCC in holding the Chief Constable to account. This is being developed with Kent Police in readiness for the 2025-26 performance year. It will take account of the fact that the Home Office are still working with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to develop a revised national framework for neighbourhood policing.

25. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC remains committed to keeping the plan under review, particularly in light of changes to the Strategic Policing Requirement and/or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel. More formally, the PCC has determined the plan will be reviewed annually.

26. Further to any recommendations made by the Panel, the plan will be published on 1 April 2025. Subsequently, the PCC will submit updates to the Panel as required.

### **Policing precept proposal for 2025-26:**

27. On 17 December 2024, in a written statement to Parliament on the Provisional Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2025-26, the Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP, Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention said:

*"As set out in the Local Government policy statement of 28<sup>th</sup> November, PCCs will have the flexibility to raise the police precept by £14 for a Band D property in 2025-26. This could generate up to £329.8 million of additional funding available to police forces compared with 2024-25. This strikes the balance between protecting taxpayers and providing funding for police forces.*

*“...Today, this Government has confirmed a significant increase in funding for police forces. In return, we expect police forces to raise their ambition on efficiencies and drive forward improvements to productivity while helping us deliver on our mission to create safer streets.*

*“...We expect policing to approach the 2025-26 financial year with a focus on delivering the government’s priorities, as set out in the Prime Minister’s Plan for Change:*

- *Increasing the number of officers, PCSOs and special constables in neighbourhood policing teams;*
- *Tackling violence against women and girls;*
- *Reducing knife crime;*
- *Cracking down on antisocial behaviour;*
- *And by doing these things, increasing public confidence in policing.”*

28. The operational pressures, financial constraints (e.g. the funding formula), restrictions on officer numbers, and workforce composition faced by Kent Police in 2025-26 and in the medium term mean that, once again, difficult decisions need to be made to balance the budget. A shortfall in funding from the Government, alongside significant budget pressures means substantial savings need to be made. In Kent, 82% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees (59% related to police officer pay) which reduces the scope to make savings from non-pay areas. (This compares to a national average of 78%, 58% of which is related to police officer pay).
29. In 2025-26, Kent Police needs to make savings of £10.0m to balance the budget, and a further £38.2m across the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP); increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles will help mitigate the savings required. If the maximum increase was not taken and, for example, an increase in line with the Bank of England’s inflation target (2% or £5.12) was, this would increase the level of savings required to £16m in 2025-26. This could jeopardise Kent Police’s strong performance in areas such as Neighbourhood Policing and the Force Control and Incident Room.
30. By way of additional context:
  - The £10.0m of savings required in 2025-26 is on top of almost £100m delivered since 2016 when the PCC was first elected. Easy savings are no longer an option.
  - Since 2010, central government funding for Kent has fallen by 15.2% in real terms. Even with the assumed increase in precept for 2025-26, police funding in Kent will have only increased by 1.4% in real terms over the same period.
31. It is not only the Force that faces significant cost pressures though; so too does the Office of the PCC (OPCC). Alongside the normal pay pressures, an increase in the number and cost of misconduct hearings, police complaints, the complexity and scale of commissioned services for victims and witnesses, and increase in correspondence including a 50% increase in Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests, have placed pressure on the OPCC budget for 2025-26.
32. The PCC has always endeavoured to maintain the budget at or below the level inherited from the previous Police Authority. In 2018-19 the PCC reduced the office budget by £0.2m to enable the Force to increase the number of police officers – this was before the previous government’s Police Uplift Programme. Since 2018-19 that reduced budget has been maintained. All pay awards, increments and inflationary pressures during that period have been absorbed into the existing budget. Additional responsibilities given to PCCs have also not been funded, and so have been absorbed into the existing budget.
33. Although extremely challenging, the PCC recognises the immense pressure the Force is under to deliver savings, and has therefore determined that OPCC cost pressures will be managed internally, with the OPCC budget being maintained at £1.5m. This will be achieved through better use of external funding, the management of vacancies, and where appropriate, use of the PCC’s own reserves.
34. The PCC is proposing to increase the policing precept by the maximum allowable amount of £14 per year, or 5.5% for an average Band D property.

35. The decision to propose the maximum increase allowed is not one that has been taken lightly. The PCC is acutely aware it is a further burden when Kent residents are facing considerable cost-of-living pressures, especially if other local authorities increase their precepts by the maximum permitted. However, it is essential to mitigate some of the cost pressures and to maintain Kent Police's strong performance.

36. In developing this proposal, the PCC has also considered other factors including:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement.
- Delivery of the draft 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'.
- Professional guidance and advice from the Chief Constable.
- Kent Police's Force Management Statement (FMS) - a detailed self-assessment of future demand versus capacity.
- Kent Police's Control Strategy - an annual assessment of long-term key issues.

37. The Force has prepared a savings plan, but this has required some difficult decisions to be made. However, the PCC and the Chief Constable both believe that it strikes a balance between investment in frontline policing to provide a more visible and effective service, with making savings in other parts of the organisation. The release of savings will also be managed carefully to ensure minimal impact on operational policing.

38. In addition, the PCC is confident that through this budget and precept proposal, he and the Chief Constable can Cut Crime, Support Victims and Build Trust, as well as deliver against the expectations of the Policing Minister as set out at paragraph 27.

39. Between 20 December 2024 and 7 January 2025, the PCC undertook a public consultation on his proposed precept increase. The survey was made available on the OPCC website and promoted online to Newsletter subscribers and through My Community Voice, as well as traditional media channels, including Kent Online. Attached as Appendix C is the explanatory text to the survey and the answer options.

40. In total, 821 responses were received, with 76.7% (630) recognising the need for the increase and accepting that it was necessary to support Kent Police. The result was as follows:

I'm happy to contribute an increase of £14 per year for an average Band D council tax as described.	48.3% (397)
I'm not happy about the increased charge, but accept it needs to be done to fund Kent Police and reduce the pressure to find savings.	28.4% (233)
I'm not happy about the increased charge and accept that this would mean a significant reduction in service.	23.3% (191)

41. Noting the outcome of the public consultation, and subject to the Police and Crime Panel's approval, the PCC confirms his intention to increase the policing precept in 2025-26 to £270.15 for an average Band D property. This represents an increase of £14 per year (or 5.5%) on the current precept.

42. Appendix D is a detailed report dealing with financial matters prepared by the Chief Finance Officer. It includes further information on the funding settlement, budget and precept proposal, OPCC budget and MTFP.

### **Recommendation:**

43. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Review the draft Police and Crime Plan and produce a report which may include recommendations.
- Review the proposed precept and produce a report which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.

### **List of Appendices:**

**Appendix A** Police and Crime Plan survey report  
**Appendix B** Draft 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'  
**Appendix C** Proposed precept consultation  
**Appendix D** Chief Finance Officer's Report

**Matthew Scott**

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The Office of the Kent

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## Police and Crime Plan Survey 2024

As part of his commitment to actively engage with the diverse communities of Kent and Medway, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Scott, launched his Police and Crime Plan Survey in July 2024. It ran until the beginning of December.

Like previous years, the aim of the exercise was to survey a large and representative sample of residents on their views and experiences of policing, as well as their feelings of safety and whether they had been a victim of crime.

Collecting this information enables the PCC and his staff to draw conclusions that help inform the Police and Crime Plan, which will run for the next four years.

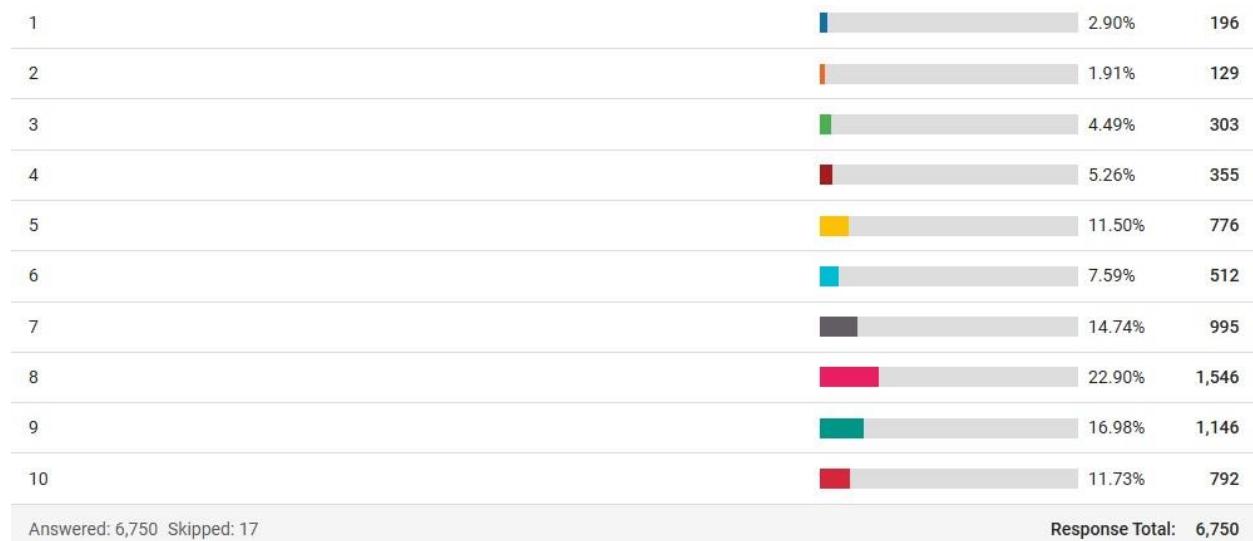
We received 6,767 survey responses overall. This is by far the highest response we've ever had for our Policing Survey, superseding last's year's record total of 4,538.

It was shared widely throughout Kent and Medway, to different communities and in a variety of ways.

Hard copies were completed at the Kent Police Open Day and on our many visits to street stalls, community groups, religious establishments and partner charities all around the county. The survey was widely promoted on our social media channels and posted directly onto various community Facebook Groups, on 'My Community Voice', in Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters and on 'Nextdoor'. It was also circulated by parish councils and local schools.

A special edition Newsletter was sent out to our 5,000-strong mailing list and emails were sent to community liaison officers, places of worship, schools, colleges, universities, rotary clubs, women's institutes, commissioned charities, criminal justice partner organisations, and many more. It was also promoted via a footer on all outgoing OPCC staff emails.

**Q1. On a scale of 1 - 10, how safe do you feel where you live? (1 being very unsafe, 10 being very safe).**



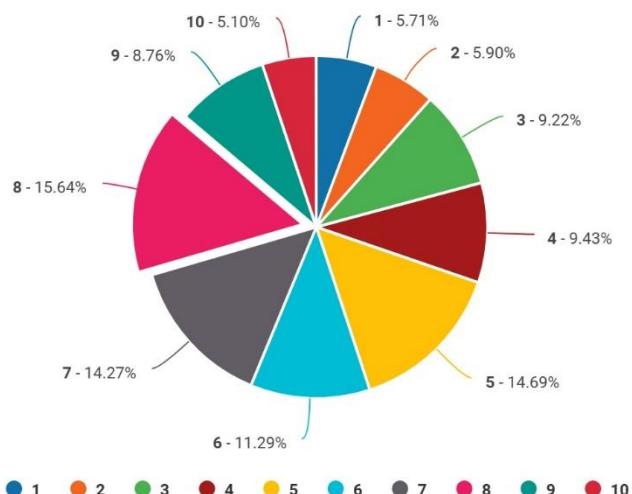
Most people *do* feel safe where they live, with 74% of respondents ticking 6 or above. **The average ranking for feelings of safety where you live was 7/10.** That's higher than last year, when the average was 6.3.

There is a discrepancy however when you compare the views of victims of antisocial behaviour (ASB) or other crime and those who have not been victims.

Those respondents (1016) who told us they'd been victims of ASB (as opposed to witnesses) rated their feelings of safety as 5.6/10. Those who had NOT been victims of ASB rated their feelings of safety as 7.8/10.

Those who were victims of other crime (775 respondents) put their feelings of safety as 5.7/10, whereas those who had not been victims, rated their feeling of safety 7.4/10.

**Q2. On a scale of 1 - 10 how safe do you feel in your nearest town centre? (1 being very unsafe, 10 being very safe).**



The above chart shows most people do feel safe in their nearest town centre, with 55% selecting 6/10 or above. The **average feeling of safety ranked 5.8/10**, so less than people's feelings of safety where they live.

Of course, Kent is a large county, so perhaps it's more interesting to see how safe respondents feel in their nearest town centre, depending which district they live in.

District	Feeling of Safety	No of Respondents
Ashford	5.5 out of 10	617
Canterbury	6.4 out of 10	531
Dartford	5.7 out of 10	960
Dover	5.9 out of 10	333
Folkestone and Hythe	6.2 out of 10	282
Gravesham	4.5 out of 10	237
Maidstone	5.1 out of 10	610
Medway	4.9 out of 10	651
Sevenoaks	7.1 out of 10	449
Swale	5.5 out of 10	614
Thanet	5.8 out of 10	500
Tonbridge and Malling	6.1 out of 10	340
Tunbridge Wells	6.7 out of 10	407

It's also interesting when you compare how safe people feel in different age groups. This suggests 21-39 year olds feel less safe than older people or indeed teenagers.

Age	Feeling of Safety	No of Respondents
17 or younger	6.5 out of 10	1079
18-20	5.8 out of 10	41
21-29	5.4 out of 10	175
30-39	5.4 out of 10	609
40-49	5.7 out of 10	974
50-59	5.5 out of 10	991
60-69	5.5 out of 10	1080
70-79	6.0 out of 10	1035
80-89	6.2 out of 10	283
90 or older	6.3 out of 10	16

**Q3. On a scale of 1 - 10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (1 being not at all, 10 being very much).**

Answer Choices	Responses	
1	7.48%	504
2	5.14%	346
3	6.40%	431
4	6.10%	411
5	12.36%	833
6	8.36%	563
7	11.31%	762
8	16.34%	1,101
9	12.32%	830
10	14.20%	957

Answered: 6,738 Skipped: 29      Response Total: 6,738

Overall people *do* trust Kent Police. **On average respondents rated their level of trust as 6.4/10.** This is a slight improvement on last year, when people ranked their trust level as 6/10.

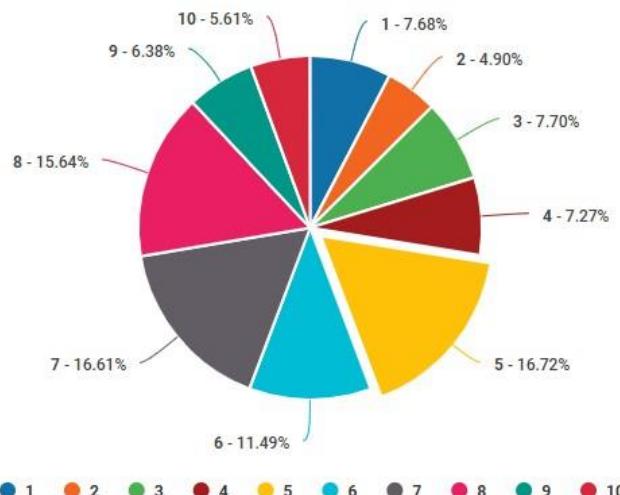
63% scored their trust level as 6 or more, with only 25% rating it as 4 or under. Again, this is an improvement on last year when 57% of respondents scored 6 or above and just under 32% ranked their trust levels as 4 or under.

There is a slight discrepancy when we look at victims of crime. Those who had been victims of ASB scored their trust level as 6.1/10; those who had not been a victim of ASB scored it as 6.5/10.

Those who had been victims of any other crime rated their trust as 5/10, those who had not been victims scored 6.1/10.

This is an improvement on last year, when victims of crime only ranked their trust in police as 4.5/10.

**Q4. On a scale of 1 - 10 how well do you think Kent Police are performing, in the current circumstances? (1 being very badly, 10 being very well).**



As you can see from the above chart, most people think Kent Police perform OK. The largest number of people were neutral on this answer, scoring the force 5, but the second and third highest ratings were 7 and 8. **On average, the force scored 5.8/10.**

55% scored police performance 6 or above, with 28% rating them 4 or below.

We asked this question slightly differently last year, but then only 40% ranked Kent Police' performance as good or very good, and 34% rated it as poor or very poor. Therefore, the data suggests there has been an overall improvement in perceptions of Kent Police's performance.

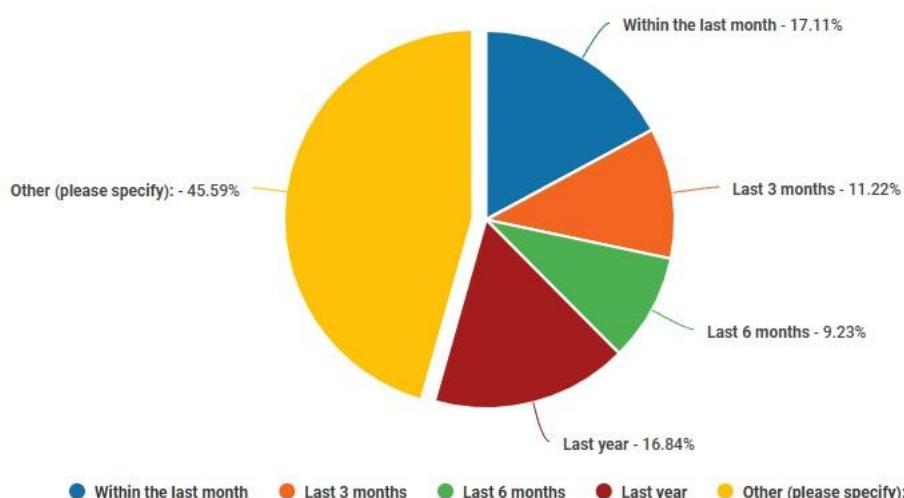
However, there is still a worrying discrepancy between victims of crime and non-victims. Those who had been victims of ASB scored police performance as 4.3/10, victims of other crimes rated it 4.4/10. Non-victims scored it 6.6/10.

Last year the result for victims was similar, with 58% thinking the police performed badly or very badly.

We also compared "police performance" by age groups. The age groups with lower satisfaction levels were the 50-59 and 60-69 groups. Older and younger people were more positive.

Age	How well are Kent Police performing	No of Respondents
17 or younger	6.8 out of 10	1024
18-20	5.7 out of 10	37
21-29	5.8 out of 10	171
30-39	5.5 out of 10	578
40-49	5.6 out of 10	916
50-59	5.3 out of 10	962
60-69	5.4 out of 10	1065
70-79	5.8 out of 10	1027
80-89	6.2 out of 10	263
90 or older	6.4 out of 10	16

#### Q5. When did you last see a police officer on the Beat in your area? (i.e. walking the streets)

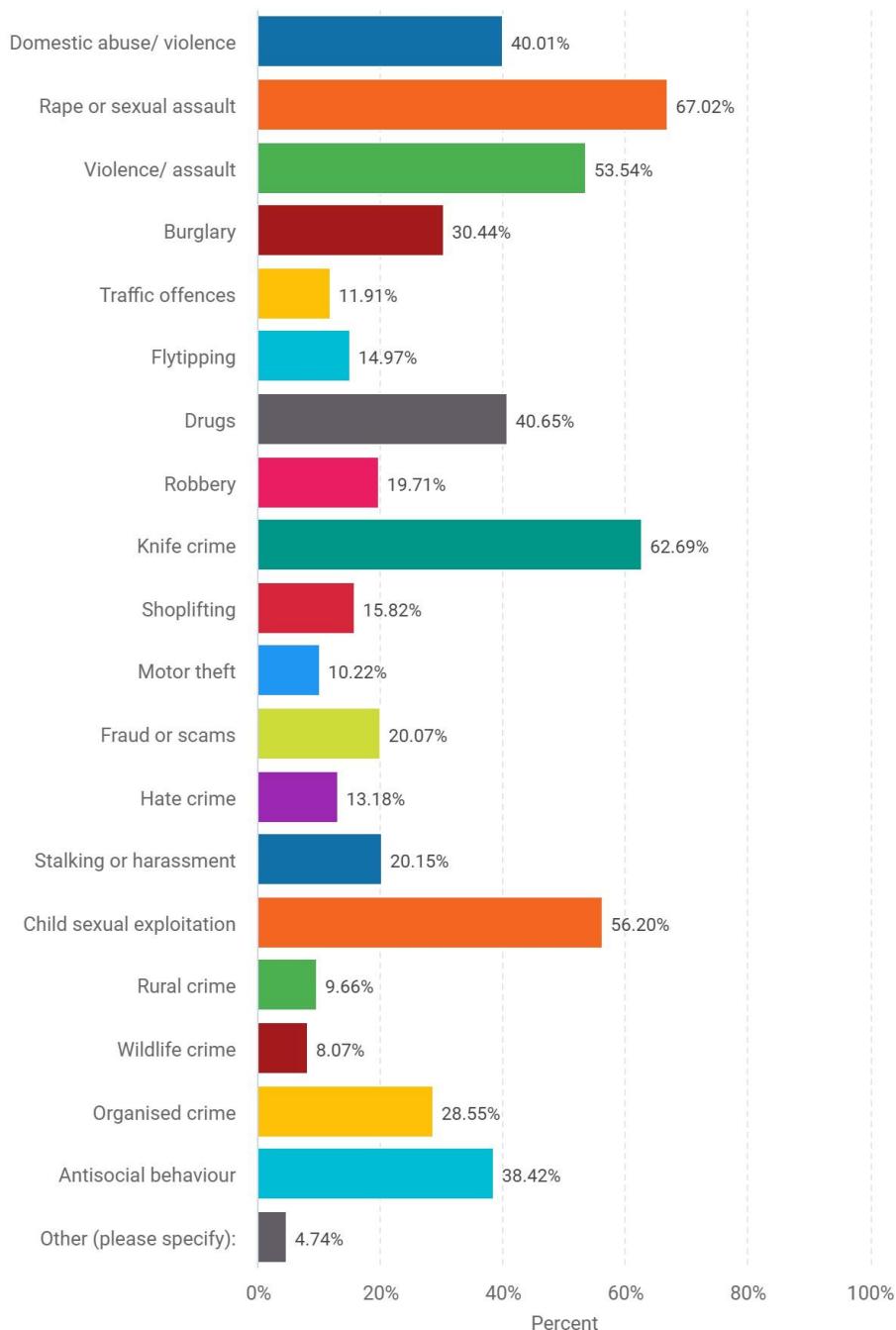


We have not asked this question before and did so in this survey to help us track the new Neighbourhood Policing Model.

As you can see, **54% of respondents had seen an officer in the last twelve months**, but nearly 46% answered “other”. Most of these, but not all, said they had never seen a police officer patrolling on foot in their area, or they had not seen one for years. Others said they had seen police patrol cars, but not officers walking the streets, while others just wanted to be specific and tell us they’d seen an officer in the last few days or weeks.

There are of course, many variables with this question: people may be out or simply not see officers on the beat, but the perception of a lack of visible policing is something the Neighbourhood Policing Model is seeking to change.

**Q6. Which of the following crime types do you feel are the most important? Tick up to 6.**



We ask this question annually, to inform our Police and Crime Plan. This year’s most commonly ticked crime types were broadly the same as those favoured in previous years.

This year the most important crime types were:

Crime Type	Percentage
Rape and Sexual Assault	67%
Knife Crime	63%
Child Sexual Exploitation	56%
Violent Assault	41%
Drugs	41%
Domestic Abuse	40%

Last year the six most important crimes for respondents were: Violent Crime (including weapons), Sex offences (including rape); Child Sexual Exploitation; Antisocial Behaviour, Burglary and Domestic Abuse .

For the first time this year Antisocial Behaviour did *not* feature in the top five crime types. It was selected by just over 38% of respondents and came eighth on our list. It's possible that this reflects the demographic of the respondents, as we have a far higher proportion of young people filling in the survey this year.

## Q7. Do you agree with the PCC's current priorities for the Chief Constable?

In this section, Matthew Scott wants to know if people agree with his policing priorities for the new Police and Crime Plan. We asked people to tell us if they think the current priorities are still important and as you can see overwhelmingly, people agreed.

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Response Total
Prevent crime and antisocial behaviour	62.71% 3,557	24.19% 1,372	9.47% 537	1.92% 109	1.71% 97	5,672
Tackle violence against women and girls	60.82% 3,446	23.84% 1,351	11.61% 658	1.94% 110	1.78% 101	5,666
Protect people from exploitation and abuse	53.97% 3,041	30.13% 1,698	12.95% 730	1.77% 100	1.17% 66	5,635
Combat organised crime and county lines	62.60% 3,533	24.26% 1,369	9.80% 553	1.88% 106	1.47% 83	5,644
Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities	64.55% 3,644	22.75% 1,284	8.27% 467	2.41% 136	2.02% 114	5,645
Support victims	53.81% 3,021	29.71% 1,668	12.59% 707	2.21% 124	1.67% 94	5,614
Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero	43.34% 2,436	32.02% 1,800	19.11% 1,074	3.38% 190	2.15% 121	5,621
Protect young people and provide opportunities	48.66% 2,738	30.18% 1,698	16.69% 939	2.90% 163	1.58% 89	5,627

Answered: 5,690 Skipped: 1,077

## Q8. Have you experienced antisocial behaviour in the last year?

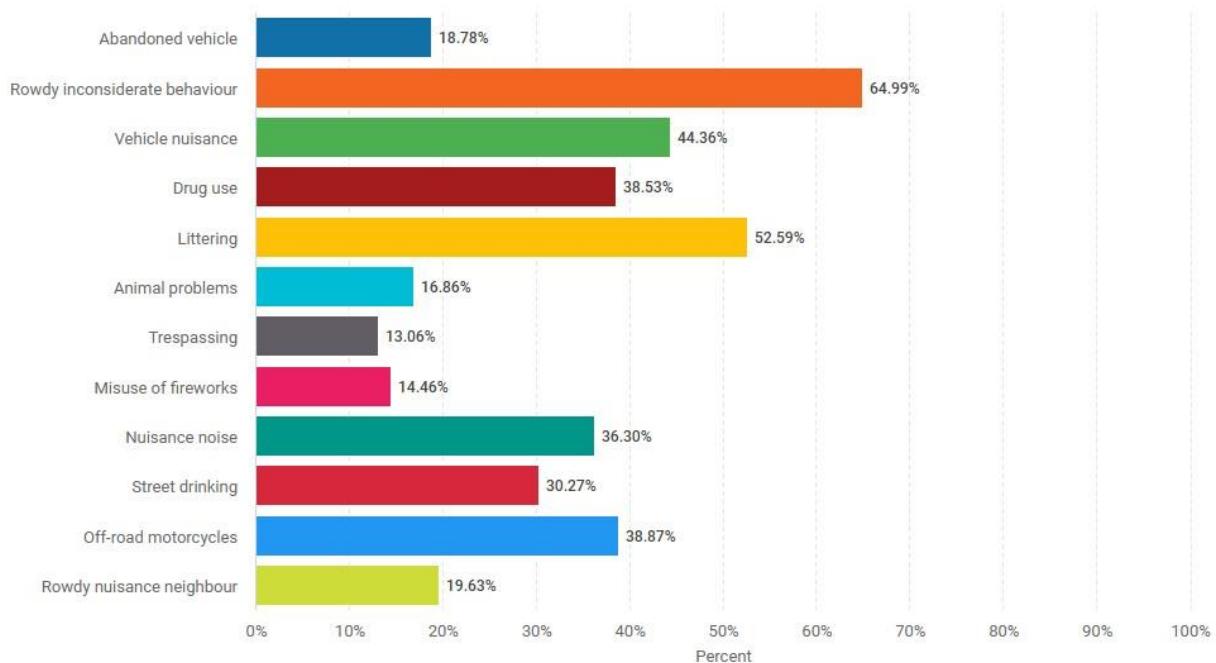
This section of the survey was dedicated to antisocial behaviour, because it's one of the most complained about offences. We want to understand what sort of things people are experiencing, whether as victims or witnesses.

These are questions we haven't asked before but will do so in the future so we can monitor performance.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Yes, as a victim	 15.44%	1,016	
Yes, as a witness	 39.62%	2,608	
No	 44.94%	2,958	
Answered: 6,582 Skipped: 185			Response Total: 6,582

The above table suggests that **55% of people in Kent are either witnessing or experiencing ASB**. The following questions provide more detail.

## Q9. If so, which type did you experience? (You can tick as many as you like).

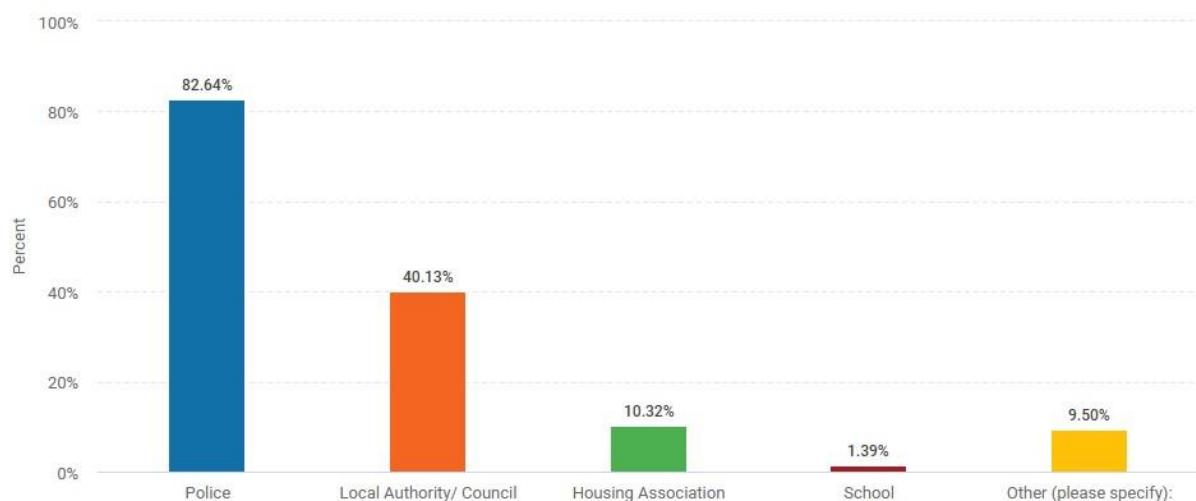


As you can see rowdy inconsiderate behaviour tops the poll, followed by littering, vehicle nuisance, off-road motorcycles and drug use.

## Q10. Did you report this?

Asked whether victims or witnesses reported this, **34.84%** (or 1224 people) said YES; **65.16%** (or 2289 respondents) said NO. Clearly most people do *not* report ASB to any authority.

## 11. To whom did you report it?



Of those who do report, most still call the police, although a substantial number did report to the local authority.

## Q12. Are you happy with how it was dealt with?

When we asked this, the answers were disappointing.

22.86% (or 278 respondents) said YES they were happy.

59.7% (or 726 respondents) said NO they were not happy.

17.43% (or 212 respondents) said the case was not yet concluded.

## Q13. Have you experienced any other type of crime in the last year?

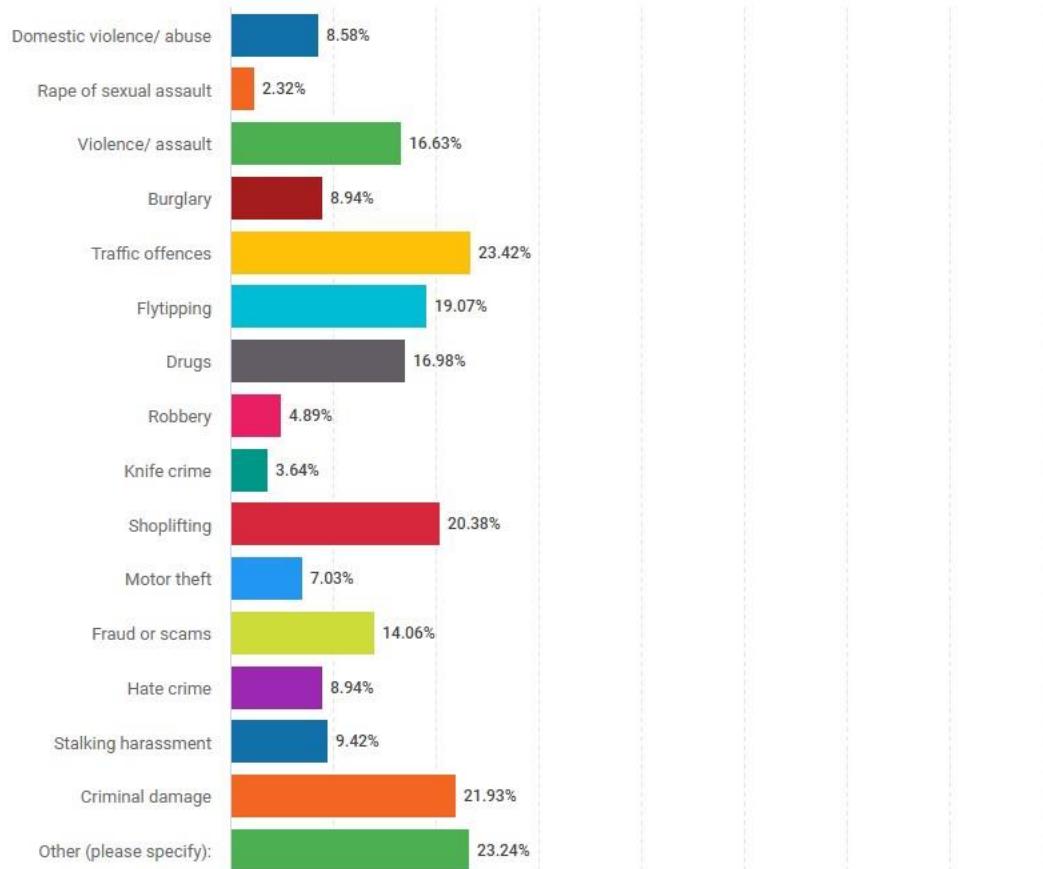
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, as a victim	<div style="width: 12.15%; background-color: #005a99; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> 12.15%	775
Yes, as a witness	<div style="width: 14.77%; background-color: #e64a19; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> 14.77%	942
No	<div style="width: 73.08%; background-color: #2e9e00; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> 73.08%	4,660

Answered: 6,377 Skipped: 390      Response Total: 6,377

We've never asked whether people have *witnessed* crime before, but it's heartening to see that a large majority have not been a victim of, or witness to, crime. Last year 77% said they had not been a victim and 23% said they had, so 12% of people indicating they'd been a victim this year is a marked decrease, although please note this question does *not* include antisocial behaviour which was the focus of question 8.

## Q14. What type of crime was it?

### What type of crime was it?



Last year antisocial behaviour was the highest crime experienced, with criminal damage, stalking or harassment and burglary or robbery following on. Considering Question 8, in which a large number said they'd been a victim of ASB, this is still the most common type of crime. Traffic offences and criminal damage follow.

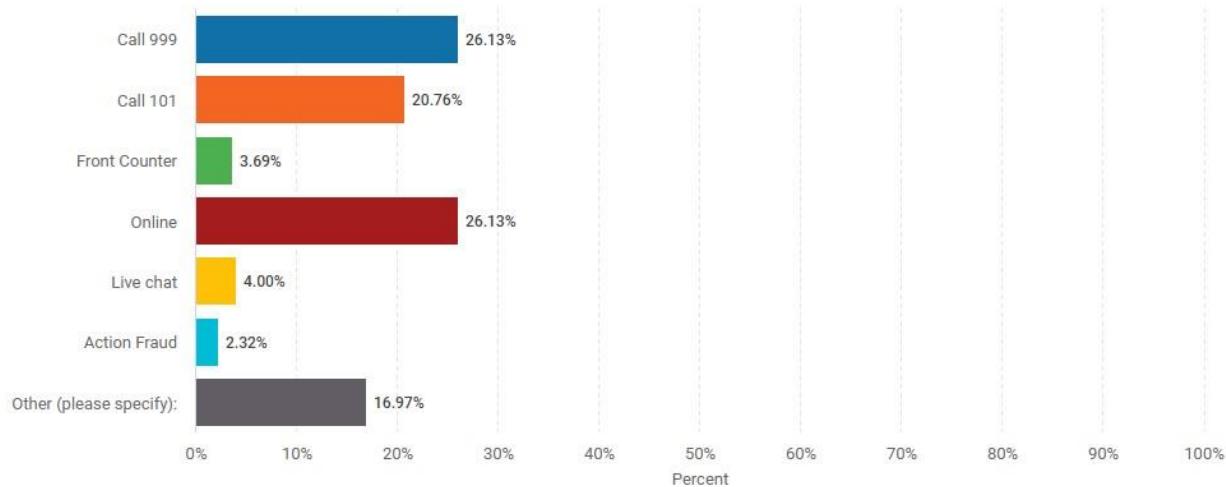
This year, for the first time, we included shoplifting on the list and it scored highly, as did flytipping, but it's worth remembering the question was answered by *witnesses* to crime as well as victims this year.

## Q15. Did you report this crime?

56.9% said they reported the crime; 43% said they hadn't, but remember this question could also be answered by witnesses as well as victims themselves. We do encourage everyone to report the crimes they experience or witness.

#### **Q16. If so, how did you report this?**

## How did you report it?



999 and online reporting are the most common ways people contact the police. A fifth called 101 and a large cohort said “other”. We asked them to specify and their answers included “told the school”; “reported to the Environment Agency”; “reported through Crimestoppers”; “reported to a PCSO or officer”. The word cloud below was created to reflect the free text block.



### **Q17. Were you happy with how it was dealt with?**

30.5% (or 289 people) said YES.

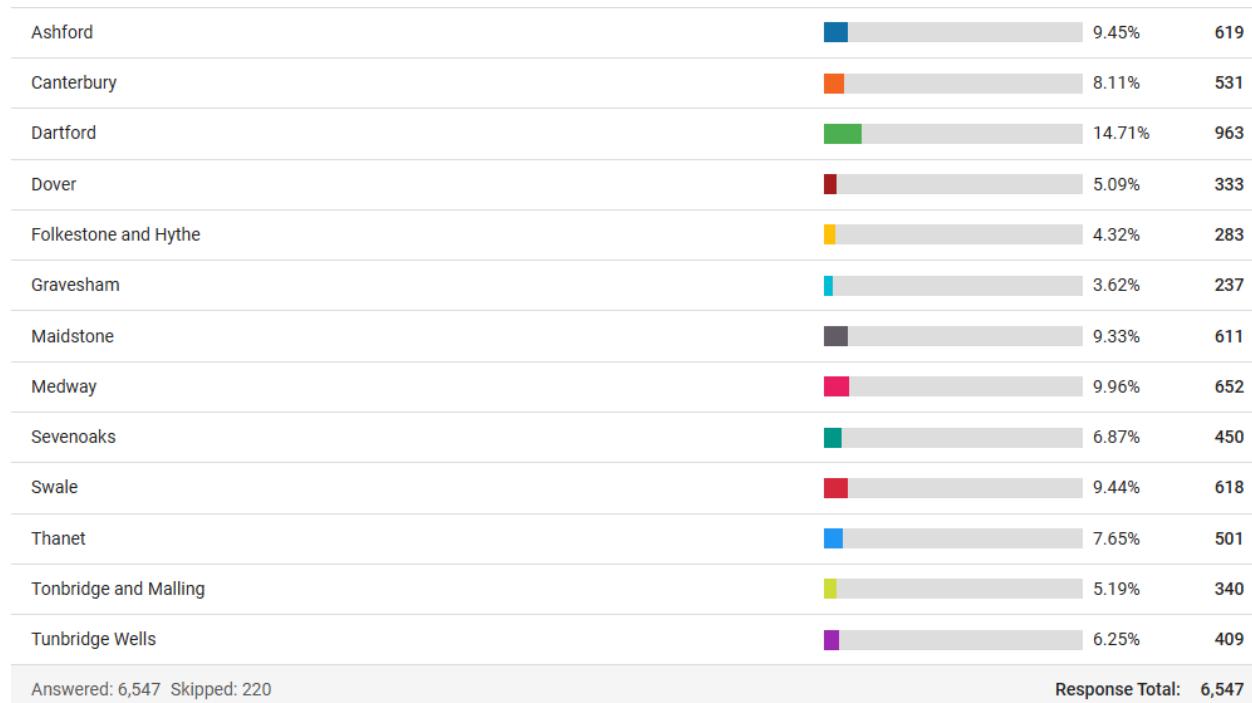
53.5% (or 508 people) said NO.

16% (or 152 people) said the case was not yet concluded.

It is concerning that only 30.5% of victims or witnesses are happy with the way the matter was handled and nearly 54% were not. We are aware there are significant delays in the criminal justice system and will ask this question in the future to measure progress.

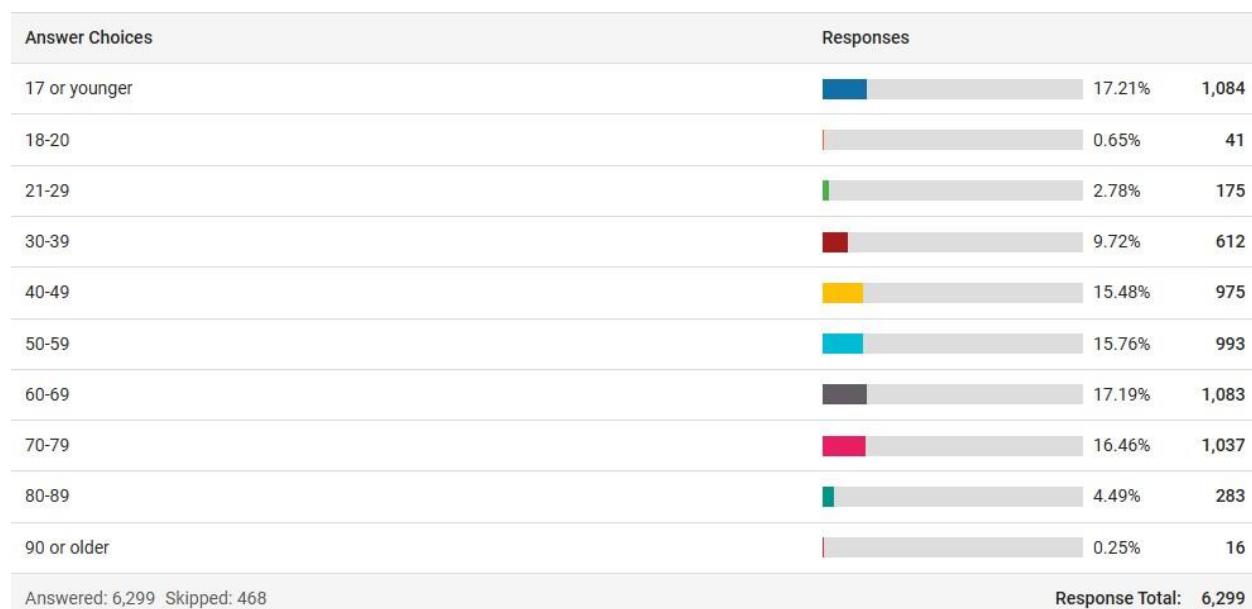
## OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PERSON.

### Q18. Which district do you live in?



### Q19. Your age

In the past we have been criticised for having an overwhelming number of people aged 60 or above filling in our survey. This year we have employed new methods to secure the participation of younger people.



## Q20. Sex

51% of respondents were women; 46% were male; 0.4% ticked 'other' and 3% preferred not to say.

## Q21. Ethnicity



## Conclusion

On average residents of Kent and Medway do trust the police, rating that trust as 6.4/10.

This is an improvement on last year's 6/10 score, and perhaps more heartening is that trust has improved among victims of crime too. Last year victims only ranked their trust as 4.5/10, now its 5/10. Those who'd been victims of antisocial behaviour rated their trust as 6.1/10.

The Kent Police performance rating is slightly lower, with the average score 5.8/10. However, 55% of the population rated Kent police as 6 or above out of ten, which is a big difference on last year when only 40% of respondents scored performance positively. However, victims of crime and antisocial behaviour still do *not* rate the performance of Kent Police as favourably, with victims of ASB rating it 4.3/10 and victims of other crime scoring it 4.4/10. It seems victims *trust* the police, but do not always think they do a good job.

Feelings of safety appear to have improved, however. People feel 7/10 safe where they live, again an improvement on last year's 6.3/10. Victims of antisocial behaviour however score lower at just 5.6/10.

People feel marginally less safe in their nearest town centre, depending on the area they live. On average it is ranked at 5.8/10, but some people (residents of Sevenoaks, for example) feel safer, others (residents in Gravesham for example) feel less safe.

People aged between 21-39 feel less safe in their town centre than older or younger people, possibly because this cohort uses night-time economy more often.

This year we introduced a new section, designed to measure the Neighbourhood Policing Model. We asked if people had seen police officers walking the beat. 54% said they'd seen an officer in the last twelve months, but a substantial cohort said they hadn't and this perception is something we will continue to monitor.

We also introduced a section about antisocial behaviour, as it repeatedly tops our polls of the crime type people experience most. 55% of the population say they've either been victims of or

witnesses to ASB. Mostly they describe rowdy behaviour, littering, vehicle or noise nuisance. Most (65%) do not report these cases, although those who do tend to either call the police or the local authority. They tend to be dissatisfied with the outcome.

Victims of other crimes (12% of our cohort) *do* tend to report to the police, but similarly only 30.5% are happy with the outcome, with a disappointing 53.5% saying they were unhappy. More positively nearly three quarters of all respondents had not been a victim or witness to other crimes.

The most common crime types experienced (or witnessed) mirrors previous years with antisocial behaviour being the most frequent (hence its own section this year), followed by traffic offences and criminal damage. Shoplifting and flytipping were listed this year and scored highly, probably because we asked *witnesses* of crime to tell us what they'd seen, as well as those who were the direct "victim".

Every year we ask people to tick six crime types, which they believe should be priorities for Kent Police. This is always a difficult question to answer, because all the choices could merit a tick, but it's helpful to understand what matters most to residents of Kent and Medway. The top six crime types are broadly the same as previous years: rape and sexual assault, child sexual exploitation violent assault and knife crime usually feature, but antisocial behaviour came further down the "most ticked" this year. It is possible that with a large cohort of younger respondents, crimes which mattered to their age group have featured more prominently.

It's worth noting that a record 6767 filled in the anonymous survey this year. We've also expanded the reach across different age groups, ethnicities and geographical parts of the county. We wish to thank everyone for taking the time to complete it and share it with others. The feedback is valuable and will assist the Police and Crime Commissioner draft the priorities for his new Police and Crime Plan and hold the Chief Constable to account at his quarterly Performance and Delivery Boards.

# Draft Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029

Page 31

Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust



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# Foreword

I am honoured to have been re-elected for a third term as your Police and Crime Commissioner. At the election, I pledged to **cut crime, support victims, and build trust** in the police.

The next four years will be challenging for policing, both at national and local level. Crime is becoming ever more complex; the criminal justice system is under enormous pressure; and there will be significant funding challenges. And devolution will present a major organisational challenge to police governance.

This Plan sets out my priorities for meeting these challenges, and keeping Kent safe for the next four years. I will work closely with the Chief Constable to deliver these priorities, which centre around 4 key areas:

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**Protecting People**

**Protecting Places**

**Protecting Property**

**Productive Partnerships**

The plan is underpinned by my continued commitment to working with regional and national policing partners, delivering a sustainable budget, and open and transparent governance.



**Matthew Scott** – Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent



# Building my Plan

To help shape this plan and its priorities, I have consulted widely with individuals, families, partners and community representatives. My annual survey shows the issues that concern people most are: rape or sexual assault; knife crime; child sexual exploitation; violence/assault; drugs; domestic abuse/violence; anti-social behaviour; and burglary.

Other findings from the latest survey in September 2024 include:

- Feeling safe where they live: average score of 7 out of 10, compared to 6.3 in 2023;
- Feeling safe in their nearest town centre: average score of 5.8 out of 10;
- Trust in Kent Police: average score of 6.4 out of 10, compared to 6.0 in 2023; and
- Performance of Kent Police: average score of 5.8 out of 10.

I have also listened to concerns and feedback from groups with common interests such as retailers and other businesses, farmers and rural communities, schools, parents and children.

They highlighted the importance of 'getting the basics right' – providing a responsive and visible police presence to prevent crime and provide reassurance to communities; a prompt response when people call; and enforcement by officers who are effective at investigating crime.

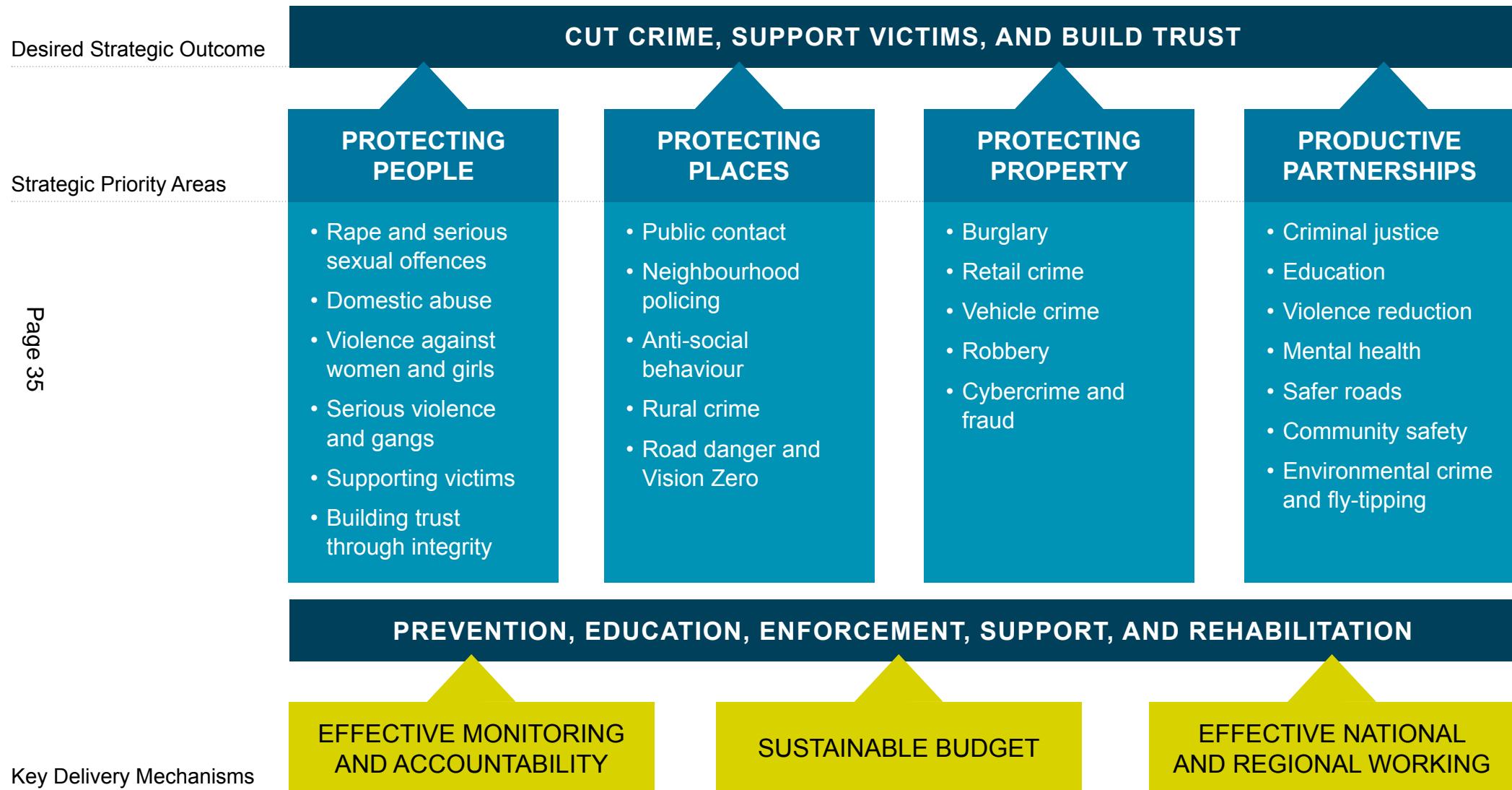
Prevention must be at the heart of Kent Police's approach – solving problems within communities and stopping people becoming victims. It requires effective partnerships to succeed – which is why it is one of the four key areas in my Plan – and good communication. But I have also made prevention the cornerstone of my work with parents and schoolchildren about sensible smartphone usage. Stopping children becoming victims of bullying or more serious crimes is vital in our increasingly digital world.

My challenge, and the challenge for Kent Police, is to get the balance right in addressing the issues that many people are aware of, while also tackling the problems that most people don't experience but which can cause significant harm to a much smaller number of vulnerable people who need to be protected and supported.

Kent is a safe place to live, visit, and work. My Plan will keep it that way.



# Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust – My Plan on a page



# How we will monitor delivery

The Plan is a public facing, strategic document, and will be underpinned by a more detailed Delivery Plan. This will form the basis of a renewed Performance and Delivery framework (using a balanced and consistent suite of performance measures, trend and trajectory data) that will support the PCC in holding the Chief Constable to account, and will start in April 2025. Ongoing force performance management will be carried out in line with the priorities in this Plan. External accountability for performance will be provided through the Performance and Delivery Board, Joint Audit Committee, Police and Crime Panel meetings, and the PCC's Annual Report.

## External accountability

Police and Crime Panel  
Performance and Delivery  
Board and Joint Audit  
Committee

## Internal delivery

Other force and PCC  
meetings

## Ongoing performance



**Suite of measures around performance, crime types, location**  
Eg focus on offenders, solved rates, response times, perception

## TARGETED ONGOING PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS

**Consistency of measurement**  
Stable measures, using agreed trend data, trajectory modelling, performance of similar forces

**Thematic reviews**  
Whole system approach to particular issues eg prevention, criminal justice, victim satisfaction, public confidence

**National Performance Measures and Assessment (tbd)**  
Eg knife crime, VAWG, Neighbourhood policing, HMICFRS reports

**Police Crime  
Commissioner's  
Annual Report**

# Protecting People

Being a victim of crime can affect people in different ways. Not only can it cause lifelong physical and emotional trauma, but it can also leave a person vulnerable to further harm.

That is why we will identify criminal activity wherever and whenever it occurs, pursue and bring offenders to justice, take action to safeguard victims and ensure they receive support to help them cope and build resilience for the future.

The identification of offenders, strong police enforcement activity, and ongoing monitoring through Integrated Offender Management are critical. Prevention through visible patrols in hotspot areas, as well as behavioural change programmes aimed at reducing re-offending are also key.

Victims must feel confident they will receive a timely response from the police, they will be listened to and taken seriously, that they will be protected from further harm, and where necessary, the police will arrest and charge the offender.

As PCC, I also recognise the importance of my statutory responsibility to provide trauma informed support services for victims, regardless of whether a crime has been reported to the police. This includes services for those who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child sexual abuse.

It is also vital to build public trust and confidence in policing, and I will hold the Chief Constable to account for the highest standards across Kent Police.



The force is conducting visible patrols in hotspot areas.

In 2024/25, the services I commissioned provided support to over 100,000 people.

# Protecting People

Priority	How this will be achieved
Rape and serious sexual offences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working with the Chief Constable, I will ensure Kent Police uses research from Operation Soteria to provide a better response to victims.</li><li>Kent Police will be relentless in its pursuit of offenders and tackle the exploitation of children.</li><li>Kent Police will investigate with compassion and professionalism to achieve very high levels of satisfaction and improve criminal justice outcomes for victims.</li><li>I will deliver an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) Service which supports children, young people and adults.</li></ul>
Domestic abuse  Page 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Through investment in technology, Kent Police will ensure all victims receive a timely and effective response.</li><li>Victims will be safeguarded through the use of police powers and civil orders/notices.</li><li>Kent Police will target offenders robustly and use all available powers to hold offenders to account.</li><li>I will work with partners to continue to provide domestic and stalking perpetrator interventions beyond March 2026.</li><li>I will provide a Stalking Advocacy Service.</li></ul>
Violence against women and girls (VAWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kent Police will target offenders robustly and use all available powers to hold offenders to account.</li><li>Through engagement with women and girls, I will address issues that require effective partnership working.</li><li>I will invest in victim services that support women and girls.</li><li>I will help to raise awareness and deal with the harm caused by stalking and harassment.</li><li>Working with the Chief Constable and partners, I will explore options to continue to build awareness about healthy relationships to young people.</li><li>Kent Police will tackle modern day slavery and human trafficking.</li></ul>

# Protecting People

Priority	How this will be achieved
Serious violence and gangs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will ensure an active and visible presence in hotspot areas.</li><li>• Kent Police will robustly tackle serious violence and knife crime, making Kent a hostile environment for gangs and those who carry weapons.</li><li>• Kent Police will bring together proactive teams to target organised crime, county lines and other serious offenders.</li><li>• I will bring partner agencies together to prevent and reduce serious violence, and to fulfil the obligations under the Serious Violence Duty.</li><li>• Working with the Chief Constable, I will deliver a Gangs and County Lines Service which provides preventative interventions and supports those involved in gangs to safely exit.</li><li>• I will work with partners to continue to deliver awareness to young people on the risks of serious violence and gangs.</li></ul>
Supporting victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will provide a Victims Advocacy and Support Service for all victims of crime in Kent and Medway regardless of whether a crime has been reported to the police or when the crime took place.</li><li>• I will provide a Restorative Justice Service to bring those harmed by crime together with their harmer where agreed, to help both parties move forward.</li><li>• I will develop services to support male victims of offences in the VAWG category.</li><li>• I will commission specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence support services.</li><li>• Working with partners, I will provide a dedicated offer for children and young people impacted by crime.</li><li>• Working with partners, I will explore collaborative commissioning opportunities with public sector organisations.</li></ul>

# Protecting People

## Priority

Building trust through integrity

## How this will be achieved

- Kent Police will ensure that complainants are contacted promptly.
- Kent Police must have an effective process for learning from complaints to improve the service delivered.
- I will ensure that my Office responds to complainants' requests for review in a timely fashion and that any learning is shared with Kent Police.
- I will continue to provide an Independent Custody Visitors service, with volunteers who visit Kent Police's custody suites, and that their findings are used to maintain standards and improve where necessary.
- I will continue to support the work of the county's Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.
- I will continue to seek the confiscation of ex-officers' pensions, where they have committed criminal offences in connection with their service.
- I remain committed to the Nolan Principles, and my Oath of Office.

# Protecting Places

Crime and ASB are issues that communities care deeply about and this is reflected through my engagement and consultation.

Whilst it is only a small minority who make the lives of others a misery, cause a nuisance and blight communities, perception can create fear that has a real impact on people's lives. Rural, urban and coastal communities want the police to listen to their concerns, understand the impact, and take action so they not only feel safer, but are safer.

Neighbourhood policing will continue to form the bedrock of policing in the county. Every community will have a named Beat Officer responsible for addressing local concerns and providing a reassuring presence. Dedicated teams within every district will also ensure there is effective community engagement, long-term problem solving to prevent issues escalating, and targeted activity when necessary.

Whilst targeted prevention activity and visible patrols are important, enforcement is also crucial, and not solely the remit of the police. Local councils and partners can and must play a significant role in tackling ASB, such as fly tipping, that has a detrimental impact on both the environment and quality of life.

There is also a need to protect communities from those who use our roads in a dangerous or negligent manner.



Every community will have a named Beat Officer.



Thanks to increased investment and strong leadership, Kent Police now has one of the most improved force control rooms in the country, answering 999 and 101 calls more quickly than almost any other force.

# Protecting Places

Priority	How this will be achieved
Public contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with the Chief Constable, I will prioritise public contact.</li><li>• Kent Police will ensure calls to Kent Police are answered promptly and front counters serve their communities effectively.</li><li>• I will invest in technology to facilitate effective two-way communication with Kent Police.</li><li>• Working with the Chief Constable, I will improve communication with the public, including the timely provision of information to victims.</li></ul>
Neighbourhood policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will ensure every community has a named Beat Officer who is accessible to the public they serve.</li><li>• Kent Police will engage with partners and use all available powers to keep town centres and villages safe.</li><li>• Kent Police will continue to target offenders robustly.</li></ul>
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Page 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will ensure an active and visible presence in hotspot areas.</li><li>• Kent Police will address local concerns including nuisance vehicles, and the illegal use of e-scooters.</li><li>• Work with stakeholders to ensure that the right agencies are using their full powers to tackle ASB.</li><li>• I will continue to raise awareness of the ASB Case Review to residents.</li><li>• I will provide a mediation service for those impacted by repeat and persistent neighbour disputes.</li></ul>
Rural crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will work with Kent Police, councils and partners to tackle fly tipping.</li><li>• Kent Police will undertake targeted prevention work to reduce theft and other criminal activity.</li><li>• Kent Police will work to improve the application and renewals processing time for firearms licensing.</li><li>• I will strengthen partnership working through a Rural Crime Board.</li></ul>
Road danger and Vision Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will reduce road danger and support Vision Zero.</li><li>• I will work with councils and other agencies to deliver the Vision Zero strategy.</li></ul>

# Protecting Property

For victims of property crime, such as burglary, there is not just the economic cost of losing possessions, it can also impact on how safe and secure they feel in their own home.

That is why crime prevention activity, such as seasonal campaigns are so important, investigative opportunities must be maximised, and offenders brought to justice through targeted enforcement. Victims must also be able to access support to help them cope, build resilience and move forwards.

Contrary to some people's view, retail crime is not timeless – it can have a profound impact on staff, customers and the economy. As an under-reported crime we need to gain a better understanding of the 'true' scale of the problem. It is also important that the police support retailers and businesses by delivering the Retail Crime Action plan and targeting offenders robustly.

Digital technology has enhanced our lives in many positive ways, but organised criminals are exploiting it. Traditional policing is not adequate to tackle such threats, so specialist capacity and capability must be maintained, both locally and nationally. Through schools and other establishments we will also ensure young people have the necessary information to understand the online world and the risks associated with it.



# Protecting Property

Priority	How this will be achieved
Burglary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will combat burglary of people's homes, helping people feel safer.</li><li>• Kent Police will continue to target offenders robustly.</li><li>• Kent Police will attend every house burglary in a timely manner.</li><li>• I will ensure access to trauma informed support provision.</li><li>• I will hold the force to account for delivering the NPCC house burglary pledge.</li></ul>
Retail crime Page 44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will deliver the Retail Crime Action plan.</li><li>• Kent Police will target offenders robustly.</li><li>• I will commission support for retail workers who experience abusive or violent behaviour.</li><li>• I will strengthen partnership working across public and private sectors through a Retail Crime Board.</li></ul>
Vehicle crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will work with representative groups, the trade and owners to reduce the theft of vehicles, including motorcycles.</li><li>• Kent Police will investigate all offences that have reasonable lines of inquiry.</li></ul>
Robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kent Police will target offenders robustly.</li><li>• Kent Police will ensure an active and visible presence in hotspot areas.</li></ul>
Cybercrime and fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with the Chief Constable, we will continue to maintain a specialist capability to tackle cybercrime.</li><li>• I will work with schools to educate young people and parents on the risks associated with online activity.</li><li>• I will ensure victims of fraud can access support to help them cope and build resilience.</li></ul>

# Productive Partnerships

Policing is not a self-contained service. Success in making Kent safer will be dependent on joined-up thinking and action across multiple agencies.

PCCs are uniquely well placed to bring partners together and ensure each agency plays to its strengths in preventing crime and ASB, protecting people from harm, supporting those affected, and delivering justice.

I will continue to work with partners in the Criminal Justice System to deliver more rapid justice, and reduce reoffending. I will commission services and target support towards supporting victims, and breaking the cycle of continued offending through targeted interventions.

I will be a strong advocate for cross-organisational data-sharing to identify vulnerability and intervene quickly to support victims and target offenders.

I will work with regional partners to disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime gangs and prevent potential terrorist activity.

I will work with a wide range of partners and stakeholders (such as businesses for Retail Crime, and parents and schoolchildren to encourage online safety).



# Productive Partnerships

Priority	How this will be achieved
Criminal justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through the work of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, I will focus efforts on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- reducing the court backlog;</li><li>- improving victims' experiences of the CJ system.</li></ul></li><li>• I will co-commission services that reduce re-offending.</li><li>• I will ensure victims have access to appropriate support throughout their CJ journey.</li><li>• I will ensure criminal justice organisations deliver their Victims Code requirements through effective reporting.</li><li>• I will deliver an Appropriate Adult Service for vulnerable adults in Custody.</li></ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will support Kent Police's school engagement programme.</li><li>• I will help to ensure there are comprehensive school programmes to help educate the next generation on keeping safe.</li></ul>
Violence reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with partners, I will develop a public health, preventative approach to serious violence across the county.</li><li>• I will commission services to support prevention and intervention activity.</li></ul>
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will build on the existing relationship between NHS partners and Kent Police to embed Right Care Right Person so the most vulnerable receive the help they need.</li></ul>
Safer roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration in support of Vision Zero.</li><li>• I will encourage volunteering, including Community Speedwatch.</li></ul>
Community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will bring partners together to implement strategies that tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.</li></ul>
Environmental crime and fly-tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will work with Kent Police, councils and partners to disrupt and deter criminal activity that has a detrimental impact on both the environment and quality of life.</li></ul>

# Effective monitoring and accountability



- Each of the three parties in the chart contributes to building the public's trust and confidence through effective monitoring and accountability.
- The Chief Constable will be held to account for delivering the priorities for policing set out in this plan and the Strategic Policing Requirement.
- The OPCC will review progress in the previous year, set out current and emerging issues and challenges, and how Kent Police intends to address them.
- Evidence on progress will be gathered from a number of sources including the force's own performance data, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, government reports and datasets, audit findings, data from partners and public surveys.
- I will publish performance data and hold Performance Meetings where I will hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery and which will be available online. Governance statements, policies and procedures, decision records and details of expenditure and contracts are all accessible at [www.kent-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk)
- Progress against this plan will be regularly reported to the Police and Crime Panel and an Annual Report will be published.

# A sustainable budget

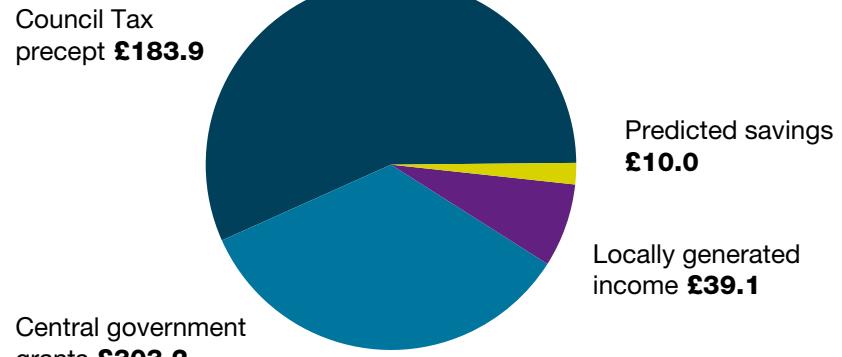
The total Police & Crime budget I hold is £536.2m for 2025/26. This budget is not just for policing – I have broader statutory responsibilities to prevent crime and support victims with services delivered independently of the police.

My overall budget is funded from government grants and the council tax alongside other income. 99% of the funding is given to the Chief Constable to deliver policing across Kent. The remainder is held by me to deliver my responsibilities and to commission services for victims. This includes my core victim support service as well as specialist services for victims of crime; prevention work; supporting community safety initiatives and joint working with partners to support victims of domestic abuse and other crimes. In 2024/25 over 100,000 victims were supported through these services.

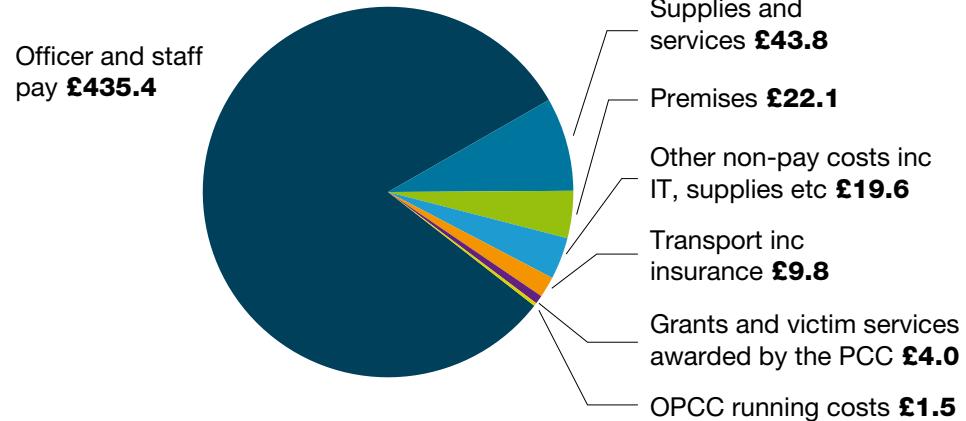
The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) looks ahead in order to predict the overall funding position over the life of this plan. The MTFS is continually reviewed to take account of changes in the financial environment, the operational priorities of the Chief Constable and emerging challenges.

The future is challenging with substantial savings needed to be made over the next few years, with £10m required in 2025/26 alone.

## Income £m 2025/26



## How that money is spent £m



# Effective national and regional working

## Strategic Policing Requirement

Many threats Kent faces can be tackled locally, but some require a coordinated national approach.

Set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), the biggest threats to public safety are:

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Terrorism
- Cyber
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Public Disorder
- Civil Emergencies

The Chief Constable and PCC must have 'due regard' to the SPR and ensure Kent Police is in a state of readiness to respond when necessary. This may include sharing and pooling resources with other forces to tackle such threats.

## BlueLight Commercial

Established in 2020, BlueLight Commercial is a not-for-profit organisation that works in collaboration with blue light organisations. This includes all PCCs.

It provides commercial support across procurement functions, including contract management in core areas such as aviation, fleet, equipment and uniform, and ICT.

Since being established, it has delivered financial benefits to policing of £287m.

## Police Digital Service

The Police Digital Service (PDS) aims to create a more digitally enhanced service that exploits data and technology to strengthen operational effectiveness, drive value for money and better safeguard and protect the public.

From 2018/19 to 2023/24, PDS helped to achieve £48.6m of cashable savings and £174.6m non-cashable efficiency savings for police forces.

## Collaboration with other forces

Kent Police has a strong and effective collaboration with Essex Police, including shared functions. These include the Serious Crime Directorate, HR, IT and Estates.

It also works in collaboration with the seven forces in the eastern region in areas such as procurement and forensics, and with the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) to tackle serious organised crime.

## Devolution

We will work with local and national partners to make sure that the effective governance of policing in Kent is maintained under any new model.

This plan will be updated to take account of changes to reflect national policies and legislation and local decisions.

# Contacting your Police and Crime Commissioner

As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I'm happy to help or answer your questions.

Please get in touch with me:



**Email**  
[contactyourpcc@kent.police.uk](mailto:contactyourpcc@kent.police.uk)



**Write**  
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9BZ



**Call**  
01622 677055



**Website**  
[www.kent-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk)



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**Next door**  
[Kent PCC](https://www.nextdoor.com/kent-pcc)



## Budget consultation

Matthew Scott launches consultation on the Kent Police budget for 2025-2026.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, it is my responsibility to ensure that Kent Police has sufficient resources to prevent and investigate crime, to support victims and to protect our communities, be they urban, rural or coastal.

Thanks to your support, we now have more officers in Kent than ever before; our call handling service is amongst the best in the country and we have cut crime by 13% since 2019.

However, costs are rising, and on top of that, we have to pay increased national insurance contributions. So I have to make difficult decisions in order to fund the services you consistently tell me you want.

Central Government has agreed to fund Kent Police £273.7 million, and have given me the flexibility to raise the police precept of the council tax by £14 a year (or £1.16 per month) for a Band D property next year. This increase will help raise a total of £182.9m. But even with this increase Kent Police will have a shortfall of around £10 million.

If we do this, we hope to maintain the level of service you expect and deserve. The Force will of course have to make significant savings. I have written to the Government to request fairer funding in the future and will make proposals for new funding for Kent Police.

Please share your views on the police budget.

### Answer choices:

	I'm happy to contribute an increase of £14 per year for an average Band D council tax (or £1.16 per month) as described.
	I'm not happy about the increased charge, but accept it needs to be done to fund Kent Police and reduce the pressure to find savings
	I'm not happy about the increased charge and accept that this would mean a significant reduction in service

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**Key Points**

1. The key points from the 2025/26 budget and precept proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) are:
  - A proposed increase in the precept of £14 a year, or 5.5% for a Band D property, equivalent to £1.17 a month, or 3.8p per day.
  - A council tax for an average Band D property of £270.15.
  - Kent PCC remain among the ten lowest PCC council tax preceptors in the country.
  - An increase in Government funding of £14.1m
  - Savings gap of £10.0m
2. In previous years, this report has set out the additionality that the increase in precept will bring. For this year, the increase in precept is being used to mitigate the funding pressures faced by Kent Police. Substantial savings of £10.0m are required to balance the budget in 2025/26 and with a further £38.2m across the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) meaning the funding generated through the precept increase only mitigates the level of savings required to make in 2025/26. Without the increase further significant savings would need to be made and would risk jeopardising the strong performance made in areas such as Neighbourhood Policing and the Force Control Room. Despite this, the PCC and Chief Constable are determined to drive efficiency, making policing in Kent more effective with continued investment into frontline policing and the support and equipment they need alongside new and innovative technology to improve support functions.
3. The decision to increase the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles has not been taken lightly. The cost-of-living pressures that the taxpayers of Kent are facing are considerable and it is recognised that this is a further burden especially if other local authorities are increasing their precepts by the maximum allowed. It is, however, essential, in order to maintain the continued strong progress by the Force.

**Background**

4. The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed budget and precept proposals by the PCC. It delivers one of the key responsibilities of the PCC under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and supports the PCC's priorities within his Police and Crime Plan.
5. In determining his budget proposals, the PCC has had regard to:
  - His 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'
  - National targets and objectives including the Strategic Policing Requirement.
  - Consultation with the Chief Constable.
  - The Kent Police Pledge.
  - The results of consultation with the public.
  - The plans and policies of other partner agencies relating to community safety and crime reduction.
  - Government policy on public spending and the Police Finance Settlement.
  - Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
  - Reserves Strategy.
  - Capital Strategy.
  - Commissioning Strategy.
  - Treasury Management Strategy
  - Continuous improvement and value for money for the taxpayer of Kent.
  - The CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice.
6. This report will set out the:
  - Government's national police funding settlement for 2025/26.
  - 2025/26 budget and precept proposal.
  - 2025/26 funding pressures.
  - The PCC's Budget for the office and commissioning services for victims.

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30.
- Savings.
- Additional Income.
- The Reserves Strategy.
- The Capital Strategy.
- PCC Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Statement.

### **2025/26 National Funding Settlement**

7. The 2025/26 Provisional Settlement was announced on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 in a written ministerial statement by the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire. This is the first settlement since the change of government following the general election in 2024.
8. The Minister confirmed that PCCs had available an additional £986.9m of funding in 2025/26. Of this, £329.8m, approximately one-third, would come from local taxpayers through the council tax, provided all PCCs increased their precept by £14, the maximum allowed under the referendum principles. The rest of the funding is made up of:
  - £339m increase in Core Police Grant.
  - £230m of funding to support forces with the cost of the increase in the Employers National Insurance Contribution (NIC), distributed by headcount.
  - £100m as a new Neighbourhood Policing Grant, distributed according to the funding formula.
9. The Minister confirmed that through this funding there will be:
  - 6% average increase in funding, including precept and NICs for all PCC areas
  - 3.7% flat rate increase in Core Grant for all PCC areas
  - 34% cash increase in Capital city grants to the City of London and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
  - A commitment that Firearms Licencing Fees will increase to cover costs 'when Parliamentary time allows'
  - A requirement to participate in Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme which is anticipated to deliver hundreds of millions of pounds by the end of Parliament
  - A consultation with police system leaders on plans for a new National Centre of Policing, which is expected to include specialist and supportive functions like forensics, aviation and IT. National arrangements on procurement are also expected to generate savings to reinvest into frontline policing.
  - A new Performance Unit will be established in the Home Office to 'drive up performance and standards.'
10. The settlement in December 2024 confirmed that PCC's will have the flexibility to increase the precept up to £14 for 2025/26 only. As has been the case for a number of years, PCCs did not receive any capital grant funding.
11. Following the settlement it was announced that in addition to the above, £49m of funding had been set aside at a national level for Violence Reduction Units, however, local allocations have not yet been announced.
12. Although further details are still to be announced the PCC is confident that this budget and precept proposal puts Kent in a position to contribute to the expectations of the Policing Minister as set out above.

## 2025/26 Kent Funding Settlement

13. Locally, the funding received by Kent is as follows:

**Table 1: Funding Settlement**

Funding Stream	2025/26	2024/25	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Police Core Grant	232.1	223.8	8.3
Specific: PUP (officer uplift) **	8.6	10.4	(1.8)
Specific: Additional Recruitment**	0.3	0.2	0.1
Legacy Council Tax Grants	13.3	13.3	0.0
Specific: Pension Grant Allocation**	10.6	11.7	(1.1)
Specific: NIC Reimbursement	6.3	n/a	6.3
Specific: Neighbourhood Policing Grant**	2.4	n/a	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>273.6</b>	<b>259.5</b>	<b>14.1</b>

\*\* Although announced as funding the grant is classed as income.

14. Government funding has increased for 2025/26 by £14.1m, however this is all to cover specific cost pressures, namely:

- £8.3m Police Core Grant: for the full year effect of the 4.75% pay award applied in September 2024.
- (£1.8m) PUP: decrease in incentive grant to maintain our police officer numbers throughout the financial year. This is due to a 'rebalancing' of funding between the PUP grant and core funding in order to provide 'increased flexibility'. In effect this has moved into the Core Grant above to help fund the pay awards. Further details on government expectations are still awaited.
- £0.1m Additional Recruitment grant: Kent recruited over and above their national target by 5 officers. This is to maintain that over recruitment.
- (£1.1m) Pension Grant: to cover the additional police pension contributions that Kent must pay due to the McCloud judgement. This is less than last year as 2024/25 contained a one-off payment for administration costs and a correction for an oversight in the previous year's government's distribution.
- £6.3m NIC Reimbursement: To cover the cost of the changes in the employers NIC rate. This was distributed based on headcount numbers not necessarily the full cost of the impact.
- £2.4m Neighbourhood Policing Grant: To support the recruitment of additional and redeployed neighbourhood police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables spanning the length of the parliament. The fund was distributed using the funding formula. The conditions of the grant are yet to be confirmed.

15. The Government has distributed funding for the full year effect 2024/25 pay award through the core grant based on the existing funding formula and not on police officer headcount. Kent has always argued that the funding formula is out of date and inherently unfair on itself and some other PCC areas. Kent is poorly funded by allocations delivered through this method of allocation and means funding to cover specific pay costs are allocated on a basis that does not take into account employee strength. Therefore, the additional funding for the pay award does not cover the cost of the pay increases for Kent. As an example of the overall unfairness in the formula, one PCC area has 800 fewer officers than Kent Police but through the national formula allocation receives approximately £14.5m more in funding. As per previous settlement's there was no funding for police officer increments.

16. The Government have not yet clarified the conditions regarding the neighbourhood policing grant, but the aim is to increase the numbers involved in neighbourhood/front line policing. Kent are hopefully ahead of the curve in regard to having a named officer in every ward as a result of the recently implemented Neighbourhood Policing model. However, without that clarity it is difficult to assess any impact.

17. Nationally, the Minister confirmed a 6% average increase in funding when including government grant and assumed maximum precept increases. Although this is true overall in Kent there is an imbalance in how that 6% increase is funded, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Average Percentage Increase from funding source**

	Government	Precept	Total
National Average Increase %	6.1	5.8	6.0
Kent %	5.5	6.3	6.0

18. It is worth putting into context recent funding settlements, since 2010 government funding for Kent PCC has fallen by 15.2% in real terms. Even when the assumed increase for the 2025/26 precept is included police funding in Kent will have only increased by 1.4% in real terms over the same period.

### **2025/26 Budget and Precept Proposal**

19. The 2025/26 PCC budget and precept proposal has had to find a balance between meeting ongoing avoidable pressures, additional investment, and savings. The financial challenges facing Kent Police and the PCC in 2025/26 and beyond mean that once again there will need to be difficult decisions required to balance the budget. The shortfall in funding from the Government, restrictions on officer numbers alongside the significant budget pressures means substantial savings will need to be made. However, both the PCC and the Chief Constable have struck a balance where investment in frontline policing can provide a more visible and effective service while making savings in other parts of the organisation.

20. Increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles will help mitigate but not remove the need to make savings. Even with this £14 increase, £48.2m of savings are required over the medium term, £10.0m of which are required in 2025/26. If the maximum increase were not taken and, for example, an increase in line with the inflation target (2% or £5.12) was taken, this would increase the level of savings required to £16m for 2025/26. This is an issue that is not unique to Kent and is affecting policing across the country. However, clearly the unfairness in the funding formula and the different abilities for PCCs to raise income through precept means it impacts some more than others. Kent as one of the lower (and below average) preceptors is more affected. Both the PCC and Chief Constable recognise that asking the public to pay more for policing during a time when households are facing their own cost of living pressures is a challenge.

21. The £10.0m required for 2025/26 is a significant saving and should be seen against a backdrop of almost £100m savings having already been delivered since 2016 when the PCC was first elected.

22. In Kent 82% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees compared to a national average of 77% which reduces the scope Kent has to make savings from non-pay areas. It is expected that police officer numbers will have to be maintained and if this is the case then this equates to 59% of our gross budget that we cannot make savings from. It is therefore inevitable that with the level of savings required that there must be some impact on staffing levels. Anything less than the £14 increase in the precept would require additional reductions in staffing, including the de-civilianisation of roles and a risk of reductions in service levels including those where strong progress has been made.

23. The Force have been preparing savings plans during the year. This has required some difficult decisions to be made. However, the release of savings will be done in a managed way to ensure minimal impact on operational policing.

24. The budget and precept proposal for 2025/26 is as follows:

**Table 3: Budget Requirement and Precept**

Budget Requirement	£435.7m
Less Police Funding	£251.7m
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£184.0m</b>
Less Collection Fund Surplus	£0.3m
<b>Amount to be raised by Council Tax</b>	<b>£183.7m</b>
Divided by aggregate council tax base*	679,841.81
<b>Band D Council Tax</b>	<b>£270.15</b>

\*Draft council tax base as final figures not yet received.

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding

## 2025/26 Funding Pressures vs Additional Funding

25. The following table shows the additional funding received against the additional cost pressures facing Kent Police for 2025/26.

**Table 4: Additional Funding and Cost Pressures**

Additional Funding	£m	£m	Additional Cost Pressures
<b>Police Core Grant</b> Government funding that is ongoing and in our base budget for 2025/26 and future years. Note: other funding received from the Government is classed as income rather than funding and therefore is included within the additional cost pressures (i.e. it nets off against those cost pressures).	8.3	21.01	<b>Police officer and staff pay costs including pay awards and National Insurance.</b> More than 80% of the Kent Police budget is employee costs and therefore any increase in pay is a significant cost pressure. This is the cost of the 4.75% pay award to August 2025 with an assumption that a 2.8% award will apply from September 2025. This figure includes the increase in the National Insurance Contributions for Employers reimbursed through NIC Increase Grant, Overtime and a number of other pay adjustments (vacancy rate and joiners and leavers)
<b>Council Tax</b> Additional funding raised from local taxpayers through increasing the precept to £14.	11.6	8.3	<b>Incremental pay increases.</b> All officers and staff are on incremental pay scales that increase each year, based on performance. All new recruits start at the bottom of the pay scale and receive an increasing scale of increments over the first 5 years. Therefore, with the increase in new officers' the cost of incremental pay is a significant pressure especially as they approach the years 4 through 6
<b>Collection Fund Surplus</b> The estimated balance on the collection fund accounts of all billing authorities at the end of March 2025.	0.3	2.1	<b>Contract Inflation.</b> This increase is for those contracts where inflationary increases are included. This covers contracts for IT hardware and software, some vehicle costs and other specific contracts.
<b>NIC Increase Grant</b> This grant is to cover the cost of the increased employer's contribution rate for national insurance.	6.3	6.5	<b>Other inflation and cost pressures.</b> All costs are subject to inflationary pressures. Specific inflation increases for pay and contracts have been included above. This also includes other cost pressures such as increases in parts and labour costs for vehicles including EV and increased kennelling costs for stray dogs due to the changes in legislation on XL Bullies.
		1.8	<b>Revenue cost of the capital programme.</b> This is the increase in the cost to the revenue budget for the capital programme. This figure includes £0.6m increase in our minimum revenue provision (MRP) for previous years borrowing to fund the capital programme; a £1.0m increase in the revenue contribution to capital that will help fund capital expenditure and £0.2m of additional borrowing costs.
		-3.2	<b>Budget Adjustments/Savings/Income.</b> Several changes to pay related budgets, some additional income (including one-off government grant applied as income) and other budget adjustments.
<b>Total Additional Funding</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>Total Additional Net Cost Pressures</b>

## **OPCC Budget and Commissioning Strategy**

26. It is not only the Force that are facing significant cost pressures, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is also facing cost pressures. Increases in the number and cost of misconduct hearings, police complaints, the complexity and scale in commissioning services for victims and witnesses, increases in correspondence including Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests alongside the normal pay pressures puts undue pressure on the OPCC budget for 2025/26.
27. The PCC has always endeavoured to maintain the budget at or below the level inherited from the previous Police Authority. In 2018/19 the PCC reduced the office budget by £0.2m so the Force could increase the number of police officers before the previous government announced their Police uplift initiative. Since 2018/19 that reduced budget has been maintained. All pay awards and increments and inflationary pressures during that period were absorbed into the existing budget and no increase in budget was requested. All additional responsibilities that were given to PCC's during that period did not come with any funding for additional burdens and therefore the costs were absorbed into the existing budget.
28. Although this has proved challenging the PCC recognises the immense pressure the Force is under to deliver savings and therefore has determined that all pressures for the OPCC will be managed internally within the OPCC. This will be managed through better use of external funding, managing vacancies and where appropriate the use of the PCC's own reserves.
29. The PCC's Making Kent Safer Plan includes the guiding principle that puts 'victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do' with a priority to 'commission services for victims that are needs led.' In the previous year, the PCC has supported 102,000 people through the core Victim Support service enabling them to receive the help and support regardless of whether the crime was reported to the Police or when that crime took place. Feedback on the service is measured through a 'distance travelled' survey and is universally positive.
30. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) announced funding for the specific victims' grant allocations for 2025/26 in early December 2024. The core funding grant for providing victims services was reduced by 4.2% or £90,000. This funding is used to support the core Victim Support service amongst other services. Although a significant reduction, the PCC's Commissioning Team have reviewed funding allocations, and the PCC can confirm that this reduction will not be passed on to service providers. All allocations to services funded by the MoJ grant will be maintained at their current level. Government funding for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services was maintained at the same level for 2025/26 with increased flexibility.
31. However, despite allocations being maintained at the previous year's levels, those services are facing an increase in the Employers NIC rate and minimum wage levels as well as ongoing inflationary pressures. The OPCC has requested service providers to outline what service they can provide with the same level of funding. This may mean that there will be some limitations to the scope of the services provided (i.e. some may need to introduce waiting lists), however, the PCC and his team will review all services and ensure that there are no gaps in service provision.
32. Funding will be allocated as per the Commissioning Strategy on vital services for victims, including those delivered from Compass House, including the Victim Support service, the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor service, Schools service, and Restorative Justice. Unfortunately, the funding for Immediate Justice was withdrawn during 2024/25 and with the reduction in funding it has not been possible to take this forward this year. The PCC requested proposals from a number of sources and will seek to implement a pilot Immediate Justice programme if and where resources allow. At the time of writing some details around funding have still not been clarified so the Commissioning Strategy will be published on the website in March 2025.

## **Medium Term Financial Plan**

33. The MTFP is agreed each February as part of the budget setting process and is updated, refreshed, and published throughout the year as further information becomes available. The five-year plan covers

the current year plus four from 2025/26 through to 2029/30. For obvious reasons there is more certainty around the figures included in the early years than for those towards the end of the plan as we have no indication from government on funding, precept flexibility or officer numbers. A variety of scenarios are produced by the PCC and Force CFOs with differing assumptions, and these are discussed with the PCC and Chief Constable and their senior leadership teams before the final version is completed and presented in this report. The MTFP is a living document and is updated regularly for any major changes. The key assumptions included in the current plan are:

#### Funding assumptions

- The precept referendum limit is £14 (5.5%) in 2025/26. No assumption is made regarding any precept flexibility beyond 2025/26. Therefore, the plan includes a precept increase of 2% each year which was the pre-flexibility maximum and in line with inflation expectations.
- The council tax base will increase by 1.2% in 2025/26, with continued growth of 1.1% in future years.
- That the Kent PCC receives the same percentage of the national police funding in future years as in 2025/26 (i.e. there is no change in the funding formula).
- That overall government funding will increase by 1% each year.
- That the additional pension grant received in 2025/26 will be maintained as part of the ongoing funding to police.
- Any top slicing and reallocating from the overall police grant by the HO will remain as described in the financial settlement.

#### Cost Assumptions

- All additional officers recruited under PUP will be maintained across the MTFP.
- These officers will form part of the ongoing establishment.
- Pay cost inflation for officers and staff will be 4.75% to August 2025 with a 2.8% increase every September after.
- Any additional bonus payment or pay award or change in award date above those highlighted will have to be funded through any in-year underspend, reserves, additional savings, or additional government funding.
- Specific non-pay inflation is applied to individual cost categories and contracts so the general rate varies for 2025/26, but 2% has been applied in each year of the MTFP after that, in line with the Bank of England's target. This will be revised each year.
- That an investment in equipment and technology to support police officers through capital investment will continue with a further £1m in each subsequent year of the MTFP to help ensure Kent Police has the funds to provide the best support now and in the future.

34. With these assumptions, across the life of the MTFP there is potentially £48.2m of savings required to make with £10.0m being required in 2025/26. While the Force has a good track record of identifying savings, any changes in the assumptions above, for example pay awards or inflation, could lead to greater or in some cases fewer savings having to be made so will be monitored and managed on a regular basis.

#### Savings

35. A total of £10.0m is required to balance the budget for 2025/26. This is being achieved through savings and a contribution from reserves. The Chief Constable has briefed the PCC with details of the savings proposals and provided assurance that the savings will be managed sympathetically where it impacts on personnel. The plan to balance the budget is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: 2025/26 Savings Plan**

Category	Description	£m
Police Staff	Review the number of staff roles across the organisation.	1.3
Vacancy Factor	A vacancy factor for all areas with some limitations on protected areas ranging from 8.5% to 10.5%.	2.1
Reserves	Use of reserves to fund time lag between initiatives being implemented and the full year effect of savings being realised.	2.1
Non-Pay	A number of small savings from non-pay expenditure.	1.2
Capital Charges	A change in the method of calculating MRP and reducing the revenue to capital transfer	0.8
Project Delays	Changes to various projects across IT and Estates.	1.1
Other	A number of savings including reductions in various budgets such as marketing and external training plus other smaller savings.	1.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>10.0</b>

36. The PCC CFO and Chief Constable CFO are agreed that the budget gap can be met for 2025/26 and therefore balance the budget. However, should further savings be required on top of the £10.0m then this would have to be found through further service reductions or reserves.

37. A summary of the MTFP is set out at Annex A. The following table shows the level of savings required based on the assumptions in the MTFP.

**Table 6: Savings requirement**

Savings	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>New Savings (each year)</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>
<b>Total Savings (cumulative)</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>48.2</b>

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding

38. The Force and PCC continually look for opportunities for further ongoing savings. Any savings identified during the year that are not required to balance the budget in 2025/26 will be used to support the investment programme over the medium term to reduce the revenue costs of capital.

39. Savings of this magnitude will require difficult decisions to be made around staffing levels within the organisation. All decisions will be carefully managed to protect the welfare of staff and minimise the impact to frontline policing.

#### **Additional Income**

40. There are effectively two methods of balancing the budget, the first is to reduce costs by making savings and these have been outlined above. The second is to increase income. The PCC does not have a General Power of Competence like local authorities or even the more limited power given to Fire and Rescue Authorities so there are limited opportunities to increase income and/or levy charges.

41. Almost all the PCC's income is from Government Grant and local precept. Although there is flexibility on the precept it is capped by the Government's referendum principles.

42. However, funding opportunities do arise during the year and the PCC has been successful in bidding for further funding into Kent. The PCC is a subscriber to a service through Blue Light Commercial which identifies opportunities for PCC's and partners to make funding bids. This service is monitored through the PCC's Commissioning Team and allows the PCC to share opportunities with our commissioned services and partners to help them attract funding as well.

43. The PCC has attracted over £3m of additional funding into the Commissioning budget during 2024/25 to provide additional services for victims. This is for specific service delivery during the year but means funding for the Commissioning budget has almost doubled since 2015/16.

44. The PCC secured funding from the Department of Transport targeting persistent offenders by limiting their use of the roads. Op Voice focused on driving offences across the County leading to several arrests and vehicles being seized. A number of offenders had a history of other crimes including violence against women and girls. The operation used roads policing to target a multitude of offenders committing crime making roads and neighbourhoods safer. This initiative is now being reviewed to see if it can be used nationally.

45. During 2023/24 the Force had difficulty in filling externally funded posts leading to a budget pressure in 2024/25 of approximately £1.8m. This has been monitored by the OPCC throughout 2024/25 to ensure that external resources are maximised. However performance in this area has improved and no pressure has arisen for 2025/26. The PCC continues to challenge the Chief Constable to maximise the use of external funding, and this regular scrutiny will continue in 2025/26.

46. Both the PCC and Chief Constable remain committed to finding and bidding for any additional funding into Kent and ensuring this is maximised effectively during the year.

### **Reserves Strategy**

47. A principal element of the PCC's overall financial strategy is the use of reserves over the life of the MTFP. The following section summarises the current and medium-term position on reserves. The full Reserves Strategy is attached at Annex B.

48. The PCC's Reserves Strategy has the following key elements:

- A general non-earmarked reserve of 3% of the net budget will be maintained for unknown and/or unforeseeable events.
- A prudent approach to risk management will be maintained and accordingly earmarked reserves will be created where appropriate to cover for possible significant risks.
- Reserves not required for the above purposes will be clearly identified as available for other discretionary opportunities.
- In the interest of the council taxpayer, the PCC will where possible build up and maintain a level of reserves for investment, borrowing only where the life of the asset and economic environment make it the most efficient way of financing investment.

49. The total general and earmarked reserves are expected to be £29.4m as at 1 April 2025. Of this, the general reserve will amount to £13.1m or 3% of the net budget. This is in line with the Reserves Strategy policy of holding 3% of the net budget in general reserves.

50. The remaining reserves are all earmarked for specific purposes. Capital investment in 2025/26 will be funded from asset sales during the year, a revenue contribution to capital and borrowing. In the first instance this will be internal borrowing, where the PCC 'borrows' from cashflow during the year, reducing the level of funds available for investing in the money markets but reducing the cost of borrowing.

51. The level of reserves has reduced significantly over the last few years due to planned use to support recruitment, strong performance of delivering capital projects and reducing asset sales. This reflected a strong direction from the Government to reduce policing reserves from a high level in 2017/18. However, due to strong financial management reserves have stabilised and will remain relatively static over the medium-term period.

52. For 2024/25 the Force are expecting to underspend on the revenue budget, the PCC has notified the Chief Constable that any underspend will be taken back into reserves to fund the capital programme and mitigate risks over the medium term. Any in-year reallocations of underspends will only be considered by the PCC where an exceptional business case is made.

53. The reserves position over the medium term is set out in Table 7:

**Table 7: Reserves**

Reserve	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General	12.5	13.1	13.3	13.2	13.8	14.1
Risk (inc. Insurance)	10.7	10.1	8.8	8.0	7.0	6.0
Investment Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Ring fenced (inc. PCC)	6.5	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>26.5</b>

54. Over the medium term, taking all the plans and provisions into account, total reserves are expected to be £26.5m at the end of 2029/30.

### Capital

55. The Capital Strategy is a key document for the PCC and forms part of the integrated financial planning process. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure and capital financing contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure. This document is published alongside the budget report and can be found at Annex C.

56. The key themes driving capital investment can be summarised as follows:

- Policy led with clear linkages to operational requirements and the Keeping Kent Safe Plan.
- Maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of the estate meeting statutory compliances.
- Using technology and innovation to reduce demand, increase the time, and focus officers can devote to core policing.
- Where possible, generate revenue savings.
- Ensuring sound and reliable equipment and facilities for officers.
- Exploiting tangible efficiency and effectiveness opportunities in partnership with others.

57. All projects expecting to be funded from the investment reserve will have to produce a business case and projects will be identified on the strength of that case and the priority to the organisations. This reflects a more agile way of working within a constantly changing environment and provides substantial flexibility to the delivery of the investment programme. As per normal practice, actual release of funding next year and in future years will depend on the completion of sound business cases.

**Table 8: Investment Programme**

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Information Technology	7.3	5.0	6.9	6.5	4.8	30.6
Estates	4.9	11.5	13.5	13.5	13.8	57.2
North Kent	10.8	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.6	13.3
Replacement Programmes	1.5	4.1	1.4	0.8	0.6	8.4
Vehicle	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.6	14.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>123.7</b>

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding. 2025/25 includes expected roll forward from 2024/25.

58. The capital programme is a mixture of projects that either update/refresh assets or are new projects. The IT programme includes the continuing implementation of the Digital Forensics platform, mentioned in last year's report, which will revolutionise how the Force deal with storing and investigating digital devices, freeing up officer time and meaning victims will not be without their device for longer than necessary. A pilot area for this platform will be in place during 2025.

59. Work continues on the implementation of a contact management system that will improve how the public can contact Kent Police and keep victims and witnesses informed on the progress of crimes they have reported.

60. The Estates programme is taking existing core buildings and ensuring they are fit for policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The works undertaken at places like Coldharbour and Sittingbourne amongst others have made an improvement in officers and staff wellbeing and improved the efficient and effective use of workspace across the estate. It will also release revenue savings back into the budget, especially from utility and maintenance costs. Replacement programmes include projects for replacing vehicles and updating the Force's equipment as well as the electrification of the fleet.
61. The PCC is taking a personal interest in the capital programme, especially the work on the estate, receiving assurance regarding costs, delivery, and value for money. The PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account over the delivery of this programme.
62. The investment programme is funded by a combination of investment reserves, a revenue contribution to capital, borrowing and the use of capital receipts from disposing of assets during the year. All asset disposals are subject to a business case and require approval by the PCC. It should be noted that the Capital Grant from the Government has been abolished so therefore we no longer receive any government funding for capital expenditure.
63. The PCC will have to borrow to fund the capital programme. Any decision to borrow will be made, like all decisions, with value for money for the taxpayer in mind and only be done when it is the most cost-effective way of delivering a project and will consider the project, business case and asset life expectancy. A decision to borrow will also consider taxpayer equity, this is where taxpayers of today may be funding assets that future taxpayers will use. Spreading the cost of a long-term asset over its life cycle will ensure that all taxpayers who benefit from the asset will be contributing to the cost.
64. In the first instance, borrowing is likely to consist of internal borrowing. This is where the PCC will borrow against future cashflow, foregoing the interest that could have been earned through investing the funds in the money markets. This is a way of borrowing with the lowest cost. This internal borrowing does require repaying back into the cashflow and the impact of this has been considered within the MTFP. This will be short-term borrowing for cashflow purposes, providing the most economical way of borrowing for the substantial investment that is being made in the Kent Police estate. This will ensure that the Force are maximising the benefit from the new way of working from a leaner, more efficient and effective estate.

#### **PCC Chief Finance Officer – Section 25 Professional Statement**

65. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that the designated Section 151 Officer, in this case, the PCC CFO must issue a professional statement on the adequacy of reserves, the robustness of estimates and the overall effectiveness of the systems of financial control and risk management.
66. The PCC CFO has reviewed the financial environment and the risks facing policing in Kent and the PCC and has commented on the overall financial outlook for 2025/26 and beyond before focussing on reserves, estimates and financial controls.
67. The outlook for 2025/26 and across the MTFP is the most demanding it has been in several years. The government announced a one-year settlement in December 2024 while work takes place on a new Comprehensive Spending Review to be revealed in Spring 2025. Although the one-year funding was as expected it was hoped that it would cover the major cost pressures, but it fell short of expectations. The level of savings required over the period of the MTFP is a significant challenge. 2025/26 is balanced with a savings plan in place but will require robust monitoring to ensure delivery of those savings and avoid future additional cost pressures. Future years are harder to ascertain with the lack of clarity of future government funding and their plans for neighbourhood policing and violence reduction units.
68. Previous budget and precept reports have mentioned several times the unfairness in the funding formula, however, the formula is not the solution to the current financial challenge as it is not the only cause. There are a number of issues and cost pressures that require rectification in order to create a better financial environment within the policing sector.

69. The incoming government agreed public sector pay awards in the summer of 2024. For Police Officers a pay award of 4.75% was agreed and the Chief Constable and PCC agreed that this be extended to all police and OPCC staff as well. The Government committed to finding additional funding to allocate to PCCs to cover the full cost of this award over and above the 2.5% increase that PCC's and Forces had budgeted for. However, the increase in funding from the government for Kent in 2025/26 does not cover the full year cost of the pay award announced in September 2024 and no funding has been provided for pay awards from September 2025. In any event, Kent had to find the first 2.5% for pay before government funding provided for some of the remaining pressure. For Kent, a 1% increase in pay is £2.2m and without government funding relies on either an increase in precept or savings to cover the cost.

70. The method of allocating funding for pay awards was through the existing funding formula which is now almost 20 years old and crucially does not take into account officer numbers as one of its factors. Kent is disadvantaged by the fact that it had already begun increasing officer numbers ahead of the PUP whereas other areas had reduced numbers. This meant Kent had to start from a higher cost base which the formula and PUP incentive funding did not consider. As an example of the current funding formula, a similar PCC with 800 fewer officers than Kent receives £14m more in grant. It adds a further unnecessary cost pressure and places a burden on local taxpayers to make up any difference in funding through the council tax. The distribution of any additional funding through this method further embeds existing discrepancies in funding across policing areas.

71. Government has been reviewing the formula for distributing the national core Police funding to PCCs for several years. The PCC and the PCC CFO along with the Chief Constable and their CFO have been involved in discussions with the HO to champion Kent's case for a fairer settlement outlining the unique nature of Kents geographic position (proximity to Europe/London) and the significant policing challenges' that brings. However, it should be noted that formula changes are a risk as well as opportunity for funding received by Kent particularly post 2025/26. While changes to the funding formula should rectify the historic underfunding of Kent Police from central government, the formula itself only provides the share of overall police funding that Kent will receive. The opportunity is that Kent gains a larger share of the allocation with the risk being it is a larger share of an overall smaller allocation to policing.

72. A better method for allocating funding specifically related to officer numbers is through headcount numbers. The data is easily obtainable, in fact it is reported to Government twice a year and is provided by and therefore cannot be disputed by policing areas. Kent have long argued this would be a fairer settlement. This argument was finally recognised in the distribution of the compensation for the increase in Employers National Insurance Contribution. The Government distributed this funding through headcount. Unfortunately, the overall quantum was not enough, and funding still fell slightly short (£0.3m) of what was required. It also does not take into account the passing on of the increase in NIC from suppliers and service providers.

73. Government funding only considers pay awards and has never included funding for increments. All Police Officers and staff are on incremental pay scales and subject to satisfactory performance, are moved up to the next point on the pay scale. The Police Uplift Programme has provided for additional officers in Kent all of whom are working their way up through the pay scales. Despite the government providing incentive funding to maintain these officer numbers the level of funding does not include any increases for increments. For Police Officers increments increase dramatically towards the end of their first five years so the effect of increments will see a significant impact over the MTFP as these officers complete those 5 years.

74. The previous government instigated the PUP to increase the number of police officers across the country. The PUP incentive grant was designed to ensure that those officers that were recruited were maintained over the year. This included two reporting points and penalties if numbers fell below the specified level. The incentive grant has been reduced for this year with a corresponding uplift in the core grant. Effectively using part of the incentive grant to fund the pay awards. Having to maintain officer numbers means that around 60% of the pay budget is locked down for the year and cannot be reduced. This restriction puts pressure on staff and non-pay budgets to make the required savings. Kent already spends less on non-pay than the average (18% of budget compared to 23% nationally) and therefore it

is harder to make savings in non-pay areas. A change from two reporting points in the year to one would yield the same result on officer numbers but provide a significant saving to Kent Police.

75. The increase in precept flexibility £14 for 2025/26 allows PCCs the scope to set a precept in line with their Police and Crime Plan priorities. It also continues the previous Government's policy of PCCs funding significant budget pressures through precept rather than central grant. The movement of funding away from central government funding to council tax places a significant burden on local taxpayers. It is inherently unfair and increases the disparity between those PCCs who receive a greater proportion of their funding from central government. As the report has shown the 6% average funding increase across the country has been funded through different elements with Kent's proportion coming more from precept than government funding.
76. Due to historic differences in council tax the proportion that £14 represents can vary significantly between force areas, the highest being 8.6% the lowest 5.2%. Kent's increase is 5.5%, towards the lower end of increases across the country. The proportion of funding raised through council tax also differs significantly between force areas too from the lowest where 20% of their total funding is from council tax to the highest which has 55.5% of funding from council tax. Kent's council tax makes up 42% of funding, up from 28% in 2010/11.
77. This reliance on council taxpayers to help fund budget pressures leaves PCCs facing potential fluctuations in tax collection and the tax base that any local tax incurs. This was reflected during the Covid pandemic where a reduced tax base (when growth was expected) and a deficit on the collection fund (when it is usually a surplus) caused additional pressure and meant the Government had to provide additional funding. Although the tax base has remained robust for 2025/26 there is a risk that the cost-of-living crisis may impact on the tax base and collection rates for future years. We have been prudent in our assumptions going forward and I am satisfied that these are achievable.
78. 2025/26 continues the financial challenges that the PCC and Kent Police have faced over recent years. A savings requirement of £48m over 5 years is a substantial request. The restriction on the Chief Constable not to reduce police officer numbers and the cap on the PCC's ability to raise income from precept stifles their ability to reduce the level of savings. Challenging decisions are needed to meet these pressures as well as the increasing demand and scrutiny on policing.
79. The lack of details beyond 2025/26 makes it difficult to plan ahead with a number of unknowns. 2024/25 was the final year of CSR21 and the government announced work had begun on a new CSR to be announced in Spring 2025. This will hopefully bring some certainty to the future assumptions in the MTFP on core grant funding and, especially, potential precept referendum limits which will provide clarity on the level of savings that will be required.
80. The current forecast over the MTFP either requires a significant injection of funds through the CSR or a radical change in thinking over closing the savings gap. It would be reckless to take decisions until we have all the information from the CSR to avoid unnecessary strain and stress on the organisation and those that work for it. However, the size of the savings gap over the MTFP means it would equally reckless not to begin planning and identifying ways to reduce that gap.
81. The current forecast size of that gap requires attention and a fundamental change in how the budget is created. There are a number of options that the Chief Constable and PCC have at their disposal that would help meet the savings requirement but have been restricted by central government. The aim for both is to provide an efficient and effective police force for Kent that is sustainable within the resources they have available.
82. To achieve this over the medium term the Chief Constable must have the authority to build a service and budget that meets the needs of policing in Kent with the resources available. This may mean disregarding any financial incentives that are offered by the government especially if those incentives do not cover the full cost of the pressure. This recognises that there may be some short-term pain to enable a more sustainable future.

83. As pay pressures are the main driver of the budget pressures the Chief Constable will need to have the flexibility to create the right mix of personnel to deliver policing in Kent. Again, this should be regardless of any government directives or incentives to maintain a certain number of police officers. Effective neighbourhood policing requires a flexible mix of prevention, diversion, and enforcement activity; a strictly enforced focus on police officer headcount does not allow the Chief Constable to do that.
84. Without this the annual search for savings means that service reductions will continue, police officers will not be utilised appropriately and the opportunity to invest in the right personnel or technology to continually improve the service will be lost. The ability to find the right mix enables Kent Police and the PCC to live within their means. provide an effective, flexible service becoming ever more efficient and where any additional funding becomes available it can be used to provide additional services or investment in technology rather than making up shortfalls in government funding.
85. The PCC CFO is required to consider the adequacy of reserves, the robustness of estimates and assumptions and the overall effectiveness of the systems of financial control and risk management. The following covers more specific areas contained within the budget and precept report for 2025/26.
86. The key assumption on future funding is that the Kent PCC's share of the national funding settlement will remain over the CSR period. Although actual allocations are unknown it seems prudent to reflect the current settlement as a continuing commitment. Any further funding that is announced in future years will help offset proposed savings targets. The current MTFP shows savings of £38m for the four years beyond 2025/26 which is a major challenge with the restrictions on officer numbers and precept in place.
87. The precept referendum limit has fluctuated on an annual basis which makes it difficult to forecast appropriate levels for MTFP planning purposes. As PCC CFO it is my duty to plan different scenarios to account for changes in funding however, for planning purposes the MTFP for future years precept reverts to the pre-precept flexibility limit of 2%. The PCC will take any decision on future precept levels at the appropriate time when all the funding and costs are known.
88. Although the rate of inflation is lower than the recent peak in 2023 it stubbornly refusing to dip below the Bank of England's target of 2%. The inflation rate is a primary driver for pay awards. It is difficult to determine the level of pay award that will be agreed from September 2024. Each 1% increase in pay is the equivalent of £2.2m for officers and staff. With that in mind we have budgeted for 2.8%. Any pay award above 2.8% it is expected would be covered by additional government funding as has been the case in previous years. However, as this funding was found within government departments it is unclear as to whether this would be a viable option for future years. Any increase above that level would have to be funded through reserves or additional savings.
89. The Government's planned rectification to the public sector Pension Funds due to recent court cases (e.g. McCloud) has now been resolved and as expected has had a substantial financial impact on employers' contributions to the pension schemes as well as other administrative costs. The increased employer's contribution has been included within the budget and MTFP and therefore there is no need to provide any other funding within the MTFP for this issue.
90. In year financial monitoring shows an expected underspend on both capital and revenue budgets. This is due to many factors. This follows an underspend in previous years, and it is hoped is now the normal spending pattern, although no presumption of in-year underspending should be made because, having agreed the budget the PCC authorises its spending. With strong budget management arrangements and the medium-term savings plan, which sets out where and how savings may be found, this increases the Force's flexibility to make savings as and when they arise dependent on future cost and income pressures.
91. The level of general reserves has been maintained at 3% of the net revenue budget over the MTFP in line with the Reserves Strategy. This level of general reserves will account for any major event that may require recourse to the Government's Special Police Grant. The 3% in general reserves covers us for two such events and a further contingency. This policy is reflected in the Reserves Strategy and is reviewed annually and as such there is no change for 2025/26.

92. While the Force has a good track record of identifying and managing savings through effective financial management and planning, unfortunately these can be one-off rather than ongoing recurring savings. The greater level of recurring savings that are found reduces the pressure on the MTFP. The level of savings identified in the MTFP are only a forecast of the future and will change as we go through the years. The Force continuously seeks early opportunities to identify savings and deliver them wherever possible. Any savings identified and not required to meet savings targets will be taken into reserves.

93. It is recognised that the delivery of savings becomes harder each year. There are projects that will generate significant savings in future years including the redevelopment of the police estate. The scale of the task for 2025/26 cannot be underestimated and it is a sign of the positive attitude to tackling this issue that the Force report on savings through the financial monitoring process to the Chief Officer Team and to the PCC and his CFO. The Force have had to work innovatively to identify where savings can be made without impacting on front line services. It should be recognised that the level of savings required is challenging and will require challenging decisions especially around staffing which adds complexity and cost to the delivery of the savings plan. The flexibility in our budget and prudent use of reserves will be used to mitigate against the non or late delivery of savings in year.

94. The increased demand for capital investment due to an ageing estate and the increased need for technology, coupled with the reducing ability to produce capital receipts means that there is a risk that funding may not be available for the investment programme. This risk is being managed through borrowing, and particularly internal borrowing to fund elements of the investment programme. This significantly reduces the cost of borrowing as it is the opportunity cost of investing the funds that is lost. This does cause a revenue pressure as this borrowing still needs to be repaid (albeit without the interest element) and the cost of the project included within the MRP calculation. The capital strategy outlines how MRP is to be calculated. The annual review of this strategy has led to a change in how MRP is calculated to a fairer and more equitable method in line with Cipfa guidance. This will bring about savings in 25/26 and across future years in the MTFP. Wherever possible the PCC will look to reduce the impact of borrowing on the revenue budget. Any underspend for 2024/25 will be used to offset some of this cost in 2025/26.

95. The requirement for the electrification of the police vehicle fleet and the subsequent impact on the infrastructure and buildings still requires further clarification. Although the Government has delayed the date for when diesel vehicles will cease to be sold, the vehicle manufacturers are unlikely to delay as their plans are well advanced. In any event there will come a time when Kent Police must purchase electric vehicles for all its fleet. Some limited purchases have already occurred where cost efficient, but a full change to the fleet will require substantial investment. Although the timing and quantum is not certain an estimate has been included within the capital programme and therefore no further contingency is required.

96. Due to its geographical location Kent is faced with issues around its border which require the involvement of the Force. The contingency planning undertaken by Kent Police and its partners around the initial exit from the European Union proved successful. However, planned changes to border rules with the often-delayed introduction of the EU Entry/Exit Scheme and the use of Kent by the Government's immigration service does place demands on policing resources. The PCC has previously been successful in obtaining funding from the Government, so the Kent taxpayer is not funding the consequences of national decisions. It is still unclear as to what 'business as usual' will be at the borders post transition and therefore the impact that it will have on policing, and particularly Kent. This will become apparent over the next few years. The PCC and the Force are actively engaging with the HO to ensure Kent's voice is heard on these issues and to take advantage of any funding opportunities should they arise. However, should business as usual have any unexpected impact or costs then this would be managed through the reserves in the first instance with a view to reimbursement from the Government.

97. The Force and the OPCC maintain active risk registers and associated risk management processes for operational and management risks which are monitored by the independent Joint Audit Committee. As well as the financial challenges described above, many of the key risks inevitably fall on the Force, rather than the OPCC, from both existing and newer threats. Examples of the former include the criminal justice backlog, electrification of the fleet, and cybercrime. Within the OPCC, on-going strategic risks relate to

ensuring the core statutory functions of the PCC are met; this includes overall financial governance and value for money, the commissioning of victim's services and the complaints regulations.

98. Overall, I have considered the level and need for reserves against the strategic risk registers of the Force and the OPCC. There is a significant financial challenge facing the organisation but there are proactive plans in place to deliver the savings required in a managed way and a robust governance framework overseeing the challenge. The reserves position provides some resilience without increasing risk to the organisation and therefore, I am satisfied that the reserves for next year and over the life of the plan are prudent and appropriate after consideration of the latest key risk assessments. I am satisfied that the estimates have been drawn up in a robust way, recognising that medium term forecasts beyond 2025/26 will inevitably carry more uncertainty. I am also satisfied that the operation of internal and external audit and the implementation of new monitoring processes improve the sound operation of financial controls. Regular monitoring and review of delivery plans and active risk management, including via the Independent Joint Audit Committee, remain vital parts of the local governance arrangements.

Rob Phillips  
Chief Finance Officer  
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent  
January 2025

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**Supporting information:**

Annex A – Summary of Medium-Term Plan, 2025/26 to 2029/30

Annex B – Reserves Strategy 2025/26

Annex C – Capital Strategy 2025/26

## Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure:</b>					
Police pay	293,307	304,702	316,579	328,096	340,154
PSE pay	117,902	120,265	122,669	124,818	129,405
Overtime	8,474	9,200	8,824	8,931	9,259
Other pay costs	15,717	15,971	16,052	11,602	12,028
Premises	22,062	21,468	21,883	21,898	22,703
Transport	9,833	10,024	10,202	10,356	10,737
Supplies & services	43,832	45,411	47,384	48,708	50,700
Third party payments	13,630	14,139	14,676	14,578	15,114
PCC including victim services	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Revenue Impact of Capital programme	5,987	7,521	7,765	7,709	7,992
<b>Gross Spending</b>	<b>536,244</b>	<b>554,201</b>	<b>571,534</b>	<b>582,196</b>	<b>603,592</b>
<b>Income:</b>					
Government & Overseas Funding	-51,367	-52,227	-53,053	-53,926	-55,908
Sales, fees, charges & rents	-5,599	-5,678	-5,807	-5,843	-6,058
Interest / investment income	-1,177	-1,087	-1,087	-1,087	-1,127
Reimbursed services	-36,025	-36,097	-36,233	-29,641	-30,730
Transfers to / from reserves	3,756	4,739	5,422	6,746	6,994
<b>Net Spending</b>	<b>445,652</b>	<b>463,851</b>	<b>480,776</b>	<b>498,445</b>	<b>516,763</b>
Savings required 2025/26	-9,985	-9,985	-9,985	-9,985	-9,985
Savings required 2026/27	0.00	-10,652	-10,652	-10,652	-10,652
Savings required 2027/28	0.00	0.00	-8,675	-8,675	-8,675
Savings required 2028/29	0.00	0.00	0.00	-9,212	-9,212
Savings required 2029/30					-9,646
<b>Spending After Savings</b>	<b>435,667</b>	<b>443,214</b>	<b>451,464</b>	<b>459,921</b>	<b>468,593</b>
<b>Funding:</b>					
Police core and legacy grant	-251,752	-254,073	-256,418	-258,786	-261,178
Council tax precept plus estimated collection fund balance	-183,915	-189,141	-195,406	-201,135	-207,415
<b>Total Net Financing</b>	<b>435,667</b>	<b>443,214</b>	<b>451,464</b>	<b>459,921</b>	<b>468,593</b>

# Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Reserves Strategy 2025/2026

## **Introduction**

1. An important element of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) overall financial strategy are the reserves held over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This strategy outlines the level of reserves, how and why those reserves are held and any planned use of or transfer to reserves during the period covered.
2. The Reserves Strategy is published as part of the Police and Crime Plan and Budget Papers reported to the Police and Crime Panel in February each year. Alongside the MTFP, Capital Strategy, Commissioning Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision policy, the Reserves Strategy forms part of the overall financial strategy of the Kent Police Group (the PCC and Force).
3. In line with the financial papers listed above, the Reserves Strategy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The PCC Chief Finance Officer (PCC CFO) statement on the adequacy of reserves is included within the Section 25 statement in the budget report.

## **Background**

4. Reserves are held as part of the overall MTFP, and it forms part of several legislative safeguards in place that help prevent the PCC from over-committing financially. These include:
  - The requirement to set a balanced budget as set out within the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
  - The requirement for the PCC to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer (the PCC CFO), or Section 151 Officer, to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
  - The requirements of the Prudential Code, Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice, and the Financial Management Code of Practice.
  - The PCC CFO's duty to report on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves when the PCC is considering his budget requirement.
5. This is reinforced by Section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 which requires the PCC CFO to report to the PCC, Police and Crime Panel and the External Auditor if there is or likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where the PCC does not have sufficient resources to meet expenditure in a particular year.
6. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires PCCs as a 'precepting' authority to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
7. It should be noted that there is no defined minimum level of reserves that PCCs should hold. Local circumstances in terms of resourcing, expenditure and demand vary significantly across the country and so the level of reserves held is a judgement by the PCC with advice from the PCC CFO considering all local and national circumstances. However, the Government have specified that any level of general reserves over 5% of the net budget requires explanation within the Reserves Strategy. Kent does not hold general reserves above 5%.

## **Financial Regulations**

8. As all financing is issued to the PCC then it follows that the PCC holds all the reserves. Kent's Financial Regulations sets out the key responsibilities for the PCC's CFO, Force CFO (FCFO), Chief Constable and the PCC regarding reserves and how they are used and maintained.

## **Reserves Strategy**

9. The PCC holds reserves for four reasons:
  - As a general contingency against unknown or unforeseen events
  - To manage strategic risks in the organisation
  - To manage change within the organisation
  - Held for statutory responsibilities

10. The PCC's Reserve Strategy has the following key elements:

- A general non-earmarked reserve of 3% of the net budget will be maintained for unknown and/or unforeseeable events.
- A prudent approach to risk management will be maintained and accordingly earmarked reserves will be created to cover for possible significant risks.
- Reserves not required for the above purposes will be clearly identified as available for other discretionary opportunities.
- In the interest of the council taxpayer, the PCC will where possible build up and maintain a level of reserves for investment, borrowing only where the life of the asset and economic environment make it the most efficient way of financing investment.

11. These elements are the aims of the PCC's Reserves Strategy and have not changed, however, the attainment of these aims has become more challenging due to the current financial climate. The aims are the overarching guiding principles to which the Reserves Strategy aspires.

### Reserve Levels

12. The number and type of reserves as well as the level held in those reserves is reviewed on a regular basis. The total general and earmarked reserves are expected to be £29.4m as at 1 April 2025. Of this, the general reserve will amount to £13.1m or 3% of the net budget. This is the current level of reserves recommended by the PCC CFO in the strategy to be held for general contingency. This level is regarded best practice and comparable with other PCCs. The MTFP, budget and Reserves Strategy all have clear guidance on the use of general reserves. If at any time general reserves are utilised so that their level falls below the recommended level, then the first call on the budget is to replenish the general reserves to 3% of the net revenue budget.

13. The remaining reserves are all earmarked. It should be noted that the investment reserve is expected to have a balance of £0.1m across the MTFP. Capital investment will be funded from asset sales during the year and borrowing. In the first instance this will be internal borrowing, where the PCC 'borrows' from cashflow during the year, reducing the level of funds available for investing in the money markets but reducing the cost of borrowing.

14. The level of reserves has reduced significantly over the last few years due to the planned use of reserves to support recruitment, delivery of capital projects and reducing asset sales. This reflects a strong direction from the Government to reduce policing reserves from their high in 2017/18 but also the strict financial environment in which policing operates. Reserve levels have recovered and stabilised since 2020/21.

15. The PCC has notified the Chief Constable that any underspends will be taken back into reserves to mitigate risks over the medium term. Any in-year reallocations of underspends will only be considered by the PCC by exception.

16. The reserves position over the medium term is set out below:

**Table 1: Reserves over the MTFP**

Reserve	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General	12.5	13.1	13.3	13.2	13.8	14.1
Risk (inc. Insurance)	10.7	10.1	8.8	8.0	7.0	6.0
Investment Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Ring fenced (inc. PCC)	6.5	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>26.5</b>

17. Over the medium term, taking all the plans and provisions into account, reserves are expected to total £26.5m at the end of 2029/30.

18. The expenditure from the investment reserve is reliant on borrowing and in-year asset disposals being realised and available to spend. A contribution to capital investment continues to be made over the life of the MTFP to support the investment in ensuring that police officers have the appropriate buildings, equipment, and technology to be as effective as possible.

19. Any revenue underspends not required for unforeseen expenditure will be taken back into reserves.

20. The four categories of reserves in Table 1 are held for the following:

- **General** is used to mitigate against unknown and unexpected events that incur considerable cost that could not be borne within the revenue budget. This could include public order, major investigation costs or to fund initial costs of major disruption/disaster response (i.e., Covid 19 pandemic, flooding). This would be used before applying to the Government's Special Grant scheme should the criteria be met. The Special Grant scheme usually only accepts applications from those PCC's who have incurred costs greater than 1% of their net revenue budget with a further 0.5% for a second event. This reserve covers two such instances plus a further 1.5% for unknown and unexpected costs.
- **Risk** is used to mitigate any sudden or unexpected changes in funding levels. This also includes the Insurance reserve which is held to cover potential liabilities in any insurance claim. To keep our insurance premiums at a reasonable level we self-insure to a significant degree. The level of the Insurance Reserve is suggested by our Insurance advisors as an appropriate amount to keep in reserve should we incur a large insurance claim. This is reviewed annually by our actuaries.
- **Investment** funds the capital investment in our investment programme. The investment programme consists of medium and long-term projects that are designed to improve, renew, or create assets that will reduce financial commitments and improve policing in Kent. All sales of assets (capital receipts) fall into this reserve to be used for future capital investment. Capital projects will typically incur some revenue investment, and this is included within the revenue budget.
- **Ring fenced** are funds set aside to deal with a specific purpose. These can be reserves that have to be held for statutory purposes or where they have been designated to deal with a particular issue or risk. This includes the budget support reserves held to mitigate risks around the current year budget, including risk in the non-delivery or delayed delivery of the savings plans. It will also, where appropriate, fund costs for significant operations that would not lead to a claim for Special Grant avoiding the need to use general reserves. This also holds any partnership reserves that are held for statutory reasons and on behalf of specific partnerships. They can only be used for the purposes they were intentionally held for. This also holds the PCC reserve. These are funds set aside from the PCC's own budget to fund innovative projects to help transform policing and for schemes or services that will support victims and witnesses.

21. The expenditure from the investment reserve is reliant on borrowing as in-year asset disposals reduce. A revenue contribution to capital continues to support the investment programme and this contribution will increase over the medium term. Any fluctuations in asset disposals may mean a reduction in investment, or where appropriate for long term projects a need to borrow.

### Home Office Classification

22. The Home Office set out clear guidance on publishing the Reserves Strategy. It also states that the information on each revenue reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into each of the following three categories:

Classification	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium-term financial plan	0.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7
Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Funding held as a general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs in accordance with sound principles of financial practice	29.2	27.8	27.2	26.5	25.8

23. Further details of the PCC's reserves can be found in Annex B1.

## Summary of Reserves Position

		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Reason	Planned Use
	Classification	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m		
General	Contingency	12.5	13.1	13.3	13.2	13.8	14.1	3% of Net Revenue Budget. Held to mitigate against unknown and unexpected events. Will fund major operations, public order, major investigation costs that are not expected or to fund initial costs of major disruption/disaster response (i.e. Covid 19, flooding) before applying for Police Special Grant.	This is the minimum level of reserves we would be expected to hold. There is no expectation that these reserves will be used over the medium term, but should there be an unexpected event then they can be. The increase in the net budget means this reserve will increase over the medium term.
Risk	Contingency	10.7	9.1	8.2	9.5	7.0	6.0	This reserve is held to support the budget in times of funding changes (both increases and decreases) to avoid precipitous decisions being made. It also covers our potential liabilities in any insurance claim. In order to keep our insurance premiums at a reasonable level we self insure to a significant degree.	There is planned use of the reserve during the MTFP. This is well above the minimum level of reserves we have been advised to hold by our insurance to mitigate against large insurance claims of which we currently do not have any. This may fluctuate over the medium term depending on our advisor's advice.
Investment Reserve	Planned	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	This reserve funds the capital and revenue investment in our capital programme. All sales of assets (capital receipts) fall into this reserve to be used for future capital investment. This reserve funds the revenue investment involved in our investment programme. Capital projects will typically incur some revenue investment and this reserve helps fund that part of the investment programme without impacting on the ongoing revenue budget.	This reserve is used during the year as income and expenditure are incurred. This is the residual balance that can only be used for specific expenditure.
Partnership and Ring Fenced Funds	Planned	5.6	6.5	6.3	4.4	5.6	5.6	These reserves are held on behalf of partnerships within and supporting policing and can only be used for the purpose for which they are held.	There are estimated plans to use these during the medium term although this will depend on in-year partnership decisions. The final MTFP balance will broadly be the same as the starting balance.
PCC	Planned	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	This reserve holds funds set aside from the PCC's budget to fund innovative projects to help transform policing and fund local PCC priorities.	These reserves are held to support one-off initiatives to support policing or to support grant funded victim support services. There are plans to use these over the MTFP to support budget pressures within the OPCC.
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>26.5</b>		

## Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Capital Strategy 2025/2026

### 1 Purpose

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to produce a Capital Strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability, and affordability.

The Capital Strategy is a key document for the Kent PCC and Kent Police and forms part of the integrated revenue, capital, and balance sheet planning. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure; capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides a summary of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability and an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

Throughout this document the term Kent Police Group is used to refer to the activities of both the PCC and Kent Police.

### 2 Scope

This Capital Strategy includes all capital expenditure and capital investment decisions for Kent Police Group. It sets out the medium to long term context in which decisions are made with reference to the life of the projects/assets.

### 3 Legislation

Expenditure on capital is bound by legislation and codes of practice. This strategy complies with and has regard to:

- Local Government Act 2003
- Localism Act 2011 (England)
- Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
- Capital Finance: Guidance on Local Government Investments, third edition (2018)
- Capital Finance: Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision, fourth edition (2018)
- CIPFA Prudential Code (2021)
- CIPFA Prudential Code Guidance Notes (2021)
- CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (2021)
- CIPFA Financial Management Code (2019)

### 4 Links to other Corporate Strategies and Plans

The PCC produces a Police and Crime Plan every four years and it is reviewed annually.

The PCC and the Chief Constable have produced a Joint Vision which is supported by the Chief Constable's Policing Model and Control Strategy.

To support these overarching documents a number of interrelated strategies and plans are in place, such as the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Medium Term Capital Plan (MTCP), Reserves Strategy, Commissioning Strategy, Asset Management Plan, and the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS).

The operation of all these strategies and plans is underpinned by the Code of Corporate Governance and Financial Regulations.

Capital resources should be directed to those programmes and projects that optimise the achievement of the outcomes contained within those documents. The following processes are designed to ensure this happens.

## 5 Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is incurred on the acquisition or creation of assets, or expenditure that enhances or adds to the life or value of an existing fixed asset. Fixed assets are tangible or intangible assets that yield benefits to Kent Police Group for a period of more than one year (e.g. land and buildings, ICT, equipment, and vehicles). This contrasts with revenue expenditure which is spending on the day to day running costs of services such as employee costs and supplies and services.

The capital programme is Kent Police Group's plan of capital works for future years, including details on the funding of the schemes.

## 6 Capital vs. Treasury Management Investments

Treasury Management investment activity covers those investments which arise from the organisation's cash flows and debt management activity and represent balances which need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

For Treasury Management investments the security and liquidity of funds are placed ahead of the investment return. The management of associated risk is set out in the TMS.

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code recognises that some organisations are entitled to make investments for policy reasons outside of normal treasury management activity. These may include service and commercial investments. However, like all police bodies, Kent PCC does not have a General Power of Competence, which gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and as such is prevented from entering into commercial investment activities.

## 7 The Capital Budget Setting Process

Kent Police Group is committed to a rolling medium-term revenue and capital plan that covers the current financial year plus four years. The plans are drawn up, reassessed, and extended annually and if required re-prioritised to enable Kent Police Group to achieve the aims and objectives established in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, the Chief Constable's Policing Model and to support national drivers like the National Policing Vision for 2030.

Although an MTCP is published the Capital Strategy takes a view beyond the medium term and looks at the long-term implications of the capital projects and the funding thereof.

The MTCP provides the Kent Police Group infrastructure and major assets through capital investment, enabling Kent Police Group to strengthen and streamline core assets and systems, and provides the framework for delivering innovative policing with a lower resource profile.

Key focuses of the Capital Programme:

- To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure, maintaining core sites, improving core training facilities and progressing the Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
- To ensure provision is made for ICT and Business Change Technology to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative digital policing services.
- The maintenance and replacement of other core assets where necessary, e.g. vehicles and communication infrastructure.
- Improving our environmental sustainability and mitigating our impact on the environment.

The plans acknowledge the constrained financial position of Kent Police Group and maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity to manage change projects.

## 8 Collaboration and Wider Sector Engagement

Although Kent Police Group has its own Capital Strategy and MTCP, the natural drivers that encourage local and regional forces to collaborate, such as cost and resource sharing, along with structured collaborations and national plans, can have a significant influence on local decision making.

One of the focal points therefore of Kent Police's Capital Strategy is to acknowledge regional and national partnership working, both with other forces/PCCs and in the wider context of engagement with local authorities, other emergency services, the Crown Prosecution Service and central government and its agencies, to improve overall service to the public.

## 9 Affordability and Financial Planning

Prior to submission of the draft MTCP in late autumn, a significant amount of financial work will have already been undertaken on revenue and capital budgets. This work will have identified the potential financial position for Kent Police Group in respect of the coming medium term, considering core known information and stated assumptions.

The work will include forecasts on inflation, committed growth requirements, forecast productivity and efficiency savings, assumptions around grant and council tax funding plus any other information introduced during the budget process.

The revenue financial position is also influenced by the Capital Bid process and the MTCP – in terms of both revenue consequences of capital programmes and through the ability or requirement to financially support capital investment, either through direct financing or borrowing.

## 10 Capital Sustainability

For a long time, Kent Police Group has benefitted from substantial capital reserves, supported by the sale of operational buildings or police houses or from revenue reserves built up over several years from in year revenue underspends. This position has changed.

Looking ahead over the medium term the prudent use of reserves, the level of overspending and the reducing number of assets available for sale means that alternative ways of funding the capital programme have been considered. A Revenue Contribution to Capital Outturn (RCCO) was introduced to set aside an increasing level of revenue expenditure over the medium term to provide revenue funding for short life programmes.

Kent Police Group will also use internal borrowing to fund the programme. This means borrowing against future cashflow. It is recognised that this reduces the availability of funds for investment and the impact of this is considered in the TMS. It is also recognised that borrowing internally will impact on the revenue budget as this borrowing is repaid into the cashflow. This will be considered when making decisions on the level of capital funding available.

These borrowing decisions are not made in isolation, nor are they made over a one year or five-year view. Borrowing plans are expanded across the long term to ensure that decision makers are aware of the financial impact their decision will have beyond the medium term.

The Kent Police strategy is to invest in core infrastructure now that will not only offer overall service improvements to the public, but also maximise revenue savings in the future through:

- A smaller, more efficient, and effective estate.
- Protecting our officers and staff, through the purchase of safety equipment.
- Making our officers and staff more efficient and effective enabled through improved Information and Communication Technology solutions.
- Improving our environmental sustainability and mitigating our impact on the environment.

Its Investment Strategy will also be influenced by and take account of national visions for policing, regional and local priorities.

The Force Chief Finance Officer (FCFO) and PCC's Chief Finance Officer (PCC CFO) believe that the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme proposed are sustainable.

### **11 The Formal MTCP Approval Process**

The MTCP is continuously updated during the financial year but begins to crystallise formally in the autumn. The MTCP is presented to Chief Officers Management Board (COMB) and once agreed is then presented to the PCC as part of the overall suite of budget reports for formal approval. The programme will be a mixture of continuing projects, regular maintenance, and new projects. How this programme is funded will have been discussed and agreed through the FCFO and PCC CFO prior to the PCC's final approval. The taking of loans, if required, then becomes a decision for the PCC CFO in conjunction with the FCFO who will decide funding of the capital programme based on the level of reserves, current and predicted cashflow, and the money market position. It will then be determined whether borrowing should be met from internal or external borrowing. Where appropriate, both CFO's may seek advice from external partners, including but not limited to our Treasury Management advisors on the most appropriate and cost-efficient method of borrowing.

The PCC approves the funding envelope and a high-level view of projects in February each year. Once the PCC has approved the capital programme, then expenditure can be committed against these high-level schemes subject to a full business case being submitted, normal contract procedure rules and the terms and conditions of funding.

Whether capital projects are funded from grant, contributions, capital allocations or borrowing, the revenue costs must be able to be met from existing revenue budgets or identified (and underwritten) savings or income streams.

### **12 Individual Project Management**

Capital projects are subject to scrutiny. This varies dependant on the type of project and may be influenced by size or by the makeup of regional involvement. Each project will have a Project Manager and potentially a team to implement the project.

Typically, projects will have a dedicated Project Board, which, if part of a larger programme may sit under a Programme Board. Programme and Project Boards will have a Senior Responsible Officer or Chairperson. Detailed oversight is further provided through ICT Project Management Office, Strategic Estate Groups and Force Change Boards. Regional Projects or Programmes may also report into Regional Boards.

For large capital projects or those that are of public, or PCC interest, the PCC or a senior member of the PCC's team will be invited to have a seat on the programme board for that project or regular personal briefings to the PCC will be requested.

### **13 Monitoring of the Capital Programme**

The FCFO will submit capital monitoring reports as part of the regular financial reporting requirements to the PCC CFO monthly. These reports will have already been to COMB and be shared with the PCC on a regular basis throughout the year. These monitoring reports will show spending to date and compare projected income and expenditure with the approved capital budget. The report will also include current forecast of the funding of the programme alongside the revenue implications.

For proposed in-year amendments to the annual capital budget, for schemes not already included in the MTCP, the FCFO will prepare a business case for submission to the PCC for consideration and approval, including details on how the new scheme is to be funded.

Monitoring reports presented and discussed with the PCC at his Performance and Delivery Board meeting with the Chief Constable are published on his website. The reports are also presented to the Joint Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

In addition, for those business change programmes where a formal board has been established, a detailed scheme monitoring report is presented at each Board meeting.

#### **14 Multi-Year Schemes**

Payments for capital schemes often occur over many years, depending on the size and complexity of the project. Therefore, estimated payment patterns are calculated for each project so that the expected capital expenditure per year is known. This is called a cash flow projection or budget profiling.

The approval of a rolling multi-year capital programme assists Kent stakeholders in a number of ways. It allows the development of longer-term capital plans for service delivery. It allows greater flexibility in planning workloads and more certainty for preparation work for future schemes. It also allows greater integration of the revenue budget and capital programme. It also matches the time requirement for scheme planning and implementation since capital schemes can have a considerable initial development phase.

#### **15 In Year Changes to the Capital Programme**

An MTCP is produced which shows all planned expenditure over the next five years. This plan will include a schedule to show how the planned expenditure is likely to be funded subject to business case approval.

A separate annual capital budget is produced before the start of the financial year. Initially this budget will only include ongoing schemes from previous years as well as annual provisions such as vehicles, plant, and equipment. Additional schemes from the MTCP are included in the annual budget after cases have been accepted and timescales are known.

### **16 Funding Strategy and Capital Policies**

#### **16.1 Government Grant**

The PCC no longer receives any direct Government support for capital expenditure.

#### **16.2 Capital Receipts**

A capital receipt is an amount of money which is received from the sale of an item on the fixed asset register. This can only be spent on other capital expenditure and cannot be used to fund revenue items.

These capital receipts, once received, are used to finance the capital programme. The sale of assets is a one-off receipt and means the pool of assets available diminishes with each sale limiting the ability to fund projects from capital receipts.

#### **16.3 Revenue Funding**

Recognising that the pool of assets available for sale is declining a RCCO is seen as a sustainable funding alternative. However, the pressures on the revenue budget are acute with substantial savings already being required. Where appropriate and affordable an appropriate provision for RCCO is included within the annual revenue budget and the MTFP.

#### **16.4 Prudential Borrowing**

Local authorities, including PCC's, can set their own borrowing levels based on their capital need and their ability to pay for the borrowing. The levels will be set by using the indicators and factors set out in the Prudential Code. The borrowing costs are not supported by the Government so Kent Police Group need to ensure it can fund the repayment costs. The authority's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, published within the TMS sets out a prudent approach to the amount set aside for the repayment of debt.

## 16.5 Internal Borrowing

The PCC holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus any balances and reserves held. The level of funds for investment is determined by the cashflow into and out of the organisation. To minimise borrowing costs, any surplus funds that would normally be held for investment can be used to fund projects within the capital programme. This is called internal borrowing and means the cost of borrowing is the return on investment foregone. The impact of this will be reflected within the TMS.

## 16.6 Reserves and Balances

Unspent capital grant and capital receipt monies can be carried forward in the Balance Sheet until they are required to fund the capital programme. The PCC can also hold revenue reserves built up over several years to fund elements of the capital programme. Reserves are held and controlled by the PCC through the PCC CFO. Details on Reserves is contained within the Reserves Strategy, published alongside this strategy and the Budget and Precept Report.

## 16.7 Leasing

Kent Police Group may enter into finance leasing agreements to fund capital expenditure. However, a full option appraisal and comparison of other funding sources must be made and the FCFO and the PCC CFO must both be satisfied that leasing provides the best value for money method of funding the scheme before a recommendation is made to the PCC.

Under the Prudential Code finance leasing agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing. Under the code Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) are classed as leasing. Kent has one PFI project, Medway Police Station. They are monitored carefully and reviewed to ensure they are operating effectively, retain value for money and that Kent are prepared for when the PFI financing ends and the buildings revert to Kent Police ownership.

## 17 Procurement and Value for Money

Procurement is the purchase of goods and services and the financial regulations clearly set out the processes and rules in place for effective procurement. Kent Police Group have recourse to two key partnerships to leverage the best value for money from our capital activities.

7F Commercial ensures that all tender processes and contracts, including those of a capital nature, are legally compliant and best value for money. It is essential that all procurement activities comply with prevailing regulations and best practice as set out in the Code of Corporate Governance, which includes Contract and Financial Regulations. Guidance on this can be sought from the 7F Commercial Team.

BlueLight Commercial is a government funded organisation that acts on behalf of all PCCs and Chief Constables across the country to obtain efficient and effective services providing value for money opportunities. This works on our behalf across both revenue and capital spending.

The main aim is to hold 'value for money' as a key goal in all procurement activity to optimise the combination of cost and quality.

## 18 Partnerships and Relationships with other Organisations

Wherever possible and subject to the usual risk assessment process Kent Police Group will look to expand the number of capital schemes which are completed on a partnership basis and continually look for areas where joint projects can be implemented. In support of this initiative Kent has a joint ICT Department with Essex Police and several ICT and business change programmes are being delivered collaboratively.

Where Kent Police Group procures capital items on behalf of other consortium partners only Kent Police Group related expenditure which will be included in the fixed asset register will be included in the MTCP and the annual capital budget.

## 19 Management Framework

All contracts are in the name of the PCC meaning that the PCC owns all the assets. However, the Chief Constable has day to day operational control over short life assets, such as ICT, equipment, and vehicles. Ownership of the estate belongs with the PCC, but as these are operational buildings, the Head of Estates manages the estate on behalf of the Chief Constable with regular reporting to the OPCC and oversight.

The PCC CFO and FCFO manage the MTCP and the annual capital budget. The FCFO provides regular updates to COMB who, collectively, maintain oversight of planned operational expenditure.

The PCC CFO is responsible for developing and then implementing the strategic documents; Capital Strategy; Reserves Strategy and the TMS in consultation with the FCFO.

During the budget preparation process COMB take a strategic perspective to the use and allocation of Kent Police Group capital assets and those within its control in planning capital investment. They receive reports on proposed capital projects and make formal recommendations to the PCC during the development of the capital programme.

Having approved the MTCP and the annual capital budget in February each year the PCC formally holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery of capital projects as part of the regular Finance paper at the Performance and Delivery Board meetings.

## 20 Performance Management

Clear measurable outcomes should be developed for each capital scheme. After the scheme has been completed, the Chief Constable is required to check that outcomes have been achieved.

Kent Police Group should complete post scheme evaluation reviews for all schemes over £1.0 million and for strategic capital projects.

Reviews should look at the effectiveness of the whole project in terms of service delivery outcomes, design and construction, financing etc. and identify good practice and lessons to be learnt in delivering future projects. These reports will be presented to COMB and then shared with the OPCC. They will be available for sharing to a wider audience (i.e. Joint Audit Committee, Police and Crime Panel) if required.

## 21 Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect Kent Police Group's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and to execute its strategies successfully.

Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences, and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the element of risk in all their activities.

The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. Both the Force and the OPCC have a corporate risk register which sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of Kent's corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks or maximise opportunities.

To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced, and monitored. It is important to identify the appetite for risk by each scheme and for the capital programme in its entirety, especially when investing in complex and costly business change programmes.

Kent Police Group accepts there will be a certain amount of risk inherent in delivering the desired outcomes of the Police and Crime Plan and will seek to keep the risk of capital projects to a low level whilst making the most of opportunities for improvement. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, Kent Police Group will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.

The FCFO and the PCC CFO will report jointly on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.

### **21.1 Credit Risk**

This is the risk that the organisation with which we have invested capital monies becomes insolvent and cannot complete the agreed contract. Accordingly, Kent will ensure that robust due diligence procedures cover all external capital investment through its arrangements with 7F Commercial and where appropriate through BlueLight Commercial. Where possible contingency plans will be identified at the outset and enacted when appropriate.

### **21.2 Liquidity Risk**

This is the risk that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed. This is also the risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example because of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates. Our exposure to this risk will be monitored via the revenue and capital budget monitoring processes. Where possible appropriate interventions will occur as early as possible.

### **21.3 Interest Rate Risk**

This is the risk that interest rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Interest rates will be reviewed as part of the on-going monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.

### **21.4 Exchange Rate Risk**

This is the risk that exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Where relevant, exchange rates will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations. However, for Kent Police capital projects this is unlikely to have a material impact.

### **21.5 Inflation Risk**

This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.

### **21.6 Legal and Regulatory Risk**

This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Before entering into capital expenditure or making capital investments, Kent Police Group will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.

## **21.7 Fraud, Error, and Corruption**

This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes around capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. Kent Police Group has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through its values, principles, and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by the national Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Declaration of Interests.

## **22 Other Considerations**

Capital Schemes must, as with all PCC and Force spend, comply with all appropriate legislation, such as for example, the Disability Discrimination Act, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and building regulations etc.

January 2025

**To:** Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel  
**Subject:** HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – update  
**Date:** 4 February 2025

**Introduction:**

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not judge progress based on targets as he recognises that they can skew behaviour and that often, despite Kent Police's best efforts, it is not always possible to protect the public or bring offenders to justice. The PCC does though consider other feedback, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, other independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. Further to the report that was submitted to the 10 October 2024 Panel meeting, this paper provides an update on Kent Police's progress in addressing the findings from HMICFRS' PEEL 2023-25 Inspection and how the PCC continues to hold the Chief Constable to account.

**Background:**

4. HMICFRS independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes the answers in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.
5. PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is HMICFRS' regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS use inspection findings, analysis and professional judgment to assess how good forces are in several areas of policing.
6. PEEL assessments are conducted in a cycle, whereby each force is subject to the same inspection. However, the approach HMICFRS takes and the core questions that make up the assessment, change with each cycle of inspections. As a result, HMICFRS make it clear that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in the 2023-25 cycle and those from previous PEEL inspections.

**PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police:**

7. On 17 November 2023, HMICFRS published Kent's inspection report – the [full report](#) can be viewed on their website.
8. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in 11 areas of policing and HMICFRS made graded judgements in 10 of these. They also inspected how effective a service Kent Police gives victims of crime, but do not make an overall graded judgment.
9. The findings followed eight months of continuous assessment consisting of document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and a Victim Service Assessment requiring the review of a number of calls for service, investigations, and subsequent outcomes.
10. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements in the 10 areas of policing:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers & public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership & force management			

- As a result of the inspection, the force received 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs).
- While the AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim's protected characteristics from the previous PEEL Inspection was not referenced due to ongoing national work, the force carried this forward. As a result, the total number of AFIs is 15.
- Although Crime Data Integrity was not assessed, Kent Police's grade of 'Outstanding' from the previous PEEL 2021/22 inspection still stands and so the force continues to lead the field nationally with one of the highest levels of accuracy.

#### **Progress Update:**

- As reported previously, following the inspection, Kent Police created an Improvement Plan. Progress is monitored at the Future Improvement and Development Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and Chief Officer Management Board chaired by the Chief Constable.
- While HMICFRS will not formally sign off AFIs until the next PEEL assessment cycle (due to commence in 2025/26), the force maintains regular engagement and where appropriate, provides evidence in support of early closure. In July 2024, as a result of evidence provided, the following three AFIs were reviewed by HMICFRS and closed because of the positive progress:
  - The force doesn't always answer emergency calls quickly enough.
  - The force needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls the caller abandons because they aren't answered.
  - The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.
- The force has also self-assessed three AFIs as discharged: consistency in assigning the correct crime classification outcomes; the development of serious organised crime (SOC) local profiles; and the introduction of a disproportionality panel to monitor and respond to vetting decisions.
- Work on the remaining nine AFIs continues, with extensive workstreams for each. Attached as Appendix A is a summary of current progress prepared by Kent Police.

#### **Holding to account:**

- The PCC is pleased that three AFIs have already been closed by HMICRS and that the force has assessed a further three as discharged. He also remains reassured that the remaining AFIs are being progressed, as evidenced by Appendix A.
- Through his quarterly Performance & Delivery Board, the PCC continues to monitor the AFIs closely and holds the force to account for delivering their responsibilities under the Victims Code, getting the right outcomes and bringing offenders to justice. He also continues to scrutinise the Neighbourhood Policing model to ensure that it delivers the service that residents expect and deserve.

20. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
21. The 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity and regularly includes updates on progress against the force's Improvement Plan.
22. Progress updates are also reported at the [Joint Audit Committee](#) and the PCC continues to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings.
23. Whilst the PCC recognises that the force has work to do to ensure it consistently provides a first-class service, he would like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service and doing their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime.

**Recommendation:**

24. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their October 2025 meeting.

## HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – progress update

On 17 November 2023, HMICFRS published their PEEL inspection of Kent Police. Following publication, the force put in place a plan to progress the 14 areas for improvement (AFIs) issued by HMICFRS.

One AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim's protected characteristics issued in PEEL 2021/22 was not referenced, but the force carried this across into the improvement plan to ensure continued monitoring.

This brought the total number of AFIs to 15. Details of all the gradings are provided below.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers and public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership and force management			

The following provides a summary of AFIs that have been closed since the last report and those that remain in progress.

- Victim Service Assessment Ungraded (1 AFI carried over from PEEL 2021/22)

The force continues to await national guidance in respect of recording all protected characteristics. Improvements in the recording of ethnicity continue to be made. Guidance has been provided to staff to reinforce the requirements, data is available via a dashboard on the Force Data Hub and a short training video has been developed to further enhance compliance. Oversight and scrutiny to drive improvement continues to take place through local supervision and governance arrangements, overseen by the Investigative Quality Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Crime.

- Preventing, Deterring Crime and ASB and Reducing Vulnerability Good (1 AFI)

Problem-solving plans are now stored on the force crime recording system, providing an easy search function, and facilitating the sharing of best practice. Training has been provided to neighbourhood staff and officers and staff in wider teams such as Local Policing and Vulnerability Investigation Teams also receive this. This AFI was discussed at the last Future Improvement and Development Board (FIDB), chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) to review the evidence. It was agreed that the actions set to address the AFI had been met, however additional examples in respect of sharing lessons learned and improved outcomes for victims would strengthen the evidence further.

- Responding to the Public Requires Improvement (4 AFI: 3 Closed)

Following assessment in July 2024, the following AFI have been formally closed by HMICFRS.

- The force doesn't always answer emergency calls quickly enough.
- The force needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls the caller abandons because they aren't answered.
- The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.

The remaining AFI relates to the monitoring and reassessment of outstanding calls for service that require priority attendance.

The reinstated RETHRIVE process and identification of those callers with vulnerabilities is embedded into daily business and ensures an appropriate response and reassessment of risk takes place. Quality assurance processes within the Force Control and Incident Room are well established and THRIVE and RETHRIVE are regularly reviewed. Ongoing work is taking place to ensure attendance to calls for service is timely, and this will assist in further managing those outstanding calls linked to vulnerability that require a high priority level of response.

- Investigating Crime Requires Improvement (3 AFI: 1 closed)

The Investigative Improvement Plan, investigative principles and detective development continue to enhance current process and practice with progress overseen by the ACC Crime. Training has been carried out across the force with further sessions planned for 2025. The Investigative Improvement Plan is currently being refreshed to ensure continued focus into 2025. Detective numbers are tracked, and the current position is positive. The current charge rate for victim-based crime is over three percentage points above the figure reported in PEEL. Similarly, the solved rate is four and a half percentage points above that reported in PEEL which demonstrates a sustained positive trajectory.

Immediate action was taken when HMICFRS made the force aware of issues with the administration of outcome 21. Appropriate use of outcomes is now embedded within the Audit Calendar and forms part of the day-to-day process of the Data Audit Team. It also forms an integral part of the Crime Data Quality work being driven by Investigation Management Unit and Quality Policing Managers. Several processes are in place that identify emerging trends to ensure these are addressed quickly through education, development, and amendment. Regular audits of outcomes are undertaken to ensure they are being used appropriately. This AFI was discussed at the last FIDB and the evidence reviewed. The Board agreed this AFI had sufficient evidence to close.

Work continues to agree a long-term solution for recording victim needs assessments (VNAs) on the force crime recording system. Improvements in the recording of VNAs continue to be seen as a result of training, oversight, audit and scrutiny. The quality of VNAs continues to be dip tested to ensure the needs of a victim and not just their vulnerability is documented as per policy. Performance monitoring continues to take place to ensure ongoing and sustainable improvement is made.

- Protecting Vulnerable People Good (1 AFI)

Repeat domestic abuse offenders are targeted by proactive teams who work closely with partners across several agencies to reduce offending and break the cycle of abuse. Work continues to ensure that protective orders are being considered when appropriate and this is monitored at Force Performance Management Committee chaired by the DCC. In addition, policy has been reinvigorated, and training delivered. Performance monitoring continues to take place to ensure ongoing and sustainable improvement is made.

- Managing Offenders and Suspects Adequate (2 AFI)

The force is confident that overdue active risk assessments are identified through supervisory reviews, however the AFI was noted and a formal monitoring process established to provide assurance. The Divisional Policing Review has seen the management of active risk assessments aligned centrally which has

further enhanced the supervision and performance. Once the new model is established this AFI will be considered at the next FIDB.

The new digital forensics structure is well established, and the 'legacy' mobile phone work is now clear and performance for both mobile phones and computers continues to improve. Delivery of the digital forensics' platform solution is critical to support further performance improvement and discharge this AFI. Delivery has been delayed and is anticipated in 2025.

- Disrupting Serious and Organised Crime Good (1 AFI: Closed)

This AFI has been self-assessed as completed and discharged by the DCC. SOC local profiles are in place. The Regional Organised Crime Threat Assessment reports Kent's performance in respect of disruptions to be positive. The force is second in the region and demonstrating a marked improvement in other disruptions.

- Tackling Workforce Corruption Adequate (2 AFIs: 1 AFI Closed)

Since the inspection took place, the force has made changes to meet the demands placed on the Force Vetting Unit as described in previous papers. This AFI has been considered met for some time, however it has remained open to allow review of the updated Authorised Professional Practice (APP). The revised APP was published on 12 December 2024 and a review is underway to ensure the force remains compliant. An update will be provided at the next FIDB.

### Governance

Progress against the improvement plan will continue to be monitored at the FIDB chaired by the DCC and Chief Officer Management Board chaired by the Chief Constable to ensure scrutiny at the very highest level. In addition, regular reporting of progress will continue to take place at both the PCC Performance and Delivery Board and the Joint Audit Committee.

### Future

On 30 September 2024 HMICFRS published their proposed 2025-29 inspection programme for consultation. The proposal sets out the PEEL 2025-27 programme, national thematic inspections, rolling programmes, joint inspections and commissions from the Home Secretary and other local policing bodies. Consultation is ongoing and the force awaits the final position.

In respect of PEEL 2025-27, the current proposal is set out below:

- Introduction of two new core questions in respect of safeguarding children and adults at risk and the response to fraud.
- Custody will be incorporated to enable more frequent inspections (from six to four years).
- Crime data integrity will continue to be inspected but not graded. HMICFRS will carry out dip sampling of files and include any relevant findings in specific characteristics of good for other core questions.
- The core question on management of suspects and offenders will be paused.
- The core question on protecting vulnerable people from harm will be removed; however the force's capability in this area will be reported in a revised HMI summary.
- The core questions will focus on: Leadership; Supporting and developing the workforce; Public treatment; Prevention and deterrence; Responding to the public; Investigating crime; Safeguarding children and adults at risk; Custody; and Fraud.

Preparation and governance are well established with Chief Officer oversight to ensure the force puts forward the best evidence available to demonstrate the progress made against the previous AFIs, and new evidence across the core questions being assessed.

**Police and Crime Panel - Future Work Programme – 4 February 2025****4 June 2025**

Election of Chair	Statutory Requirement	PCC
Election of Vice-Chair	Statutory Requirement	PCC
Panel Annual Report	Requested by the Panel	PCC
Criminal Justice System – Update	Requested by the Panel	PCC
Contacting Kent Police	Offered by the Commissioner	PCC

Standard item at each meeting

Questions to the Commissioner

Items to note at each meeting

Commissioner's Decisions

Performance and Delivery Board minutes (if available)

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