

**From:** Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner  
**To:** Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel  
**Subject:** 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan - Continuation for April 2021 to March 2022' and 2021/22 precept proposal  
**Date:** 4 February 2021



**Introduction:**

1. The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) (PRSRA 2011) sets the requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to formulate a Police and Crime Plan which covers their term of Office.
2. A Police and Crime Plan must include the following information:
  - the police and crime objectives to be delivered;
  - the policing that the Chief Constable should provide;
  - the financial and other resources to be provided to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions;
  - the means by which the Chief Constable will be held to account for the provision of policing; and
  - the crime and disorder reduction grants that will be made and any conditions associated with them.
3. Whilst every plan will be localised in nature, they all share a common aim in communicating a PCC's vision and objectives.
4. The plan will also impact upon a wide variety of stakeholders and has a number of intended audiences including the public, victims of crime and witnesses, the Chief Constable, police officers and staff, the Secretary of State, the Police and Crime Panel, the private and voluntary sector and partner agencies.
5. PCCs are required to keep their plan under review, and before issuing or varying their plan must:
  - prepare a draft of the plan;
  - consult the Chief Constable in preparing the draft plan;
  - send the draft plan to the Police and Crime Panel;
  - have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Panel in relation to the draft plan;
  - give the panel a response to any such report or recommendations; and
  - publish any such response.
6. PCCs are also required to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the precept which is proposed to be issued for the financial year.
7. This report fulfils the requirements as set out in paragraphs 5 and 6.

**The Safer in Kent Plan:**

8. On 1 April 2017, the PCC published his Police and Crime Plan, titled 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan – April 2017 to March 2021'.
9. Ordinarily the PCCs term of office should have run from May 2016 to May 2020 when elections were due to take place. As per the PRSRA 2011, the plan's end date was set as March 2021 to allow for the elections and to afford the incoming PCC time to prepare and publish a new Police and Crime Plan.
10. However, there was nothing ordinary about the year 2020 and as a result of Covid-19 the PCC elections were postponed and are now scheduled for May 2021.
11. As a result, and having carefully considered the situation, the PCC has decided that the current plan will continue for up to a further year for the following reasons:
  - Whilst there is uncertainty about the timing of the elections due to Covid-19, they are due to take place in May and therefore the plan may be superseded within a matter of months.
  - The Government commenced a review of the PCC model in July 2020 and it seems prudent to await the outcomes of part one which are due to be announced before the elections.

- At this time of crisis and uncertainty, there is a need for policing to focus on the priorities set by Government.
- Fundamentally the plan still reflects the PCC's ambitions and public's priorities; consistency of message for Kent Police at this time is also beneficial given the current challenges.

12. Attached as Appendix A is the draft version of 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan – Continuation for April 2021 to March 2022' in text only format. Once the text has been finalised, photographs and graphics will be added and it will be presented in a similar format to previous years.
13. As a continuation, there have been very minimal changes and only where absolutely necessary. For example, the 'Introduction and context' has been amended to reflect that it is a continuation plan and the 'Lobbying for a fairer funding settlement for Kent' section updated as the UK has now left the EU. The only exception is the 'Resources and Medium Financial Plan' section which has been extensively re-written to take account of the latest financial information, including HM Government's Police Grant announcement.
14. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC consulted with the 1.8 million people living in Kent and Medway. This was for two reasons: firstly, to ensure the plan continues to reflect the concerns of local communities; and secondly, with the elections scheduled for May, to help inform the incoming PCC's new plan.
15. The fifth Annual Policing Survey was open from 1 December 2020 to 7 January 2021. A total of 3,276 responses were received; whilst a decrease on last year (3,648) it should be noted that the survey ran for just over five weeks, compared to six months in 2019. The number of responses also exceeded that received in 2018 (1,400), 2017 (1,661) and 2016 (1,690).
16. Against a total Kent and Medway population of around 1.8 million, 3,276 responses is considered statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (a commonly accepted level of probability).
17. The aim of the survey was to reach out to residents and offer them the opportunity to answer a number of questions. A report outlining the survey methodology, and the full results is attached as Appendix B (and can also be accessed [here](#)).
18. Below is an overview of some of the key questions along with a precis of the results (previous year's figures are included where comparative data is available):

Q5. Overall, do you believe that the current priorities I have set for Kent Police are the correct ones? (Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree or disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree)

	<i>% of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed</i>
<i>Put victims first</i>	79.9
<i>Fight crime and antisocial behaviour</i>	84.5
<i>Tackle abuse, exploitation and violence</i>	83.5
<i>Combat organised crime and gangs</i>	84.5
<i>Provide visible neighbourhood policing and effective roads policing</i>	76.1
<i>Deliver an efficient and effective service</i>	79.6

- Q6. How safe do you feel where you live, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)  
 ➤ Respondents across Kent and Medway felt 7.0/10 safe where they live (2019 = 6.4 / 2018 = 6.5)
- Q7. Have you been a victim of crime in Kent in the last year?  
 ➤ 15.9% of respondents indicated 'Yes' (2019 = 19.7% / 2018 = 23.3%)
- Q8. If so, how satisfied were you with the service Kent Police gave you? (1 = very unsatisfied / 10 = very satisfied)  
 ➤ On average victims rated the service received from Kent Police 4.3/10 (2019 = 4.5)

Q11. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important?

- *Respondents could select up to six issues from a pre-defined list of 22; the top five were:*
  1. *Antisocial behaviour*
  2. *Gangs and county lines*
  3. *Child sexual exploitation*
  4. *Knife crime*
  5. *Burglary*

Q15. Kent Police is recruiting more officers thanks to my budget and the Government's investment in 20,000 more police officers. What issues do you think they should focus on?

- *Respondents could select up to four areas from a pre-defined list of nine; the top four were:*
  1. *Preventing crime & antisocial behaviour*
  2. *Neighbourhood policing*
  3. *Targeting gangs and organised crime*
  4. *Investigating crime*

Q16. The Government has given PCCs the ability to increase the policing element of council tax by £1.25 per month (£15 a year) for an average Band D property. In the past, any surplus raised from council tax that is not needed to meet running costs has been spent on things like more police officers and staff. Would you support an increase of £1.25 per month?

- *75.1% of respondents indicated 'Yes' and 24.9% 'No'*

19. To assess how representative the sample was of Kent and Medway's population, respondents were also asked to select the district they live in, to provide demographic information and to indicate whether they worked for or volunteered with Kent Police.

20. For a second year the survey was hosted on a third-party platform, Smart Survey; in addition to minimising costs and impact on staff workload, Covid-19 restrictions prevented attendance at, or the hosting of physical engagement events. A link to the survey was posted on the OPCC website and shared widely through various social media channels, including a relatively new platform called 'NexDoor' which gave access to a captive audience of over 181,000 verified Kent residents. A link to the survey was included on all outgoing OPCC e-mail correspondence and a special edition 'Annual Policing Survey' e-newsletter was circulated to over 1,600 subscribers. It was also sent out by post to members of the public who contacted the OPCC and requested a copy.

21. The majority of publicity was free of charge, but the PCC did take the decision to spend £1,249 to promote the survey through Kent Online sponsored content and a digital advertisement. On 4 December the PCC took the opportunity to promote the survey whilst on Radio 4, and a number of consultation events for the public were also held using Facebook Live and Microsoft Teams, including one for police cadets only.

22. Based on the survey results, it should be noted that the top five issues that respondents felt were most important were consistent with last year; therefore they were already included in the plan and remain valid:

- Antisocial behaviour
- Gangs and county lines
- Child sexual exploitation
- Knife crime
- Burglary

23. The survey was only one element of the consultation. It also included feedback from partners/community organisations throughout the year and took account of correspondence received by the OPCC.

24. The Chief Constable has been made aware of the survey results and the PCC's intention to continue the Police and Crime Plan for up to a further year.

25. Further to any recommendations made by the Panel, the continuation plan will be published on 1 April 2021.

26. The PCC would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who completed the survey and provided feedback on policing and crime across the county.
27. With the next PCC election scheduled for 6 May 2021, it should be noted that the plan may be superseded prior to March 2022 (as referenced at paragraph 11).

**Policing precept proposal for 2021/22:**

28. On 17 December, Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service announced the provisional police funding settlement for 2021/22. In a written statement to the House of Commons, the Minister said:

*“As set out as part of the spending review 2020, PCCs will also be able to raise further funding through precept flexibility, subject to confirmation at the final local government finance settlement. PCCs will be empowered to increase their band D precept by up to £15 in 2021-22, without the need to call a local referendum. If all PCCs decide to maximise their flexibility, this would result in up to an additional £288 million of funding for local policing next year. It is for locally accountable PCCs to take decisions on local precept.”*

29. Whilst a difficult decision, in light of the Minister’s statement the PCC is proposing to increase the policing precept by the maximum allowable amount of £15 per year, or 7.4% for an average Band D property (equivalent to £1.25 per month). In addition, Kent Police will be required to make £6.5m of savings in 2021/22.
30. The financial impact from the Covid pandemic has been substantial and wide-ranging. It has impacted the funding available both nationally and locally. However, the PCC is determined to ensure that Kent Police builds on the successes of previous years whilst establishing a strong financial position to enable continued innovation and class leading policing.
31. As part of the Governments national uplift programme, the police funding settlement has provided additional funding for the Chief Constable to recruit a further 145 officers during 2021/22. Through this uplift and the officers recruited as a result of previous years precept increases, Kent Police will have the highest number of officers in its history by March 2022.
32. The precept flexibility allows the PCC to support the Chief Constable in ensuring that Kent Police remains as efficient and as effective post pandemic as it has been throughout the crisis. The increase will fund some substantial costs incurred through the Covid pandemic, pay inflation, equipment and IT projects that will support front line officers in fighting crime and protecting the vulnerable, as well as placing Kent Police on a substantial financial footing for the future. It will also mean that the officers and staff recruited through previous years precepts can be maintained.
33. In developing his proposal, the PCC has also considered a number of other factors including:
- Over 75% of respondents to the Annual Policing Survey indicating that they would support an increase of £1.25 per month.
  - Professional guidance and advice from the Chief Constable.
  - Kent Police’s Force Control Strategy - an annual assessment of long-term key issues; it includes exploitation, serious violence and abuse and sexual offences.
  - The National Crime Agency’s Strategic Assessment - an annual assessment of the threat to the UK from serious and organised crime. Identified threats include child sexual abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking, immigration crime, drugs and cybercrime.
34. Subject to the Police and Crime Panel’s approval, the PCC confirms his intention to increase the policing precept in 2021/22 to £218.15 for an average Band D property. This represents an increase of £15 per year (or 7.4%) on the current precept.
35. Attached as Appendix C is a detailed report dealing with financial matters prepared by the Chief Finance Officer.

List of Appendices:

- Appendix A** Draft 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan – Continuation for April 2021 to March 2022'
- Appendix B** Annual Policing Survey: Summary report – January 2021
- Appendix C** Chief Finance Officer Report