



Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan

Continuation for April 2021 to March 2022

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Leadership:

Strong ethics, transparency and integrity at all times

Guiding principles:

People suffering mental ill health need the right care from the right person
Crime is important no matter where it takes place
Vulnerable people must be protected from harm

My priorities, for the Chief Constable to deliver are to:

1. Put victims first
2. Fight crime and antisocial behaviour
3. Tackle abuse, exploitation and violence
4. Combat organised crime and gangs
5. Provide visible neighbourhood policing and effective roads policing
6. Deliver an efficient and accessible service

As the Police and Crime Commissioner, I will:

1. Hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of Kent Police's priorities
2. Enhance services for victims of crime and abuse
3. Commission services that reduce pressure on policing due to mental health
4. Invest in schemes that make people safer and reduce re-offending
5. Make offenders pay for the harm that they have caused
6. Actively engage with residents in Kent and Medway

Opportunities for the future:

1. Calling for more criminal justice powers for Police and Crime Commissioners
2. Lobbying for a fairer funding settlement for Kent
3. Further collaboration with other organisations
4. Oversight of the police complaints process
5. Developing new crime prevention and diversion practices
6. Backing volunteering

Introduction and context

As Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) I am required to publish a Police and Crime Plan which covers my term of office.

Ordinarily my term of office should have run from May 2016 to May 2020 when PCC elections were due to take place. However, there was nothing ordinary about the year 2020 and as a result of Covid-19 the elections were postponed and are currently scheduled for May 2021.

Having considered the ongoing Covid crisis, uncertainty about the PCC elections, and the current review of the PCC model by HM Government, I have decided that the 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan' should continue for a further year – or until the elections are held and it is superseded.

'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan' sets out the priorities that will drive the work of Kent Police, partners and my office for up to a further year until March 2022, as well as the overall strategic direction for policing and community safety in the county.

Informed by [extensive consultation](#), it also takes into account national guidance such as the [Policing Vision 2025](#). It will be kept under review, including in light of any recommendations made by the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel or guidance issued by HM Government. More importantly, it will be updated in line with what local communities want.

Progress against this plan will be published in an Annual Report which will be made public via my website and also submitted to the Police and Crime Panel. However, progress will not be judged on stipulated numerical targets, but consider other feedback, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports and other independent publications.

Leadership: strong ethics, transparency and integrity at all times

The public rightly expects the highest standards of behaviour from everyone in public life, particularly those engaged in policing and criminal justice. Trust in policing is vital. From the Chief Constable, to the police officer on the street, all must play their part in instilling and upholding ethical standards. Their honesty, integrity, impartiality and openness must be beyond reproach.

PCCs, elected by residents, have a key role to play in this. PCCs hold the Chief Constable to account on all elements of policing, and I believe that strong ethics, transparency and integrity must be at the heart of this, both personally and professionally. For four consecutive years, HMICFRS have graded Kent Police 'Outstanding' for Legitimacy, and I will continue to ensure the [College of Policing's Code of Ethics](#) forms the bedrock of standards and behaviour within Kent Police.

It is equally important that PCCs themselves operate with integrity and the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. I am clear on what my statutory duties are and the responsibilities I have been entrusted to undertake by the electorate of Kent. I will never interfere with operational decisions made by the Chief Constable, or any other police officer or professional staff, but will hold the force to account on behalf of the public for the delivery of the priorities set out in this plan.

To demonstrate my own commitment to ethics and integrity, I have also [signed and published the Committee on Standards in Public Life ethical checklist](#) and my [personal Code of Conduct](#) which reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life:

- **Selflessness** – I will act solely in terms of the public interest; not to gain financial or other material benefits for myself, my family, or my friends.
- **Integrity** – I will not place myself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence me in the performance of my official duties.
- **Objectivity** – In carrying out my duties, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, my choices will be based on merit.
- **Accountability** – I am accountable to the public for any decisions and actions I take and will submit myself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate for PCCs.
- **Openness** – I will be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that I take. I will give reasons for my decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty** – I will declare any private interests relating to my role as the PCC and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership** – I will promote and support these principles through my leadership and by setting an example to those around me.

As I commit to making my decisions open and transparent, I will ensure that Kent Police does the same so that public confidence can be maintained.

Policing is unique and increasingly challenging, with officers and staff dealing with more complex issues, greater demand and higher public expectations. The workforce of Kent Police is its greatest strength and asset, but they need support to make the best possible decisions, and the right skills and knowledge to fight crime and address community concerns. As a result, I am committed to working with the Chief Constable to develop and support the workforce in terms of service delivery, but also their own wellbeing.

I am also uniquely placed to bring a diverse range of partners together and provide leadership to tackle all forms of inequality. As a [White Ribbon Ambassador](#) I will lead by example in taking a stand against sexism and all forms of gender-based violence, including against women and girls. I will also encourage equality and diversity and ensure unlawful discrimination is eliminated in order to make the policing family more diverse and a better representation of the communities it serves. In addition, I will hold the Chief Constable to account for equality and diversity, including delivery of the duties described in the Equality Act 2010.

Guiding principles

For a Police and Crime Plan to be successful, not only should PCCs seek to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the priorities, but there has to be clear principles that guide the actions and decisions taken by both the Chief Constable and the PCC. This plan sets out both what residents want to see Kent Police focus on, but also what I will do to support communities and protect people from harm.

1. People suffering mental ill health need the right care from the right person

It is estimated that more than a third of Kent Police's time is spent dealing with individuals and cases involving mental health illness. It is sadly the case that there has been an increasing reliance on Kent Police to assist those in mental health crisis. More people in crisis are coming to the police's attention and being assisted by officers and staff, sometimes in place of healthcare professionals.

This clearly isn't always best for a person in crisis. Nor is it fair on police officers, who are not healthcare professionals, to be relied on so heavily and so frequently.

Policing has always had an element of mental health crisis that it must deal with, and that will not change, particularly when there is a criminal allegation involved. However, it is not sustainable for forces to have to spend so much time dealing with this important issue, when there are other bodies that should be involved. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 banned the use of police stations for children detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983, and placed extreme limitations on police stations being used for adults; it is vital therefore that people suffering mental ill health get the right support from the right person at the right time.

The Chief Constable and I will continue to raise awareness of this issue and work with others in order to both reduce demand on policing, and ensure that vulnerable people are being helped in the right and appropriate way.

2. Crime is important, no matter where it takes place

Kent and Medway are fortunate to both have a mixture of urban, rural and coastal communities. As the PCC, I believe that crime should be considered important and investigated, no matter where it takes place. That includes offences committed in residential, business and online environments, or on our roads.

Victims come from all sections of society and the impact can be devastating. It is therefore important that Kent Police has the right resources in the right places to address both the threat from terrorism, and demand from Kent's local communities.

3. Vulnerable people must be protected from harm

Nationally, there is a greater emphasis on police forces protecting 'vulnerable' people and communities. It is a priority for the Home Office and something that Kent Police is inspected upon independently by HMICFRS. Kent Police has a fully embedded policing model built around vulnerability and the Control Strategy features many of the key themes – child sexual exploitation, abuse, gangs, county lines, modern slavery and human trafficking.

Kent Police, other key bodies and I need to continue to work together to raise awareness of these issues in order to protect both adults and young people from harm, support victims of crime and witnesses, tackle hate crime and ensure those perpetrating serious and heinous crimes are brought to justice.

Joint Vision

The Chief Constable and I are committed to working together to secure the best possible outcomes for policing and community safety in Kent. This commitment is reflected in our joint vision for policing which focuses on partnership working, protecting the public from harm, neighbourhood policing and providing a first class service:

“Our vision is for Kent to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit. By protecting the public from harm, we will allow our communities to flourish and by working with the public and partners, we will provide a first class policing service that is both visible and accessible. We will retain neighbourhood policing as the bedrock of policing in Kent. We will be there when the public need us and we will act with integrity in all that we do.”

Kent Police's Priorities – 2021 to 2022:

The following priorities are based on my on-going engagement and consultation with local residents, community and youth organisations, schools, partner organisations and elected officials, as well as letters and correspondence received by my office. The Chief Constable is expected to formally respond and outline how the plan will be delivered. As the PCC, I will then hold him to account for the progress made.

1. Put victims first

Being a victim of crime or witness can affect people in very different ways and have a significant impact on the person's life, their family, and the local community. Their initial contact will often be with the police, but thereafter they may have to go to court, give evidence and await a verdict – whilst also dealing with the emotional after-effects of what unfortunately can be a traumatic and understandably life-changing experience.

Victims of some crimes, such as modern slavery and stalking and harassment may also be reluctant to report what's happened to the police because they are worried about their safety, getting into trouble or not being believed.

It is paramount that victims and witnesses feel confident to report crime to Kent Police and subsequently receive swift and effective help and support to cope, with their needs identified and met from the outset. That is why Kent Police must provide a quality service that puts victims and witnesses first and foremost and meets the expectations of the [Victims Code](#) and [Witness Charter](#).

Victims and witnesses must be at the heart of everything the force does and be treated with fairness, respect and dignity so they have the confidence to come forward.

2. Fight crime and antisocial behaviour

Crime and antisocial behaviour are issues that residents and local communities care deeply about and this is reflected through my on-going engagement and consultation.

Kent Police must ensure it has the right resources with the right skills to investigate, and where possible, bring to justice those who harm individuals and businesses by committing offences such as burglary, fraud, sexual abuse/exploitation and cybercrime. It must also continue to combat knife crime, targeting and tackling those who choose to carry a weapon.

In addition, Kent Police must work with the county's Community Safety Partnerships, other statutory and non-statutory bodies, and local communities to understand, prevent and tackle crime and antisocial behaviour wherever it takes place, and address its sometimes complex causes. Urban, rural and coastal communities across Kent need to feel safe and secure.

3. Tackle abuse, exploitation and violence

There is no place for abuse, violence or exploitation in our society. However, crimes such as child sexual exploitation and human trafficking pay little respect to traditional borders, and present unique challenges for policing.

Criminals are targeting the most vulnerable in Kent. Those involved in modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking are not just using Kent as a gateway to and from the continent, but committing these crimes in our local communities. They are often involved with complex criminal networks which require substantial investment to investigate and disrupt.

There are also many individuals in relationships facing abusive behaviour and violence on a daily basis, but are too afraid to seek help. Domestic abuse may occur behind closed doors but the consequences are often devastating and long term, affecting victims' physical health and mental well-being. It can also have a significant and long-lasting effect on children in the household, the wider family and the local community.

4. Combat organised crime and gangs

Tackling organised crime and gangs presents considerable challenges at a local, regional, national and global level. The impact on individuals and whole communities can be significant.

Kent Police must continue to develop and share intelligence to build a detailed local picture of threats, risk, harm and vulnerabilities, to enable the deployment of the right resources to prevent, disrupt and investigate offending in order to keep the county safe. There also needs to be a combination of effective local, regional, national and international coordinated activity, and seamless working between Kent Police and other partners and law enforcement agencies.

In addition, as technology develops, so too does criminality. Cybercrime for example, is becoming an increasing problem, with organised criminals exploiting the internet to commit a diverse range of crimes.

5. Provide visible neighbourhood policing and effective roads policing

Neighbourhood policing is fundamental to delivering policing in the county. By focusing on local problem solving, together with partners and local communities, it improves the quality of life within those communities, helps keep people safe, and importantly builds public confidence and trust.

Kent's roads are shared spaces, used by drivers of different types of vehicle, alongside vulnerable road users with little or no protection in traffic, such as motorcyclists, pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders. All road users have a responsibility to use them as safely as possible. However, Kent Police must continue to crackdown on the main factors which contribute to people being killed and seriously injured on Kent's roads – including speeding, using a mobile phone, not using a seatbelt, drink/drug-driving – and work with partners to address other behaviour that puts road users at risk.

In addition, many criminals use the road network to access the county and in the planning and commission of their crimes. There is also a link between the illegal use of vehicles and other serious crime. Working with partners, and using intelligence and targeted enforcement, Kent Police must continue to deter and disrupt criminality by making the roads a hostile place for those intent on causing harm to urban, rural and coastal communities.

6. Deliver an efficient and accessible service

Kent Police must continue to exploit opportunities to collaborate with Essex Police and neighbouring forces. As part of the Seven Force Strategic Collaboration, with Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, opportunities are available to share procurement and other functions in order to increase efficiency and innovation.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 placed collaboration with other emergency services on a statutory footing. Kent Police must continue to explore opportunities to work with Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), South East Coast Ambulance Service and the other emergency services to deliver an efficient and effective service to local communities.

Whether through the development of new technology, a reduction or shifting of demand, or investment in its people, Kent Police must also continue to reduce bureaucracy, streamline processes and deliver value for money, whilst remaining accessible to the public for urgent and non-urgent matters and addressing the needs of local communities.

Kent taxpayers deserve to know their money is being well spent.

The Strategic Policing Requirement

Like all forces, Kent Police must be ready to make an effective contribution to tackling the national threats set out in the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) which is currently being reviewed by the Home Office. At any moment it may need to share and pool resources with other forces in order to tackle incidents that cause serious harm or are a threat to the nation's security and public safety. This may include acts of terrorism, serious and organised crime, cybercrime, child sexual abuse, major public unrest or civil emergencies such as flooding. The Chief Constable must ensure there are sufficient resources to meet these important responsibilities.

The force must also continue to work with other emergency services to respond to major or complex incidents effectively.

What I will do:

PCCs have a broad set of responsibilities that expand beyond policing and it is important that I carry out these functions effectively to support local people's priorities.

1. Hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of Kent Police's priorities

A key duty of PCCs is to be democratically accountable to the public for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.

It is important for these accountability arrangements to be visible to the public, and for policing to be responsive to local communities. It is vital that the public's voice is heard on how policing is delivered across the county and my office will ensure this happens.

To exercise my powers and duties in holding the Chief Constable to account, my governance arrangements will include:

- Weekly one-to-one briefings with the Chief Constable that focus on delivery of the priorities in this plan, including regular updates on topics such as recruitment, finance, estates, innovation, technology, criminal justice and serious crime.
- A quarterly Performance and Delivery Board meeting with the Chief Constable, where the following force papers are required in advance and published by my office: Safer in Kent Plan – Delivery & Performance; Inspections, Audits & Reviews; People; Finance; and Collaboration & Partnership Working. The meeting will be open to the public.
- A joint Audit Committee that looks at financial and risk management as well as internal controls.
- Attendance at the internal Kent Police Culture Board, which is chaired by the Chief Constable. The Board's purpose is to continue the development of a culture which is consistent with the Chief Constable's and my shared Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities. Where there is a relentless focus on quality of service, putting victims and witnesses first and where officers and staff are confident to do the right thing.
- An established scheme of Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), who check on the welfare of people in police custody by visiting police stations unannounced. I will continue to receive quarterly updates, and the published Annual Report will outline the scheme's objectives and plans for the future.
- Requesting bespoke briefings from the force on significant and/or sensitive issues.

Kent Police and Essex Police also share a number of operational and non-operational resources and I will ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place to oversee these shared resources.

In specific circumstances, PCCs may also call upon public bodies, such as HMICFRS, to inspect their force.

2. Enhance services for victims of crime and abuse

It is my responsibility to commission support services for victims of crime across the county. I am committed to providing services that treat victims as individuals and can be tailored to their needs. I also believe services should support victims in not only dealing with the often complex criminal justice system, but empower individuals to cope and recover from the crime they have suffered.

The services I will support and develop range from the core victim referral service for those who have suffered crimes such as burglary, theft and vehicle crime, to specialist services for victims with more complex needs, such as domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault and hate crime. These services are available to victims and in a number of cases immediate family members, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police.

I will continue to support and enhance services for all victims, providing the following:

- Engagement and Support Service (core referral service)

Currently awarded to Victim Support and delivering free and confidential support, advice, information, signposting and referrals for Kent residents who have been a victim of crime and have reported it to the police. Victim Support also provides self-referral opportunities for those that have experienced a crime but do not wish to report it to the police. This service works in collaboration with specialist services to ensure victims receive the most appropriate support for their needs.

- Compass House

This is the hub for victim and witness support services in Kent. Victim Support, Kent Police's Witness Care Unit, Citizens Advice Court Based Witness Service, the Independent Sexual Violence Adviser Service and the Restorative Justice Service are co-located within the building on a permanent basis. In addition, other services also co-locate based on need to meet with victims or work collaboratively with the permanently based agencies on delivering improved services to victims.

Compass House provides some facilities for victims and witnesses including counselling rooms and a vulnerable victim's suite, but they are not required to visit in order to access support, as this is delivered within Kent's communities. Victim Support also operate community based Compass Points where victims can discuss their needs face-to-face; the Witness Service and Restorative Justice Service also provide community based support.

- Specialist Victims' Services

In addition to the core referral service, it is important to ensure victims have access to specialist support services where they have more complex and specialist needs. These services might include support for domestic abuse victims, underrepresented groups, sexual assault victims or trauma counselling. These services work alongside the core referral service to ensure victims have access to the support they need to help them cope and recover from their experience. My office will continue to identify opportunities to develop and enhance these services, which may include making funding available such as through the Victim Specialist Services Fund.

- Restorative Justice

Recognising that the recovery process is unique, I have commissioned a Restorative Justice Service that supports the delivery of victim-led restorative justice opportunities to support their recovery and reduce re-offending. This service is available any time during the victim's recovery process and I am committed to ensuring that we work in collaboration to ensure effective use of restorative justice in Kent.

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisers and Sexual Assault Support Services

I will seek to provide greater sustainability for Independent Sexual Violence Advisers in Kent, ensuring that effective support is available to victims of rape and sexual assault. This will include fully understanding the needs of victims to ensure the service reflects demand. I will also work closely with NHS England, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners to ensure the right services are available at the right time.

- Domestic Abuse

I will continue to work in collaboration with partners to ensure victims of domestic abuse, whether male or female, including the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community, are able to access appropriate support services, and that prevention and early intervention opportunities are identified. This includes working with both Kent County Council and Medway Council on delivering effective commissioned services for domestic abuse victims. I will also provide any extra resources that are needed to guarantee future provision of domestic homicide reviews and raise awareness of domestic abuse services for men.

- Child Sexual Assault

Part of the funding I receive from HM Government is to specifically support victims of child sexual assault. I will continue to work with partners and providers to identify the best opportunities for supporting children who have suffered sexual assault, including adults who now feel able to access services to help them deal with non-recent abuse.

To ensure the best possible service for victims of crime in the county, it is important I understand their needs and views on the services being delivered. I will continue to engage with victims through a range of forums, including the Victims Panel.

Importantly, I am committed to continually enhancing victim services in Kent to ensure the best possible support is provided. This includes identifying opportunities to improve the reach and scope of services to ensure victims receive support that is responsive to their needs. I will also explore greater utilisation of technology and research to enhance services, ranging from developing more effective methods for contacting victims to providing greater access to support through facilities such as Live Chat.

3. Commission services that reduce pressure on policing due to mental health

I will continue to provide funding and facilitate discussions with key partners to support schemes and/or projects that reflect my commitment to this issue. This includes those projects already in existence or implemented since I took up office, including providing officers with greater access to advice from mental health professionals, provision of safe places or alternative places of safety, and importantly helping those with mental health issues who come into contact with the police access the right and appropriate support. I also want to work with those who help keep vulnerable people, with conditions such as dementia, safe from harm and exploitation.

Importantly, the funding will not be used to support mental health services which are the responsibility of the NHS, or to support those services where statutory funding has been withdrawn or reduced.

In addition, research conducted by the mental health charity Mind shows that members of the emergency services are more at risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the general population, but less likely to seek support. I will work with the Chief Constable to ensure that police officers and staff are supported in their own wellbeing and have access to the right support services.

4. Invest in schemes that make people safer and reduce re-offending

I will continue to look at opportunities to allocate funding that supports innovative local working to tackle issues linked to this plan, such as communities working together to prevent and/or reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. In addition, I already allocate grants to key partners such as the Community Safety Partnerships to support delivery of this plan through tailored local projects. I will further enhance this activity by ensuring effective scrutiny of how the grants are used and also look at further collaborative opportunities and sharing of good practice.

Police forces are not responsible for funding CCTV schemes, and Kent Police does not fund any at present. Unfortunately, due to financial pressures, this policy will not change.

I will continue to fund the drug and alcohol partnerships in Kent and Medway in order to support individuals to turn their lives around and tackle the harm that can be caused in communities. I shall also fund work to reduce youth offending and to help prevent those within the criminal justice system from re-offending.

○ Violence Reduction Challenge

Launched in June 2018, the Violence Reduction Challenge (VRC) was my response to HM Government's Serious Violence Strategy.

The VRC's primary objective was to determine what could be done to prevent and tackle violent crime within urban, rural and coastal communities across Kent.

To achieve this, I brought together Kent Police and other key partners from the emergency services, the criminal justice sector, local authorities, businesses, charities and community groups to address violent crime.

As a result of the VRC several actions were identified and implemented including:

- creating a Violence Reduction Fund to support relevant community schemes;
- requiring Community Safety Partnerships to use more of their funding to prevent and tackle violent crime;
- developing a bespoke stalking and harassment service in conjunction with the charity Victim Support; and
- setting up a multi-agency taskforce in Medway to tackle the underlying causes of violent crime.

In 2019 a number of PCCs, including my office, received funding from HM Government to establish a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to bring together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to tackle serious violence and its causes. Its aim is to support a multi-agency, public health, long term approach to preventing and tackling serious violence across Kent and Medway with a special focus on knife crime involving those under 25. My office chairs the VRU Oversight Board, attended by all partners, to ensure effective delivery of the VRU.

5. Make offenders pay for the harm that they have caused

An important principle of criminal justice is to ensure that those who cause harm give back to victims and the community they have hurt. The Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) allows forces to keep some of the revenue from illegal activity, which is shared between HM Government, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), victims and policing. I will ensure Kent Police continues to re-invest POCA proceeds to drive up performance on asset recovery and to fund crime fighting priorities for the benefit of local communities.

There are also other mechanisms to ensure that offenders repay communities. For example, I will use money raised through forfeiture under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to support the fight against drug trafficking and misuse of illegal substances that devastates lives and harms communities. When people are fined, or their cars seized after breaking the law on our county's roads, depending on the offence some of this money is retained by Kent Police. I will use money from those found to have been driving without insurance to support community safety projects.

6. Actively engage with residents in Kent and Medway

A fundamental duty of PCCs is to ensure the public's concerns are listened to and acted upon. Good public engagement also improves the quality of decisions PCCs take, since they are based on a broad knowledge of the issues that matter most to local communities.

That is why I have developed a wide-ranging engagement programme that enables the diversity of residents, irrespective of background, to have their say on how their streets and communities are policed. The programme has been designed to allow people to express their views in a way which is most convenient for them, including in urban, rural and coastal locations right across the county, and opportunities outside of normal office hours.

They include the following:

- A more accessible website;
- 'Street stalls' in high-footfall locations;
- Regular public consultations;
- Talking to pupils at the county's schools;
- Traditional and social media channels;
- Visits to various community organisations and representative groups;
- Direct engagement with partners and other elected officials;
- Newsletters and proactive e-news alerts.

Alongside this plan, I have also published ['Safer in Kent: Backing Young People'](#), a document which sets out how I will increase my direct engagement with young people to ensure that they are adequately represented, and those who face particular challenges, such as looked after children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are supported.

In addition, many Kent Police officers and staff live within the county, and so their feedback is important. As a result, I will continue to engage with them and meet with representatives of the Kent Police Federation, UNISON and staff support associations such as Kent Network of Women and the Racial Equality Network (formerly the Kent Minority Ethnic Police Association).

Opportunities for the future:

1. Calling for more criminal justice powers for Police and Crime Commissioners

Criminal justice is delivered by a number of organisations including the police, CPS, courts, probation and prisons. Through the Kent Criminal Justice Board which I chair, I will hold these organisations to account and seek to strengthen partnership working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

There is more that can be done though, and I believe further devolvement of criminal justice powers to PCCs has the potential to improve the journey for all service users. Whilst the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) considers this, I will explore opportunities to ensure that victims and witnesses in Kent receive the best possible services to support them in coping and recovering from the crime they have experienced.

PCCs can also play a pivotal role in developing and improving partnership working. I want to ensure those organisations involved in Kent – not just the police – play their part and will continue to engage with Ministers in calling for further criminal justice powers to be devolved to PCCs.

2. Lobbying for a fairer funding settlement for Kent

As the PCC, part of my role is to ensure the Chief Constable has the resources he needs to deliver effective policing across the county.

As the 'Gateway to Europe', Kent Police faces some very unique policing challenges with ferry ports, the Channel Tunnel and miles of coastline within our county. Kent's officers and staff are on the frontline in protecting the country from terrorism and international criminality, including human trafficking and drugs smuggling.

The UK has now left the European Union and Kent Police continues to work closely with the Home Office and partners to minimise any impact on the county. Preparations have been challenging; I have engaged with HM Government on behalf of the police service and secured additional funding for Kent Police. However, change brings uncertainty and I will continue to engage with HM Government on policing issues nationally, as well as seek additional funding for any unavoidable and unexpected costs incurred by Kent Police in the future.

World events have led to increased international migration and the plight of those trying to enter the country illegally is a reality in Kent, as are protests over immigration. There are also significant challenges in relation to the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children being looked after in the county, many of whom are in the care of local authorities, but at risk of being exploited by gangs and unscrupulous criminals.

Kent Police has the UK's longest Strategic Road Network and some of the busiest, with significant levels of traffic flowing through the ports and a corresponding high level of freight and HGVs. This takes up substantial police resources and at times of major disruption at the ports, requires the implementation of contingency plans. Ramsgate port also has live animal exports, which in turn can attract protests which require policing.

The county's proximity to London also presents opportunities for gangs and organised crime groups to cross borders and operate in our county. I will continue to lobby HM Government to get a good deal on police funding for Kent, so these unique challenges, and many more, are properly recognised.

3. Further collaboration with other organisations

Over recent years, Kent Police has embraced collaboration, for example, leading the way nationally in its work with Essex Police to develop a Serious Crime Directorate and shared Support Services, as well as co-locating KFRS staff in the Force Control Room, the first fire service to do so in the UK.

To support blue light collaboration, provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2017 placed collaboration between the emergency services on a statutory footing, and also empowered me to engage at a strategic level as a member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority.

The force also works closely with a number of statutory and non-statutory partners to tackle crime and address community safety issues, including the Community Safety Partnerships, local authorities, health and probation services.

Kent is formally linked with two regional groups of police forces. The Eastern Region group of seven forces, which includes Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, is where the most collaboration is done and where there is greater potential to explore benefits to policing. However, Kent also works with Surrey, Hampshire, Thames Valley and Sussex Police in the South Eastern region.

By collaborating with other organisations, it is possible to tackle crime and community issues more effectively through improved communication and by making better use of limited resources and greater sharing of skills and expertise. We can also share best practice across a wider area on issues like mental health and innovation.

As the PCC, I continue to develop positive relationships with the county's MPs, Council Leaders and other key stakeholders, so even more can be delivered for Kent residents.

4. Oversight of the police complaints process

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 substantially increased a PCC's role in the complaints system, both in terms of the actual handling of complaints, and also how the Chief Constable is held to account for performance in complaints management. Previously, my office only had a statutory duty in terms of complaints made against the Chief Constable and worked with the force to assess complaints handling.

The relevant provisions were enacted on 1 February 2020 with all PCCs taking on the 'Appellate' function, providing a review process for complainants to contact the PCC if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint (for matters below the level of misconduct). PCCs also have an explicit statutory responsibility to increase their level of oversight of the complaints system at a local level. Whilst the Act allows PCCs to take on other functions within the system, at this time I do not believe it would be right for Kent, and so the force will continue to receive, record and resolve complaints.

Through these changes and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) – the reformed police watchdog previously known as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) – more confidence can be given to the public, seeking resolution, when things do not go right.

5. Developing new crime prevention and diversion practices

As with so many of the challenges we face as a society, the prevention of crime is better than cure. Stopping crime before it happens, and preventing harm being caused to victims, will always be preferable to picking up the pieces afterwards. However, crime is changing and so working with Kent Police, other partners and the private sector, I am keen to build on past successes and explore how new technologies and tools may be used to better protect the communities of Kent.

I am also keen to develop diversion schemes that help support those arrested or at risk of arrest. Research shows that deepening involvement in the justice system actually makes individuals more likely to re-offend and also comes with a range of collateral consequences, such as a criminal record. As well as being a better way of addressing criminal behaviour, operating schemes within police custody should enable Kent Police to re-direct more police officer time into frontline services, maximising the use of its resources. And of course, diversion activity that helps prevent individuals becoming lifelong offenders will serve to reduce crime in the future.

6. Backing volunteering

Kent Police is lucky to have so many dedicated officers and professional staff working within the organisation, who are also supported by our award-winning Special Constabulary and police volunteers. With match-funding from my office, we have seen the return of Volunteer Police Cadets for young people and further opportunities will be developed for those who give up their time to work within Kent Police.

I am also keen to back those organisations which support Kent Police and complement policing across the county, but do not formally wear a police logo. Without the extensive support of a great number of charities and volunteers, there would be extra costs and resources that Kent Police would need to find.

Resources and Medium Term Financial Plan:

Setting the budget and deciding on the level of council tax is one of the most important decisions I take. Requesting money from taxpayers is a decision not to be taken lightly and I will ensure that every spending decision is challenged to ensure it delivers value for money for the Kent taxpayer.

○ Funding

I receive all funding for policing and crime in Kent. This includes:

- £212.2m General Government Grant. The amount I receive in direct revenue funding (excluding specific grants) from HM Government has increased by £10m for 2021/22. This is for the recruitment of 145 police officers which is Kent's allocation of the national uplift of 6,000 in 2021/22.
- £21.5m of Specific Government Grant. This includes funding for victims and the continuation of pension grant. This also includes £2.4m of incentivisation grant that is being paid in arrears and will be received as and when we achieve our recruitment targets. However, I am confident that through my budget and previous year's recruitment that Kent Police is already in a strong position to be able to meet the recruitment target of 145 new officers set by HM Government for the end of 2021/22. Therefore, the release of Kent's share of the incentivisation funding has been included within the budget.
- £2.8m in council tax support grants from HM Government. These are one-off grants received to mitigate against the impact of the Covid pandemic on the council tax in 2021/2022. This includes Local Government Income Grant which helps spread the deficit on the collection fund over three years and the Local Council Tax Support Grant which mitigates against the reduction in the tax base.
- £138.2m from the council tax. This includes the estimated deficit on the collection fund that has been spread over three years.
- £28.1m from miscellaneous income.

The funding above plus £6.5m savings means the gross budget for 2021/22 is £409.3m. This is £25.5m greater than the gross budget in 2020/21.

● Budget and medium-term financial challenges

For 2021/22 I find myself in a vastly different place than I was expecting 12 months ago. The financial impact from the Covid pandemic has been substantial and wide-ranging. It has impacted the funding available both nationally and locally. However, I am determined to ensure that Kent Police build on the successes of previous years whilst establishing a strong financial position to enable continued innovation and class leading policing.

Nationally, the police funding settlement has provided additional funding for the Chief Constable to recruit another 145 officers during 2021/22. I am pleased that the leadership shown in Kent in using the precept to increase officer numbers in previous years continues to be replicated across the country through police grant and has been determined to ensure that Kent receives its fair share of the uplift. Through this uplift and the officers recruited through previous years precept increases, Kent Police will have the highest number of officers in its history.

The precept flexibility allows me to provide support to the Chief Constable to ensure that Kent Police can be as efficient and as effective post pandemic as they have been throughout the crisis. The increase will fund some substantial costs incurred by the force regarding the Covid pandemic, pay inflation, equipment and IT projects that will support front line officers fight crime and protect the innocent, as well as place Kent Police on a substantial financial footing for the future. It also means that the officers and staff recruited through previous years precepts can be maintained.

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is agreed each February as part of the budget setting process and is updated and refreshed throughout the year as further information becomes available. The plan covers the current year plus four from 2021/22 through to 2025/26. For obvious reasons there is more certainty around the figures included in the early years than for those towards the end of the plan. A range of optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are produced by the force's and my Chief Finance Officer with a number of differing assumptions; these are then discussed with myself and my Chief Executive before a final version is completed.

The current iteration of the MTFP shows potentially substantial savings required over the lifetime of the plan. However, the assumptions included are on the pessimistic side and as they become actual it is expected that the savings position will change.

The settlement outlined the Policing Minister's expectations in return for additional funding invested in policing. These are:

- Forces to recruit another 6,000 officers by the end of March 2022 (some of these officers are expected to go into Counter Terrorism Policing, Regional Organised Crime Units and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau).
- £120m efficiency savings from across the law enforcement sector (reflected as part of this funding settlement). These are expected to be delivered through a combination of improved procurement practices as well as savings in areas such as estates, agile working and shared services. They are broken down as follows:
 - £95m against core grant;
 - £8m against Counter Terrorism Policing;
 - £2.8m from the National Crime Agency;
 - £14.2m from programmes within reallocations.
- High quality data should be collected and used to support local delivery, identify efficiencies and support the National Policing Board's drive to deliver the best possible outcomes within policing.

I am confident that this budget and the medium-term plan demonstrate Kent's commitment to these expectations.

• **Council tax**

HM Government sets a limit on how much can be raised through the council tax before I have to call a referendum. For 2021/22 HM Government announced that PCCs could increase their precept by up to £15 for an average Band D property.

Ideologically, I am a low-tax Conservative and I have repeatedly stated my desire to not increase the precept unless it is needed to protect frontline policing. This increased flexibility for 2021/22 has allowed me to continue to protect what Kent Police already has, as well as provide additional resources for the frontline and the prevention of crime. I believe for 2021/22 this announcement exceeds that test and that the council tax for Kent will increase by £15 for an average Band D property, an equivalent increase of 7.4% (equivalent to £1.25 per month).

I have made no assumptions on increases over and above 1.99% in future years.

• **Commissioning and working with partners**

Working with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, deliver community safety initiatives and to support victims is vital. I have been given additional responsibilities and funding to support this and my approach is set out annually in my Commissioning Strategy.

At the time of writing, the MoJ have yet to formally announce their allocations but it has been assumed that the £2.1 million received last year for the specific purpose of delivering support services for victims of crime, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police will continue in 2021/22. In total, the combined commissioning and victim services budget is expected to be £4.2m for 2021/22. As 2021/22 is an election year, I have chosen not to allocate all of the funding available. This will allow any incoming PCC to allocate it in accordance with their priorities. Any decisions regarding funding prior to the PCC election will seek to ensure continuity of services for victims and witnesses. Details of these will be made available on my website.

My Commissioning Strategy sets out the detail of this budget and how responsibilities will be managed during the financial year. I also intend to take the opportunity to consolidate the impact of the funding I provide and use this to help inform commissioning decisions for the future. This strategy will be released once all allocations from the MoJ have been announced. However, a broad outline is shown below.

Commissioning Budget Strategic Overview 2021/22

Funding Streams	2021/22 £m
Crime Reduction Grant	1.8
Victim Specialist Services	2.3
Preventative & Engagement Projects	0.1
Total	£4.2*

* These are indicative allocations of the 2021/22 funding streams and will be subject to further amendment. Finalised allocations will be published online.

A number of allocations from the above funding streams are in the process of being agreed in order to sustain key provision of services pending the outcome of the PCC elections in May 2021.

Once the outcome is known, further allocations will be made in line with any incoming PCC's priorities.