

Mr Mike Hill, OBE
Chair, Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel
Kent County Council
Sessions House
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

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Dear Mike

Further to the 2 February meeting, thank you for the Panel's report on my draft 'Making Kent Safer' Plan and proposed precept for 2022/23.

I am pleased the Panel were supportive of my new plan and would like to express my thanks for their feedback. With regards to the recommendation that a specific paragraph on tackling hate crime be included, I can confirm that the following text has been added under the Kent Police priority 'Protect people from exploitation and abuse':

'Kent Police must continue to have a robust response to all forms of hate crime to ensure they receive the attention they deserve and to protect people from harm.'

I also noted Members' comments with regards to crime prevention. I firmly believe that prevention is better than cure; stopping crime or antisocial behaviour before it happens, and preventing harm being caused, will always be preferable to picking up the pieces afterwards. Whilst I believe the essence of the plan reflected this, in light of the feedback I can confirm that I have amended the Kent Police priority 'Work with residents, communities and businesses to fight crime and antisocial behaviour' to:

'Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour'

I am also grateful to the Panel for approving my proposed 4.58% increase in the police precept - equivalent to £10 per year for an average Band D property. Whilst a very difficult decision and one I do not take lightly, the disappointing financial settlement from the Government means it is necessary to help mitigate the savings that have to be made, maintain operational policing and limit the impact on frontline services. It will also ensure Kent Police builds on the successes of previous years by enabling me to make prudent investments in some police buildings, a new digital evidence system and expanding the Volunteer Police Cadet programme.

It is also important not to lose sight of the fact that due to previous precept increases that were supported by the Panel, and extra funding from the Government's Uplift Programme, police officer numbers have risen by 788 since 2016. Kent will soon have 3,970 officers - the highest number in its history - with a further 195 to be recruited by March 2023 (10 of which will go to the Regional Organised Crime Unit). The recruitment of these officers continues to help Kent Police manage current and future demand, and ultimately make Kent safer.

Once again may I thank Members for their feedback, as well as ongoing support and scrutiny.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner