



Making Kent Safer

April 2022 to March 2025

Version: Spring 2023

Foreword

Since I was first elected in 2016 I have worked with Kent Police to rebuild its strength so that it can provide the service that victims need and deliver on the issues that matter to residents.

By using council tax precept and funding from the Government's uplift programme, Kent Police will have over 4,000 officers for the first time ever. This has helped reduce burglary and cut the number of county lines. It's led to the creation of community and county-wide taskforces, established to deal with deeper rooted issues. And increased visibility in our urban and rural areas.

Since my last plan, our country has been through a lot - and this has led to extra pressures and challenges for policing to address. We've left the European Union changing the way that policing interacts with European and global partners, as well as how our borders operate.

We've also been through a pandemic that has changed so much about our country. Communities came together and the police delivered against a fast-changing set of regulations and expectations fantastically well.

But tragically, we have seen some of the worst of humanity. The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer. The killing of our own PCSO Julia James. The killer of Wendy Knell and Caroline Pierce being brought to justice - only to discover what terrible crimes he committed, abusing his position within a local hospital.

Violence against women and girls is now more than ever something we all have to work together to challenge and tackle.

I thank local residents for their contribution to this plan, which I believe reflects the issues we all want to see action on whilst ensuring that victims, vulnerable people and the voiceless will benefit from the first-class service they want and deserve.



Matthew Scott
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent

Integrity and transparency

The public expects the highest standards of integrity from those in public life; together with transparency they form the cornerstone of public confidence. Trust and confidence in policing are vital.

From Chief Constables to police officers on the street, there is a need to strengthen public trust and confidence and so the importance of integrity and transparency has never been greater – the public can't just be safe, they need to feel safe.

Of course, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) elected by local residents also have a key role. PCCs hold Chief Constables to account on all elements of policing. Integrity and transparency must be at the heart of this, both personally and professionally.

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 Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public for the delivery of the priorities set out in this plan. I will also continue to ensure the [College of Policing's Code of Ethics](#) forms the bedrock of standards and behaviour within Kent Police.

To demonstrate my own commitment, I have signed the [Oath of Office](#), the [Committee on Standards in Public Life Ethical Checklist](#) and a [personal Code of Conduct](#) which reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

As I commit to making my decisions open and transparent, I will also ensure that Kent Police does the same to maintain public trust and confidence.

Policing though is unique, and increasingly challenging. Whilst the workforce of Kent Police is its greatest strength and asset, 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, the Chief Constable and I are committed to developing and supporting the workforce in terms of both service delivery and their own personal wellbeing.

We are also committed to working together to ensure diversity, equality and inclusion are at the heart of service delivery and embedded in both our organisation's culture. We will lead by example and create an environment that celebrates inclusion and diversity; where discrimination has no place and 'difference' is valued and harnessed to make policing more representative of Kent for the benefit of local communities and our staff. I will also hold the Chief Constable to account for 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.

Crime is important no matter where it takes place - urban, rural or coastal communities

Fortunate to have a mixture of urban, rural and coastal communities, the county of Kent is diverse and vibrant.

As PCC I believe that every crime is important no matter where it takes place – it should be investigated appropriately and proportionately, with the right outcome secured for the victim. This includes offences committed in residential, business and online environments, as well as on the 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 the serious threat from terrorism and organised crime, whilst meeting the demand from Kent's local communities.

Victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do

Whilst I want to ensure that fewer people become victims in the first place, where they unfortunately do, it is important that they and any witnesses are at the heart of the criminal justice process.

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. They can also find themselves giving statements and evidence in a system that is complex, daunting and probably at times, confusing.

I believe victims and witnesses must be treated with care, respect and dignity and have confidence in the criminal justice system. I welcome the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) which sets out the services and minimum standards that must be provided by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Courts and wider criminal justice partners. It is important that Kent Police reminds victims of crime about their rights and of the availability of restorative justice. I also support Government proposals to introduce a new Victims' Law, as well as the expectations set out in the [Witness Charter](#).

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 can subsequently access the right support as early as possible.

Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency

People with mental health problems or other vulnerabilities may have a range of complex needs, which the police alone are not fully equipped to meet. In some circumstances police involvement is necessary and unavoidable; they are often the first point of call in an emergency or for people in distress or crisis. However, on other occasions it is not in the interests of the person, nor the police or public to have officers taken away from their core front line duties unnecessarily.

Whilst police officers have the training and skills necessary to identify when a person is vulnerable, they are not experts in specific illnesses or disabilities; rather they need to be able to recognise when intervention is necessary and refer the person to the right agency to ensure they receive timely and appropriate support.

Multi-agency working including information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated action are key to the effective identification of risk to vulnerable people, preventing those risks from escalating and ensuring the continued well-being of those concerned.

The Chief Constable and I will continue to work with others to both reduce demand on policing and ensure vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health receive the right help from the right agency at the right time.

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 – 2022 to 2025

The following priorities are based on my 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 has been consulted on this plan and is expected to formally respond and outline how it will be delivered. As the PCC, I will then hold him to account for the progress made.

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

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

Victims of crime and ASB want it to stop, and the perpetrators punished for what they have done. They want the police and authorities to take the matter seriously, to understand the impact on them and to protect them from further harm.

Kent Police must ensure it has the right resources with the right skills to investigate all crimes, and where possible, bring to justice those who harm individuals and businesses by committing offences such as robbery, 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.

ASB can take many forms – including intimidating and aggressive groups, damage, graffiti, and the anti-social use of vehicles. What they all have in common is that they are a blight on our communities and make people feel unsafe in their homes and wider community.

The police are vital to combatting ASB and are often the first agency residents turn to for help and support, but they cannot solve all problems by themselves. Kent Police must continue to work closely with residents, communities, businesses and partner agencies to address the sometimes complex causes of ASB and deliver effective long-term solutions. They must also ensure that victims and communities know their rights under the Community Trigger process.

Whilst urban, rural and coastal communities across Kent need to feel safe and secure, engagement with businesses of all types and sizes is important too.

Tackle violence against women and girls

Women and girls in our community are at a disproportionate risk of a wide range of crimes, predominantly perpetrated by men, such as domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, rape and sexual offences, including adult and child sexual exploitation.

Many females face violence and abusive behaviour on a regular basis and are too afraid to seek help. Abuse may occur behind closed doors but the consequences can be devastating and long-term, affecting the victim's physical health and mental well-being. It can also have a significant and long-lasting effect on any children, the wider family and local community.

As acknowledged nationally and reflected in the strong public response to my consultation in 2021, the police must actively tackle violence and abuse against women and girls.

To do so, Kent Police must listen to those directly affected by violence and abuse and work with partners to help ensure no woman or girl feels unsafe. Key areas will include:

- Prevention – raising awareness and understanding of the issue in educational establishments, workplaces as well as online, and making public spaces and venues safe places for all;
- Victims – ensuring they have the confidence to come forward, know what they can expect and have access to tailored first-class care and support throughout their criminal justice journey;
- Perpetrators – pursuing and bringing those responsible to justice; and
- System – working as a criminal justice system and with other agencies to deliver a 'whole system' approach, with better joint working and more effective interventions.

Equally, there is a need to continue building trust and confidence between women and girls and the police. The definition of violence against women and girls set out by the Government also includes offences against men and boys. As such, they should not receive any less of a service when they are victims of the same crimes, such as domestic abuse, stalking and sexual abuse.

The Chief Constable and I also expect inappropriate behaviour to continue to be called out within Kent Police, and all allegations of police perpetrated abuse to be dealt with swiftly, thoroughly and fairly with victims receiving first-class care and support.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

The exploitation or abuse of anyone in Kent is unacceptable. Not only can it cause victims lifelong physical and emotional trauma, but it can also leave a person even more vulnerable to further harm.

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.

Child sexual abuse and exploitation present unique challenges for policing and continues to grow. This is particularly true of online abuse, where ever-more sophisticated digital tools protect anonymity and where apps encourage children to engage in risky behaviour.

Those involved in modern slavery and human trafficking are not just using Kent as a gateway to and from the continent but committing offences within local communities. They are also often involved with complex criminal networks which require substantial investment to investigate and disrupt.

The vulnerable in our communities must be protected, but no single agency can tackle exploitation and abuse in isolation. That is why Kent Police must work with local partners to identify exploitation and abuse wherever it is occurring, pursue and bring offenders to justice, take action to safeguard victims and facilitate the provision of appropriate support to help them cope and recover.

Recognising that exploitation and abuse is not limited by geographical boundaries, Kent Police must also work with national and international law enforcement agencies to identify and protect victims and detect, deter and disrupt offenders and criminal networks.

Combat organised crime and county lines

Organised crime can seem like a distant threat, but sadly it presents considerable challenges and its effects can be seen in local communities. Whether it is serious violence such as knife crime, fraud and financial crime, cybercrime or the drugs trade, some of the most vulnerable members of society often become victims.

A common feature of county lines drug supply is also the exploitation of young and vulnerable people, where the associated violence and abuse has a devastating impact on the individual and local communities.

Kent Police must continue to develop and share intelligence to build a detailed local picture of threats, risk, harm and vulnerabilities, to safeguard victims and 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 agencies.

In addition, whilst digital technology has enhanced our lives and interactions in many positive ways, unfortunately organised criminals are increasingly exploiting it to commit a diverse range of crimes. Through appropriate technology, expertise and resource, and by working in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, Kent Police must protect residents and bring offenders to justice.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

The relationship between the police and the people who live, work in and visit the county is vital to building trust and confidence that Kent Police will keep people safe.

The public rightly has an expectation that they will be able to contact Kent Police when they need to in ways that work for them, whether to report an emergency, seek advice, offer information or express an opinion. And when they do they should expect to get an appropriate response.

Kent Police must allow individuals and diverse communities to engage and make contact with confidence, by making its services accessible, appropriate, easy to use and safe. It must continue to effectively handle 999 and 101 calls, but also maintain other methods of contact, such as online and through personal interaction, to ensure it is open to all and has the ability to respond to user needs and situations.

The police service would cease to function without the active support of the communities it serves. Kent Police must listen to and understand the needs of communities across the county and provide an appropriate response 24/7, 365 days a year in a timely, empathetic and professional manner. Neighbourhood policing is fundamental to this, providing opportunities for greater community engagement and delivering a local approach to policing that is visible, accessible and responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities.

Whilst the purpose stays the same, to prevent crime and keep people safe, in a world where technology and population change at pace, Kent Police must continue to adapt and transform to remain accessible and responsive to public need, whilst being a human, visible presence in local neighbourhoods.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

Despite the efforts of police officers, road safety partnership staff and volunteers, Kent's roads remain a concern for local communities.

People continue to drive through red lights, at high speeds, under the influence of drink or drugs, use a mobile phone at the wheel, or fail to wear a seat belt and commit a crime. They are putting their lives and the lives of others at risk. Inconsiderate road users who behave dangerously or in an anti-social manner are also making others feel unsafe.

Whilst all road users share a responsibility for their own and others' safety, the police have a vital part to play in ensuring that the road network operates efficiently and that those who use it can do so in safety and security. Kent Police must continue to crackdown on the main factors which contribute to people being killed and seriously injured on Kent's roads and work with partners to prevent road dangers, tackle inconsiderate behaviour and educate where appropriate.

Vision Zero is Kent County Council's Road Safety Strategy. Through partnership working, an evidence-led approach and by combining engineering, education and enforcement, it aims to make Kent's roads feel and be safer for all, with the aspiration of reducing road fatalities to zero by 2050. Kent Police must play its part by continuing to support Community Speedwatch and enhancing its enforcement activity to reduce driver behaviour that puts themselves and others at risk.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

Behind closed doors, a significant number of children and young people are subject to neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse; offending can also often be an indicator of vulnerability. With education disrupted, protective factors outside the home reduced and social contact made more difficult, the global coronavirus pandemic made some children and young people even more vulnerable.

However, they are not simply small adults; their knowledge, understanding, emotional and physical maturity is different. This can influence their ability to recognise danger, seek help or protect themselves and manifest in behaviours that may put them at greater risk. Research also demonstrates that without protective factors, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have a long-lasting impact.

It is essential that Kent Police and partners maximise the opportunities to support and protect children and young people by adopting a child centred approach which actively seeks out and hears their individual voices, acknowledges their differences, recognises their vulnerabilities and meets their needs.

Whenever an officer or member of staff comes into contact with a child or young person, it is important that they look beyond the immediate situation by asking questions and observing their behaviour and environment. By doing so, they may just help to break the cycle of neglect, abuse, trauma and offending which will reduce demand and improve the lives of children and young people for generations to come.

By actively promoting Child Centred Policing, the Voice of the Child and supporting innovative programmes such as Operation Encompass, we can ensure a brighter future for children and young people.

Every interaction with a child or young person also leaves a mark; it is an opportunity to build trust and to keep them safe. As a result, Kent Police must continue working with educational establishments and other organisations to provide positive engagement opportunities through programmes such as the Volunteer Police Cadets and Mini Police Cadets.

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.

Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system

In setting this Police and Crime Plan, I commit to holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure that the priorities I have set out - the issues which matter to the people of Kent - are being tackled. I will hold the Chief Constable to account in a number of ways, including:

- in public through my Performance and Delivery Board, and the Joint Audit Committee;
- through private briefings when it is appropriate to do so in order to discuss operationally or commercially sensitive matters;
- through an Independent Custody Visiting scheme that monitors the welfare of detainees.

As statutory responsibilities, I will also continue to monitor complaints made against Kent Police and act as the appellate body, providing a review process for complainants who are dissatisfied with how the force has handled their complaint.

Data is important, and I will be looking to track improvements in performance where these can be measured such as through victim satisfaction surveys. Equally though, it is important to consider context and the impact of external factors. For example, in some instances a numerical increase in reported crime may indicate that victims have greater confidence or feel more comfortable to come forward due to the success of awareness campaigns.

But I am not and will not be solely reliant on data. I will also consider other feedback, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services reports and other independent publications.

In holding the Chief Constable to account it is also vital that I hear the public's voice on how policing is being delivered. I will therefore provide a wide-ranging engagement programme that enables the diversity of residents, irrespective of background, to have their say.

It is also important to understand the finite role that Kent Police plays in securing justice and keeping our communities safe. Delivering an effective and efficient criminal justice system is not solely a responsibility for the police. Other agencies including local councils, the CPS, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, and the Probation Service all have a part to play in ensuring the victim's journey is as swift and smooth as possible. A good police response followed by a failure to achieve justice will still leave many victims dissatisfied and discouraged from reporting future crimes. Lengthy court delays and any public perception that sentencing is too lenient will also damage public confidence.

As chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, I will use my convening powers to bring the various agencies involved in the criminal justice process together to ensure we are collectively delivering a joined-up system which puts victims, not offenders and processes, first. In the longer term I would welcome the Government, following the conclusion of its PCC Review, affording PCCs greater responsibility for holding these agencies to account.

Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour

Preventing crime and ASB reduces demand on policing and the criminal justice system. But more importantly, it reduces victimisation. Preventing crime from happening in the first place delivers safer communities for all of us, allowing residents and businesses to thrive.

Residents feel reassured by a policing presence in their communities, but effective prevention is not solely a policing responsibility. Through my commissioning budget, I will continue to invest in initiatives which reduce crime and make people feel safer; including community-based partner-led projects.

The effectiveness of a joined-up response has been proven by the work of the partnership Task Forces in Thanet, Medway, and Maidstone, and by the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It is only by working together that we can effectively prevent crime and ASB by addressing some of the underlying causes such as poor mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, inadequate housing, and lack of provision of youth services.

When vulnerable suspects are brought into police custody, we must maximise the opportunity to reduce future offending through diversion and support. Around 80% of cautioned or convicted crimes are the result of reoffending.

At sentencing, whether a custodial sentence or not, consideration needs to be given to rehabilitation. And when prisoners are released, we must ensure they have a realistic chance to rebuild their lives. That means ensuring they have appropriate accommodation and opportunities for training or employment.

Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation

For nearly two centuries, British policing has constantly evolved and adapted to respond to shifting threats. As a result of my regular engagement with the public, I continue to work with Kent Police to ensure the force has the resources to meet the needs of today and the demands of tomorrow.

Where these threats are national, or international, it is imperative that police forces and other law enforcement agencies work in collaboration to identify the most effective solutions to address these problems; including investing in new innovative practices where appropriate.

Presently, one of the largest threats to public safety is cyber-enabled crime. Fraud, for example, now represents the most common crime type in England and Wales. Much of this crime is conducted online via digital communications. Protecting the public and businesses from this threat requires education and awareness, as well as investment in specialist digital investigators and modern IT. Working with local and national partners, including the Police Digital Service, I will ensure policing is able to exploit the advantages that technology can offer to better safeguard and protect our communities.

Policing must also play its part in tackling wider issues such as the global climate crisis. I am committed to energy efficiency and reducing Kent Police's carbon footprint to help protect the local environment, while potentially realising cost savings through the smarter use of resources and technology. By actively supporting the national procurement service BlueLight Commercial – which I currently chair – PCCs can also acquire a modern, greener fleet and promote social value throughout supply chains while ensuring value for money for taxpayers.

Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review

I have a duty to ensure Kent Police has the resources it needs. Since I was first elected, I have spoken up for the people of Kent and Medway, lobbying Government for our fair share of national grant funding. The success of the Government's uplift programme means Kent Police now has more police officers than at any time in its history, but there is still more to do.

Our county is uniquely positioned between London and mainland Europe. We have one of the longest coastlines in the country, the longest Strategic Road Network, and some significant pockets of urban and coastal deprivation. As the Home Office reviews the national Funding Formula - the mechanism used to calculate how much national funding each police force area receives - I will continue to engage with decision-makers in Whitehall to ensure our circumstances are fully recognised and that Kent Police is not adversely affected.

I have already been successful in recent years in securing additional money from a variety of Government grants and funding streams to assist in making Kent safer. This includes surge funding to tackle and disrupt county lines; reimbursement for costs associated with exiting the European Union; VRU funding to tackle youth violence and knife crime; Safer Streets funding to make communities safer; and one-off funding to provide additional support for vulnerable victims during the Covid pandemic.

Through my Commissioning Team, I will continue to proactively identify opportunities to bid for Kent's share of national funding streams and ensure any money received is spent appropriately. Doing so will mean that I can further financially support Kent Police to deliver a quality operational response, and support communities to deliver initiatives which make people safer.

Support volunteering

I continue to be in awe of all those, whether they bear a police logo or not, who freely give their time to support our local communities and keep us safe. As well as my Independent Custody Visiting scheme, organisations such as the Kent Special Constabulary, the Volunteer Police Cadets, Kent Rescue 4x4, Kent Search and Rescue (KSAR), Community Speedwatch, victims' support services, and innumerable others deserve our thanks. Without the extensive support of these and a great number of others, there would be extra costs incurred and resources required by Kent Police.

My commitment to those organisations remains that I will do all I can to ensure they have the support they need to thrive and continue their fantastic work. That may include financial assistance when appropriate and in accordance with my commissioning priorities. As an example, with match-funding from my Office, we have seen the return of Volunteer Police Cadets for young people in Kent.

However, because supporting volunteering is not just about money - it is about leadership - where I can, I will also use my convening powers and influence to speak up for their needs and assist them in accessing support from elsewhere.

I have volunteered for a variety of organisations throughout my lifetime and will continue to do so where I can. I will also continue to empower and encourage my own staff to volunteer in their local communities in whatever way they choose.

Commission services for victims that are needs-led

Providing services which support victims of crime, and so helping them come to terms with what has happened as much as possible, is one of the core responsibilities of any PCC.

My firm commitment is that, here in Kent, the services I commission will be victim-led and treat everyone as an individual by taking account of their own needs and unique circumstances. This includes services for those who may be especially vulnerable, such as victims of domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and modern slavery.

Whether a victim chooses to report their crime to the police or not, I will ensure they can access freely available services to help them. Such services may make greater utilisation of digital or other contact channels, but only where it is the right thing for the victim.

I also commit to ensuring people for whom English is not a first language, as well as those who have disabilities or other personal circumstances which impact on their ability to access services, are catered for.

To make sure funds allocated from my commissioning budget to support victims' services are used to maximum effect, I will continue to utilise a variety of commissioning approaches to ensure appropriate service providers are identified and awards are subject to robust governance and monitoring arrangements, with information made publicly available in the interests of openness and transparency.

National expectations

The Strategic Policing Requirement

Many of the threats Kent faces can be tackled locally, but threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime, cybercrime and major public unrest need a coordinated approach which brings together resources from across the country.

The policing requirement to counter such threats is set out in the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) (SPR)¹ and the Chief Constable and I must have 'due regard' to the SPR and ensure that Kent Police is in a state of readiness to respond to the requirements. This may include sharing and pooling resources with other forces in order to effectively tackle such threats. Kent Police already has a strong collaboration with Essex Police and with police forces across the Eastern region to tackle serious criminality, but the Chief Constable must ensure there are sufficient resources to meet these important responsibilities.

As PCC I must also ensure that sufficient funds are available to deliver the required contribution to the SPR.

National Crime and Policing Measures

The Government has been clear that PCCs must achieve significant reductions in crime and restore the public's confidence in the criminal justice system.

To support the '[Beating crime plan](#)', the Home Office has introduced a number of National Crime and Policing Measures to focus effort on key national priorities and allow performance to be measured.

The key national priorities are as follows:

- Reduce murder and other homicides
- Reduce serious violence
- Disrupt drugs supply and county lines
- Reduce neighbourhood crime
- Tackle cyber-crime
- Improve satisfaction among victims – with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse

They complement the local priorities set out in this Police and Crime Plan and I aim to be as transparent as I can be on performance in this area. In holding the Chief Constable to account, I will provide a statement on the contribution of Kent Police to delivery of the national priorities on a quarterly basis and make this available via my website.

Policing Vision 2025

The [Policing Vision 2025](#) sets out the future for policing, shaping decisions about how police forces use their resources to keep people safe. It has been developed by the Association of PCCs and the National Police Chiefs' Council in consultation with the College of Policing, the National Crime Agency, staff associations and other policing and community partners.

Legislation

New or amended legislation such as the Public Order Bill and Victims Bill represent real opportunities to make Kent safer, tackle crime and ASB, support victims and ensure justice is done. Kent Police must ensure that it provides the right training, empowers officers and staff, and puts in place the right resources to address relevant provisions.

¹ Currently being reviewed by the Home Office

Resources and Medium Term Financial Plan

Funding

I receive all funding for policing and crime in Kent. The total gross funding for Kent is £444.6m and is funded through:

- £224.5m of direct revenue grant funding from central government
- £23.9m of specific government grant
- £161.1m from the council tax including the deficit on the collection fund
- £35.1m of locally generated income such as fees and charges

The overall gross expenditure for Kent is £458.7m and therefore £14.1m of savings are required to balance the budget. Of this, £6.8m is expected from the Neighbourhood Policing Review, leaving £7.3m to be identified and made in year. 99% of the budget is available for the Chief Constable to exercise his functions in delivering the Making Kent Safer plan. The remaining 1% is to enable me to carry out my statutory duties as PCC.

Council tax

The Government sets a limit on how much can be raised through the council tax before I must call a referendum. For 2023/24, the Government announced that PCCs could increase the 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. I am also acutely aware of the financial pressures faced by households during the cost of living crisis and am reluctant to add to them. However, this increased flexibility has allowed me to mitigate the savings required for 2023/24, continue to maintain police officer numbers, as well as invest prudently for operational policing and the prevention of crime. I believe this exceeds that test and therefore the council tax for Kent will increase by £15 for an average Band D property, or 6.57% (equivalent to £1.25 per month or 4 pence per day).

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

Budget and medium-term financial challenges

My budget and precept proposal for 2023/24 has been a difficult proposition. In previous years, although highlighting the need to make significant savings, I have been able to identify the additionality to Kent Police that the precept will provide, whether through additional officers, PCSO's or assets and equipment.

However, the financial challenges facing policing in 2023/24 and beyond mean I need to focus on the difficult decisions required to balance the budget. The shortfall in funding from the Government, with only £0.7m of ongoing additional funding received in 2023/24, coupled with significant inflation mean cost pressures are substantial and savings need to be made. I have discussed the savings proposals with the Chief Constable to ensure the impact on frontline policing is mitigated as much as possible, while recognising that they will impact on other areas of the organisation.

An example of this is the Neighbourhood Policing Review. Its aims are to ensure Kent Police has the right mix of roles and functions to ensure it continues to provide a first-class service and to deliver financial savings. The review introduces a new plan for neighbourhood policing which utilises the additional police officers recruited over the last few years to replace PCSOs in local areas so that residents will see more police officers on the street. This will unfortunately mean a reduction in the headcount of PCSO's.

This example highlights the scale of the problem for 2023/24. A significant operational review has identified substantial savings that in most years would have been sufficient to meet the savings gap. However, even with those savings there is still a need for savings of a similar magnitude just to balance the budget.

My increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles helps mitigate some of the savings required. Anything less than £15 would require further reductions in staffing and service levels.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) shows that the next two years are the most difficult in terms of savings required to balance the budget. Although difficult decisions have been and will need to be made, I am determined to ensure that those decisions are taken at an early stage and in a considerate manner so that Kent Police can build on the successes of previous years and face the future in a strong position.

The 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 2023/24 through to 2027/28. A range of optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are produced by the force's and my Chief Finance Officer with several differing assumptions; these are discussed with myself, the Chief Constable and our respective senior leadership teams before the final version is completed and presented.

The current iteration of the MTFP shows £42m of savings required over the lifetime of the plan. There is a savings plan to cover this period which is constantly reviewed by the senior leadership team to identify opportunities for further savings.

The Policing Minister when announcing the financial settlement stated that the police are expected to ensure they make the best use of public money. The Home Office expects to see at least £100 million of cashable savings (as part of CSR21). This should be achieved through the following:

- Working with BlueLight Commercial to maximise financial and commercial benefits related to procurement, through use of the organisation's commercial expertise, leveraging the purchasing power available across the sector, and developing the capacity to implement a full commercial life-cycle approach to procurement.
- Corporate Functions, where the Home Office and BlueLight Commercial are conducting ongoing work with the sector to understand the opportunities around management of corporate functions, for example implementation of shared service models.

I am confident that this budget and the MTFP demonstrate Kent's ability to meet these expectations and my commitment to making the best use of the funds entrusted to me by the Kent taxpayer.

Commissioning and working with partners

In addition to my policing responsibilities, I am responsible for ensuring effective support services for victims of crime, and working in partnership to reduce crime, disorder, and ASB. To support delivery of this I have a commissioning budget which is made up of the following:

- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 enables PCCs to use an element of the Policing Grant to support crime and disorder reduction within their police area.
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) issues a victim services grant to PCCs under section 56(1) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to enable the commissioning of support services.
- Funding secured through bidding opportunities made available during the financial year.

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 future commissioning decisions.

At the time of writing the MoJ have yet to formally announce their allocations, but it has been assumed that the £2.1m 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 2023/24. In total, the combined commissioning and victim services budget is expected to be £4.2m for 2023/24.

My Commissioning Strategy will be released once all allocations from the MoJ have been announced. However, the following provides a broad outline.

Commissioning Budget Strategic Overview 2023/24

Funding Streams	2023/24 £m
Crime and Disorder Reduction	1.8
Victim Services	2.3
Intervention Projects	0.1
Total	£4.2*

* These are indicative allocations of the 2023/24 funding streams and will be subject to further amendment. Finalised allocations will be published online.

Allocations from the above funding streams are in the process of being agreed to sustain key provision of services for 2023/24. There are also a number of projects that my team acquired additional funding for, such as the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme and additional Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. These will continue into 2023/24.

Once the funding outcome is known, further allocations will be made in line with my Commissioning Strategy.