

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

Introduction:

1. The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) (PRSRA 2011) sets the requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to issue a Police and Crime Plan within the financial year in which they are elected. The plan has effect from the day on which it is published to the last day of the financial year in which the next election is expected (or when a new plan is published following the election, if sooner).
2. The purpose of a Police and Crime Plan is to communicate a PCC's vision and objectives. The Police and Crime Plan impacts upon a wide variety of stakeholders and has a number of intended audiences, including: the public; victims of crime and witnesses; police officers and staff; the Secretary of State; Police and Crime Panels; community safety partners; criminal justice agencies; and the private and voluntary sector.
3. A Police and Crime Plan must set out the following:
 - the PCC's police and crime objectives;
 - the policing of the area which the Chief Constable is to provide;
 - the financial and other resources the PCC is to provide to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions;
 - the means by which the Chief Constable will report to the PCC on the provision of policing;
 - the means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing will be measured; and
 - the services, including any grants and conditions associated with them, which are to be provided by virtue of section 143 of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014¹.
4. PCCs are required to keep the plan under review and at any time, may issue or vary a Police and Crime Plan. In doing so, they must have regard to the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) which is issued by the Secretary of State and was published in February 2023.
5. Before issuing or varying a Police and Crime Plan, PCCs must:
 - prepare a draft of the plan or variation;
 - consult the Chief Constable in preparing the draft plan or variation;
 - send the draft plan or variation to the Police and Crime Panel;
 - have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Panel in relation to the draft plan or variation;
 - give the panel a response to any such report or recommendations; and
 - publish any such response.
6. In exercising their discrete functions, PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to the issued Police and Crime Plan.
7. The PRSRA 2011 also requires PCCs to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the precept which is proposed to be issued for the financial year.
8. The Police and Crime Panel must review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC, which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.
9. This report fulfils the requirements set out in paragraphs 5 and 7.

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

Development of the Police and Crime Plan:

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

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

➤ Respondents across Kent and Medway felt 7.0/10 safe where they live

> 2023 = 6.3 > 2022 = 7.2 > 2021 = 7.0 > 2020 = 7.0 > 2019 = 6.4 > 2018 = 6.5

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

➤ Respondents felt 5.8/10 safe in their nearest town centre

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

➤ Respondents across Kent and Medway trusted Kent Police 6.4/10

> 2023 = 6.0

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

➤ Respondents rated the performance of Kent Police 5.8/10

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

➤ Respondents could select up to six from a pre-defined list; the top five were:

1. Rape or sexual assault
2. Knife crime
3. Child sexual exploitation
4. Violent assault
5. Drugs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- With an average of 7.0/10, respondents felt safer where they live than in 2023 (6.3/10).
- With an average of 6.4/10, respondents had more trust in Kent Police than in 2023 (6.0/10)
- The top two types of crime respondents felt were most important - Rape or sexual assault and Knife crime² - were consistent with previous years.
- There was strong agreement with the PCC's current Police and Crime Plan priorities.

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

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

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

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

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

The Kent Police and Crime Plan:

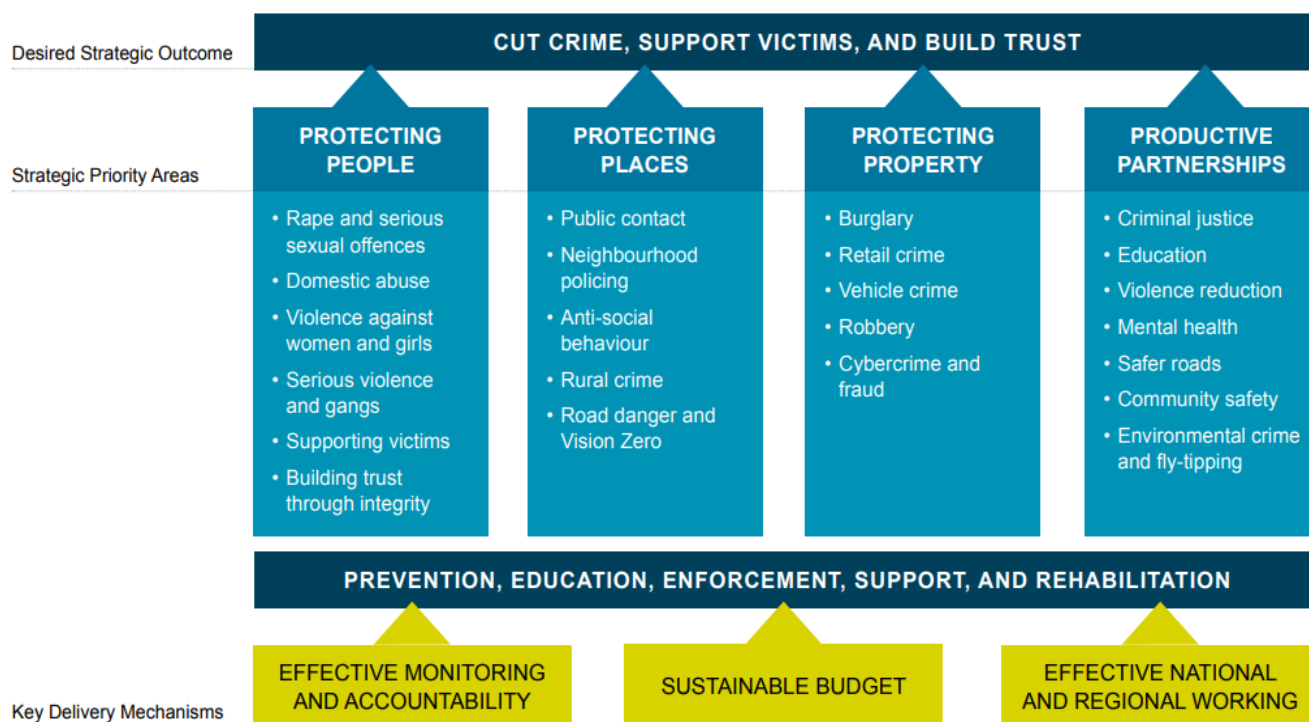
21. Attached as Appendix B is a draft of the PCC's 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Policing precept proposal for 2025-26:

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

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

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

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

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

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

35. The decision to propose the maximum increase allowed is not one that has been taken lightly. The PCC is acutely aware it is a further burden when Kent residents are facing considerable cost-of-living pressures, especially if other local authorities increase their precepts by the maximum permitted. However, it is essential to mitigate some of the cost pressures and to maintain Kent Police's strong performance.
36. In developing this proposal, the PCC has also considered other factors including:
- The Strategic Policing Requirement.
 - Delivery of the draft 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust: Kent Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029'.
 - Professional guidance and advice from the Chief Constable.
 - Kent Police's Force Management Statement (FMS) - a detailed self-assessment of future demand versus capacity.
 - Kent Police's Control Strategy - an annual assessment of long-term key issues.
37. The Force has prepared a savings plan, but this has required some difficult decisions to be made. However, the PCC and the Chief Constable both believe that it strikes a balance between investment in frontline policing to provide a more visible and effective service, with making savings in other parts of the organisation. The release of savings will also be managed carefully to ensure minimal impact on operational policing.
38. In addition, the PCC is confident that through this budget and precept proposal, he and the Chief Constable can Cut Crime, Support Victims and Build Trust, as well as deliver against the expectations of the Policing Minister as set out at paragraph 27.
39. Between 20 December 2024 and 7 January 2025, the PCC undertook a public consultation on his proposed precept increase. The survey was made available on the OPCC website and promoted online to Newsletter subscribers and through My Community Voice, as well as traditional media channels, including Kent Online. Attached as Appendix C is the explanatory text to the survey and the answer options.
40. In total, 821 responses were received, with 76.7% (630) recognising the need for the increase and accepting that it was necessary to support Kent Police. The result was as follows:

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

41. Noting the outcome of the public consultation, and subject to the Police and Crime Panel's approval, the PCC confirms his intention to increase the policing precept in 2025-26 to £270.15 for an average Band D property. This represents an increase of £14 per year (or 5.5%) on the current precept.
42. Appendix D is a detailed report dealing with financial matters prepared by the Chief Finance Officer. It includes further information on the funding settlement, budget and precept proposal, OPCC budget and MTFP.

Recommendation:

43. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to:
- Review the draft Police and Crime Plan and produce a report which may include recommendations.
 - Review the proposed precept and produce a report which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.

List of Appendices:

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