

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Draft refreshed Police and Crime Plan and 2026-27 precept proposal
Date: 5 February 2026

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 that covers their term of office.
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](#) (SPR) 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.

Refreshing the Police and Crime Plan:

10. On 1 April 2025, the PCC published his 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029.
11. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC is committed to consulting with victims and the wider community and to keeping the plan under review, particularly in light of government commitments, changes to the SPR and/or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel. More formally, the PCC has determined that the plan will be refreshed annually.
12. Attached as Appendix A is the 2026 refreshed version of the plan, which has been updated where necessary. It has not, however, been fundamentally altered since it still reflects the PCC's strategic direction for policing and community safety in the county, with the priorities designed to drive the work of Kent Police, partners and the Office of the PCC (OPCC).
13. In approaching each refresh, the PCC is keen to encourage feedback from victims, communities and partner agencies. The Annual Policing Survey was launched in September and ran until the beginning of December 2025. It aims to reach out to, and hear from as many of Kent's communities as possible. In total, 5,401 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).
14. A report outlining the survey methodology and the full results is attached as Appendix B (and can also be viewed [here](#) on the OPCC website).
15. The following is worthy of note:
 - With an average of 7.3/10, respondents felt safer where they live than in 2024 (7.0/10).
 - With an average of 5.9/10, respondents felt safer in their nearest town centre than in 2024 (5.8/10).
 - With an average of 6.5/10, respondents had more trust in Kent Police than in 2024 (6.4/10).
 - With an average of 6.1/10, respondents felt Kent Police were performing better than in 2024 (5.8/10).
 - There was very strong agreement with the PCC's current Police and Crime Plan priorities.
 - The percentage of respondents who had experienced ASB as either a victim or witness was 51.5%, a decrease of 3.6 percentage points compared to 2024.
16. For information, some of the key questions and results are shown below (previous year's figures are included where available):
 - Q1. On a scale of 0-10, how safe do you feel where you live? (0 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)
 - *Respondents across Kent and Medway felt 7.3/10 safe where they live*
 >2024 = 7.0 > 2023 = 6.3 > 2022 = 7.2 > 2021 = 7.0 > 2020 = 7.0 > 2019 = 6.4 > 2018 = 6.5
 - Q2. On a scale of 0-10, how safe do you feel in your nearest town centre? (0 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)
 - *Respondents felt 5.9/10 safe in their nearest town centre*
 >2024 = 5.8
 - Q3. On a scale of 0-10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (0 = not at all / 10 = very much)
 - *Respondents across Kent and Medway trusted Kent Police 6.5/10*
 >2024 = 6.4 > 2023 = 6.0
 - Q4. On a scale of 0-10, how well do you think Kent Police are performing? (0 = very badly / 10 = very well)
 - *Respondents rated the performance of Kent Police 6.1/10*
 >2024 = 5.8
- Q6 – Q9. Do you agree with the PCC's current Police and Crime Plan priorities?

	<u>Protecting People</u>	<u>Protecting Places</u>	<u>Protecting Property</u>	<u>Productive Partnerships</u>
Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape & serious sexual offences • Domestic abuse • Violence against women & girls • Serious violence, gangs & knife crime • Supporting victims • Building trust through integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public contact • Neighbourhood policing • Anti-social behaviour • Rural crime • Road danger & Vision Zero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burglary • Retail crime • Vehicle crime • Robbery • Cybercrime & fraud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal justice • Citizens in policing • Education • Violence reduction • Mental health • Safer roads • Community safety • Environmental crime & fly-tipping
% Agreed	91.1	92.7	93.7	93.8

Q10. Have you experienced antisocial behaviour in the last year?

		2024
Yes - as a victim or witness	51.5%	55.1%
No	48.5%	44.9%

Q14. Have you experienced any other type of crime in the last year?

		2024
Yes - as a victim or witness	27.5%	26.9%
No	72.5%	73.1%

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

18. 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 by completing the survey.

19. As well as the survey results, other documents and factors considered by the PCC include:

- 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 SPR 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 Safer Streets Mission and ambition to halve knife crime and violence against women and girls within a decade.
- Findings and recommendations from independent public inquiries, such as Angiolini.
- 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.

20. The refresh has also taken account of feedback received throughout the year from engagements undertaken by the PCC as well as the thousands of pieces of correspondence received by his office.

21. The Chief Constable has also been fully consulted, and of course the PCC's own ambitions and objectives, as well as overall vision for policing and community safety in the county remain at its core.

22. Further to any recommendations made by the Panel, the refreshed plan will be published on the OPCC website on 1 April 2026. The PCC will subsequently provide updates to the Panel as required.

Changes to the 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' Police and Crime Plan 2025 – 2029:

23. It is important to note that based on the survey results there was strong support for the plan priorities.

24. It has therefore only been updated where necessary to remain contemporary. The most significant changes are as follows:

- Page 4 - survey data updated based on most recent Annual Policing Survey results.
- Page 8, VAWG - first bullet amended to incorporate Recommendation 23 of the Angiolini Inquiry, Part 2 First Report: PCCs should ensure that the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is an essential part of their Police and Crime Plan.
- Page 12, Neighbourhood policing - first bullet updated to incorporate elements of the Government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.
- Page 12, ASB - second bullet added to reflect elements of the Government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.
- Page 18 - updated based on proposed 2026-27 budget.
- Page 19, Devolution - updated to reflect the Government's announcement that PCCs will be abolished in 2028.
- Page 20 - updated to reflect that the OPCC is now on LinkedIn and TikTok.

25. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC will keep the plan under constant review, particularly in light of changes to the SPR or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel.

Policing precept proposal for 2026-27:

26. On 18 December 2025, in a written statement to Parliament on the Provisional Police Funding Settlement (England and Wales) 2026-27, the Rt Hon Sarah Jones MP, Minister of State for Policing and Crime said:

“Total funding for police forces, including Counter-Terrorism Policing, will be up to £19.5 billion in 2026-27, an increase of up to £798 million compared to the 2025-26 police funding settlement. Total funding to territorial police forces will be up to £18.3 billion, an increase of up to £746 million compared to 2025-26. This equates to a 4.2% cash increase and a 2.0% real terms increase for police forces. For Police and Crime Commissioners in England the council tax referendum threshold will be £15 for a Band D property.

“Funding for Counter-Terrorism Policing will increase by at least £52 million to £1.2 billion in 2026-27. Police and Crime Commissioners will be notified separately of force-level funding allocations for CT Policing, which will not be made public for security reasons.

“We will publish a Police Reform White Paper in early 2026 which will set out a vision to bring policing into the modern age with the technology, innovation and structures they need to ensure policing can focus on the crimes that matter to the public and to drive out waste and inefficiency.”

27. Whilst confirming that PCCs have the flexibility to increase the precept by up to £15 in 2026-27, the statement was extremely light on detail compared to previous years. There was no breakdown of core police funding into the usual categories of grants; no mention of other grant funding i.e. Violence Reduction Units (VRU), and there were no details on how the funding should be used.
28. Although not published in time for this report, the Police Reform White Paper is expected to include further details regarding the abolishment of PCCs, potential changes to Force boundaries, as well as the financial settlement including any conditions of funding.
29. The overall increase in police funding as announced by the Government assumes that all PCC's increase the precept by £15, the maximum allowed under the referendum principles. This continues the move away from central funding for policing with local taxpayers expected to pick up the burden. In 2010, 73% of Kent's funding came from government with 27% from precept and locally generated income. That proportion in 2026-27 will be 56% government and 44% precept.
30. Whilst the Core Police Grant from the Government has increased by £12.9m, this does not include any funding for pay awards (agreed by the Government). In Kent, pay costs are approximately 80% of the budget, so pay awards alone amount to £16.4m, £3.5m greater than the funding provided centrally. Overall budget pressures in 2026-27 total £30m.
31. On Friday 16 January, the Home Office announced that the police funding settlement would be increased by a further £50m, with all PCC areas benefiting from a share to increase the number of police officers within Neighbourhood Policing. Kent's share of this additional funding is £1.2m, with a target to increase police officers in neighbourhood policing by 43. The Government also confirmed this is the only headcount target they require and the previous target around overall police officer numbers no longer applies.
32. In 2026-27, a further 43 officers will therefore be deployed within Neighbourhood Policing across Kent and Medway on top of the 65 delivered in 2025-26. This means an additional 108 officers working in local neighbourhoods tackling ASB and addressing community concerns.
33. The 2026-27 PCC budget and precept proposal has had to find a balance between meeting ongoing unavoidable pressures, additional investment, and savings all without having the complete details of central government funding. This means that the proposal is the best estimate of the financial challenges faced by Kent Police and the PCC. Despite the lack of detail, the amount of core funding from government means savings will be required. Further announcements and any conditions attached to funding means the level is yet to be finalised. However, it is recognised that savings will need to be made and that the precept will need to increase in order to mitigate the severity of the savings required.

34. Increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles would help mitigate but not remove the need to make savings. Even with the £15 increase, £40m of savings are required over the medium term, £2.9m in 2026-27. If the maximum increase was not taken and, for example, an increase in line with the inflation target (2% or £5.40) was, this would increase the level of savings required by approximately a further £7m for 2026-27 alone. This is an issue not unique to Kent but affecting policing across the country, with the unfairness in the funding formula and the different abilities for PCCs to raise income through precept impacting on some more than others. Kent as one of the lower (and below average) preceptors is more affected. Both the PCC and Chief Constable continue to argue for fairer and better funding from central government.
35. In Kent 80% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees which reduces the scope to make savings from non-pay areas. The budget was prepared assuming that police officer numbers will have to be maintained. If they are, this equates to 59% of the gross budget that savings cannot be made from. It is therefore inevitable that with the level of savings required there will be some impact on staffing levels. Anything less than a £15 increase in the precept would require additional reductions in staffing, including the de-civilianisation of roles and risk reducing levels of service including where strong progress has been made.
36. The Force have been preparing savings plans during the year and these can be tailored depending on the final level of savings required. In any event, this has required some difficult decisions to be made. The PCC and the Chief Constable have struck a balance where investment in frontline policing can provide a more visible and effective service while making savings in other parts of the organisation. The Chief Constable has also assured the PCC that any savings which impact on personnel will be managed sympathetically.
37. Any savings requirement for 2026-27 should be seen against a backdrop of close to £100m savings already delivered since 2016 when the PCC was first elected.
38. However, it is not only the Force that faces significant cost pressures; so too does the 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 Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests, continue to put pressure on the 2026-27 budget.
39. 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 his 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.
40. Although extremely challenging, the PCC recognises the immense pressure the Force is under to deliver savings, and has therefore determined that all OPCC pay pressures will be managed internally. However, there are a number of costs the PCC funds that support the work of the Force. These relate to the Sexual Assault Referral Clinic (SARC) which provides valuable forensic services as well as initial support to victims, external audit fees, and fees and allowances for Legally Qualified Chairs and Joint Audit Committee members. The OPCC has no choice but to pay these increased costs. Therefore, the PCC will be increasing his overall office budget by £0.25m in 2026-27, returning it to a pre-2018/19 level.
41. In developing this proposal, the PCC has considered other factors including:
- The SPR.
 - Delivery of the 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' 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.
42. The PCC also conducted a consultation on police funding, including the council tax precept. Running between 18 December 2025 and 18 January 2026, 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 and social media channels.

43. In total, 1,200 responses were received and attached as Appendix C is the survey report (it can also be viewed [here](#) on the OPCC website).

44. With regards to the council tax precept, the following results are worthy of note:

- 86.8% of respondents (1,041) accepted that the maximum increase permitted by the Government of £15 per year was necessary; and
- 46.4% of respondents (557) were willing to pay more than the maximum £15 increase per year extra.

45. For information, the precept specific questions and results are shown below:

The Government will allow PCCs to increase the council tax precept by £15 per year for a Band D property in 2026-27. This raise will allow us to maintain the current level of service. If we do not achieve this income, Kent Police would be required to make cuts to the service.

Q6. How do you feel about the proposal to increase the council tax precept?

<i>I'm happy to contribute an increase of £15 per year for an average Band D council tax (or £1.25 per month) as described.</i>	41% (493)
<i>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 further savings.</i>	46% (548)
<i>I'm not happy about the increased charge and accept that this would mean a significant reduction in service.</i>	13% (159)

Q7. Would you be willing to pay more than £15 per year extra?

Yes	46% (557)
No	54% (643)

46. Subject to the Police and Crime Panel's approval, the PCC proposes to increase the policing precept in 2026-27 to £285.15 for an average Band D property. This represents an increase of £15 per year (or 5.6%) on the current precept.

47. This decision has not 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 maintain the continued strong progress and performance of Kent Police.

48. The PCC is also confident that through his budget and precept proposal, he and the Chief Constable can continue to Cut Crime, Support Victims and Build Trust.

49. Attached as 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:

50. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Review the draft refreshed 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 Draft refreshed 'Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust' Police and Crime Plan 2025 - 2029

Appendix B Annual Policing Survey report – December 2025

Appendix C Police Funding Consultation report – January 2026

Appendix D Chief Finance Officer's Report