

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Draft Refreshed Police and Crime Plan for 2015/16 and Precept Proposal

Summary: This paper provides an overview of the process for refreshing the Police and Crime Plan, including the consultation that has taken place and revisions that have been made. In addition, this paper provides details of the proposed precept, budget and medium term plan and community safety grants.

Background:

1. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out the requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners to formulate a Police and Crime Plan which covers their term of office. The Police and Crime Plan must include the following information:
 - The police and crime objectives to be delivered;
 - The policing that the Chief Constable should provide;
 - The financial and other resources to be provided to the Chief Constable to exercise their functions;
 - The means by which the Chief Constable will be held to account for the provision of policing;
 - The crime and disorder reduction grants that will be made and any conditions associated with them.
2. Police and Crime Commissioners are required to keep the Police and Crime Plan under review. In particular, the plan should be reviewed in light of any changes to the Strategic Policing Requirement or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel.
3. Police and Crime Commissioners are also required to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the precept which is proposed to be issued for the financial year. This report also fulfils that requirement.

The Plan Refresh Process:

4. The current plan makes a commitment for an annual refresh to be undertaken. This allows for changes in national policy, local priorities and financial parameters to be incorporated, as well as consideration of Panel recommendations. The refresh will not result in a fundamental altering of the plan, as this reflects statutory requirements and the ambitions of the Commissioner during her term of Office.
5. In approaching the refresh, there has been a commitment to positively encourage feedback opportunities from individuals, communities and partner agencies as a means to improve and develop service delivery. Therefore, an extensive consultation process employing various engagement techniques has been undertaken to inform this refresh. The consultation opened on 23 October and closed on 5 December 2014.

6. On 23 October, an online survey was uploaded and promoted on the Commissioner's website asking the following questions:
- Of the existing priorities within the Police and Crime Plan, are there any that require more or less emphasis and if so, why?
 - Are there priorities which relate to policing, criminal justice and community safety which you feel should be included in the Police and Crime Plan and if so, why?
 - What policing, criminal justice or community safety priorities has your organisation identified through the annual business planning processes? Are these reflected within the current Police and Crime Plan and if not, which ones would you consider relevant for inclusion?
 - Are there any significant national, regional or local policy changes within policing, criminal justice or community safety that need to be considered for inclusion within the refreshed Police and Crime Plan? If so, what are these?
 - For 2015/16, if the Government were to permit an increase in the policing proportion of council tax beyond 2%, without requiring a costly referendum, would you support me raising it, as long as it did not go above 3.5%?
7. On 27 October, a range of stakeholders were directly e-mailed the online survey including:
- Kent MPs
 - KCC Councillors
 - Medway Councillors
 - Community Safety Partnerships
 - Parish Councils
 - Council Leaders & Chief Executives
 - District & Borough Councillors
 - Business Associations
 - Charities & Voluntary organisations
 - Kent Association of Local Councils
8. The online survey was also e-mailed directly to 5,000 subscribers of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Newsletter and the opportunity to provide feedback highlighted in the November 2014 edition.
9. The link to the consultation was circulated to 8,600 twitter followers and the Commissioner also hosted a Policing in Kent event on 21 November 2014 where the online survey was promoted.
10. Whilst clearly a range of views and opinions were articulated through the consultation, the following is a summary of the results and outcome:
- Are there any existing priorities that require more or less emphasis – suggestions reflected in the plan include domestic abuse, hate crime and partnership working. However, the consensus agreed with the current priorities, and visible community policing was again the most consistent theme.
 - Are there any other priorities that should be included – themes reflected in the plan include road safety, alcohol misuse and drug dealing. In addition, consistent themes that have been incorporated are child sexual exploitation and police engagement.
 - Are there priorities that your organisation has identified that should be included – there was little consistency, but themes reflected in the plan include the health agenda, gang affiliation and rural policing.
 - Are there any significant policy changes that should be included – common themes that are incorporated in the plan include the use of new powers (e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014), cybercrime, human trafficking and children and young people.
 - Support for raising the policing proportion of the council tax – there was strong support for an increase of 2%, in line with existing published plans, but limited support for an increase of more than this; in particular, where there was support, it was tempered by a need to know where the funds would be spent.

11. In addition to the above, the refresh has taken into account comments received throughout the year at public engagement events and in correspondence received by the Office of the Commissioner.
12. The Chief Constable has been consulted and provided feedback which is fully reflected in the refreshed plan.

Key Changes in the Refreshed Police and Crime Plan:

13. A copy of the refreshed Police and Crime Plan in text only format can be found at Appendix A. Once the text has been finalised, photographs and graphics will be added prior to publishing on the website. It will be presented in a similar format to the current Police and Crime Plan.
14. As previously indicated, the focus has been on refreshing the contents of the plan rather than undertaking a major re-write. However, as this is both a public-facing plan and used to set the direction of policing and crime and disorder reduction, it is designed to balance the needs of both audiences within one document.
15. The Governance section sets out how Kent Police will be held to account for the delivery of policing and the priorities contained within the refreshed plan. This has been updated to reflect new arrangements introduced over the last year:
 - The People Board: In support of the Force culture change, this oversees how the Kent Police Mission, Vision and Values are being embedded, with an emphasis on organisational health, integrity and diversity.
 - The Ethics Committee: Comprising of independent members as well as Force and OPCC representatives, this was set up in line with recommendations developed by the College of Policing in the Code of Ethics. The Committee supports the Chief Constable and Commissioner in fostering a culture where ethical decision making drives activity, and ensures a quality service is delivered to the communities of Kent.
16. Aligned to the consultation findings, the core Policing and Crime and Disorder Reduction Priorities remain unchanged and are as follows:
 - Cut crime and catch criminals
 - Ensure visible community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent
 - Prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and reduce repeat victimisation and offending
 - Put victims and witnesses at the heart of processes
 - Protect the public from harm
 - Deliver value for money
 - Meet national commitments for policing
17. Reflecting the consultation, working in partnership remains a core theme. With the challenging financial environment, it is more important than ever to pool resources, avoid duplication and identify and share innovative solutions to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Whilst Community Safety Partnerships and other statutory partners continue to play a pivotal role, the plan also emphasises the importance of less formal partnerships such as the Crime Rural Advisory Group and Business Crime Advisory Group in tackling specific concerns.
18. Visible community policing remains as the bedrock of policing in Kent, but the plan emphasises the importance of exploring other opportunities with police and non police organisations to develop fresh ideas to keep police officers and community support officers on frontline duties.

19. The plan has been updated to reflect emerging national as well as local issues, a theme highlighted through the consultation. This includes tackling so called 'legal highs', enhancing investigative capability in relation to cyber or online crime and providing e-safety advice.
20. The plan places a greater emphasis on children and young people, notably:
 - Partners working together to protect children, particularly from child sexual exploitation following events in Rotherham. To support this, the Commissioner is providing £200,000 funding to the Force in each of the next three years to boost capacity to tackle child sexual exploitation and enhance multi-agency working.
 - Further to research conducted by the Youth Commissioner since her appointment in March 2014, the plan incorporates a number of recommendations that focus on integration and engagement with young people.
 - Whilst there remains a strong focus on preventing and reducing youth offending and victimisation, the plan reflects the importance of partnership working in tackling other challenges young people face, such as gang affiliation.
21. As highlighted through the consultation, the plan has been updated to reflect new legislation and other strategies, including the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and national/local Mental Health Concordat. In addition, the plan seeks to develop working relationships within the changing criminal justice landscape, such as with the recently formed Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service.
22. With Ministry of Justice funding now coming to Police and Crime Commissioners, the plan continues to reflect the Commissioner's commitment to place victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system. The plan emphasises the importance of:
 - Developing specialist victim support services which result in real and positive outcomes.
 - Ensuring the service to victims in terms of first referral and subsequent access to specialist support is tailored to the needs of Kent; rather than the 'one size fits all' approach offered by previous national arrangements.
 - Ensuring opportunities presented by the new Victims' Centre, including co-location of the Witness Care Unit and Victim Support are maximised to support the above.
 - Delivering further improvements; a sum of money has been set aside for projects identified by partners, including the Commissioner to improve the experience of victims in the criminal justice system.
23. The plan continues to have due regard for the Strategic Policing Requirement. With the recent shocking and tragic events in France, maintaining the capability and capacity of Kent Police to respond to national, as well as local threats must be a priority.
24. The section titled 'Finance and Medium Term Budget Challenge' has also been refreshed to take account of the latest financial information and Force plans to ensure on-going delivery of a first class service in challenging times.

Policing Precept Proposal for 2015/16:

25. A policing precept for 2015/16 of £147.15 for a Band D property is proposed. This represents an increase of 1.99% or 5.5 pence per week on the current precept for 2014/15. An increase of that level is entirely in line with previously published intentions set out in the current Police and Crime Plan. Wide consultation also confirms the public are content with this level. A balance has to be drawn between any increase to council tax payers versus raising the policing element to provide some (albeit limited) mitigation against the impact on policing services resulting from grant cuts. In reality, the scope for a local judgement on that balance is constrained by the referendum trigger limit, the cost to undertake a referendum (in excess of £2m for Kent) and the very prescriptive rules on how referenda have to be run. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to explore with local council tax payers in a meaningful way even limited tax increases beyond the trigger limit of 1.99% to further mitigate service reductions, as happens in Wales.
26. Government grant is the most significant funding stream for the budget, but each 1% rise in the police element of the council tax generates £800,000 for Kent. A 1.99% increase (2% rounded) raises £1.6m and for 2015/16, this means that having to find an additional saving of £1.6m or about 30 police officer jobs – on top of the savings of £14.5 that are still required – has been avoided. In other words, a 2% increase allows the Force to keep about 30 police officers 'on the books' rather than lose them.
27. Even with a 1.99% increase, Kent's policing precept is still likely to be the third lowest in the country and as a result, well below the current national average of £169.06 per band D property.

Budget and Medium Term Plan Supporting Information:

28. In response to the last four years of grant cuts, the Force has already delivered a new policing model as well as other savings, totalling £50m. Those savings have come at a cost though, with approximately 500 police officers and 720 police staff not being replaced when they have left the Force.
29. In a new round of grant cuts, for the year 2015/16, the Government has cut the general grant to the Force by 5.1% or £9.4m in cash terms. That, coupled with routine pay and inflation pressures, means the Force has to find £14.5m of savings in 2015/16 even after applying an increase in the policing element of the council tax of 1.99%. Thanks to sensible forward planning, the Force will be able to deliver these savings without any significant cuts in front-line visible neighbourhood policing. In part, the savings for next year are being delivered by improved use of IT and innovation. However, it will still require the loss of approximately another 115 jobs, primarily through natural attrition, but also further restructuring and asking staff and officers to do even more. Added to this, the ability to protect front-line policing capability will be severely limited in the face of further grant cuts over the medium-term.
30. In more detail, the key areas of saving in 2015/16 are as follows:
- Budget alignment following the last round of savings and introduction of vacancy factors (£5.1m).
 - Non-Pay efficiency savings (£4.1m).
 - Further restructuring and innovation: Tactical and tasking operations, Force Control Room, corporate directorate, case file management (£2.8m).
 - Additional collaboration savings with Essex Police (£2.5m).

31. Overall, the planned gross budget for 2015/16 will be £306m, of which 98% will be delegated to the Chief Constable. The net budget for all operations, after taking into account assumed counter terrorism grants and local income, will be £274.1m. The operations of the Office of the Commissioner will be required to deliver an underspend of £100,000, equivalent to a real saving of 8.7% to provide one off funds for the Chief Constable to invest further in culture change within the Force. The separate commissioning Grants budget will have to absorb the average cash grant cut of 5.1%. However, again by targeted use of office budget underspends it is intended to limit actual reductions to partners in 2015/16 to that previously set out and published last year.
32. The budget plan reflects the latest indication of the specific grant allocation for Kent in 2015/16 of £1.9m to deliver the important responsibility of commissioning services for victims of crime. Turning to other new initiatives for 2015/16, one-off funding will be allocated from savings in previous years to allow:
- £200,000 in each of the next three years as a contribution to boosting Force capacity to help fight child sexual exploitation and support enhanced multi-agency working.
 - £100,000 in 2015/16 to support projects identified by partners and the Office of the Commissioner to improve the experience of victims in the wider criminal justice system.
33. In addition to revenue spending, a total of £13m will be allocated for a variety of capital and investment projects during 2015/16. Financed from a mixture of accumulated capital reserves and capital receipts, they will be kept under constant, ruthless review

The Medium Term Financial Challenge:

34. Beyond 2015/16, the latest Autumn Statement from the Chancellor (December 2014), makes clear that cuts in public spending will continue into the medium-term in response to the public sector deficit. At a minimum, the same level of cuts to the police grant from 2016/17 onwards as seen in the previous round up to 2015/16 could be faced. To put that into context, and even after assuming an increase in the police council tax of 1.99% per year, a 20% real cut in police grant over the medium-term implies minimum further savings of £46.5m for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. This is in addition to the £14.5m required for 2015/16, making a total of £61m further savings as a minimum for the period 2015/16 to 2018/19, but it could be even worse. This £61m of savings over the medium term is on top of the £50m of savings already delivered in the previous round of grant cuts between 2011/12 and 2014/15, making a total of £111m.
35. Faced with that level of cuts to police funding, there needs to be a serious national debate about the role and expectations for policing over the medium to long-term, and in particular the balance between local, regional and national policing.
36. The Chief Constable will be developing saving options during 2015 to ensure the Force can respond effectively to the medium-term financial challenge when the national detail is known. Maximising efficiency opportunities, fully exploiting collaboration, challenging every item of spend, looking to reduce demand and making best use of police officer time through IT and innovation, with partners where appropriate, are key planning principles. However, the most important transformational aim remains to limit the impact of grant cuts on front-line policing capability as far as is possible and only taking savings from that area as a last resort.

37. To assist the Panel and for information, Appendix B is the Chief Finance Officer's Budget Statement, with additional technical supporting annexes dealing with; the Summary Medium Term Financial Plan and Statement of Reserves (Revenue). At Appendix C is a copy of the response, from the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCTS), to the Home Office on the police grant announcement. The Kent Commissioner's Chief Finance Officer contributed to the response.

Community Safety Grants – Working With Partners:

38. Working with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour is vital. The three key principles in how the community safety funding is allocated remain:

- a. All spending plans must help deliver the key priorities set out in the refreshed plan.
- b. Working with existing partners to deliver joined up services where possible and appropriate; ensuring proportionate governance arrangements for the grants, but also commissioning services directly if that proves more effective.
- c. Providing as much medium-term funding certainty as possible in the allocations to partners whilst also taking into account the reduced funding anticipated in future years.

39. Last year, the promise was made that as much medium-term certainty in funding allocations to partners and organisations would be provided. Accordingly, the assumed allocations for 2015/16 and 2016/17 were set reflecting the understanding that allocations would have to be reduced each year on the basis of the assumed general policing grant cut suffered. Although the actual policing grant cut for 2015/16 is greater than was assumed last February, the allocations for 2015/16 announced last year will be honoured by utilising under-spends in the office budget in 2014/15. This maintains vital community safety plans without adding to the savings burden falling on the Force. That would also be the intention in respect of previously announced indicative allocations for 2016/17, but this will depend on the scale of future grant cuts imposed on policing.