

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Draft Refreshed Police and Crime Plan for 2016/17 and Precept Proposal
Date: 2 February 2016

**Kent Police & Crime
Commissioner**

'Devoted to Kent'



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; and
 - 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 this 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. Unlike previous years though, there have been two rounds of extensive consultation employing various engagement techniques.
6. The first round opened on 26 October and closed on 11 December 2015 and consisted of an online survey which was uploaded and promoted on the Commissioner's website. It asked the following questions:
 - Of the strategic priorities within the existing Police and Crime Plan, are there any you feel require more or less emphasis, and if so why?
 - Are there any priorities which relate to policing, criminal justice or community safety which you feel should be included in the Police and Crime Plan and if so, why?
 - What are your views on increasing the police precept element of the council tax by 1.99%, in line with previous published medium-term plans?
7. A range of stakeholders were directly e-mailed the survey, including:
 - Kent MPs
 - Council Leaders & Chief Executives
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups
 - Neighbourhood Watch Chairs
 - Community Safety Partnerships
 - Parish Councils
 - Kent Finance Officers
 - The Police & Crime Panel
 - Victim Services
8. Furthermore, it was e-mailed to approximately 5,000 subscribers of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Newsletter and the opportunity to give feedback highlighted in the November 2015 edition. The link to the consultation was also circulated to approximately 9,600 twitter followers and promoted by local media.



9. Whilst a range of views and opinions were expressed, the following is a summary of the feedback received:
- Any existing priorities that require more or less emphasis – whilst responses overall indicated the level of emphasis was appropriate, partnership working, support for victims, tackling radicalisation and child sexual exploitation were frequently mentioned. However, once again visible community policing was the most consistent theme.
 - Are there any other priorities that should be included – whilst most responses referred to existing priorities, additional priorities included tackling modern slavery and protecting children in care, particularly those unaccompanied and seeking asylum.
 - Support for raising the policing proportion of the council tax – there was strong support for an increase of 1.99% (in line with the Commissioner's financial plan at that time).
10. In addition, Youth Advisory Group members were invited to comment on the plan, particularly the elements relating to children and young people. There was a good level of feedback and the general consensus was that the priorities reflected current issues affecting young people, such as drugs, anti-social behaviour, cyber-bullying and sexual exploitation.
11. The second round of consultation took place following the Autumn Statement and Spending Review (25 November 2015) and subsequent Police Grant Report 2016/17 (17 December 2015) in which the Government announced:
- '...additional flexibility will be given to the 10 PCCs in England with the lowest precept levels each year (the lower quartile), so that they can raise their precept by up to £5 per year per Band D household. Other PCCs in England will face a 2.0% referendum threshold each year.*
- The PCCs to receive this £5 flexibility in 2016/17 are Northumbria, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Sussex, Essex, **Kent**, Hertfordshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire.*
- '...For 2016/17, direct resource funding for each PCC, including precept, will be protected at flat cash levels, assuming that precept income is increased to the maximum amount available. This means that no PCC will face a reduction in cash funding next year compared to this year...'*
12. In order to minimise cuts to Kent Police funding in the future, the Commissioner therefore has the ability to increase the council tax precept by up to 3.4% (or £5 per year on a Band D property). However, in light of recent terrorist atrocities across mainland Europe, the Home Secretary has also requested that all police forces increase their firearms capability by up to 50%.
13. As a result, the second consultation proposed a precept increase of £5 for a Band D property with a commitment from the Commissioner to use the additional money to boost the number of firearms officers. Taking the form of an online poll, it ran from the 21 December 2015 to 15 January 2016, and was circulated via e-mail to the same recipients and promoted in the same way as the first consultation. The poll consisted of one question:
- Will your family pay £5 extra to increase public safety? Yes/No
14. In total, 895 online responses were received and the outcome was as follows:
- Yes: 53.2% (476 respondents);
 - No: 46.8% (419 respondents).
15. In addition to the above, the Commissioner hosted a 'Policing and Austerity' conference on 9 December 2015, at which the audience were invited to feedback on the plan priorities (reflected under paragraph 9) and also vote on the precept. There was unanimous support from those present (approximately 60 guests) for increasing the precept by 3.4% (or £5 on a Band D property).
16. Taken together, the Commissioner received feedback from nearly 1,000 people in the two rounds of consultation and at the conference. Overall, the majority were supportive of the Commissioner increasing the police precept element of the council tax.

17. Both consultations were reported in local newspapers, on radio and television.
18. The refresh has also taken into account comments received throughout the year at public engagement events and in correspondence received by the Commissioner's Office. The Chief Constable has also been consulted.

Key Changes in the Refreshed Police and Crime Plan:

19. A copy of the draft 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.
20. 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. As previously indicated, the focus has been on refreshing the contents of the plan rather than undertaking a major re-write. For reference purposes, a summary of the main changes can be found at Appendix B.
21. Aligned to the consultation findings, the core Policing and Crime & 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
22. Also reflecting the consultation, visible community policing remains a core theme and the bedrock of policing in Kent. However, the plan continues to recognise the invaluable contribution that the extended policing family makes to protecting communities and keeping people safe, including the Community Wardens and volunteers such as Neighbourhood Watch.
23. In light of recent extremist atrocities across Europe, and reflecting the consultation, the plan places a much greater emphasis on partners working together to protect public safety by tackling radicalisation and also enhancing Kent Police's specialist capability and capacity to protect communities from local, national and international threats.
24. The plan continues to acknowledge the value of statutory partners (e.g. Community Safety Partnerships) and less formal partners (e.g. Business Crime Advisory Group) in preventing and tackling crime. The importance of the on-going collaboration with Essex Police is recognised, but also exploring other collaborative opportunities within policing and beyond to enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness.
25. Recognising the contribution of partners in protecting the most vulnerable, and reflecting the consultation, human trafficking has been expanded to modern slavery with a commitment to increase resources and improve local and national coordination. The plan also places a greater emphasis on:
 - The multi-agency child sexual exploitation team ensuring those at risk, as well as victims of exploitation are identified and protected, and offenders brought to justice.
 - Protecting children from harm, particularly those in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
 - Tackling cybercrime and cyber-enabled crime and improving education to help people protect themselves online.

26. In addition, the plan continues to reflect the Commissioner's commitment to place victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system, emphasising the importance of:
- Compass House in delivering a county-wide care and advice service for victims and witnesses tailored to individual needs.
 - Ensuring the long term contract for core victim services is managed effectively, providing easy access and a first class service.
 - Delivering specialist victim services that offer timely support and have a positive impact on victims.
 - Providing effective services for all victims of domestic abuse and supporting the children of victims.
 - Kent Police continuing to effectively support victims and witnesses whilst working to meet the national Code of Practice for Victims and Witness Charter.
27. 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.

Policing Precept Proposal for 2016/17:

28. At £147.15, Kent's current policing precept is the joint third lowest of all shire areas and below the national average of £173.35. A new policing precept in 2016/17 of £152.15 for a Band D property is proposed. This represents an increase of £5.00 or 9.6 pence per week on the current precept. This is in line with the increase assumed by the Home Secretary in the allocation of grant to forces for next year. Kent is one of 10 areas with the lowest current policing precept allowed to raise the precept by £5 (or 3.4%) for next year. The rest are limited to 2%, before requiring a referendum.
29. The original budget planning assumed an increase of £2.94 or 2% and this has been applied to reducing the savings otherwise required for next year by £1.7m. The further £2.06 or 1.4% to take the increase to £5.00, generates an additional £1.2m per annum which the Commissioner intends to use to recruit 24 of the 37 additional firearms officers the Chief Constable advises he needs to protect the communities of Kent, in line with the Home Secretary's expectations.
30. Even with a £5 increase, Kent's policing precept will still remain in the bottom ten of all forces.

Budget and Medium Term Plan Supporting Information:

31. Prepared by the Chief Finance Officer, a detailed report dealing with financial matters can be found at Appendix C - highlights are set out below.
32. Undoubtedly, the national grant settlement for policing for the next four years out of the Chancellor's Spending Review was considerably better than originally feared. This has translated into a promise that force budgets will be protected in cash terms providing Commissioners maximise the council tax flexibility open to them, including the additional flexibility for those in the bottom quartile. Accordingly, the actual across the board cash cut in the formula element of the grant is 0.6% for next year (2016/17). In addition the Home Office have identified £34m of funding to help support local armed response capability and £37m to support other capabilities (not yet defined). These other funds are yet to be allocated to individual force areas. There is no detail beyond 2016/17.
33. Nationally, the Home Secretary has set aside additional funding for specialist counter-terrorism capability which will be applied via specific grants for that purpose, either regionally or to individual forces as per current arrangements.
34. The Home Secretary has repeated her wish to re-start the formula review with a potential implementation in 2017/18, but no detail on that revised process has yet been released. It would be unwise to assume the review will simply re-start where it left off, it could easily re-start by re-visiting the proposed principles, making predictions of local impact even more difficult. As any formula change will produce inevitable winners and losers, a period of potentially significant grant turbulence in 2017/18 has to be anticipated at the current time.

35. Locally for Kent, in 2016/17 the general grant will be £186.2m, a reduction of £1m or 0.6% in the formula funding element on the current year. The Force will need to consume inflation and other cost pressures, not least a £4.6m hike in employer national insurance costs and a net investment of £1.2m to fund the extra 24 firearms officers to protect the public.
36. To help smooth the impact of the national insurance increase the Commissioner will apply £3.5m of reserves for that purpose in 2016/17 and raise the precept by £5 in part to cover the cost of the additional officers but also to help moderate the savings otherwise required. The net result is a need for £8.7m of savings next year. As per previous policy guidelines the Chief Constable has found these from non-front line savings. The better than feared settlement has meant the Chief Constable wishes to review more significant changes previously being contemplated, especially in respect of the configuration and level of inspector and chief inspector support to local district policing.
37. In advance of further detail, assuming it is allocated pro-rata to current counter-terrorism funding, the assumed share of the firearms grant for Kent would be in the order of £700,000 for next year. This, in addition to the £1.2m from raising the precept up to the full £5 per Band D property allowed would enable the Chief Constable to increase his armed response capability by the 37 officers that he needs.
38. The key areas of savings to achieve the £8.7m of resultant savings for next year are set out in Appendix C and due to effective forward planning by the Chief Constable will not involve any impact on front-line policing.
39. Overall, the planned gross budget in 2016/17 will be £313.0m, of which 98% will be delegated to the Chief Constable. The net budget for all operations, after taking into account current assumed specific grants and local income will be £277.9m. As in the current year, the headline budget for the operations of the Office of the Commissioner will be held at the same cash level inherited from the previous Police Authority in 2012 but once again will be required to deliver an underspend of £100,000, equivalent to a real saving of 8.0%.
40. As well as the continuation of the £200,000 per annum for the Chief Constable to invest in child sexual exploitation capacity, one-off funding will be allocated to the Force from savings in previous years to allow:
- £30,000 to fund an Anti-slavery Partnership Coordinator within the Serious Crime Directorate.
 - A further £100,000 in 2016/17 to support the Chief Constable's continued investment in his people and the wellbeing of the workforce.
 - £75,000 to support a further year of Police Community Support Officer crime prevention work in primary schools.
 - £50,000 for IT systems to track, monitor and manage the health of detainees in police custody.
41. In addition to revenue spending, a further £15m of new monies will be allocated to the Chief Constable for a variety of new capital and investment projects during 2016/17. The headline schemes for next year are set out in Appendix C with the actual release of resources being dependent on sound business cases in the usual way. Overall, the planned release of funding to support investment in innovation and resilience is £44m to 2019/20, financed from capital reserves. This level of investment would cost a minimum of £2m of annual debt charges by March 2020 if it was being financed from borrowing, equivalent to the cost of 40 officers.
42. The planned use of reserves is also set out in Appendix C.

The Medium Term Financial Challenge:

43. Beyond 2016/17, the actual grant allocations for each force area have yet to be announced. However, on the basis of applying the same spend and grant cut assumptions for the four years to 2019/20, but including a contingency for additional top slicing, the new apprentice levy and other possible pressures, results in the Force having to find £33m of savings over the next four years. This is before any impact, positive or negative, that may arise from the way the formula for allocating grant to individual forces is changed.

44. These additional savings are on top of the £62m that have been delivered since 2011/12.
45. On the basis of the better than feared grant settlement, the Chief Constable will be reviewing previous plans during 2016/17 to respond to the revised medium-term financial challenge. 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, remain key planning principles. As well as responding effectively to the changing nature of threat and risk, 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.

Commissioning Community Safety and Specialist Victim Services – Working with Partners:

46. Working with partners to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and directly support victims of crime is vital. The three key principles in how the available funding is allocated remain:
- All spending plans must help deliver the key priorities set out in the refreshed plan.
 - 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.
 - 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.
47. The total budget for commissioning community safety, crime reduction and victim support services will be set provisionally at £4.2m. Of this, £2.1m is funded from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) specific victims' grant. At £2.1m, the total allocation for next year protects the current level of funding for victim services, plus an uplift of £146,000, with advice being that this should be used for child victims of sexual assault. The Commissioner will be following this advice. Overall, it is a very welcome announcement from the MOJ and pleasing to see that victims are high on the Department's priorities. The Commissioner has written to the MOJ to express her thanks. At this stage, £1.4m of the specific grant has been allocated in the plan pending confirmation of funding. The remainder will be allocated through the normal commissioning prospectus approach, but on the understanding it must be allocated to victim services in line with the specific grant conditions.
48. Through the use of accumulated underspends in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget, it will be possible to ensure grants to key partner organisations, especially Community Safety Partnerships, can be maintained at the same cash level in 2016/17 as in the current year. Overall, this will ensure all key and vital support areas can continue to be funded next year. The planned 2016/17 allocations are set out in the draft refreshed Police and Crime Plan (Appendix A).