Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's draft refreshed Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 and proposed precept for 2015/16

Date: 3rd February 2015

PANEL DECISION

That the Panel supports the refreshed Police and Crime Plan and approves the Commissioner's proposal to increase the police precept by 1.99%.

Background

1. The Panel have a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and associated Regulations to:

   - Review and report on the Commissioner's draft Police and Crime Plan; and
   - Review and report on the Commissioner's proposed level of precept.

   In addition the Panel may:

   - Make any recommendations on the draft plan or proposed precept; and
   - By a two thirds majority, veto the proposed precept

Report

2. The Panel were provided with the Commissioner's draft refreshed Police and Crime Plan and budget, together with a report explaining the consultation on the draft, the main changes and continuing themes. The report also set out the Commissioner's reasons for an increase in the precept of 1.99% and provided contextual information about the medium term financial picture.

3. The Panel noted that the Commissioner had consulted widely in preparing the draft refreshed plan and that there had been consistent support for visible community policing. The Panel noted the Commissioner's intention to provide £200,000 in each of the next three years to support work to combat child sexual exploitation and the Panel strongly supported the emphasis on this work. The Panel noted that the new Victims Centre was on target for completion in April 2015 and her explanation that the Centre was a hub for victim support work across the County and a location where both police witness care teams and Victim Support could work together.

4. The Panel noted the extent of the Commissioner's consultation on the draft Plan and precept and asked about the level of response to consultation. The Commissioner explained that the response to formal consultation had been low but that informal

consultation (for example at public meetings) had shown strong support for an increased precept.

5. The Commissioner explained that she sought approval for an increase in the police precept of 1.99%, which would enable the Force to retain 30 officers who would otherwise be lost due to grant reductions. The Panel noted the Commissioner's comment that the police precept in Kent was still well below the national average and that, even with her proposed precept increase, the Force would have to lose 53 officers during 2015/16. The Commissioner explained that medium term financial planning was being conducted on the basis that the Force budget would need to be reduced by a further £60m by 2019 and that this was based on reasonable rather than worst case scenario assumptions.

6. The Panel expressed support for the work of the Youth Commissioner and asked the Commissioner what her plans were for continuation of this work once the Youth Commissioner completed her contract. Panel members were advised that work had been commissioned to consider how to continue to engage with young people who, in the Commissioner's view, did not engage with Councils. Panel members drew attention to existing channels of communication with young people and reminded the Commissioner of her commitment to discuss her future plans for the Youth Commissioner role with the Panel. The Commissioner undertook to consult with the Panel and the interested parties.

7. The Panel noted the provision of resources to support work to combat child sexual exploitation. The Panel sought information from the Commissioner as to the intended use of the money and were advised that the Chief Constable was developing a plan. Panel members asked the Commissioner to bear in mind the roles of other partners across the County in this work.

8. Panel members welcomed the Commissioner's continued financial commitment to support Community Safety Partnerships and to visible neighbourhood policing. The Panel noted with approval the Commissioner's frequent references to partnership working in her Plan.

9. The Panel noted the Commissioner's intention that there would not be any satellite victim centres across the County and encouraged her to make sure that the victim centre in Ashford linked up with other victim support work going on across the County.

10. Panel members sought and received an explanation of the bids made by the Commissioner to the Innovation Fund.

11. After discussion the Panel decided that it supported the Commissioner's draft plan, noting especially the commitment to partnership working, support for Community safety Partnerships and the focus on tackling child sexual exploitation. The Panel also approved the Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 1.99%