

# My time as Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner



Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner  
November 2012 – May 2016

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## Introduction

This is a brief summary of my work, and the work of my office, since I was elected Kent's first independent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It complements our four annual reports which, collectively, provide much more detail about our achievements.

When I was elected I promised to keep politics out of policing and to oppose the privatisation of our police force as I genuinely believe that ideology and party politics should not be the drivers of excellent public services. This I have done, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my staff, the Chief Constable and everyone at Kent Police for helping me deliver my manifesto pledges.

Despite Kent Police losing a fifth of its funding and a fifth of its workforce, visible community policing and victims and witnesses remain at heart of everything we do. I am proud to have commissioned a brand new service providing support to victims of crime in Kent - tailored to each victim's needs - and to have triggered a national review of crime recording practices.

I removed all targets and the Chief Constable has done a magnificent job instilling in everyone at Kent Police a culture of 'Doing the Right Thing' for victims - a culture cited by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) as an example for other forces to follow.

HMIC has also rated Kent Police among the best in the country, and the only force to be awarded 'Outstanding' for Legitimacy (see Appendix 1). I am proud of the officers and staff for what they have achieved and I thank the Chief Constable for spearheading and delivering that change.

Above all else, though, I am proud of the fact that the people of Kent are getting a better service from their police force and partners than when I came into office. Crime has fallen and the public has never been better engaged in policing.

**Ann Barnes**

Your Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

# Doing what I promised

When campaigning for election in 2012 I made several important promises to the people of Kent. I believe in keeping my promises – that is the only way to maintain people's trust. I am pleased to say that I have kept all my promises, listed below, during my time in office.

In some cases the things we did were subsequently developed and adapted, but all of them remain core elements of Kent's Police and Crime Plan.

- Cutting crime and boosting visible policing;
- Fighting Government cuts;
- Giving people a greater say in policing;
- Putting victims at the heart of policing and the criminal justice system;
- Youth Commissioner;
- Mobile Police Stations;
- Meet the Commissioner.

## Tackling the issues that matter to us

My Police and Crime Plan reflects my manifesto promises as well as the other things which you, the people of Kent, tell me matter most to you. Each year I consulted with local individuals and organisations and refreshed the Plan because crime and criminality – nationally and here in this great county – are constantly changing. As the PCC, my job is to create the Plan and then make sure Kent Police has the resources it needs to meet those challenges. I also make sure, on behalf of the taxpayer, that Kent Police delivers value for money.

The strategic priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, which have remained consistent throughout my term of office, are listed below. I have also given an explanation of why those things are important and a summary of just some of the ways I have gone about addressing them.

- Cut crime and catch criminals;
- Ensure visible community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent;
- Prevent crime and 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.

### Cutting crime

Keeping people safe is the fundamental duty of any police force and everyone, no matter where they live, wants to see less crime in their area. Fewer crimes means fewer victims of crime. I know this is important to people which is why, when elected, I promised to make sure that Kent Police kept up its relentless focus on cutting crime and catching criminals.

However, in order to cut crime any Chief Constable first needs an accurate picture of what is happening and where. Only then can they deploy appropriate resources to where they are needed most.

That is why, during my first months in office, I used my new power as a PCC to ask HMIC to carry out an independent review of crime recording practices in Kent Police. Importantly, I also wanted to make sure that you, the people of Kent, could have faith in the crime statistics.

HMIC's report found the institutional culture of chasing targets at that time had led to some Kent Police officers "pursuing crimes on the basis of how easy they were to solve, rather than on their seriousness or their impact on victims or communities".

Under pressure to meet crime reduction targets, some officers were skewing the crime figures, with 1 in 10 crimes not being recorded correctly – a 90% accuracy rate. I was shocked - this was totally unacceptable because if a crime does not go on the books it cannot be investigated properly.

Victims were being let down and this was the catalyst for a fundamental change at Kent Police. I removed all targets from the Police and Crime Plan and the Chief Constable, with my full support, instilled in his officers a new culture with an emphasis on 'Doing the Right Thing' for victims and delivering a quality service (see Appendix 2).

For a time, while the mistakes of the past were put right, Kent Police's recorded crime figures went up. That was inevitable but it was also the right thing to do, and the force held its nerve in the face of some negative media headlines. I'm delighted to say, having come out the other side, that the public can now have absolute confidence in crime recording practices here in Kent, as confirmed by HMIC in a recent review.

<b><i>What is being done to catch criminals?</i></b>
<i>Investing in Body Worn Video cameras</i>
<i>Working with Community Safety Partnerships to tackle local crime and anti-social behaviour</i>
<i>Protecting frontline officer and PCSO numbers</i>
<i>Implementation of a new Local Policing Model</i>
<i>Working with Essex Police to investigate serious and organised crime</i>
<i>Creation of a specialist Rural Task Force</i>
<i>Investing in the Special Constabulary</i>
<i>Use of Predictive Policing deployments</i>
<i>Supporting Crimestoppers and other campaigns encouraging vulnerable victims to report crime</i>

Since July 2015 we have been able to compare like-for-like data but rather than worrying about how many crimes are going on the books, the Chief Constable and his District Commanders use that accurate data to make sure their finite resources are being put where they are needed most.

Because of their worry over crime recording, HMIC conducted a national review of all police forces. It found an average accuracy rate of 80%, meaning the vast majority were performing much lower than Kent's original 90%, and nowhere near Kent's present 96% accuracy rate.

Many forces are still going through the process of putting their own crime recording practices right – while Kent is one of just a handful where crime has fallen.

Meanwhile, what I uncovered here in Kent prompted the Home Secretary to commission her own review into police targets nationally. That review, led by Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis, praised Kent Police for the groundbreaking changes that had been made. She said Kent Police had "changed the performance culture but kept the culture of performing" and Kent featured prominently as an example of best practice and a model for other forces.

Of course, I am never complacent which is why the force's performance is one of the standing items routinely discussed at my Governance Board, where I hold the Chief Constable to account on your behalf.

## Protecting visible community policing

When budgets are being cut it is impossible to deliver exactly the same policing service people have grown used to, but wherever I go in Kent the number one priority for people I have met has always been visible community policing. The fact that the Chief Constable shares this vision is one of the reasons I gave him the job in 2014.

What we have done is protect the frontline wherever possible and we have even been able to boost visible community policing in some areas by working smarter.

Significant savings have been made by collaborating with other forces and sharing support service functions. Every penny saved means there is more left to keep police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in our communities where they belong.

I was delighted when, in February 2016, the Chief Constable was able to commit to maintaining PCSO numbers. He has my 100% support in this. PCSOs are vital because, while warranted officers are required to dash about the county responding to 999 calls, PCSOs are a constant in their communities. They are truly valued.

In keeping with one of my election promises, I also introduced Mobile Police Stations to increase the visibility of local officers particularly in rural areas. These were launched in 2013 and their deployment has been kept under constant review to make sure they are as effective as possible. They are a really valuable community resource, regularly deployed to crime hotspots to provide reassurance and to local fetes and events to provide a point of contact for local people.

Back in 2013 I invested £250,000 in Kent's Special Constabulary. These volunteers, with the same powers as the Chief Constable, won a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2014. Last year they gave more than 110,000 hours of their time to policing in their communities, including performing specialist roles in the Rural Task Force and the Roads Policing Unit. That was a fantastic achievement and I cannot thank them enough for the work they do serving the people of Kent.

Then, in 2014, a new Local Policing Model was adopted which gave each District Commander greater control of their officers and staff. This adjustment, along with innovative practices such as Predictive Policing and investing in Body Worn Video cameras, means Kent's finite resources are now deployed on the streets for longer, where the need is greatest.

Later that year we launched a new Rural Task Force, specifically to boost visible community policing and cut crime in Kent's rural areas which make up 75% of the county. Living in a small village as I do, I understand how rural communities can feel isolated. I'm pleased to say the Task



### ***What is being done been to boost visible community policing?***

*Investing in the Special Constabulary*

*Protecting frontline officers and PCSO numbers*

*Introduction of Mobile Police Stations*

*Implementation of a new Local Policing Model*

*Use of Predictive Policing deployments*

*Creation of a new Rural Task Force*

*Investing in technology to keep officers on the streets for longer*



Force has been working closely with the Crime Rural Advisory Group and the farming community to gather information and proactively target criminals.

## Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

It is not enough to simply cut crime. Police forces have a duty to work with the communities they serve to prevent crime from happening in the first place. Throughout my time in office, I worked tirelessly with Kent Police and partners to support initiatives which prevent crime and help cut the risk of victims repeatedly suffering at the hands of criminals.

That is why, in 2014, I joined other partners in signing the Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat. This is a commitment from agencies across Kent to work together to stop vulnerable people reaching 'crisis point'.

It led to my office part-funding a Mental Health Triage scheme, where a trained nurse accompanied officers responding to calls involving someone with mental health issues. That pilot has been developed so officers across Kent now have access to expert telephone advice, and can call trained professionals to attend if required. As a result, fewer vulnerable people are taken into custody and are instead getting more appropriate support.

I also give money, through a Youth Diversion Fund, to numerous projects across Kent and Medway specifically designed to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, because once a young person falls into the criminal justice system it can be very difficult to get them back out again.

In recognition of the growing threat of cyber-crime to our communities, my office funds dedicated PCSOs to deliver e-safety advice in schools; and I have personally spoken with young and old alike about what they can do to protect themselves online.

Last year, we also hosted a Business Crime Conference for members of the local business community. Speakers included representatives from the Business Crime Advisory Group, the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate. Attendees were able to find out how the force is tackling business crime and learn about the new and emerging threats from cyber-crime and fraud and how to protect their businesses from them.

## Putting victims and witnesses first

The Chief Constable and I share a joint vision which puts victims and witnesses right where they belong – at the heart of the criminal justice system.

<b><i>What is being been done to prevent crime?</i></b>
<i>Funding for community groups from the Commissioner's Fund and Youth Diversion Fund</i>
<i>Supporting partnerships working with vulnerable people, and Drug and Alcohol Action Teams</i>
<i>Joint working with Community Safety Partnerships to resolve local issues</i>
<i>Supporting public crime prevention campaigns</i>
<i>Introduction of Mobile Police Stations</i>
<i>Supporting the Kent Troubled Families Programme and Medway Action for Families</i>
<i>Funding PCSOs to deliver e-safety advice in schools</i>
<i>Hosting conferences for the Rural and Business communities</i>
<i>Implementation of a new Local Policing Model</i>
<i>Deterring criminals by confiscating ill-gotten gains using the Proceeds of Crime Act</i>
<i>Boosting visible community policing</i>
<i>Establishing a multi-agency team to combat child sexual abuse and identify children at risk</i>

Building on the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, launched by the Ministry of Justice, we launched our own Kent Victims' Charter in 2014. It lists 10 promises we make to all victims of crime regarding the service they can expect. It states in black and white that victims and witnesses should always be at the heart of everything we do.

Victims were at the heart of the change in culture at Kent Police which the Chief Constable and I brought about following the review I commissioned into crime recording practices; and they were central to our thoughts when responsibility for commissioning victims' services was devolved from the Ministry of Justice to PCCs.

Grabbing the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with both hands, I seized the opportunity to replace the national one-size-fits-all model with a tailored service, offering a greater variety of support to a greater number of victims. Central to that local service is Compass House, the victim and witness care and advice hub in Ashford which opened on time and in budget. That was no mean feat, but my staff worked extremely hard and, through engagement with victims of crime, we developed a centre that is fit for purpose and puts victims first.

We renovated a redundant annexe of Ashford Police Station and created a comfortable and friendly environment where victims can access a range of support services. Our approach is now seen as a blueprint for victims' services and I am immensely proud of that.

Initially, I commissioned Victim Support to deliver services in Kent for one year and in that time they offered help to more than 53,000 victims of crime. After a thorough tendering process at the end of 2015, Victim Support won the contract to provide the service for a further three years. That contract, building on what we learned in the first year, began on 1 April 2016.

Victim Support staff work under the same roof as staff from Kent Police's Witness Care Unit – making sure the help offered to all victims and witnesses is joined up from the point a crime is reported to the point the case goes to court. Kent is also at the forefront of using video technology to spare vulnerable victims and witnesses the trauma of attending court in person. Evidence can be given by video link from a police station or from Compass House.

As part of the new contract awarded by my office, Victim Support has also developed Compass Points – helpdesks located around the country where victims can drop-in or

<b><i>What is being done to support victims?</i></b>
<i>Commissioning Victim Support to deliver core services to victims of crime</i>
<i>Creation of a new victim and witness care and advice centre at Compass House, and local Compass Points</i>
<i>Creation of a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Maidstone</i>
<i>Set up a Victims' Panel to make sure victims' voices are heard when developing services</i>
<i>Co-development of a project to support child victims of domestic abuse</i>
<i>Launch of a TrackMyCrime service</i>
<i>Co-commissioning a Kent-wide service for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors</i>
<i>Funding given to organisations providing specialist support to victims</i>
<i>Providing victims of sexual assault with quicker access to counselling services</i>





attend by appointment to receive help, advice and support from trained staff and volunteers in the local community. This makes the service more convenient and accessible and puts the victim first.

Aside from the help offered by Victim Support, I award hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants each year to local charities to provide help to victims with unique needs – like the hard-of hearing, people with learning difficulties and male victims of domestic abuse.

Another project of which I am very proud is our state-of-the-art Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Maidstone, Beech House. When we heard the old SARC at Darent Valley Hospital was closing, my office worked closely with the NHS to replace it with a first-class facility. Beech House has already provided care, support and counselling to more than 500 victims of the most distressing and traumatic of crimes. My office has also allocated additional funding to East Kent Rape Line and Family Matters to allow victims swifter access to counselling.

## Protecting the public from harm

All police forces have a duty to protect the public from harm, which is why I was pleased in 2014 to hear from HMIC that Kent Police was working well with other forces to tackle serious and organised crime.

Principally, and with my full support, Kent and Essex Police have a joint Serious Crime Directorate which undertakes numerous investigations into some of the most serious crimes which affect our communities – such as murder and violent crime, drugs supply and human trafficking. Some of these crimes are committed by Organised Crime Groups, which is why it is vital that Kent and Essex's joint Directorate continues to work closely with neighbouring forces, the National Crime Agency and the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit.

One abhorrent crime type which we cannot ignore – which is happening right here in Kent – is child sexual exploitation. I still do not understand what drives someone to abuse a child, but I do understand the importance of everyone doing everything they can to stop them.

That is why in 2015 I pledged an additional £600,000 – money we had saved by managing our finances in the past - over three years to establish a new multi-agency team to identify children at risk and investigate cases of abuse. My office also invested in a new training video for officers and staff to make sure they are aware of the signs to look out for. To date, more than 2,000 officers and staff have viewed it.

It is not enough for Kent Police simply to investigate child sexual abuse, because by then it is too late – the abuse has already happened. We know it can take years for victims to muster the courage to come forward. What the force is now doing, with its partners under the umbrella of Operation Willow, is identifying the most vulnerable children and making sure they get the help they need before it is too late.

The horrific abuse which took place in Rotherham was preventable, if only the authorities had talked to each other, which is why protecting young people in care – of which Kent has more than

<b><i>What is being done to protect the public?</i></b>
<i>Raising the precept to increase Kent's firearms capability</i>
<i>Boosting visible community policing</i>
<i>Raising awareness of how people can protect themselves from cyber-crime</i>
<i>Establishing a multi-agency team to combat child sexual abuse and identify children at risk</i>
<i>Working with neighbouring forces to tackle serious and organised crime</i>
<i>Supporting the foundation of a new National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network</i>

its share – is one of the priorities given an additional focus in the latest refresh of the Police and Crime Plan.

My office also works to protect people from cyber-crime and online fraud, by supporting a regional Cyber-Crime Survey and publicising the simple steps people can take to protect themselves online.

## Spending money wisely

One of my key duties has been to make sure Kent Police, and my office, provide value for money for the taxpayer. I have always been conscious that the money I have to manage and award to groups is not my money – it is entrusted to me by the people of Kent – and I have to spend it wisely.

Since 2011 Kent Police has had to make £62million of savings and in the five years to 2015 this meant a reduction of 518 police officers and 598 staff – roughly a fifth of the Kent Police workforce going out of the door and not being replaced.

Then, despite the Chancellor announcing “there will be no cuts in the police budget at all”, we were handed a further cut in Kent’s general police grant for 2016/17. That – when inflation and other financial pressures are also taken into account – means Kent Police still has to save £33million over the next four years.

In order to keep delivering a quality service, the force has had to use its resources smarter and keep officers on the streets for longer. I’m pleased to say, thanks to a lot of hard work and sound financial management from my office – judged ‘Outstanding’ by HMIC – we have ensured the necessary savings for 2016/17 can be met without impacting on frontline policing. According to HMIC, thanks to careful planning, Kent Police is well-placed to face these challenges.

To improve efficiency, I invested-to-save in officers’ Body Worn Video cameras. This equipment means more criminals are minded to enter early guilty pleas and the force receives fewer vexatious complaints. Kent is also rolling out mobile tablet devices which will enable officers and PCSOs to spend more time out in communities and less time travelling back and forth to police stations to fill out paperwork. We need 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century policing. I have also supported the roll-out of the national Police ICT Company.

Kent Police has also been leading the way in collaboration. We have saved millions of pounds by sharing support service functions - like HR, IT, procurement and finance - with Essex Police since I first mooted the idea in 2007 while I was still the chair of the Kent Police Authority. Kent and Essex’s shared Support Services Directorate even won first place in the Institute for Continuous Improvement’s national awards in February 2015.

### ***What is being done to ensure money is spent wisely?***

*Investing-to-save in Body Worn Video cameras and mobile tablet devices*

*Sharing support service functions and a joint Serious Crime Directorate with Essex Police*

*Introduction of telephone investigation for less serious crimes*

*Sharing a force control room with KFRS*

*Keeping the costs of the OPCC down*

*Agreement to work closer with forces across the East of England*

*Investing in developing a new force website providing information to the public*

*Quality-assuring all bids for funding from the OPCC*

*Applying for Police Innovation Fund grants*

Meanwhile, our force control room, shared with Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), has led the way in blue-light collaboration and recently won a national award from the iESE (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise). It is fantastic to have national recognition of a job well done.

I also kept the costs of my own office down, with any underspend ploughed back into the force and into Community Safety Partnerships. HMIC's Value for Money Profile 2015 found my office to be the third cheapest in the country per head of population. Even the Taxpayers' Alliance conceded my office was cheaper to run than the old Kent Police Authority.

## Meeting our national commitments

As well as meeting the challenges of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in our county, Kent Police has a responsibility to work with other forces to meet its national and international policing responsibilities. It cannot work in isolation. Criminals do not respect force borders and so, only by working together, can forces effectively protect the public from harm.

In 2014 during a visit to Coquelles in France I saw for myself the excellent work of Kent Police officers working together with counterparts from the UK Border Force.

Tragically, I also saw a group of young women who were likely victims of human trafficking. They were set free in France but I fear, in time, they may still have been trafficked to Britain through Kent. That brought home to me the need for more joined-up work to protect vulnerable people, with human trafficking being given additional emphasis in the latest refresh of the Police and Crime Plan.

I also personally supported the foundation of a new National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network to combat this emerging crime; and approved using our funds to contribute towards national initiatives such as the Police ICT Company, in partnership with other forces.

After the Paris terror attacks in 2015 the Home Secretary requested all forces increase their firearms capabilities by up to 50%. After speaking with the Chief Constable, and consulting with the people of Kent, I chose to increase the precept – the amount an average family pays in council tax for policing each year - by £5. These extra funds will make sure that, going forward, the Chief Constable has the armed officers he needs at his disposal.

He cannot recruit more officers to keep us safe if he cannot afford to pay them year on year.

And, of course, Kent Police has responsibility for policing Operation Stack – which in 2015 was, finally, recognised as a national problem, not just a Kent one. Unfortunately, despite legitimate



### ***What is being done to help other police forces?***

*Boosting Kent's firearms capability*

*Answering requests for Mutual Aid*

*Supporting regional and national initiatives*

*Contributing funds to national policing projects*

*Working with neighbouring forces to tackle serious and organised crime*

*Deploying Counter Terrorism officers at the UK border*

expectations given by the Home Office, the Home Secretary has repeatedly refused to reimburse the costs of policing Operation Stack in 2015.

## Doing what I have to do

The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) also fulfils a number of vitally important statutory duties. The key ones are summarised below along with a brief outline of just some of the ways my office meets them.

- Appoint the Chief Constable and hold them to account;
- Appoint a Chief Executive/Chief of Staff, and a Chief Finance Officer;
- Engage with local people and partners;
- Set the police and crime objectives through the Police and Crime Plan;
- Set the force budget and determine the precept;
- Bring together community safety and criminal justice partners to make sure local priorities are joined up;
- Manage an Independent Custody Visitors' Scheme;
- Produce Annual Reports for the Police and Crime Panel.

### Appointing the Chief Constable and holding him to account

In 2013, Kent Police's Chief Constable retired and I advertised for a replacement. I was pleased with the response and delighted to be able to appoint Alan Pughsley, a very experienced and knowledgeable candidate, as the new Chief Constable in 2014. A year later he was awarded the Queen's Policing Medal and he remains a credit to Kent Police.



Of course, I always air any concerns that I have, including in public at my Governance Board and through the equally important People Board, which gives officers and staff a voice and a direct channel to my office. This board is important to me because the force's greatest asset is its people and their views and treatment are vital to its success. I also meet regularly with chief officers and receive briefings to make sure the force is effectively implementing the priorities set out in my Police and Crime Plan.

Meanwhile, staff from my office routinely review performance data and attend a number of force meetings, including the Performance Management Committee chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and the Estates Board.

Ultimately, the open and honest working relationship my office and the force enables us to work together effectively to provide a first class service to the people of Kent.

### Appointing a Chief of Staff and a Chief Finance Officer

All PCCs are required to appoint people to these two statutory posts, and I have made sure my office is well-served by successive Chiefs of Staff. My current Chief of Staff, Adrian Harper, was previously responsible for helping to address Kent's crime recording difficulties and I am proud to



say my Chief Finance Officer, Sean Nolan, serves as the President of the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society.

The appointments process for these statutory posts was scrutinised and approved by the Police and Crime Panel, as required.

Mr Harper leads a team of OPCC staff that is efficient and professional, staffed with politically-neutral, committed public servants. In the last three-and-a-half years, they have had to develop policies and procedures, learn new skills, adapt and change. They have learned to support and challenge in equal measure and have delivered for me all of the policies I was elected on.

## Talking to local people and partners

One of the most important jobs for any PCC is to act as a bridge between the people and the police.

A quarter of the people in Kent and Medway are under the age of 20 so one of my manifesto promises was to appoint a Youth Commissioner to listen specifically to young people's needs. She produced a Youth Engagement report which helped my office consider future engagement work and led to me setting up a Youth Advisory Group.

I also agreed to participate in a TV documentary intended to help people understand the role of PCCs and showcase some of my office's work. I was disappointed with the programme but I listened to feedback and subsequently reviewed how I engaged with the public.

Press releases about our work are issued to the media and also posted on the OPCC website; and we embraced digital communications – using our office Twitter feed, an e-mail newsletter and my online blog to keep people informed. My correspondence team is very busy, dealing with more than 400 pieces of correspondence each month – a total of 16,500 since November 2012 and numerous Freedom of Information requests (233 since mid-November 2015 alone).

In addition, I always endeavour to get out of the office whenever possible to meet face-to-face with the diverse communities of Kent, to listen to their concerns and ultimately to hold the Chief Constable to account on your behalf.

## Creating the Police and Crime Plan

My Police and Crime Plan was published shortly after I was elected and it sets out the high-level strategic direction and objectives for Kent Police. It is still based on my manifesto promises but has been refreshed annually in response to feedback from the public, the Police and Crime Panel and the ever-changing policing landscape.

The latest refresh, published on 1 April 2016, includes a greater emphasis on child sexual exploitation, protecting vulnerable children from harm, increasing Kent's firearms capability and tackling cyber-crime, human trafficking and modern slavery.

Each year it has been put before the Police and Crime Panel for comments, as required.

### ***What is being done to engage with people?***

*Holding regular public meetings and surgeries*

*Setting up a Youth Advisory Group*

*Regular meetings with councillors and partners*

*Holding online-meetings and utilising social media*

*Hosting a Rural Crime Conference, Business Crime Conference and precept conferences*

*Creation of Mobile Police Stations*

*Keeping people informed via the OPCC website and supporting the development of a new force website*



The Chief Constable has a duty to deliver against the Plan - and my office holds him to account for this - but he always retained complete operational independence over how policing is delivered here in Kent and nothing in the Plan seeks to restrict this.

### **Setting Kent Police's budget and the council tax precept**

One of the key differences between PCCs and the old Police Authority model is that PCCs are identifiable and directly accountable to the people who elect them. When setting the Kent Police budget and the council tax precept I never lost sight of that.

In Kent, the money received through the police element of the council tax accounts for around 29% of our annual funding, so setting the precept is an important decision. That is why each year I hosted a Policing Precept Conference to update the public and our partners on the force's financial situation and ask for their views on my proposals for the next financial year.



In accordance with the medium-term plan set out in the Police and Crime Plan, the precept increased by 1.99% each year from 2013/14 to 2015/16. For 2016/17, after consulting with the public and partners, I used the opportunity to increase the precept by 3.4% (£5 for an average Band D property) to invest in more firearms officers which the Chief Constable told me he needs.

Even so, the amount Kent Police receives from council tax (£152.15 for an average Band D property in 2016/17) remains one of the lowest in England and Wales and I am proud to say Kent Police remains on a sound financial footing. We have saved millions through careful planning, and protected visible community policing in the process.

The fact our finances were judged to be 'Outstanding' by HMIC in 2015 – despite the difficult decisions we had to make – is testament to the savings plan my office has overseen. HMIC states that Kent Police is well-placed to face its future financial challenges, which is comforting.

I am pleased to report that, as I hand over responsibility for a £300million-a-year budget to the next PCC, Kent Police remains debt-free. Indeed, thanks to our savings plan, I've been able to leave a modest amount of cash available for future projects and savings of £33million have almost been identified until 2020.

### **Bringing partners together to deliver our priorities**

Partnership working is fundamental to any successful police force, and is necessary in an age of austerity to deliver a quality public service. Crime and anti-social behaviour reduction cannot be delivered by the police alone and, besides, victims do not care which agency is responsible for tackling the issues they face - what they care about is whether or not their issue is resolved.

I have always been against the privatisation of police functions but that does not prevent the force from working with other forces, local authorities, the health service and the communities it serves if doing so means a more efficient service.

To that end, I'm pleased to say excellent work is being undertaken by the 13 Community Safety Partnerships, where Kent Police works hand-in-hand with local authorities, KFRS, housing associations and the health service to find joined up solutions to problems.

Some of these problems may appear trivial to some people but I disagree. I have always believed anti-social behaviour can have the same impact as crime on a victim, particularly when it comes to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

I also know how frustrating the courts process can be – and how alien it can seem if a victim or witness does not get the support they need. That is why the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB) – made up of my office, Kent Police, Kent County Council, the NHS, the criminal defence community, Kent Probation, HM Courts and Tribunals Service and HM Prison Service – has been looking at ways to make the justice system more efficient and effective for victims.

Reducing the time it takes cases to get to court, introducing Sunday remand hearings and increasing the availability of video link suites - to spare vulnerable victims and witnesses the trauma of having to give evidence at court - are just some of the ways I am pleased to say the KCJB puts victims and efficiency at the heart of everything it does.

### ***What is being done to bring partners together?***

*Working with Community Safety Partnerships to tackle local crime and anti-social behaviour*

*Sharing a force control room with KFRS*

*Working with health services to cut detentions under the Mental Health Act*

*Engaging with the judiciary to ensure video link technology is used to its full potential*

*Establishing a multi-agency team to combat child sexual abuse and identify children at risk*

*Engaging with the Business Crime Advisory Group and the Crime Rural Advisory Group*

*Hosting commissioning workshops to support voluntary and community groups*

*Bringing together victim service providers and criminal justice agencies*

*Encouraging agencies to work across borders - to improve effectiveness, reduce duplication and share good practice*

## **Managing the Independent Custody Visitors' scheme**

Our Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers who pay unannounced visits to police cells across Kent to make sure detainees are being treated properly. Shortly after I took office we had around 40 volunteers but I am pleased to say that, thanks to our support, we now have 55 skilled volunteers plus three co-ordinators.

The scheme has received praise from HMIC, and I am particularly proud of having been able to invest in mental health training for the volunteers – making sure they know how to spot what specific needs anyone in custody with mental health difficulties may have and how best to communicate with them.

All volunteers in our county – whether they serve the Special Constabulary, Speedwatch, Kent Search and Rescue, Neighbourhood Watch groups or our own ICVs – are a credit to Kent. They give their time for the benefit of others, for which I thank them all, and which is why investing in their training is the least I can do for them.



## **Producing Annual Reports for the Police and Crime Panel**

PCCs must produce an Annual Report which documents progress made in the financial year in meeting the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan. Annual Reports for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 have been duly sent on time to the Police and Crime Panel.

The Annual Report for 2015/16 is being presented to the Panel on 12 April 2016, along with this report.

## **May 2016 and beyond**

I am proud to have been entrusted with the responsibility of holding a vital public service to account on your behalf, because it is critically important that the people of Kent get the best possible policing service. I am content that I have delivered what I said I would and that Kent Police is in a very strong and sustainable position for the future, whatever that may hold.

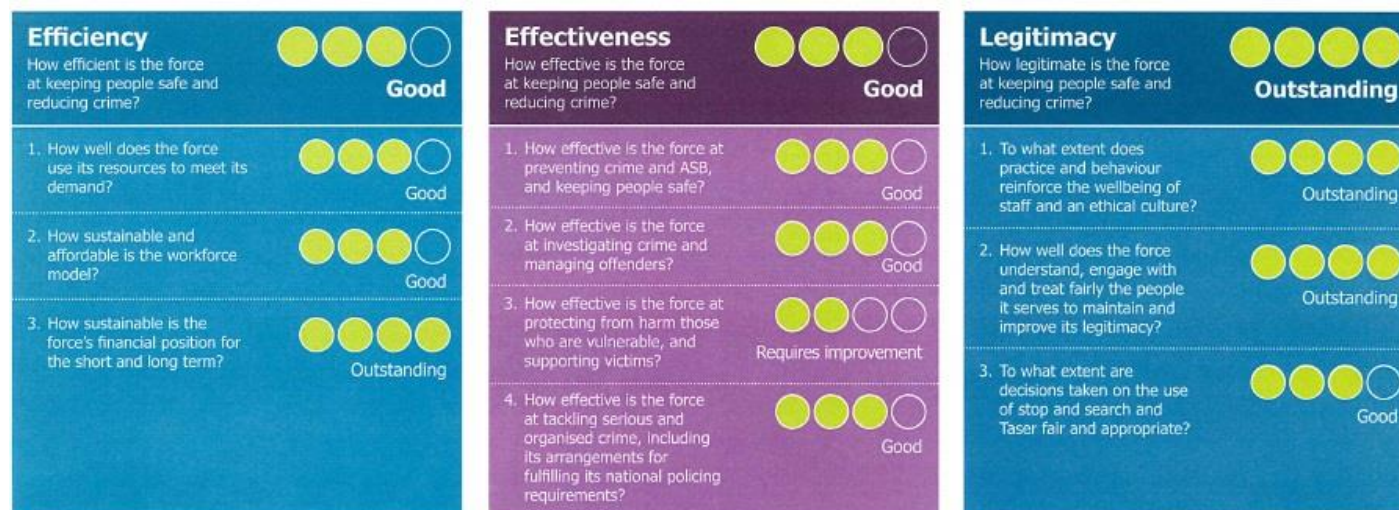
To those putting themselves forward for election in May, I give you this advice:

1. Be prepared to work around the clock. This is not a part-time position. It is an all-consuming role that requires and deserves that attention.
2. Listen to the public. They elect us into post, and ultimately they know best about what they want and the service they receive.
3. Support the officers and staff delivering the service. They are incredible people doing an amazing job. When you have to challenge, remember that mistakes can happen and look at the intention as well as the actions of those involved.
4. Put the people of Kent first - not Westminster, not a political party, not yourself.



# Appendix 1

## HMIC's verdict of Kent Police (Feb 2016)



### Zoe Billingham, HM Inspector of Constabulary:

"I congratulate Kent Police on its performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime.

"The force works well with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The quality of crime investigation is good and the force works well to stop re-offending. The force is good at disrupting organised criminality, and I welcome the steps it is taking to improve its capability further.

"The force has demonstrated robust financial management and has responded well to the financial challenges it has faced. It understands demand on its services and matches resources to meet demand. I am particularly pleased by the force's commitment to continuous improvement, demonstrated through its approach to reducing demand and the development of the Kent Operating Model. The new operating model has successfully reduced spending and is enabling effective planning.

"I commend the way in which the chief officers have created an organisational culture that is extremely positive and supports the legitimacy of the force. The care given to the wellbeing of the workforce is evident. Members of the workforce feel empowered to challenge decisions perceived to be unethical; and complaints and misconduct allegations are dealt with robustly and fairly. The strength of the culture within the organisation is reflected in the outstanding way in which the force engages with the people of Kent. It uses a variety of means of communication to aid its understanding of communities' priorities.

"Kent Police has demonstrated commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people in its communities. However, frontline officers' knowledge of child sexual exploitation should be improved. The force also needs to take steps to understand and address its very low charge rate for domestic abuse cases, ensuring more perpetrators are brought to justice. I am encouraged by the force's recognition of these issues and the hard work that is already being undertaken to address them."

## Appendix 2

# Kent Police Mission

'Provide a first class service **protecting** and **serving** the people of Kent'

## Vision of the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner

'Our joint vision is for Kent to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit. By protecting the public from harm, we will allow our communities to flourish and by working with the public and partners, we will provide a first class policing service that is both visible and accessible. We will retain neighbourhood policing as the bedrock of policing in Kent. We will be there when the public need us and we will act with integrity in all that we do.'

### Kent Police Values

- We will put the public first and deliver a service to be proud of.
- We will serve with integrity and professionalism.
- We will treat everyone with fairness, respect and dignity.
- We will be innovative, use resources wisely and operate as one team.
- We will act with humility, compassion and courtesy.
- We will listen, learn and strive to improve.

### Kent Police Priorities

- Cutting crime, catching criminals and dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- Ensuring visible community policing is at the heart of Kent's Policing Model.
- Providing a professional service, putting victims and witnesses first.
- Protecting the public from serious harm.
- Meeting national commitments for policing.
- Delivering value for money.
- Developing and supporting our workforce.



**Kent  
Police**

Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes

Chief Constable Alan Pughley