

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Neighbourhood Policing Review

Date: 27 June 2023

Introduction:

1. The defining features of neighbourhood policing can be traced back to the Peelian principles. The clear emphasis on prevention, the recognition that the police are part of the community and that their power depends on public approval, are as important today as they were at the inception of the police service.
2. That is why the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable's Joint Vision states '*...We will retain neighbourhood policing as the bedrock of policing in Kent...*'
3. It is also why, in the [Making Kent Safer Plan](#), under the priority 'Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities' set for the Chief Constable, the PCC states:
'Neighbourhood policing is fundamental, providing opportunities for greater community engagement and delivering a local approach to policing that is visible, accessible and responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities.'
4. Further to previous verbal updates by the PCC, this paper provides an overview of the process surrounding Kent Police's Neighbourhood Policing Review, and position statement on the new model which came into effect on 7 June 2023.
5. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

The rationale for change:

6. The Force must achieve a permanent revenue saving of £16-17 million over the next three years. It is unable to realise these savings via police officer pay due to the constraints of the Government Police Uplift Programme (PUP) and associated funding rules.
7. Over the last few years, the Force has developed and invested in the Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) model, including Integrated Offender Management, Schools Officers, Town Centre PCs, District Taskforces, Crime Prevention PCSOs and the Problem-Solving Taskforce. There have also been significant legislative changes nationally such as violence against women and girls, updated College of Policing core NHP guidelines and the Government's 'Beating crime plan'.
8. The significant changes to the policing landscape and the core NHP guidelines require all forces to have an appropriate model which provides visible and efficient NHP, in line with local priorities.
9. Therefore, the Chief Officer Team felt the time was right to remodel NHP in Kent to create an optimal model for the future and to contribute to Force savings.

Objectives:

10. The objectives of the Review were as follows:
 - I. To develop a NHP model that maintains or enhances the service provided to the public, in particular the service provided to victims and witnesses.
 - II. Contact, visibility and vulnerability must remain core to the NHP offer.
 - III. To develop a NHP model with fewer PCSO and staff posts, without compromising service delivery.
 - IV. To develop a model with geographical personal ownership of Ward(s) by police officers.
 - V. Develop a model with a tactical capability to respond effectively to high demand areas, requiring a longer-term problem-solving approach.

- VI. To develop a NHP model that contributes to Force savings whilst maintaining or enhancing the existing neighbourhood service provision.

Governance and oversight:

11. The programme of change has been governed by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) in his role as Senior Responsible Officer.
12. The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) for Local Policing is the lead officer, and programme management is delivered through the Force Change Team.
13. Throughout the development of the model, the following mechanisms have been used to track progress, provide scrutiny, and ensure the programme was meeting the strategic ambitions:
- Chief Officer Management Board
 - Strategic Change and Resourcing Board
 - Chief Constable / PCC weekly briefing
 - Neighbourhood Implementation Board
 - Tactical Delivery Group
 - Senior Design Steering Group
14. The governance structure has ensured that all internal stakeholders, such as operational policing leadership teams, Finance, Force Change Team, police officer and police staff associations, and Corporate Communications, were able to deliver the requirements of the model in an organised fashion.

Consultation and engagement:

15. The level of consultation and engagement during the Review has been extensive, and includes:
- 334 police officers and staff engaged with, to assist in the review of 18 roles and job descriptions
 - Extensive engagement with all 13 Community Safety Units
 - 32 police officer and police staff managers in regular two-way dialogue with the programme team
 - Engagement with all local Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Chairs, as well as the Chair of the county IAG (the model was presented to the IAG at their county engagement event)
 - Staff at seven Community Safety Partnership meetings
 - 12 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) drop-in sessions for local District and Divisional staff
 - 476 attendees at on-line engagement events with the ACC
 - Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)
 - Joint Kent Chiefs (two formal presentations provided)
 - Violence Reduction Unit
 - KCC Prevent Team
 - Nine other police forces consulted regarding best practice

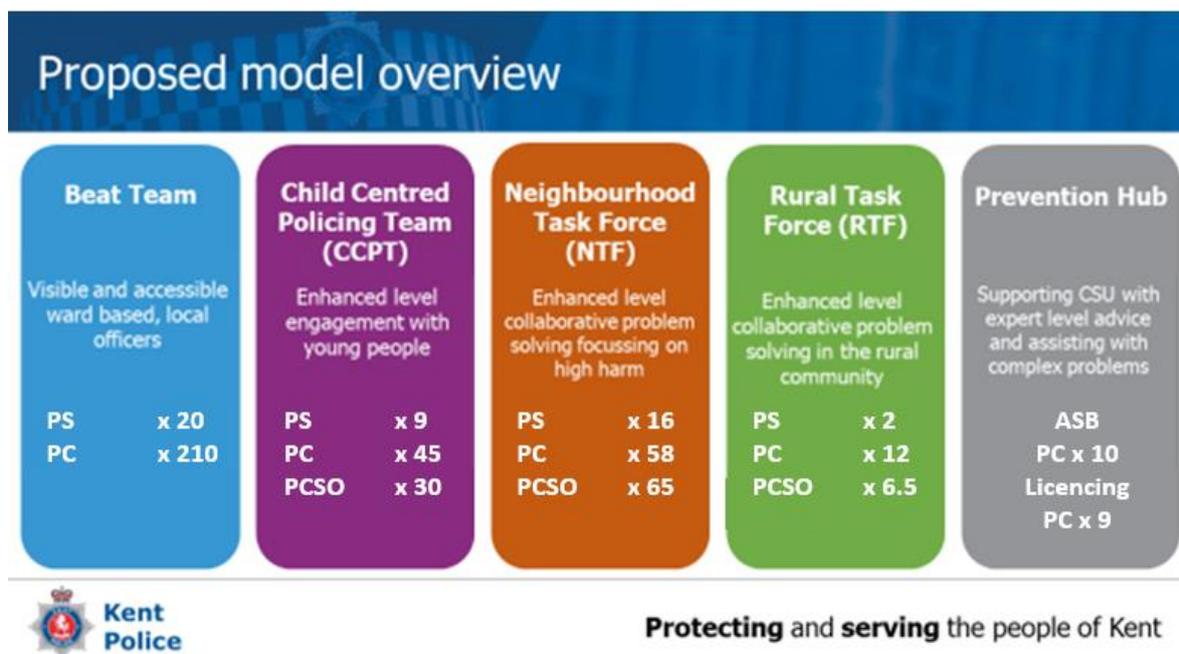
Impact on staff and support provided:

16. Every PCSO affected by the Business Case has been offered 1-2-1 engagement, with many taking the opportunity to meet with HR, operational leads, finance, Unison etc. Officers in the NHP model were likewise offered this opportunity, and in total over 500 1-2-1s have been conducted.
17. Staff associations have been involved in the Review throughout; engagement has included corporate boards, early review of communications, informal updates with two-way discussion and formal Business Case consultation.
18. From the beginning of the Review, communications from the Chief Officer Team to those affected and the wider organisation have been open and transparent. Whilst the reduction in police staff posts has been a difficult message, this has provided staff with advanced notice of the potential changes and the Force has been able to offer support as a result. There has been frequent signposting to Welfare Services, creation of a NHP Review Support Hub on SharePoint and a streamlined pathway developed for those wishing to join as police officers.

19. The Business Case was one of the largest and most impactful on staff for many years, as such, the launch on 23 November 2023 took place with all affected staff, their managers and SLT invited to an in person briefing event. The event was led by the DCC and attended by various teams able to offer help such as Welfare Services, Finance, HR, Unison and the Force Change Team.
20. Projected redundancy and pension figures were calculated for police staff ready for Business Case launch to reduce potential waiting times from external organisations and allow everyone as much time as possible to consider their options.
21. There were 336 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff posts affected by the Business Case with proposals reducing the police staff establishment within the NHP model by 232.5 FTE. This equated to 177 people or 166.15 FTE strength. As there are 103.5 posts within the new NHP model (101.5 PCSOs and two police staff), the Business Case required a reduction of 62.65 FTE.
22. There were also 259 police officers affected by the Business Case, however the proposal increased officer posts from 263 to 391 resulting in an uplift of 128.
23. 51% of PCSOs, 80% of police constables (PCs) and 91% of police sergeants (PS') secured their first preference in the desktop selection and posting processes.

The new model:

24. An overview of the new NHP model, including the number of officer and police staff posts, is shown below:



25. Under the model, every Ward will have a named police officer, and with early intervention and effective engagement at its heart, will see meaningful and targeted activity while building on the Community Safety Units' ability to disrupt those who bring misery to local communities. While not featured in the overview above, all Community Safety Units, made up of Beat Teams, Child Centred Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Task Forces, are very much part of the NHP model.
26. It should also be noted that under the model the specialist Rural Task Force sees an uplift of 1 PS and 6.5 PCSOs.
27. The Force formally moved to the new model on 7 June 2023, but it is acknowledged that to resource to full establishment without impacting on other core functions will take time. As a result, the Force has adopted an interim model with a focus on optimising the number of new Beat Officers.
28. Based on the current timeline, the Force anticipates the model will be up to establishment by September 2024.

29. Following police officer postings there have been challenges with balancing the resourcing requirement for Beat Officers. The Force's commitment to resource Beat Officer posts to a minimum of 50% has required 30 internal voluntary moves and postings through HR. It is anticipated that these officers will be released back to their permanent roles by March 2024 in line with the phased plan that utilises the PUP to fully resource the model.

Benefits/impact of the new model:

30. The model seeks to deliver a number of benefits, all of which will be reviewed at a regular basis:

- Significant reduction in the number of PCSO posts resulting in a substantial financial saving.
- Higher proportion of NHP resources owned and delivered at District level. This will improve flexibility allowing Districts to respond quickly to local problems, increase ownership and improve joint working with partners who operate at the District level. This will result in more timely and effective problem solving and targeted activity to reduce crime and hold offenders to account.
- Streamline 14 separate roles to 4 with an increased focus on local ownership. This will improve resilience (absence or vacancies will have a reduced impact on service delivery) and will ensure the public have a 'one stop shop' for issues and a consistent service, leading to increased public satisfaction.
- Dedicated NHP roles supported by an abstraction policy. This will guarantee resources are 'ring fenced' to community engagement, problem solving and targeted crime prevention activity, which will ensure visibility, improve public confidence, and reduce crime and harm.
- There will be opportunities for specialisation and lateral progression within NHP, with the Beat Officer PC role offering an entry route. This will encourage retention of staff and officers, align with and streamline the professionalising NHP workstream, and address the HMICFRS PEEL recommendation.
- Re-balancing of supervisory ratios. This will result in increased support to staff and officers to maintain welfare, and improved oversight will raise the quality of service to the public.
- Prevention Hubs will be delivered at a Divisional level to support officers with specialist advice and support. This will ensure a more efficient delivery of specialist capability allowing for more Beat Officer resources and create the ability to pool resources to deal with complex problems and sources of high harm.

31. It is acknowledged that the stability and consistency of resources in the model will be of significant benefit to developing local knowledge and relationships with the public and communities. A strategic resourcing ambition for the model has been developed, with the ambition to attract PCs and PCSOs who want to work in NHP for the long term by building an NHP career path including continual professional development.

Review process:

32. The model will continue to be subject of monthly scrutiny via the ACC-led NHP Board.

33. A formal Post-Implementation Review will commence at a time directed by the DCC, but it is anticipated that this will be around December 2023 (6-months after implementation of the model). A further review will also be required after September 2024, once the model is fully resourced. This review will be conducted by the Force Change Team.

Holding to account:

34. Throughout the Review, the PCC has held the Chief Constable to account through his quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.

35. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.

36. Whilst the Force has provided updates via the papers, the PCC has also asked questions and taken a particular interest in the welfare of those officers and staff affected. The PCC will continue to receive updates as the implementation progresses and the Force moves to a fully resourced model over the coming months.

37. The PCC will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings and receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force as required.
38. The PCC would like to express his thanks to those officers and staff impacted by the Review who have continued to provide a first class service to local communities through such a difficult period. In addition, he would like to acknowledge the Force's work around engagement and development of the model, as well as the HR processes and welfare support offered to those affected.
39. The PCC is reassured that the new NHP model will provide as good, if not a better policing service to the communities of Kent and Medway and will monitor its implementation and impact carefully.

Recommendation:

40. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their April 2024 meeting.