

AGENDA

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Dear Panel Member

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the **KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** will be held in the **Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone** on **Tuesday, 6th February, 2024, at 10.00 am** when the following business will be transacted

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Anna Taylor on 03000 416478

Membership

Councillor Peter Feacey	Ashford Borough Council
Councillor Connie Nolan	Canterbury City Council
Councillor Richard Wells	Dartford Borough Council
Councillor Charlotte Zosseder	Dover District Council
Councillor Mike Blakemore	Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox	Gravesham Borough Council
Mr Mike Hill	Kent County Council
Councillor Lauren Edwards	Medway Council
Councillor Perry Cole	Sevenoaks District Council
Councillor Richard Palmer	Swale Borough Council
Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid	Maidstone Borough Council
Councillor Heather Keen	Thanet District Council
Councillor Des Keers	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Councillor Nancy Warne	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Councillor Tristan Osborne	Co-opted member – Medway Council
Mr Ian Chittenden	Co-opted member – Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mr Jordan Meade	Co-opted member – Conservative Group
Mrs Elaine Bolton	Independent Member
Mr Gurvinder Sandher	Independent Member

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- 4 Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 17 October 2023 (Pages 1 - 10)

A - Items for consideration under Statutory Obligation

- A1 Draft refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' plan and 2024/25 precept proposal (Pages 11 - 72)

To consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's draft refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' plan; precept proposal for 2024/25 and supporting financial information.

B - Commissioner's reports requested by the Panel/offered by the Commissioner

- B1 HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police (Pages 73 - 84)

C - Panel Matters

- C1 Future work programme (Pages 85 - 86)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 29 January 2024

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 17 October 2023.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chairman), Mr G Sandher (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Blakemore, Mrs E Bolton, Mr I S Chittenden, Cllr P Cole, Cllr L Edwards, Cllr P Feacey, Cllr Mrs J Hollingsbee, Cllr D Keers, Makinson, Mr J Meade, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr R Palmer and Cllr L Parfitt-Reid

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive), Mr R Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer) and Mr N Wickens (OPCC - Head of Policy & Research)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Ms L Tricker (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**100. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting**
(Item 3)

Mr Meade declared that he was the Chairman of Gravesham Pastors Charity.

101. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 27 June 2023
(Item 4)

The Chair raised some typographical errors in the minutes, and it was confirmed these amendments would be made.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

102. Complaints Against the Commissioner - Annual Report 2022/23
(Item B1)

1. Mrs Taylor introduced the report and highlighted that the number of complaints received was low compared to other local authorities, and although the number had increased in 2022/23 this was largely due to repeated complaints that represented no overall concern.
2. Members did not have any comments or questions on the report.

RESOLVED to note the report.

103. Police and Crime Commissioner Annual Report
(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report and explained that it was a statutory function to produce an annual paper. This report covered the period between April 2022 and March 2023 and covered a year of substantial activity, for which he thanked officers within his office and the Panel. He highlighted the changes which had occurred during this period, which included the appointment of a new Chief Constable, who he felt had improved overall performance within the police force and was continuing to work on issues such as within the Force Control Room (FCR). There had also been several national projects undertaken such as the Police Uplift Programme which had seen Kent successfully recruit the 487 new police officers it had been allocated, bringing the total number of police officers to 4203, including 460 that were recruited prior to the national programme. This meant Kent now had an extra 1000 officers compared to six years ago, although retention remained an issue. He outlined that the next step was to increase the number of police staff.
2. The Commissioner highlighted the main areas within the report which were:
 - a. The commissioning element, which included commissioning programmes for victims. For example:
 1. Funding for victims had increased by 93% (from £2million to almost £4million) which included sexual abuse and domestic abuse advisers who were now in post supporting both men and women.
 2. The Victim Voice campaign which had launched in February 2023 and worked to ensure victims understood their rights and right to review. Thousands of victims had used this service and feedback was positive overall.
 3. The Victim Support Contract had formalised the Stalking Advocate and Hate Crime Advocate roles.
 4. The PCC had recommissioned the Restorative Justice programme.
 5. The Collaborate Digital programme had been launched which went into schools to teach children about online behaviour and healthy relationships.
 - b. The ongoing partnerships between the PCC and other organisations. These partnerships helped launch the Safer Streets programme, which had run until September 2023, and expanded CCTV across the county, engaged an active bystander's programme and improved street lighting. The Commissioner was also the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Board and worked closely with the Violence Reduction Unit.
 - c. Holding the Chief Constable to account and ensuring a good relationship. The Commissioner had focussed on holding the Chief Constable to account on the following issues:
 1. Public contact, including the call attrition rate for 101, which had dropped from 55% in 2022 to 5% in 2023.
 2. Mental health support, including the Right Care, Right Person scheme and response policing.
 3. The Neighbourhood Policing Review; whilst he regretted the loss of a number of PCSO's, he said the outcome was

positive with police officers going into neighbourhood roles. The Commissioner advised he had held the Chief Constable to account and would continue to monitor in the 2023/24 reporting year.

4. The criminal justice system and ensuring that Kent improved the quality of casefiles submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
 - d. The finances of Kent Police and the PCC to ensure a value for money service and good performance.
3. The Chair thanked the Commissioner for his hard work on the report including the progress made on the PEEL report, and the Panel looked forward to a full report on this in early 2024. He also thanked the Commissioner for his work on the Neighbourhood Policing Review and the commissioning work being undertaken for victims. He questioned whether the PCC was concerned regarding the backlog of cases within the court system and lack of prison spaces. The Commissioner stated that he was concerned about the criminal justice system, including the backlog of court cases which was partly due to COVID-19 but also difficulties in recruiting of judges and legal advisers. He had raised this issue with the Justice Minister as Kent had the second worst court backlog in the UK, and the police force needed to work closely with other departments to solve this issue. The Criminal Justice Board continued to monitor issues within the offender management system and would convene additional meetings if necessary.
4. The Chair requested an update on the criminal justice system to the Panel in 2024.
5. A Member thanked the Commissioner for his work on the report, including the mental health hubs outlined within the Making Kent Safer plan. A question was raised regarding the high call attrition rates for 101; if this had impacted on the numbers of people being able to report anti-social behaviour; and what services would be commissioned during 2023/24 to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner explained that the figures for anti-social behaviour could have been affected by 101 call attrition, but there were other methods of reporting such as online forms, although these were not a replacement for phones or in-person reporting. The figures would be closely monitored and compared this year, and residents would be encouraged to report all anti-social behaviour. Figures for anti-social behaviour could also have been affected by the new categorisations of crime, for example dangerous off-road motorbikes were no longer classed as anti-social behaviour, but categorised as crimes.
6. A Member asked if grant funding allocated to tackle national issues would be ringfenced to be spent in Kent. The Commissioner explained that the PCC did commission services to national charities, as well as local charities, but all services followed proper procurement rules, procedures, and contract management. The commissioning system allowed for a contribution to charities core funding, but 90% of funding had to be spent on victim services.

7. A Member thanked the Commissioner for his ongoing work regarding anti-social behaviour relating to off-road motorbikes but felt the categories of anti-social behaviour remained broad, and asked what was being done to ensure all anti-social behaviour was recorded and dealt with. The Commissioner explained that the categorisation and recording of anti-social behaviour had recently changed due to a Home Office counting rules amendment, which meant that the number of anti-social behaviour categories had decreased, with many now listed as crimes. The PCC would continue to monitor these figures closely and would speak to residents to discuss anti-social behaviour in their areas.
8. A Member asked what work was being undertaken to continue to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), as some successes had been achieved but this remained a big issue. The Commissioner stated that VAWG remained a local and national priority and needed to include violence against men and boys. There were four upcoming events including White Ribbon Day and International Men's Day to raise awareness of this issue.
9. A Member questioned the mass coordination approach of the Serious Violence Duty and felt that this needed to be tailored to a more local approach, as had previously been discussed by the Panel. The Commissioner agreed to amend the Serious Violence Duty wording in his Annual Report to reflect discussions around a more local and networked approach.
10. A concern was raised regarding question 4 of the report on page 3, which showed a 4.3/10 satisfaction score and asked what could improve this score. The Commissioner explained that satisfaction surveys were most often influenced by how quickly cases were closed with no further action; and the number of updates provided to victims.
11. Members asked if the Commissioner could provide the numbers of domestic abuse victims satisfied with the service they received, rather than percentages, and the Commissioner agreed to circulate these figures after the meeting.
12. A question was asked regarding increasing the low level of resourcing for police officers, and how call wait times could be reduced. The Commissioner explained that a detailed piece of work had been undertaken to understand and reduce call waiting times and attrition, which had been 33% and 15-minute wait times in 2022. These figures had improved in 2023 as there were now more staff working at peak times. The Commissioner added that the Neighbourhood Policing Review was currently 50% resourced, but this would increase to 95% by March 2024 and 100% by September 2024. It had been felt that a slower implementation would work better to ensure it was fully embedded and there was appropriate capacity in other teams.
13. The Vice-Chair asked what steps the PCC would be undertaking in 2023/24 to tackle personal robbery, theft, vehicle crime, and drug crime. The Commissioner explained that he was working with the Chief Constable

on these issues and was receiving monthly, ward level crime data to monitor hotspots and hold the Chief Constable to account. This included closely monitoring the levels of shoplifting and engaging with Community Liaison Officers. In terms of drug offences, these figures fluctuated based on police activity, but was again being considered by the PCC on a monthly, ward level basis.

14. A concern was raised as no data was being collected about the satisfaction of people regarding the outcomes of cybercrime. The Commissioner agreed to take this proposal forward as part of the changes to Action Fraud.
15. A Member questioned how the PCC was holding the Chief Constable to account on the issue of speed enforcement, and how community safety policing was being utilised and linked to speeding. The Commissioner explained that Kent Police ensured speed enforcement using fixed cameras, mobile speed vans, and as part of the daily business for local police officers. Officers also received information from community speed watch groups to monitor hotspots and worked in partnership with these groups.
16. A Member highlighted that the number of 999 calls had increased, and the number of 101 had decreased, and asked if the public were aware of the differences between 999/101 and how they should be utilised. The Commissioner stated that these figures were indicative of a larger national trend and were partly due to 101 call attrition. Several makes of mobile phone also automatically called 999 when certain buttons were pushed or put in emergency mode, which meant an increased number of dropped calls.
17. A Member raised a concern with the number of shoplifters active in Kent, and asked how the PCC was holding the Chief Constable to account on this issue. The Commissioner explained that he was closely tracking this issue and one of the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan was that Kent Police must work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. He said the last two Performance and Delivery Board meetings had both included scrutiny of Kent Police's work on shoplifting and also the Shop Kind campaign. He said he had recently met with shop keepers and retailers across the county to understand the challenges they were experiencing. He reported that Kent Police had been more proactive around shoplifting and retail crime, with Neighbourhood officers currently supporting the Safer Business Week of Action by going out and meeting business owners face-to-face to understand their needs. They are using the fuller range of powers, including Criminal Behaviour Orders to ban repeat offenders from certain retailers and town centres and also charging more offenders. The Commissioner explained that shoplifting was also linked to organised crime and drug crime, so Kent Police continued to invest in drug rehabilitation services, mapping organised crime, and considering best practice when targeting prolific offenders.

18. A Member thanked the Commissioner and Kent Police for their work on tackling county lines, particularly in North Kent, and asked what work was being undertaken to stop children being exploited by county lines gangs. The Commissioner explained that 85 gangs associated with county lines had been mapped in Kent in July 2020, but this figure had reduced to below 40 in 2023 thanks to the work of Kent Police. County lines gangs had been known to groom, exploit and use sexual violence on children and this was being tackled in the following ways:
- a. Child centred policing to ensure a proportionate response when a child was found to be working in a county lines gang.
 - b. The Voice of the Child programme to ensure children were treated properly when victims or witnesses to a crime.
 - c. The work of Catch 22 and the St Giles Trust to promote a proactive anti-gang message in schools.
 - d. The Schools Team within the Neighbourhood Policing Review which would focus on crime and anti-social behaviour as part of county lines activity.

RESOLVED to review and comment on the Annual Report.

104. Contacting Kent Police

(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner introduced the report and stated that it had previously been requested by the Panel due to the issues that had been faced by Kent Police over the past year. The report detailed the progress that had been made to recruit to the Force Control Room to answer 999 and 101 calls, and detailed the task given to the Chief Constable in 2022 to provide an explanation on the high rates of call attrition. The Commissioner explained that the demand on the Force Control Room (FCR) and the high vacancy rate had meant that 999 calls were prioritised over 101, leading to a call attrition rate of 55% in October 2022. In February and March 2023, the force had begun an over-recruitment process and redeployed police officers to the FCR. This had led to a reduction in call attrition in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, although this would continue to be monitored. The Commissioner highlighted that digital contact with the public remained important, including the live chat function and contact us forms.
2. The Commissioner highlighted that front counters would remain an important point of contact, and four vacancies had already been filled to ensure front counters were re-opened.
3. The Chair felt that a 2% national benchmark for call attrition rates was high, and asked if Kent Police could do better than this benchmark. The Commissioner confirmed that Kent Police would target a lower benchmark figure.
4. A Member questioned if the automated 101 response would be updated. A concern was raised that the automated message was longer than 90 seconds, which was the target response time, which meant people were often waiting 180 seconds. The Commissioner confirmed that the Chief Superintendent had reviewed the automated response and felt that encouraging people to use digital services was an important message. He confirmed that the call waiting time

began when the automated response was finished and the phone started ringing.

5. A question was asked regarding implementing a system for residents to be able to track police officers, similar to how delivery drivers and food delivery drivers were tracked. The Commissioner stated that Kent Police were beginning to engage with a national solution to implement a new technology to track the location of police officers, similar to delivery drivers.
6. The Vice-Chair questioned how the police followed up with victims after a crime, and how this was measured. The Commissioner explained that the Home Office set expectations on the timeliness and quality of follow up for victims, and this was monitored independently. The PCC could access the performance dashboard to hold the Chief Constable to account over follow-ups with victims and to promote victims' rights and the right of review, for example Victim Voice which would be distributed to the Panel after the meeting.
7. A Member raised a concern with the live-chat function and sought assurance that this did not overwhelm officers within the Force Control Room. The Commissioner confirmed that the live chat function was additionality and would not be available during peak times when 999 and 101 call numbers were high. Digital contact methods could also be useful when needing to report a crime discreetly, for example domestic abuse crimes or crimes occurring in public areas.

RESOLVED to note the report.

105. Decision OPCC.D.034.23 - PFI North Kent Police Station

(Item C1)

1. The Chair felt concerned regarding the legality and legal processes surrounding the decision. The Commissioner confirmed that independent legal advice and counsel had been sought before undertaking the decision. A report would be brought before the Panel once the matter had been concluded, for the Panel to scrutinise.

RESOLVED to note the decision.

106. Decision OPCC.D.033.23 - Sale of IP Addresses

(Item C2)

1. The Commissioner thanked the OPCC for their work on this project, as proper process had been followed and money had been generated from the sale for capital funding.

RESOLVED to note the decision.

107. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item D1)

Question 1

An officer in Folkestone told me recently that while the force locally is carrying out more recruitment than it has in years, the real issue is retention. Does the Commissioner recognise this as a particular challenge and, if so, what plans or

measures are in place to address the problem of losing officers and the experience they take with them.

(Cllr Mike Blakemore, Folkestone and Hythe District Council)

1. The Commissioner stated that retention of police officers was important locally and nationally, as forces did not want to lose skills and experience. The Performance and Delivery Board had recently discussed this issue, the minutes of which were available online. Kent Police worked to retain police officers by increasing the South East Allowance to the maximum £3000; providing them with new equipment; and lobbying the government on their behalf on changes to legislation to make the job less difficult, such as response driving and firearms policing. The force also supported officers on their decisions, such as using stop and search powers proportionately. Policies were also in place to help retain staff such as mutual exchange postings, a financial wellbeing hub, the Develop You programme, retention ambassadors, and occupational health facilities.

Question 2

In his role in holding the Chief Constable to account and following statements by the Home Secretary recently which said police should 'follow every reasonable line of inquiry' can the Commissioner reassure the Panel that where in areas where CCTV services are provided by local authorities (or indeed by private holders) where crime or suspected crime is committed, the information, images and data captured are fully and 100% utilised as part of the investigative process by Kent Police for each and every report of a crime or incident as part of the commitment and requirement to investigate each and every crime and indeed there is proactive engagement between Kent Police and CCTV systems provided by local authorities to ensure that crimes are proactively investigated and action taken by Kent Police.

(Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, Gravesham Borough Council)

2. In response to the question, the Commissioner explained that authorised professional practice guidelines had recently been updated by the Home Office but depended on the circumstances of the case. It advised that police officers should identify CCTV near the location of a crime, including local authority or on private property. Police officers would then try to make links between CCTV through a digital ambassador programme, which would remove issues of collecting DVD or video CCTV evidence.

Question 3

Can the Commissioner explain how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for the priority 'protecting people from exploitation and abuse' and the safeguarding of domestic abuse victims in particular?

(Cllr Richard Palmer, Swale Borough Council)

3. In response to the question, the Commissioner explained that protecting people from abuse was one of Kent Police's priorities. It remained a standing item on the Performance and Delivery Board agenda and the Chief Constable reported regularly on the priority. The PCC regularly visited with teams such as the Vulnerability Investigative Team who tackled abuse and the Chief Finance Officer

represented the PCC on the Strategic Board and received bespoke briefings.

4. Cllr Palmer queried how domestic abuse victims could contact the PCC, as they could be intimidated reporting to police officers. The Commissioner confirmed that victims could report direct to the PCC, and to charities and third parties such as Crimestoppers.

RESOLVED to note the responses to the questions.

108. Future work programme

(Item E1)

It was confirmed that the commissioning report would not be presented in February 2024, but the PCC would provide a verbal update at the Chief Constable briefing in November.

RESOLVED to note the report.

109. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meeting held on 7 June 2023

(Item F1)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Board held on 7 June 2023 be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Draft refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' plan and 2024/25 precept proposal
Date: 6 February 2024

Introduction:

1. The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) (PRSRA 2011) sets the requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to issue a police and crime plan that covers their term of Office.
2. A 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.
3. Whilst every plan will be localised in nature, they all share a common aim in communicating a PCC's vision and objectives.
4. PCCs are required to keep the plan under review and at any time, may issue or vary a police and crime plan; in doing so, they must have regard to the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) (SPR) which is issued by the Secretary of State and was updated in February 2023.
5. Before issuing or varying a police and crime plan, PCCs must:
 - prepare a draft of the plan or variation;
 - consult the Chief Constable in preparing the draft plan or variation;
 - send the draft plan or variation to the Police and Crime Panel;
 - have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Panel in relation to the draft plan or variation;
 - give the panel a response to any such report or recommendations; and
 - publish any such response.
6. In exercising their discrete functions, PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to the issued police and crime plan.
7. However, the police and crime plan also impacts upon a wide variety of stakeholders and has a number of intended audiences including the public, victims of crime and witnesses, police officers and staff, the Secretary of State, Police and Crime Panels, community safety partners, criminal justice agencies and the private and voluntary sector.
8. The PRSRA 2011 also requires PCCs to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the precept which is proposed to be issued for the financial year.
9. The Police and Crime Panel must review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC, which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.
10. This report fulfils the requirements set out in paragraphs 5 and 8.

Refreshing the 'Making Kent Safer' plan:

11. On 1 April 2022, the PCC published his police and crime plan, titled 'Making Kent Safer – April 2022 to March 2025'.

12. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC is committed to consulting with victims and the wider community and to keeping the plan under review, particularly in light of changes to the SPR and/or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel. More formally, the PCC has determined that the plan will be refreshed annually.
13. Attached as Appendix A is the 2024 refreshed version of 'Making Kent Safer' in text only format. Once the text has been finalised, photographs and graphics will be added. It will be presented in a similar format to the current plan.
14. As a refresh, the plan has been tweaked but not fundamentally altered as it reflects the PCC's ambitions, with the priorities designed to drive the work of Kent Police, partners and the Office of the PCC (OPCC) until March 2025, as well as setting the strategic direction for policing and community safety in the county.
15. In approaching each refresh, the PCC is committed to positively encouraging feedback from individuals, communities and partner agencies. With circa 1.9 million people living in diverse urban, rural and coastal communities across Kent and Medway, the PCC commenced his formal consultation in the summer of 2023.
16. The PCC launched his Annual Policing Survey in July 2023 and it remained open to November 2023. A total of 4,538 responses were received which is the highest return rate for the survey to date.
17. Against a total Kent and Medway population of circa 1.9 million, 4,538 responses is considered statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (a commonly accepted level of probability).
18. A report outlining the survey methodology, and the full results is attached as Appendix B (and can also be viewed [here](#) on the OPCC website).
19. Below is an overview of some of the key questions and a precis of the results (previous year's figures are also included where comparative data are available):

Q1. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (1 = not at all / 10 = very much)

- Respondents across Kent and Medway trusted Kent Police 6.0/10

Q2. Overall, how well do you think Kent Police perform?

<i>Extremely well</i>	12.7%
<i>Quite well</i>	27.2%
<i>Neutral</i>	26.1%
<i>Quite badly</i>	22.1%
<i>Extremely badly</i>	11.8%

Q3. On a scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel where you live? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)

- Respondents across Kent and Medway felt 6.3/10 safe where they live
[2022 = 7.2 / 2021 = 7.0 / 2020 = 7.0 / 2019 = 6.4 / 2018 = 6.5]

Q4. Have you been a victim of crime in the last year?

- 22.7% of respondents indicated 'Yes'
[2022 = 17.9% / 2021 = 16.8% / 2020 = 15.9% / 2019 = 19.7% / 2018 = 23.3%]

Q6. Did you report this crime?

- 81.7% of victims indicated they did report the crime
[2022 = 79.4%]

Q7. If so, how did you report it?

		<u>2022</u>
<i>Online</i>	34.3%	27.4%
<i>999</i>	23.6%	17.6%
<i>101</i>	25.2%	22.7%
<i>In person (i.e. at police station, to an officer/PCSO)</i>	10.4%	20.5%
<i>Other (e.g. Crimestoppers)</i>	6.5%	11.7%

Q12. Would you be prepared to pay more council tax to support policing in Kent?

- 41.9% of respondents indicated 'Yes'
[2022 = 52.4%]

Q13. If so, by how much per year?

		<u>2022</u>
£5	20.8%	19.3%
£10	33.0%	30.9%
£15	46.2%	49.8%

Q15. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important?

- Respondents could select up to six issues from a pre-defined list; the top five were:
 1. Serious violence, including gangs / weapon offences
 2. Sexual offences, including rape
 3. Child sexual exploitation
 4. Antisocial behaviour
 5. Burglary / robbery

20. Whilst not mandatory, to monitor how representative the sample was of Kent and Medway's population, respondents were also asked to provide demographic information and indicate whether they worked for, or volunteered with Kent Police.

21. It should be noted that the survey formed only one element of the consultation. As well as feedback received throughout the year from engagements undertaken by the PCC, it took account of the thousands of pieces of correspondence received by the OPCC and a number of other inputs. These include the SPR, feedback and observations from the Police and Crime Panel, criminal justice bodies and community safety partners, emerging local threats and national guidance.

22. The Chief Constable has also been fully consulted, and of course the PCC's own ambitions and objectives, as well as overall vision for policing and community safety in the county remain at its core.

23. Further to any recommendations made by the Panel, the refreshed plan will be published on 1 April 2024.

24. The PCC would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who completed the survey and provided feedback on policing and crime across the county.

25. With PCC elections scheduled for 2 May 2024, it should be noted that the plan may be superseded prior to March 2025.

Changes to the 'Making Kent Safer' plan:

26. As previously indicated, being a refresh some of the plan content has been tweaked; it has not had a major re-write.

27. Based on the survey results, it is important to note the top five issues respondents felt were most important were consistent with previous years and therefore already included in the plan, notably:

- Serious violence, including gangs / weapon offences
- Sexual offences, including rape
- Child sexual exploitation
- Antisocial behaviour
- Burglary / robbery

28. Acknowledging that there are some minor wording changes, the following is an overview of the most significant amendments:

- Integrity and transparency
 - College of Policing Code of Ethics – link updated as January 2024 saw the launch of the revised Code of Ethics consisting of ethical policing principles and guidance for ethical and professional behaviour in policing.

- Kent Police’s Priorities – 2022 to 2025
 - Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and ASB – change in terminology to ASB Case Review (formerly known as the Community Trigger).
 - Combat organised crime and county lines – priority changed to ‘Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs’ on the basis that illegal drugs are the root cause of much offending and therefore Kent Police must ensure it takes robust enforcement action to reduce harm in local communities.
- National expectations
 - Policing Vision – updated to reflect that the Policing Vision 2025 has been superseded with the publication of Policing Vision 2030.
 - Legislation – titles of legislation updated to ensure they are current.

29. In addition, the section titled ‘Resources and Medium Finance Plan’ has been extensively re-written to take account of the latest financial information.

30. In accordance with the PRSRA 2011, the PCC will keep the plan under constant review, particularly in light of changes to the SPR and/or recommendations made by the Police and Crime Panel.

Policing precept proposal for 2024/25:

31. On 14 December 2023, the Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire announced the provisional police funding settlement for 2024/25. In a written statement to the House of Commons, the Minister said:

“For 2024-25, the council tax referendum threshold for PCCs in England will be £13 for a Band D property. This Government remains committed to ensuring the police are properly funded without placing an excessive burden on local taxpayers. When setting their budgets, PCCs should be mindful of the cost of living pressures that householders are facing.

“...it is imperative that policing continues to deliver on driving forward improvements to productivity and identifying efficiencies where possible. The Government will continue to work with the sector to unlock the full range of opportunities and benefits of productivity and innovation to enable officers to have the tools to deliver on their core mission of keeping the public safe.

“We, therefore, expect policing to approach the 2024-25 financial year with a focus on this Government’s key priorities:

- *Maintaining 20,000 additional officers (148,433 officers in total nationally) through to March 2025.*
- *Continuing to deliver on the opportunities presented by new technology and innovation to deliver improvements in productivity and drive forward efficiencies, therefore maximising officer time and service to the public.*
- *Improving the visibility of police officers and focusing on providing a targeted approach to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour to make neighbourhoods safer, which should be a priority for all forces.”*

32. As a result of the Minister’s statement to the House of Commons, the PCC is proposing to increase the policing precept by the maximum allowable amount of £13 per year, or 5.34% for an average Band D property (equivalent to £1.08 per month, or 3.5 pence per day).

33. The proposed increase in the precept alongside funding received from the Government would support the following initiatives across the county:

- Targeted hotspot patrols – providing extra visible policing to tackle and prevent ASB and drug use in areas repeatedly affected.
- New ‘Immediate Justice’ programme – ensuring those who commit ASB undertake some form of payback within 48 hours.
- New digital forensics system - reducing the amount of time victims are left without their digital devices and freeing up officers to investigate other offences.
- Investment in new technology - to report back to victims of crime and the community.
- Road’s policing – running additional campaigns to crackdown on the fatal four (inappropriate speed, using a mobile phone while driving, not wearing a seatbelt and drink/drug driving).

34. In addition, it would mean no reduction in the record number of police officers in the county, nor the number of PCSOs; as a result, the Neighbourhood Policing model would be implemented in full. It would also enable:
- The Police Cadet scheme to be maintained and where possible grow.
 - Continued investment in the existing police estate, ensuring better use of buildings.
 - Victim services funding to be maintained at the current level.
 - Continued support for the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
 - Continuation of the Safer Streets 5 projects in Medway, Folkestone and Hythe and Swale.
35. Increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles would help mitigate but not remove the need to make savings. A shortfall in funding from the Government due to the unfairness in the funding formula as well as the need to maintain officer numbers means substantial savings will need to be made. Even with the proposed £13 increase, Kent Police will be required to make £7.3m of savings in 2024/25 – without the proposed increase, they would need to find a further £11m of savings.
36. However, over 80% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees so it is not possible to make all the savings required from non-pay areas. The Government have also incentivised funding to maintain police officer numbers, this equates to 59% of the gross budget that savings cannot be made from. It is therefore inevitable that with the level of savings required, there will be some impact on staffing. Anything less than the proposed £13 increase would require additional staffing reductions, including the further de-civilianisation of roles and a diminution in services.
37. Both the PCC and Chief Constable believe the proposed budget strikes an appropriate balance between further investment in frontline policing, alongside maintaining police officer numbers while making significant but achievable savings.
38. As in previous years, there will be no increase in the cost of running the OPCC, with the budget being maintained at £1.5m – the same level as in 2017.
39. The decision to propose the maximum precept increase allowed is not one that has been taken lightly though. The PCC is acutely aware it is a further burden when Kent residents are facing considerable cost-of-living pressures, especially with other local authorities increasing their precepts by the maximum permitted. However, even with the increase, the PCC is only able to mitigate some, not all, of the cost pressures.
40. In developing the proposal, the PCC has also considered other factors including:
- The Strategic Policing Requirement.
 - Delivery of the refreshed ‘Making Kent Safer’ plan.
 - Professional guidance and advice from the Chief Constable.
 - Kent Police’s Force Management Statement (FMS) - a detailed self-assessment of future demand versus capacity.
 - Kent Police’s Control Strategy - an annual assessment of long-term key issues.
 - The National Crime Agency’s Strategic Assessment - an annual assessment of the threat to the UK from serious and organised crime.
41. By way of context, the Kent PCC council tax precept remains the eighth lowest in the country.
42. On Tuesday 23 January 2024, the PCC published a [press release](#) on the OPCC website outlining his precept and budget proposal. Whilst it was recognised that there was limited time and opportunity, members of the public were invited to comment and have their say by completing an online form.
43. Subject to the Police and Crime Panel’s approval, the PCC confirms his intention to increase the policing precept in 2024/25 to £256.15 for an average Band D property. This represents an increase of £13 per year (or 5.34%) on the current precept.
44. Attached as Appendix C is a detailed report dealing with financial matters prepared by the Chief Finance Officer.

Recommendation:

45. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Review the draft refreshed 'Making Kent Safer' plan and produce a report which may include recommendations.
- Review the proposed precept and produce a report which may include recommendations, including as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.

List of Appendices:

Appendix A Draft refreshed police and crime plan 'Making Kent Safer – April 2022 to March 2025'

Appendix B Annual Policing Survey report – November 2023

Appendix C Chief Finance Officer's Report



Making Kent Safer

April 2022 to March 2025

Version: Spring 2024

Foreword

Since I was first elected in 2016 I have worked with Kent Police to rebuild its strength so that it can provide the service that victims need and deliver on the issues that matter to residents.

By using council tax precept and funding from the Government's uplift programme, Kent Police will have over 4,000 officers for the first time ever. This has helped reduce burglary and cut the number of county lines. It's led to the creation of community and county-wide taskforces, established to deal with deeper rooted issues. And increased visibility in our urban and rural areas.

Since my last plan, our country has been through a lot - and this has led to extra pressures and challenges for policing to address. We've left the European Union changing the way that policing interacts with European and global partners, as well as how our borders operate.

We've also been through a pandemic that has changed so much about our country. Communities came together and the police delivered against a fast-changing set of regulations and expectations fantastically well.

But tragically, we have seen some of the worst of humanity. The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer. The killing of our own PCSO Julia James. The killer of Wendy Knell and Caroline Pierce being brought to justice - only to discover what terrible crimes he committed, abusing his position within a local hospital.

Violence against women and girls is now more than ever something we all have to work together to challenge and tackle.

I thank local residents for their contribution to this plan, which I believe reflects the issues we all want to see action on whilst ensuring that victims, vulnerable people and the voiceless will benefit from the first-class service they want and deserve.



Matthew Scott
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent

Integrity and transparency

The public expects the highest standards of integrity from those in public life; together with transparency they form the cornerstone of public confidence. Trust and confidence in policing are vital.

From Chief Constables to police officers on the street, there is a need to strengthen public trust and confidence and so the importance of integrity and transparency has never been greater – the public can't just be safe, they need to feel safe.

Of course, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) elected by local residents also have a key role. PCCs hold Chief Constables to account on all elements of policing. Integrity and transparency must be at the heart of this, both personally and professionally.

I am clear on what my statutory duties are and the responsibilities I have been entrusted to undertake by the electorate of Kent. I will never interfere with operational decisions made by the Chief Constable, or any other police officer or professional staff, but will hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public for the delivery of the priorities set out in this plan. I will also continue to ensure the [College of Policing's Code of Ethics](#) forms the bedrock of standards and behaviour within Kent Police.

To demonstrate my own commitment, I have signed the [Oath of Office](#), the [Committee on Standards in Public Life Ethical Checklist](#) and a [personal Code of Conduct](#) which reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

As I commit to making my decisions open and transparent, I will also ensure that Kent Police does the same to maintain public trust and confidence.

Policing though is unique, and increasingly challenging. Whilst the workforce of Kent Police is its greatest strength and asset, they need support to make the best possible decisions, and the right skills and knowledge to fight crime and address community concerns. As a result, the Chief Constable and I are committed to developing and supporting the workforce in terms of both service delivery and their own personal wellbeing.

We are also committed to working together to ensure diversity, equality and inclusion are at the heart of service delivery and embedded in both our organisation's culture. We will lead by example and create an environment that celebrates inclusion and diversity; where discrimination has no place and 'difference' is valued and harnessed to make policing more representative of Kent for the benefit of local communities and our staff. I will also hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the duties described in the Equality Act 2010.

Guiding principles

For a Police and Crime Plan to be successful, not only should PCCs seek to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the priorities, but there has to be clear principles that guide the actions and decisions taken by both the Chief Constable and the PCC.

Crime is important no matter where it takes place - urban, rural or coastal communities

Fortunate to have a mixture of urban, rural and coastal communities, the county of Kent is diverse and vibrant.

As PCC I believe that every crime is important no matter where it takes place – it should be investigated appropriately and proportionately, with the right outcome secured for the victim. This includes offences committed in residential, business and online environments, as well as on the roads.

Victims come from all sections of society and the impact can be devastating. It is therefore important that Kent Police has the right resources in the right places to address the serious threat from terrorism and organised crime, whilst meeting the demand from Kent's local communities.

Victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do

Whilst I want to ensure that fewer people become victims in the first place, where they unfortunately do, it is important that they and any witnesses are at the heart of the criminal justice process.

Being a victim of crime or witness can affect people in very different ways and have a significant impact on the person's life, their family, and the local community. They can also find themselves giving statements and evidence in a system that is complex, daunting and probably at times, confusing.

I believe victims and witnesses must be treated with care, respect and dignity and have confidence in the criminal justice system. I welcome the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) which sets out the services and minimum standards that must be provided by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Courts and wider criminal justice partners. It is important that Kent Police reminds victims of crime about their rights and of the availability of restorative justice. I also support Government proposals to introduce a new Victims' Law, as well as the expectations set out in the [Witness Charter](#).

Victims of some crimes, such as modern slavery and stalking and harassment may also be reluctant to report what's happened to the police because they are worried about their safety, getting into trouble or not being believed. It is paramount that victims and witnesses feel confident to report crime to Kent Police and can subsequently access the right support as early as possible.

Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency

People with mental health problems or other vulnerabilities may have a range of complex needs, which the police alone are not fully equipped to meet. In some circumstances police involvement is necessary and unavoidable; they are often the first point of call in an emergency or for people in distress or crisis. However, on other occasions it is not in the interests of the person, nor the police or public to have officers taken away from their core front line duties unnecessarily.

Whilst police officers have the training and skills necessary to identify when a person is vulnerable, they are not experts in specific illnesses or disabilities; rather they need to be able to recognise when intervention is necessary and refer the person to the right agency to ensure they receive timely and appropriate support.

Multi-agency working including information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated action are key to the effective identification of risk to vulnerable people, preventing those risks from escalating and ensuring the continued well-being of those concerned.

The Chief Constable and I will continue to work with others to both reduce demand on policing and ensure vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health receive the right help from the right agency at the right time.

Joint Vision

The Chief Constable and I are committed to working together to secure the best possible outcomes for policing and community safety in Kent. This commitment is reflected in our joint vision for policing which focuses on partnership working, protecting the public from harm, neighbourhood policing and providing a first-class service:

“Our 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's Priorities – 2022 to 2025

The following priorities are based on my engagement and consultation with local residents, community and youth organisations, schools, partner organisations and elected officials, as well as letters and correspondence received by my Office.

The Chief Constable has been consulted on this plan and is expected to formally respond and outline how it will be delivered. As the PCC, I will then hold him to account for the progress made.

Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour

Crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB) are issues that residents, communities and local businesses care deeply about and this is reflected through my on-going engagement and consultation.

Victims of crime and ASB want it to stop, and the perpetrators punished for what they have done. They want the police and authorities to take the matter seriously, to understand the impact on them and to protect them from further harm.

Kent Police must ensure it has the right resources with the right skills to investigate all crimes, and where possible, bring to justice those who harm individuals and businesses by committing offences such as robbery, burglary, fraud, sexual abuse/exploitation and cybercrime. It must also continue to combat knife crime, targeting and tackling those who choose to carry a weapon.

ASB can take many forms – including intimidating and aggressive groups, damage, graffiti, and the anti-social use of vehicles. What they all have in common is that they are a blight on our communities and make people feel unsafe in their homes and wider community.

The police are vital to combatting ASB and are often the first agency residents turn to for help and support, but they cannot solve all problems by themselves. Kent Police must continue to work closely with residents, communities, businesses and partner agencies to address the sometimes complex causes of ASB and deliver effective long-term solutions. They must also ensure that victims and communities know their rights under the ASB Case Review process (formerly known as the Community Trigger).

Whilst urban, rural and coastal communities across Kent need to feel safe and secure, engagement with businesses of all types and sizes is important too.

Tackle violence against women and girls

Women and girls in our community are at a disproportionate risk of a wide range of crimes, predominantly perpetrated by men, such as domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, rape and sexual offences, including adult and child sexual exploitation.

Many females face violence and abusive behaviour on a regular basis and are too afraid to seek help. Abuse may occur behind closed doors but the consequences can be devastating and long-term, affecting the victim's physical health and mental well-being. It can also have a significant and long-lasting effect on any children, the wider family and local community.

As acknowledged nationally and reflected in the strong public response to my consultation in 2021, the police must actively tackle violence and abuse against women and girls.

To do so, Kent Police must listen to those directly affected by violence and abuse and work with partners to help ensure no woman or girl feels unsafe. Key areas will include:

- Prevention – raising awareness and understanding of the issue in educational establishments, workplaces as well as online, and making public spaces and venues safe places for all;
- Victims – ensuring they have the confidence to come forward, know what they can expect and have access to tailored first-class care and support throughout their criminal justice journey;
- Perpetrators – pursuing and bringing those responsible to justice; and
- System – working as a criminal justice system and with other agencies to deliver a 'whole system' approach, with better joint working and more effective interventions.

Equally, there is a need to continue building trust and confidence between women and girls and the police. The definition of violence against women and girls set out by the Government also includes offences against men and boys. As such, they should not receive any less of a service when they are victims of the same crimes, such as domestic abuse, stalking and sexual abuse.

The Chief Constable and I also expect inappropriate behaviour to continue to be called out within Kent Police, and all allegations of police perpetrated abuse to be dealt with swiftly, thoroughly and fairly with victims receiving first-class care and support.

Protect people from exploitation and abuse

The exploitation or abuse of anyone in Kent is unacceptable. Not only can it cause victims lifelong physical and emotional trauma, but it can also leave a person even more vulnerable to further harm.

Kent Police must continue to have a robust response to all forms of hate crime to ensure they receive the attention they deserve and to protect people from harm.

Child sexual abuse and exploitation present unique challenges for policing and continues to grow. This is particularly true of online abuse, where ever-more sophisticated digital tools protect anonymity and where apps encourage children to engage in risky behaviour.

Those involved in modern slavery and human trafficking are not just using Kent as a gateway to and from the continent but committing offences within local communities. They are also often involved with complex criminal networks which require substantial investment to investigate and disrupt.

The vulnerable in our communities must be protected, but no single agency can tackle exploitation and abuse in isolation. That is why Kent Police must work with local partners to identify exploitation and abuse wherever it is occurring, pursue and bring offenders to justice, take action to safeguard victims and facilitate the provision of appropriate support to help them cope and recover.

Recognising that exploitation and abuse is not limited by geographical boundaries, Kent Police must also work with national and international law enforcement agencies to identify and protect victims and detect, deter and disrupt offenders and criminal networks.

Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs

Organised crime can seem like a distant threat, but sadly it presents considerable challenges and its effects can be seen in local communities. Whether it is serious violence such as knife crime, fraud and financial crime, cybercrime or the drugs trade, some of the most vulnerable members of society often become victims.

A common feature of county lines drug supply is also the exploitation of young and vulnerable people, where the associated violence and abuse has a devastating impact on the individual and local communities.

Kent Police must continue to develop and share intelligence to build a detailed local picture of threats, risk, harm and vulnerabilities, to safeguard victims and enable the deployment of the right resources to prevent, disrupt and investigate offending in order to keep the county safe. There also needs to be a combination of effective local, regional, national and international coordinated activity, and seamless working between Kent Police and other agencies.

In addition, whilst digital technology has enhanced our lives and interactions in many positive ways, unfortunately organised criminals are increasingly exploiting it to commit a diverse range of crimes. Through appropriate technology, expertise and resource, and by working in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, Kent Police must protect residents and bring offenders to justice.

Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

The relationship between the police and the people who live, work in and visit the county is vital to building trust and confidence that Kent Police will keep people safe.

The public rightly has an expectation that they will be able to contact Kent Police when they need to in ways that work for them, whether to report an emergency, seek advice, offer information or express an opinion. And when they do they should expect to get an appropriate response.

Kent Police must allow individuals and diverse communities to engage and make contact with confidence, by making its services accessible, appropriate, easy to use and safe. It must continue to effectively handle 999 and 101 calls, but also maintain other methods of contact, such as online and through personal interaction, to ensure it is open to all and has the ability to respond to user needs and situations.

The police service would cease to function without the active support of the communities it serves. Kent Police must listen to and understand the needs of communities across the county and provide an appropriate response 24/7, 365 days a year in a timely, empathetic and professional manner. Neighbourhood policing is fundamental to this, 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.

Whilst the purpose stays the same, to prevent crime and keep people safe, in a world where technology and population change at pace, Kent Police must continue to adapt and transform to remain accessible and responsive to public need, whilst being a human, visible presence in local neighbourhoods.

Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

Despite the efforts of police officers, road safety partnership staff and volunteers, Kent's roads remain a concern for local communities.

People continue to drive through red lights, at high speeds, under the influence of drink or drugs, use a mobile phone at the wheel, or fail to wear a seat belt and commit a crime. They are putting their lives and the lives of others at risk. Inconsiderate road users who behave dangerously or in an anti-social manner are also making others feel unsafe.

Whilst all road users share a responsibility for their own and others' safety, the police have a vital part to play in ensuring that the road network operates efficiently and that those who use it can do so in safety and security. Kent Police must continue to crackdown on the main factors which contribute to people being killed and seriously injured on Kent's roads and work with partners to prevent road dangers, tackle inconsiderate behaviour and educate where appropriate.

Vision Zero is Kent County Council's Road Safety Strategy. Through partnership working, an evidence-led approach and by combining engineering, education and enforcement, it aims to make Kent's roads feel and be safer for all, with the aspiration of reducing road fatalities to zero by 2050. Kent Police must play its part by continuing to support Community Speedwatch and enhancing its enforcement activity to reduce driver behaviour that puts themselves and others at risk.

Protect young people and provide opportunities

Behind closed doors, a significant number of children and young people are subject to neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse; offending can also often be an indicator of vulnerability. With education disrupted, protective factors outside the home reduced and social contact made more difficult, the global coronavirus pandemic made some children and young people even more vulnerable.

However, they are not simply small adults; their knowledge, understanding, emotional and physical maturity is different. This can influence their ability to recognise danger, seek help or protect themselves and manifest in behaviours that may put them at greater risk. Research also demonstrates that without protective factors, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have a long-lasting impact.

It is essential that Kent Police and partners maximise the opportunities to support and protect children and young people by adopting a child centred approach which actively seeks out and hears their individual voices, acknowledges their differences, recognises their vulnerabilities and meets their needs.

Whenever an officer or member of staff comes into contact with a child or young person, it is important that they look beyond the immediate situation by asking questions and observing their behaviour and environment. By doing so, they may just help to break the cycle of neglect, abuse, trauma and offending which will reduce demand and improve the lives of children and young people for generations to come.

By actively promoting Child Centred Policing, the Voice of the Child and supporting innovative programmes such as Operation Encompass, we can ensure a brighter future for children and young people.

Every interaction with a child or young person also leaves a mark; it is an opportunity to build trust and to keep them safe. As a result, Kent Police must continue working with educational establishments and other organisations to provide positive engagement opportunities through programmes such as the Volunteer Police Cadets and Mini Police Cadets.

What I will do

PCCs have a broad set of responsibilities that expand beyond policing and it is important that I carry out these functions effectively to support local people's priorities.

Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system

In setting this Police and Crime Plan, I commit to holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure that the priorities I have set out - the issues which matter to the people of Kent - are being tackled. I will hold the Chief Constable to account in a number of ways, including:

- in public through my Performance and Delivery Board, and the Joint Audit Committee;
- through private briefings when it is appropriate to do so in order to discuss operationally or commercially sensitive matters;
- through an Independent Custody Visiting scheme that monitors the welfare of detainees.

As statutory responsibilities, I will also continue to monitor complaints made against Kent Police and act as the appellate body, providing a review process for complainants who are dissatisfied with how the force has handled their complaint.

Data is important, and I will be looking to track improvements in performance where these can be measured such as through victim satisfaction surveys. Equally though, it is important to consider context and the impact of external factors. For example, in some instances a numerical increase in reported crime may indicate that victims have greater confidence or feel more comfortable to come forward due to the success of awareness campaigns.

But I am not and will not be solely reliant on data. I will also consider other feedback, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services reports and other independent publications.

In holding the Chief Constable to account it is also vital that I hear the public's voice on how policing is being delivered. I will therefore provide a wide-ranging engagement programme that enables the diversity of residents, irrespective of background, to have their say.

It is also important to understand the finite role that Kent Police plays in securing justice and keeping our communities safe. Delivering an effective and efficient criminal justice system is not solely a responsibility for the police. Other agencies including local councils, the CPS, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, and the Probation Service all have a part to play in ensuring the victim's journey is as swift and smooth as possible. A good police response followed by a failure to achieve justice will still leave many victims dissatisfied and discouraged from reporting future crimes. Lengthy court delays and any public perception that sentencing is too lenient will also damage public confidence.

As chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, I will use my convening powers to bring the various agencies involved in the criminal justice process together to ensure we are collectively delivering a joined-up system which puts victims, not offenders and processes, first. In the longer term I would welcome the Government affording PCCs greater responsibility for holding these agencies to account.

Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour

Preventing crime and ASB reduces demand on policing and the criminal justice system. But more importantly, it reduces victimisation. Preventing crime from happening in the first place delivers safer communities for all of us, allowing residents and businesses to thrive.

Residents feel reassured by a policing presence in their communities, but effective prevention is not solely a policing responsibility. Through my commissioning budget, I will continue to invest in initiatives which reduce crime and make people feel safer; including community-based partner-led projects.

The effectiveness of a joined-up response has been proven by the work of the partnership Task Forces in Thanet, Medway, and Maidstone, and by the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It is only by working together that we can effectively prevent crime and ASB by addressing some of the underlying causes such as poor mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, inadequate housing, and lack of provision of youth services.

When vulnerable suspects are brought into police custody, we must maximise the opportunity to reduce future offending through diversion and support. Around 80% of cautioned or convicted crimes are the result of reoffending.

At sentencing, whether a custodial sentence or not, consideration needs to be given to rehabilitation. And when prisoners are released, we must ensure they have a realistic chance to rebuild their lives. That means ensuring they have appropriate accommodation and opportunities for training or employment.

Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation

For nearly two centuries, British policing has constantly evolved and adapted to respond to shifting threats. As a result of my regular engagement with the public, I continue to work with Kent Police to ensure the force has the resources to meet the needs of today and the demands of tomorrow.

Where these threats are national, or international, it is imperative that police forces and other law enforcement agencies work in collaboration to identify the most effective solutions to address these problems; including investing in new innovative practices where appropriate.

Presently, one of the largest threats to public safety is cyber-enabled crime. Fraud, for example, now represents the most common crime type in England and Wales. Much of this crime is conducted online via digital communications. Protecting the public and businesses from this threat requires education and awareness, as well as investment in specialist digital investigators and modern IT. Working with local and national partners, including the Police Digital Service, I will ensure policing is able to exploit the advantages that technology can offer to better safeguard and protect our communities.

Policing must also play its part in tackling wider issues such as the global climate crisis. I am committed to energy efficiency and reducing Kent Police's carbon footprint to help protect the local environment, while potentially realising cost savings through the smarter use of resources and technology. By actively supporting the national procurement service BlueLight Commercial – which I currently chair – PCCs can also acquire a modern, greener fleet and promote social value throughout supply chains while ensuring value for money for taxpayers.

Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review

I have a duty to ensure Kent Police has the resources it needs. Since I was first elected, I have spoken up for the people of Kent and Medway, lobbying Government for our fair share of national grant funding. The success of the Government's uplift programme means Kent Police now has more police officers than at any time in its history, but there is still more to do.

Our county is uniquely positioned between London and mainland Europe. We have one of the longest coastlines in the country, the longest Strategic Road Network, and some significant pockets of urban and coastal deprivation. As the Home Office reviews the national Funding Formula - the mechanism used to calculate how much national funding each police force area receives - I will continue to engage with decision-makers in Whitehall to ensure our circumstances are fully recognised and that Kent Police is not adversely affected.

I have already been successful in recent years in securing additional money from a variety of Government grants and funding streams to assist in making Kent safer. This includes surge funding to tackle and disrupt county lines; reimbursement for costs associated with exiting the European Union; VRU funding to tackle youth violence and knife crime; Safer Streets funding to make communities safer; and one-off funding to provide additional support for vulnerable victims during the Covid pandemic.

Through my Commissioning Team, I will continue to proactively identify opportunities to bid for Kent's share of national funding streams and ensure any money received is spent appropriately. Doing so will mean that I can further financially support Kent Police to deliver a quality operational response, and support communities to deliver initiatives which make people safer.

Support volunteering

I continue to be in awe of all those, whether they bear a police logo or not, who freely give their time to support our local communities and keep us safe. As well as my Independent Custody Visiting scheme, organisations such as the Kent Special Constabulary, the Volunteer Police Cadets, Kent Rescue 4x4, Kent Search and Rescue (KSAR), Community Speedwatch, victims' support services, and innumerable others deserve our thanks. Without the extensive support of these and a great number of others, there would be extra costs incurred and resources required by Kent Police.

My commitment to those organisations remains that I will do all I can to ensure they have the support they need to thrive and continue their fantastic work. That may include financial assistance when appropriate and in accordance with my commissioning priorities. As an example, with match-funding from my Office, we have seen the return of Volunteer Police Cadets for young people in Kent.

However, because supporting volunteering is not just about money - it is about leadership - where I can, I will also use my convening powers and influence to speak up for their needs and assist them in accessing support from elsewhere.

I have volunteered for a variety of organisations throughout my lifetime and will continue to do so where I can. I will also continue to empower and encourage my own staff to volunteer in their local communities in whatever way they choose.

Commission services for victims that are needs-led

Providing services which support victims of crime, and so helping them come to terms with what has happened as much as possible, is one of the core responsibilities of any PCC.

My firm commitment is that, here in Kent, the services I commission will be victim-led and treat everyone as an individual by taking account of their own needs and unique circumstances. This includes services for those who may be especially vulnerable, such as victims of domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and modern slavery.

Whether a victim chooses to report their crime to the police or not, I will ensure they can access freely available services to help them. Such services may make greater utilisation of digital or other contact channels, but only where it is the right thing for the victim.

I also commit to ensuring people for whom English is not a first language, as well as those who have disabilities or other personal circumstances which impact on their ability to access services, are catered for.

To make sure funds allocated from my commissioning budget to support victims' services are used to maximum effect, I will continue to utilise a variety of commissioning approaches to ensure appropriate service providers are identified and awards are subject to robust governance and monitoring arrangements, with information made publicly available in the interests of openness and transparency.

National expectations

The Strategic Policing Requirement

Many of the threats Kent faces can be tackled locally, but threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime, cybercrime and major public unrest need a coordinated approach which brings together resources from across the country.

The policing requirement to counter such threats is set out in the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) (SPR) and the Chief Constable and I must have 'due regard' to the SPR and ensure that Kent Police is in a state of readiness to respond to the requirements. This may include sharing and pooling resources with other forces in order to effectively tackle such threats. Kent Police already has a strong collaboration with Essex Police and with police forces across the Eastern region to tackle serious criminality, but the Chief Constable must ensure there are sufficient resources to meet these important responsibilities.

As PCC I must also ensure that sufficient funds are available to deliver the required contribution to the SPR.

National Crime and Policing Measures

The Government has been clear that PCCs must achieve significant reductions in crime and restore the public's confidence in the criminal justice system.

To support the '[Beating crime plan](#)', the Home Office has introduced a number of National Crime and Policing Measures to focus effort on key national priorities and allow performance to be measured.

The key national priorities are as follows:

- Reduce murder and other homicides
- Reduce serious violence
- Disrupt drugs supply and county lines
- Reduce neighbourhood crime
- Tackle cyber-crime
- Improve satisfaction among victims – with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse

They complement the local priorities set out in this Police and Crime Plan and I aim to be as transparent as I can be on performance in this area. In holding the Chief Constable to account, I will provide a statement on the contribution of Kent Police to delivery of the national priorities on a quarterly basis and make this available via my website.

Policing Vision 2030

First published in 2016, [Policing Vision 2025](#) was developed by the Association of PCCs and the National Police Chiefs' Council in consultation with the College of Policing, the National Crime Agency, staff associations and other policing/community partners, and set out a decade-long plan for policing to shape decisions about how police forces use their resources to keep people safe.

[Policing Vision 2030](#) builds on the successes of Vision 2025 and identifies the key priority themes for focus and delivery that it has been agreed will help policing get to where it should be by 2030.

Legislation

New or amended legislation such as the Public Order Act 2023 and Victims and Prisoners Bill represent opportunities to make Kent safer, tackle crime and ASB, support victims and ensure justice is done. Kent Police must ensure that it provides the right training, empowers officers and staff, and puts in place the right resources to address relevant provisions.

Resources and Medium Term Financial Plan

Funding

I receive all funding for policing and crime in Kent. The total gross funding for Kent is £488.1m and is funded through:

- £237.1m of direct revenue grant funding from central government
- £38.1m of specific government grant
- £172.0m from the council tax including the deficit on the collection fund
- £40.9m of locally generated income such as fees and charges

The inherent unfairness in the funding formula for distributing police funding to PCC's means I do not receive sufficient funding to cover Kent's costs. The overall gross expenditure for Kent is £495.4m and therefore £7.3m of savings are required to balance the budget. 99% of the budget is available for the Chief Constable to exercise his functions in delivering the Making Kent Safer plan. The remaining 1% is to enable me to perform my statutory duties as PCC.

Council tax

The Government sets a limit on how much can be raised through the council tax before I must call a referendum. For 2024/25, the Government announced that PCCs could increase the precept by up to £13 for an average Band D property.

Ideologically, I am a low-tax Conservative, and I have repeatedly stated my desire to not increase the precept unless it is needed to protect frontline policing. I am also acutely aware of the financial pressures faced by households during the cost of living crisis and am reluctant to add to them. However, this increased flexibility has allowed me to mitigate the savings required for 2024/25, continue to maintain police officer numbers, as well as provide additional services to increase the efficiency of operational policing and the prevention of crime. I believe the budget proposals strike an appropriate balance between additional new services and initiatives alongside maintaining police officer numbers with significant but achievable savings and therefore the council tax for Kent will increase by £13 for an average Band D property, or 5.34% (equivalent to £1.08 per month or 3.5 pence per day).

I have made no assumptions on increases over and above 2% in future years.

Budget and medium-term financial challenges

My 2024/25 budget and precept proposal has tried to find a suitable balance between investment and savings. The demands on Kent Police and the shortfall in funding from the Government as well as the need to maintain officer numbers means substantial savings will need to be made from a limited area of the budget. However, I am confident I have struck a balance where further investment in frontline policing can enhance the service to the public; provide a more visible and effective service while making savings in other parts of the organisation.

Increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles does not negate the need to make savings. Even with the £13 increase, £7.3m of savings are required in 2024/25. Over 80% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees so it is not possible to make all the savings required from non-pay areas. The Government have incentivised funding to maintain police officer numbers, this equates to 59% of our gross budget that we cannot make savings from. It is therefore inevitable that with the level of savings required that there must be some impact on staffing levels. Anything less than the £13 increase in the precept would require additional reductions in staffing, including the further de-civilianisation of roles and a reduction in service levels.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) shows that this financial pressure will continue without a change in the way the Government distributes funding to PCCs. I have argued constantly for the funding formula to be reviewed and I am pleased to say I have won that argument. The funding formula review is almost complete, and I hope that it will soon be consulted on and implemented with a financial benefit to Kent. However, until a new formula is implemented, I must base my financial planning on the current methodology with the current iteration showing £34.8m of savings required over the medium term. This is a significant saving and should be seen against a backdrop of £90m savings having already been delivered since I was first elected in 2016.

Although difficult decisions will need to be made, I am determined to ensure that those decisions are taken at an early stage and in a considerate manner so that Kent Police can build on the successes of previous years and face the future in a strong position.

The Policing Minister set out his expectations for the Government's investment in policing as follows: *"In return for this significant investment, it is imperative that policing continues to deliver on driving forward improvements to productivity and identifying efficiencies where possible. The Government will continue to work with the sector to unlock the full range of opportunities and benefits of productivity and innovation to enable officers to have the tools to deliver on their core mission of keeping the public safe. We, therefore, expect policing to approach the 2024-25 financial year with a focus on this Government's key priorities:*

- *Maintaining 20,000 additional officers (148,433 officers in total nationally) to March 2025.*
- *Continuing to deliver on the opportunities presented by new technology and innovation to deliver improvements in productivity and drive forward efficiencies, therefore maximising officer time and service to the public.*
- *Improving the visibility of police officers and focusing on providing a targeted approach to tackling crime and ASB to make neighbourhoods safer, which should be a priority for all forces."*

I am confident that through this budget and precept proposal that Kent can meet the expectations of the Policing Minister as set out above. My proposal aims to maintain police officer numbers, deliver several new initiatives that will improve visibility and target crime and ASB and deliver efficiencies and savings that will maximise police officer time.

Commissioning and working with partners

In addition to my policing responsibilities, I am responsible for commissioning effective support services for victims of crime regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police, and working in partnership to reduce crime, disorder, and ASB. To support delivery of this I have a commissioning budget which is made up of the following:

- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 enables PCCs to use an element of the Policing Grant to support crime and disorder reduction within their police area.
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) issues a victim services grant to PCCs under section 56(1) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to enable the commissioning of support services.
- Funding secured through bidding opportunities made available during the financial year.

My Commissioning Strategy sets out the detail of this budget and how responsibilities will be managed during the financial year. I also intend to take the opportunity to consolidate the impact of the funding I provide and use this to help inform future commissioning decisions.

At the time of writing the MoJ have yet to formally announce their allocations, but it has been assumed that the £2.1m received last year for the specific purpose of delivering support services for victims of crime, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police will continue in 2024/25. In total, the combined commissioning and victim services core budget is expected to be £4.2m for 2024/25.

I will continue to seek opportunities to increase funding for these important services to ensure victims and witnesses are able to access the help and support they require and provide services that prevent and reduce crime and ASB. Throughout 2023/24, my Commissioning Team and I were successful with funding opportunities and my commissioning budget in 2024/25 is 93% greater than it was in 2015/16. In addition, for 2024/25 I am in receipt of additional grant funding for the specific purpose of delivering services to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

My Commissioning Strategy will be released once all allocations from the MoJ have been announced. However, the following provides a broad outline for 2024/25.

Commissioning Budget Strategic Overview 2024/25

Funding Streams	2024/25 £m
Crime and Disorder Reduction	1.8
Victim Services	2.3
Intervention Projects	0.1
Total	£4.2*

* These are indicative allocations of the 2024/25 funding streams and will be subject to further amendment. Finalised allocations will be published online.

Allocations from the above funding streams are in the process of being agreed to sustain key provision of services for 2024/25. There are also a number of projects that my team have acquired additional funding for such as the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme, Safer Streets initiatives, additional Independent Sexual Violence Advisers and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers, and increased capacity within domestic abuse and sexual abuse support services. These will continue into 2024/25.

Once the funding outcome is known, further allocations will be made in line with my Commissioning Strategy.

Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Office telephone: 01622 677055
Email: contactyourpcc@kent.police.uk

www.kent-pcc.gov.uk

The Office of the Kent
Police and Crime
Commissioner
Sutton Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 9BZ



Annual Policing Survey 2023

November 2023

As part of his commitment to actively engage with the diverse communities of Kent and Medway, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Scott, launched his seventh Annual Policing Survey in July 2023.

Like previous years, the aim of the exercise was to survey a large and representative sample of residents on their views and experiences of policing, as well as feelings of safety, whether they had been a victim of crime, and the subsequent support received, amongst other questions.

Collecting information from the sample enables the PCC and his staff to draw meaningful conclusions to help inform the Police and Crime Plan and make decisions regarding the council tax precept.

We received 4,538 survey responses overall. This is the highest response we've ever had for an Annual Policing Survey.

It was shared widely throughout Kent and Medway, to different communities and in a variety of ways.

Because we asked whether people still trust Kent Police, following widespread criticism of forces elsewhere, the survey was deemed "newsworthy" by the local media and was published in Kent Online as well as attracting radio coverage.

Hard copies were completed at both the Kent Police Open Day and the Kent County Show as well as on our many visits to street stalls, community groups, religious establishments, and partner charities all around the county. The survey was widely promoted on our social media channels and posted directly onto various community Facebook Groups, 'My Community Voice', Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters and 'Nextdoor'. It was also circulated by parish councils.

A special edition Newsletter was sent out to our 4000-strong mailing list and emails were sent to community liaison officers, places of worship, schools, colleges, universities, rotary clubs, women's institutes, commissioned charities, criminal justice partner organisations, and many more.

Q1. On a scale of 1 - 10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (1 not at all, 10 very much so)

Answer Choices	Responses		
1		12.93%	583
2		5.34%	241
3		8.03%	362
4		5.21%	235
5		11.29%	509
6		6.85%	309
7		9.98%	450
8		15.92%	718
9		10.16%	458
10		14.30%	645
Answered: 4,510 Skipped: 28		Response Total:	4,510

On average people say they trust the police 6/10. 57% of respondents scored 6 or above and just under 32% ranked their trust levels as below 5.

There is a discrepancy however when you compare the views of victims of crime and those who have not been victims (see question 4).

1022 people who told us they'd been victims of crime answered this question and on average their trust levels are 4.5/10. People who told us they had not been victims of crime in the last year (3473 respondents) trust the police 6.4/10.

We have not asked about trust in the police before, but if you read the analysis of Question 2 (How well does Kent Police perform?), you will see in previous years, victims of crime have ranked the police similarly.

Q2. Overall, how well do you think Kent Police perform?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Extremely well		12.72%	573
Quite well		27.22%	1,226
Neutral		26.11%	1,176
Quite badly		22.14%	997
Extremely badly		11.81%	532
Answered: 4,504 Skipped: 34		Response Total:	4,504

The above table shows that 40% of Kent's population thinks the Force performs well or extremely well, with 26% neutral and 34% feeling the force performs badly or extremely badly.

However, again there is a gap between those who have been victims of crime and those who

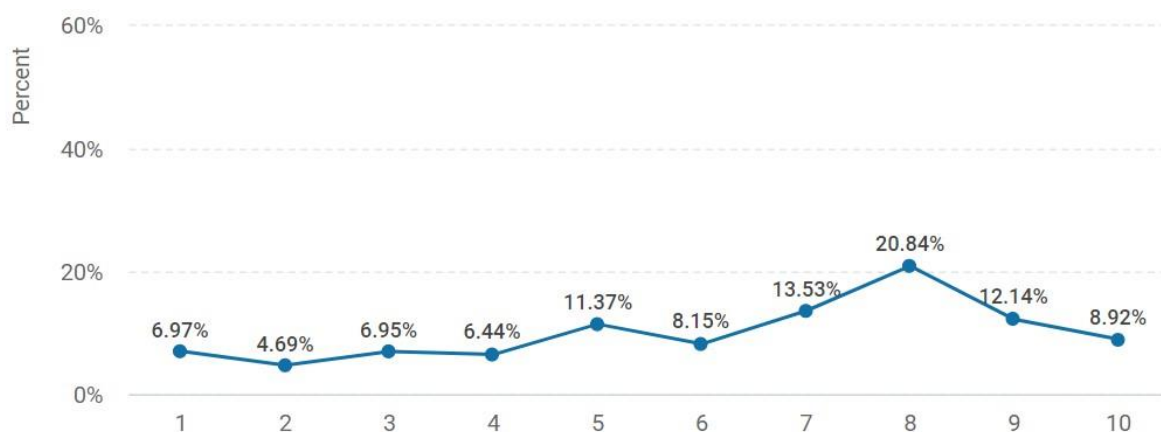
have not. 58% of those who have been victims of crime think the police have performed badly or very badly, with 18% neutral and 23% thinking they perform well or very well. When we asked this question last year 49.5% of victims of crime were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with Kent Police performance, compared to 22% of victims who were satisfied or very satisfied (29% were neutral). (Last year fewer people responded, with only 348 victims of crime answering, compared to 1019 victims this year; last year we did not ask non-victims this question.)

In the years 2021 and 2020 we asked this question slightly differently; we asked people to rank the force on performance out of 10 (like we have in Question 1 this year). In 2021 and in 2020 victims of crime ranked police performance on average as 4.3 out of 10. This is similar to their 4.5 out of 10 rating for “trust in the police” this year.

Of those who have *not* been victims of crime in 2023, 29% think Kent Police perform badly or very badly, 28% are neutral and 45% think they perform well or very well.

1019 victims of crime and 3470 non-victims of crime answered this question this year.

Q3. On a scale of 1 - 10, how safe do you feel where you live? (1 being not at all safe, 10 being very safe)





People generally feel safe where they live, scoring on average 6.3/10. A far higher cohort of people filled in this question this year (4160), but the average feeling of safety is down on last year, when it was 7/10.

And again, it’s lower if you have been a victim of crime. The 961 *victims* who answered this question told us they feel 4.7/10 safe; the 3191 people non-victims felt 6.8/10 safe.

We have also broken down how safe people feel in their districts.

District	Feeling of Safety	No of Respondents
Ashford	6.2 out of 10	348 respondents
Canterbury	6.4 out of 10	339 respondents
Dartford	5.8 out of 10	211 respondents
Dover	7 out of 10	265 respondents
Folkestone	6.5 out of 10	183 respondents
Gravesham	6 out of 10	152 respondents
Maidstone	6.3 out of 10	396 respondents
Medway	6 out of 10	414 respondents
Sevenoaks	6.6 out of 10	218 respondents
Swale	6 out of 10	397 respondents
Thanet	5.7 out of 10	357 respondents
Tonbridge and Malling	7 out of 10	235 respondents
Tunbridge Wells	6.9 out of 10	207 respondents

Q4. Have you been a victim of crime in the last year?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Yes		22.71%	1,023
No		77.29%	3,481
Answered: 4,504 Skipped: 34		Response Total:	4,504

We have used this data to inform our previous analysis. But last year less than 20% of the 2898 respondents said they had been a victim of crime, this year nearly 23% of the 4504 respondents said they had.

Those people then had the opportunity to answer supplementary questions about the crime, whether they had reported it and whether they had received any additional support following the incident.

Q5. If yes, which type of crime were you a victim of?

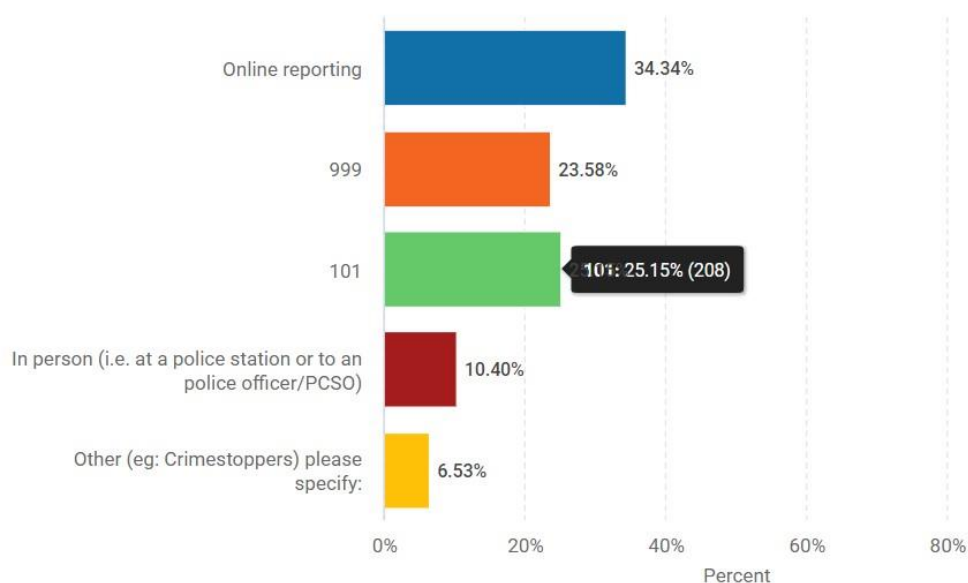
Crime type	Respondents	Percentage %
Antisocial behaviour	427	42.5
Vehicle crime =	185	18.4
Criminal damage =	185	18.4
Stalking or harassment (including online)	127	12.6
Burglary or robbery	121	12
Hate crime	110	10.9

The types of crime people are more frequently victims of is broadly the same as last year, with only vehicle crime and criminal damage being more prevalent this year than last.

Q6. Did you report this crime?

81.7% of victims DID report the crime, 18.3% did not. This is up on last year when 79% said they had reported and 21% said they had not.

Q7. If so, how did you report this?

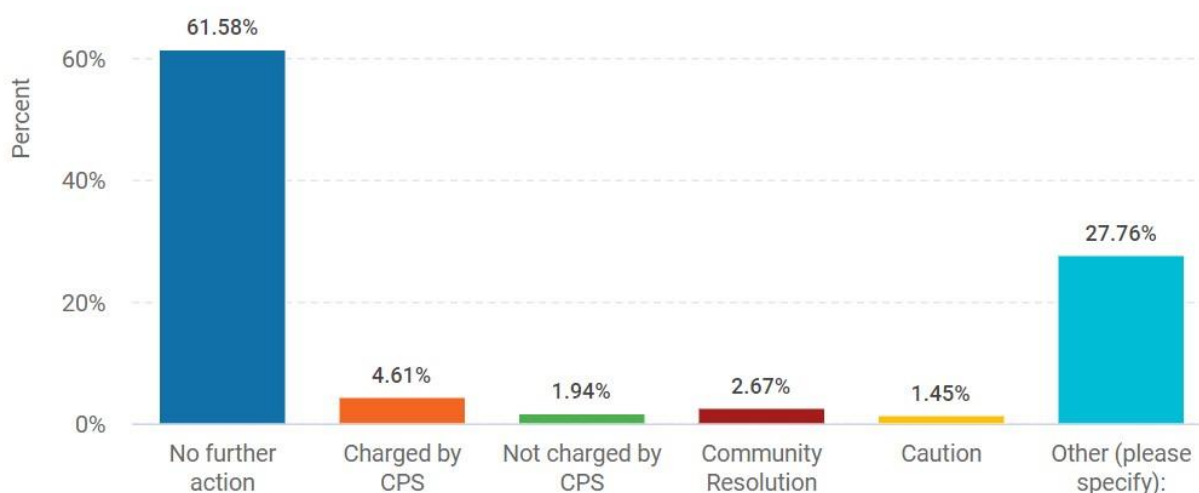


More people (34%) now use the online reporting service to contact the police, than any other

method. A quarter of victims called 101 and just under a quarter called 999.

This does differ from last year when just 27% used the online reporting tool, 23% called 101 and 17% dialled 999. But last year 21% reported in person to a police station, an officer or a PCSO; this year only 10% reported in person and just 6.5% answered “other”. The “other” responses included: “was too afraid”; “reported it to my college”; “Action Fraud”; “Crimestoppers” and “I waited too long on 101 and gave up”.

Q8. What was the outcome?



In nearly 62% of cases there was no further action, in under 5% of cases there has been a charge by the Crown Prosecution Service, in nearly 2% of cases the CPS has not issued a charge and in under 3% community resolution measures have been put in place. Nearly 28% responded “other”. The responses under “other” included: they do not know the outcome, they’re still waiting for outcomes, they rang the police, but they never turned up, or there have been resolutions like banks have refunded money, or improved security measures have been implemented either by businesses, schools or by local authorities.

Last year over 55% reported No Further Action and just under 10% had cases charged by the CPS.

Q9/10/11. Were you referred to any support services? Did you take it up? Were you satisfied with the service provided?

237 people or 32% of victims who responded told us they had been offered support services and of those 237, 88 or 37% accepted the offer.

Of those who took it up 47% were either satisfied or very satisfied, 20% were neutral and 33% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Last year only 30% of victims who took up the offer for support were satisfied or very satisfied, so this is a big improvement.

Q12/13. Would you be prepared to pay more council tax to support policing in Kent?

Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage	Count
Yes		41.87%	1,864
No		58.13%	2,588
Answered: 4,452 Skipped: 86		Response Total:	4,452

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the cost-of-living crisis, 58% of respondents said they did not want to pay more council tax to support the police.

Of the 1864 people who said they would be willing to pay more, just over 46% said they would pay £15, 33% said they would pay £10 and just under 21% said they'd pay £5.



Q14. The Community Remedy: People who are victims of incidents, such as antisocial behaviour and criminal damage can have a say in how offenders are punished through out-of-court orders, if all parties agree. The PCC would like you to rank the options in order of preference, for dealing with such offenders. (You can rank your selections in order with 1 being your favourite option).

Item	Total Score ¹	Overall Rank
Community Reparation/Service: (when unpaid work in the community is undertaken by the offender)	21201	1
Restorative Justice: (a meeting between the affected individuals and those who caused the harm)	16683	2
Mediation Service: (a trained mediator tries to resolve disputes)	15268	3
Verbal Resolution: face-to-face apology from the person who caused the harm.	14067	4
Written apology (from the person who caused the harm)	11114	5
Other (please explain in the comment box)	7137	6

Comments: **1,079**

Answered: 4,070 Skipped: 468

¹ Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts.

This was a more complicated question as we asked people to rank their preferred outcome in cases where out-of-court orders are appropriate, so for example some antisocial behaviour cases, or maybe some criminal damage cases. We provided them with a list of 5 options and gave them a 6th “other” box.

The scores are a weighted calculation with the solutions ranks first given the highest points and the least preferred ones the lowest. The scores on the graph above are the accumulative scores.

The preferred remedies were:

1. Community Reparation (when unpaid community work is undertaken by the offender)
2. Restorative Justice (a meeting between the affected individuals and those who caused the harm)
3. Mediation Service: (a trained mediator tries to resolve disputes)
4. Verbal Resolution: face-to-face apology from the person who caused the harm.
5. Written apology (from the person who caused the harm)
6. Other

Other suggestions included: “financial compensation where appropriate and possible”; “suspending of DSS payments”; “tougher sentences for repeat offenders”; “none of the above will deter repeat offenders”; “use proper court sentences”.

Q15. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important? Choose a maximum of six.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Antisocial behaviour		53.73% 2,257
Burglary/robbery		49.13% 2,064
Business crime, including shoplifting		11.52% 484
Child sexual exploitation		56.72% 2,383
Domestic abuse, including coercion and control		39.85% 1,674
Fraud and cyber-crime		23.90% 1,004
Hate crime		16.47% 692
Human trafficking/modern-day slavery		28.80% 1,210
Public disorder, including protests/demonstrations		11.64% 489
Rural crime		15.21% 639
Serious violence, including gangs/weapons offences		64.68% 2,717
Stalking and harassment, including online harassment		21.64% 909
Terrorism and radicalisation		33.40% 1,403
Vehicle crime		18.78% 789
Drugs offences		37.13% 1,560
Sexual offences, including rape		63.03% 2,648
Traffic offences		16.28% 684
Other (please specify): Show		5.59% 235
Answered: 4,201 Skipped: 337	Response Total:	4,201

As you can see from the above table, the six top crime types ticked most often were:

1. Serious violence, including gangs/ weapons offences 65%
2. Sex offences, including rape 63%
3. Child sexual exploitation 57%
4. Antisocial behaviour 54%
5. Burglary/ robbery 49%
6. Domestic abuse, including coercion and control 40%

These are broadly the same as last year, with only the order varying slightly.

Conclusion

On average, residents of Kent and Medway do trust the police, but not overwhelmingly. 57% of respondents said they did trust the police, ranking them 6 or above in our 1-10 poll. 32% ranked them below 5 and on average the people of Kent and Medway trust the police 6/10.

Similarly, more people think the Force performs well, compared to those who don't, but again not overwhelmingly so.

Most people have not been victims of crime in the last year (77%) but of the 23% who had, they trust the police less and think the police perform less well than those who have not been victims of crime.

The most common types of crime experienced were broadly the same as last year with antisocial behaviour topping the poll. However, this year criminal damage and vehicle crime affected more people than in previous years.

It's encouraging that more people reported the crime to the police than last year: their methods have altered too, with more preferring to use the online reporting site than in previous years and far fewer are reporting in person at police stations or to officers.

About a third of those victims who were offered support services took it up and the satisfaction rates with those services has improved on last year.

We also asked about council tax and whether people would be willing to pay more to support the police. Perhaps unsurprisingly with the cost-of-living crisis 58% said they would rather not. Last year 52% said they would. Of those who said they *would* be willing, almost half said they'd pay £15 more a year.

This year we added a question about the Community Remedy. The Community Remedy is where people who are victims of incidents like antisocial behaviour, criminal damage etc can have a say on how offender are punished through out-of-court settlements, should all parties agree. It's the first time we've asked this, but most people did respond with the overwhelming favourite remedy being Community Reparation.

Lastly, the five crime types which mattered most to people mirrored previous years surveys, with only the order changing slightly: serious violence, including gangs and weapon offences; sexual offences, including rape; child sexual exploitation; antisocial behaviour and burglary and robbery.

Thank you to everyone for taking the time to complete this survey. The feedback will assist the Police and Crime Commissioner in holding the new Chief Constable to account with regards to Kent Police's performance and the priorities the force should focus on.

APPENDICES

Other questions asked in this Survey.

Gender: we asked how they identified. 44% of those who responded were female; 38% were male, 17% identified as non-binary, “other” or did not disclose.

Districts: We asked where people were from.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Ashford		8.95%	360
Dartford		5.52%	222
Gravesham		4.30%	173
Swale		10.47%	421
Medway		12.21%	491
Dover		6.76%	272
Folkestone and Hythe		4.80%	193
Canterbury		8.73%	351
Tonbridge and Malling		6.79%	273
Tunbridge Wells		5.57%	224
Sevenoaks		5.52%	222
Maidstone		11.37%	457
Thanet		9.00%	362
Answered: 4,021 Skipped: 517	Response Total:		4,021

Age: We asked people's age group.

Answer Choices	Responses		
17 or younger		1.42%	58
18-20		0.66%	27
21-29		4.64%	190
30-39		12.74%	522
40-49		13.93%	571
50-59		20.62%	845
60-69		24.40%	1,000
70-79		17.91%	734
80-89		3.49%	143
90 or older		0.20%	8
Answered: 4,098 Skipped: 440	Response Total:		4,098

Ethnicity: We asked people how they identified.

Answer Choices	Responses		
White: including English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or any other White background		91.58%	3,708
Mixed or multiple ethnic background		1.21%	49
Asian or British Asian including: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or any other Asian background		1.61%	65
Black or Black British including: Caribbean, African or any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background		0.69%	28
Other including: Arab or any other ethnic group		0.20%	8
Prefer not to disclose my ethnicity		4.72%	191
Answered: 4,049 Skipped: 489	Response Total:		4,049

Key Points

1. The key points from the 2024/25 budget and precept proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) are:
 - A proposed increase in the precept of £13 a year, or 5.34% for a Band D property, equivalent to £1.08 a month, or 3.5p per day.
 - A council tax for an average Band D property of £256.15.
 - Kent PCC remains the eighth lowest council tax in the country.
2. The increase in the precept alongside funding received from central government will mean the following:
 - Additional Services – new and additional initiatives to be launched across Kent and Medway:
 - Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and drugs - targeted hotspot patrol response for those areas repeatedly affected by ASB and drugs issues.
 - Immediate Justice – offenders committing ASB will be made to repair the damage they have inflicted on victims and communities within 48 hours of committing their offence.
 - A new Digital Forensics system – to reduce the amount of time that victims are left without their digital devices and freeing up officer time to investigate crime.
 - Investment in new technology – to report back to victims of crime and the community.
 - Additional road policing campaigns to crackdown on the fatal four offences.
 - Retained Service levels – providing the investment for police officers to help them to be visible in their communities and tackling crime. Continue to provide wide ranging support services so victims and witnesses of crime can seek the help they need.
 - Maintaining the record level of police officers in Kent Police.
 - Maintaining the over recruitment of officers.
 - Maintain the numbers of PCSOs.
 - Maintain and where possible continue the growth in the Police Cadet schemes.
 - Continued investment into the existing police estate, ensuring better use of buildings.
 - OPCC office budget maintained at the same level as 2017.
 - Victim services funding to remain at the current level.
 - Continued support to the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
 - Continuation of the Safer Streets 5 projects in Medway, Folkestone and Hythe and Swale.
3. Despite the increase in precept, the significant cost pressures and the unfairness in the Police Funding Formula means funding for Kent Police falls short of what is required to meet its costs. This means there is a budget gap of £7.3m for 2024/25. To meet this gap will require:
 - A reduction in the number of staff roles
 - An increase in the vacancy factor held by the organisation (avoiding protected areas such as the Force Control Room and PCSOs)
 - Maximising external funding opportunities
 - Support from earmarked reserves
 - Delaying projects across Estates and IT with a subsequent revenue saving
 - Reviewing ranks and allowances
 - Reviewing other non-pay areas
 - Maximising opportunities for external savings, including 7Force Commercial services and BlueLight Commercial
4. The decision to increase the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles has not been taken lightly. The cost-of-living pressures that the citizens of Kent are facing are considerable and it is recognised that this is a further burden especially as other local authorities are also increasing their precepts by the maximum allowed. However, the budget proposals strike an appropriate balance between additional new services and initiatives alongside maintaining police officer numbers with significant but achievable savings.

Background

5. The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed budget and precept proposals by the PCC. It delivers one of the key responsibilities of the PCC under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and supports the PCC's priorities within his Police and Crime Plan.
6. In determining his budget proposals, the PCC has had regard to:
 - His 'Making Kent Safer' Police and Crime Plan.
 - National targets and objectives including the Strategic Policing Requirement.
 - Consultation with the Chief Constable.
 - The Kent Police Pledge.
 - The results of consultation with the public and partners.
 - The plans and policies of other partner agencies relating to community safety and crime reduction.
 - Government policy on public spending and the Police Finance Settlement.
 - Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
 - The Reserves Strategy.
 - The Capital Strategy and capital programme.
 - The Commissioning Strategy.
 - Continuous improvement and value for money for the taxpayer of Kent.
 - The CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice.
7. This report will set out the:
 - Government's national police funding settlement for 2024/25.
 - 2024/25 budget and precept proposal.
 - 2024/25 funding pressures.
 - The PCC's Commissioning Budget and Strategy.
 - Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29.
 - Savings.
 - Additional Income.
 - The Reserves Strategy.
 - The Capital Strategy.
 - PCC Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Statement.

2024/25 National Funding Settlement

8. The 2024/25 Provisional Settlement was announced on 14th December 2023 in a written statement by the Policing Minister. This settlement is the third and final year of the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR21) announced in the autumn of 2021.
9. The Minister confirmed that PCCs had available an extra £922m of funding in 2024/25. Of this, £298m approximately one-third, would come from local taxpayers through the council tax, provided all PCCs increased their precept by £13, the maximum allowed under the referendum principles. The rest of the funding is made up of:
 - £150m (previously announced at CSR21) to ensure the maintenance of officer numbers under the Police Uplift Programme (PUP).
 - £515m of funding to support forces with the cost of the police officer pay award of which £185m is additional to the funding provided in 2023/24. This is to be allocated through the existing Police Funding Formula.
 - £259m to cover the increased costs of police pension contributions.
 - £26.8m, one-off top-up funding to be provided in recognition of the software development and administration costs associated with the delay in implementing the McCloud remedy.
 - £425m set aside for the maintaining of police officer numbers. £357.8m will be ringfenced as incentive grant to those PCC's if they have maintained their overall officer headcount. The remaining £67.2m will be paid to those PCC's who volunteered to recruit above their uplift target.

10. The Minister confirmed over £200m of funding will be available to PCCs in 2024/25 for headline crime programmes. This includes:
- £92.8m to support activity designed to combat ASB and serious violence
 - £15m on Safer Streets Round 5, to supplement the funding already provided for 2023/24
 - £46m to continue the County Lines Programme and Project Adder
 - £47m to continue to support the work of Violence Reduction Units
11. The CSR had originally allowed PCCs in England the flexibility to increase funding in each year of the CSR21 period up to a £10 council tax referendum limit. The settlement in December 2023 confirmed that PCC's will have the flexibility to increase the precept up to £13 for 2024/25 only. As per last year's settlement, PCCs did not receive any capital grant funding.
12. The Minister also set out his expectations for the Government's investment in policing as follows: *"In return for this significant investment, it is imperative that policing continues to deliver on driving forward improvements to productivity and identifying efficiencies where possible. The Government will continue to work with the sector to unlock the full range of opportunities and benefits of productivity and innovation to enable officers to have the tools to deliver on their core mission of keeping the public safe. We, therefore, expect policing to approach the 2024-25 financial year with a focus on this Government's key priorities:*
- *Maintaining 20,000 additional officers (148,433 officers in total nationally) to March 2025.*
 - *Continuing to deliver on the opportunities presented by new technology and innovation to deliver improvements in productivity and drive forward efficiencies, therefore maximising officer time and service to the public.*
 - *Improving the visibility of police officers and focusing on providing a targeted approach to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour to make neighbourhoods safer, which should be a priority for all forces.*
13. The Home Office (HO) commissioned the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) to conduct a review of operational productivity in policing. The recently published Policing Productivity Review examined productivity in policing and developed a range of recommendations *'which, if fully implemented, could free up the equivalent of an estimated c.20,000 full time police officers over the next 5 years'*. The Government has stated it wishes to work with the sector to unlock the full range of opportunities and benefits outlined in the review before publishing a formal response to the review.
14. The PCC is confident that through this budget and precept proposal that Kent can meet the expectations of the Policing Minister as set out above. The proposal aims to maintain police officer numbers, deliver a number of new initiatives that will improve visibility and target crime and ASB and deliver efficiencies and savings that will maximise police officer time.

2024/25 Kent Funding Settlement

15. Locally, the funding received by Kent is as follows:

Table 1: Funding Settlement

Funding Stream	2024/25	2023/24*	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Police Core Grant	223.8	219.3	4.5
Specific Grant: PUP (officer uplift) **	10.4	6.7	3.7
Specific Grant: Additional Recruitment**	0.2	0.0	0.2
Legacy Council Tax Grants	13.3	13.3	0.0
Specific: Pension Grant Allocation**	11.7	3.4	8.3
Specific: Hot Spot Policing (ASB)**	1.6	0.0	1.6
Specific: Violence Reduction Unit**	1.5	1.6	(0.1)
Total	262.5	244.3	18.2

*2023/24 restated to include September 2023 additional pay award.

** Although announced as funding the grant is classed as income.

16. Government funding has increased for 2024/25 by £18.2m, however this is all to cover specific cost pressures, namely:
- £4.5m Police Core Grant: to pay for the full year effect of the 7% pay award applied in September 2023.
 - £3.7m PUP: incentive grant to maintain our police officer numbers throughout the financial year.
 - £0.2m Additional Recruitment grant: Kent recruited 5 officers over and above their national target. This is to maintain that over recruitment.
 - £8.3m Pension Grant: to cover the additional police pension contributions that Kent must pay plus a one-off admin grant for the McCloud judgement.
 - £1.6m Hot Spot Policing: for continuing GRIP funding and for targeting ASB in Kent.
17. The Government has allocated funding for the 2023/24 pay award based on the existing funding formula and not on police officer headcount. Kent has always argued that the funding formula is out of date and inherently unfair on some PCC areas. Kent is poorly funded by any allocations delivered through this method of funding and it means the additional funding for the pay award does not cover the cost of the pay increases for Kent and the additional officers that have been recruited.
18. As an example of the overall unfairness in the formula, one PCC in the Southeast Region area has 900 fewer officers than Kent Police but through the national formula allocation receives approximately £12.0m more in funding.
19. There are strict criteria around the draw down of the PUP grant. Forces are expected to maintain officer numbers across the 12 months and must report at two specific points in the year on headcount levels. Any deviation below the maintenance level will either reduce the amount of PUP grant received, or should headcount fall by 1.5% (64 officers for Kent) or more then the PUP funding will be withdrawn in its entirety. This also applies to the additional recruitment grant.
20. It is worth putting into context recent funding settlements, since 2010 government funding for Kent PCC has fallen by 16.6% in real terms. Even when the increases in the precept are included police funding in Kent has fallen by 1.1% in real terms over the same period.

2024/25 Budget and Precept Proposal

21. The 2024/25 PCC budget and precept proposal has tried to find a suitable balance between investment and savings. The financial challenges facing Kent Police and the PCC in 2024/25 and beyond means there will need to be difficult decisions required to balance the budget. The shortfall in funding from the Government due to the unfairness in the funding formula as well as the need to maintain officer numbers means substantial savings will need to be made from a limited area of the budget. However, both the PCC and the Chief Constable have struck a balance where further investment in frontline policing can enhance the service to the public; provide a more visible and effective service while making savings in other parts of the organisation.
22. Increasing the precept to the maximum allowed under the referendum principles will help mitigate but not remove the need to make savings. Even with this £13 increase, £34.8m of savings are required over the medium term, £7.3m of which are required in 2024/25. Over 80% of the gross budget is expenditure on employees so it is not possible to make all the savings required from non-pay areas. The Government have incentivised funding to maintain police officer numbers, this equates to 59% of our gross budget that we cannot make savings from. It is therefore inevitable that with the level of savings required that there must be some impact on staffing levels. Anything less than the £13 increase in the precept would require additional reductions in staffing, including the further de-civilianisation of roles and a reduction in service levels.
23. This is an issue that is not unique to Kent and is affecting policing across the country. However, both the PCC and Chief Constable recognise that asking the public to pay more for policing during a time when households are facing high interest rates and substantial inflation is difficult, especially when having to make savings. With that in mind, both have set out clearly where additional services will be delivered through government and local precept funding:

- ASB and drugs - targeted hotspot patrol response for those areas repeatedly affected by ASB and drugs issues
- Immediate Justice - offenders committing ASB will be made to repair the damage they have inflicted on victims and communities within 48 hours of committing their offence
- A new Digital Forensics system - to reduce the amount of time that victims are left without their digital devices and freeing up officer time to investigate those crimes
- Investment in new technology - to report back to victims of crime and the community
- Additional road policing campaigns - to crackdown on the fatal four offences

24. The Chief Constable has also confirmed that there will be no reduction in the number of police officers nor in the number of PCSO's. This means the new Neighbourhood Policing model will be implemented in full.

25. As in previous years, there will be no increase in the cost of running the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) with the budget being maintained at £1.5m. This budget supports the 'Making Kent Safer' Police and Crime Plan and enables the PCC to continue to support victims of crime, local crime reduction initiatives, crime prevention strategies and the enhanced complaints process and discharging his statutory responsibilities such as the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme (ICV). The budget for commissioning victim support services will also remain the same for 2024/25 (subject to confirmation of government funding).

26. The Force have been preparing savings plans during the year. The MTFP requires a further £7.3m of savings to be made even with the increase in government funding, the maximum precept, and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing model. This is a significant saving and should be seen against a backdrop of £90m savings having already been delivered since 2016 when the PCC was first elected. This has required some difficult decisions to be made. However, the release of savings will be done in a managed way to ensure minimal impact on operational policing.

27. The budget and precept proposal for 2024/25 is as follows:

Table 2: Budget Requirement and Precept

Budget Requirement	£409.1m
Less Police Funding	£237.1m
Sub Total	£172.0m
Less Collection Fund Surplus	£0.2m
Amount to be raised by Council Tax	£171.8m
Divided by aggregate council tax base*	670,700.8
Band D Council Tax	£256.15

*Draft council tax base as final figures not yet received.

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding

2024/25 Funding Pressures

28. As has already been mentioned, despite the Government announcing additional funding for maintaining police officers and pay awards, the PCC has not in fact received enough funding for these costs or other significant cost pressures facing Kent Police. The increase in precept will help mitigate the impact of the lack of funding and these additional costs but will, unfortunately, not cover everything. The following table shows the additional funding received against the additional cost pressures facing Kent Police for 2024/25.

Table 3: Additional Funding and Cost Pressures

Additional Funding	£m	£m	Additional Cost Pressures
Police Core Grant Government funding that is ongoing and in our base budget for 2024/25 and future years. Note: other funding received from the Government is classed as income rather than funding and therefore is included within the additional cost	4.5	12.3	Police officer and staff pay costs including pay awards. More than 80% of the Kent Police budget is employee costs and therefore any increase in pay is a significant cost pressure. This is the cost of the 7% pay award to August 2024 with an assumption that a 2% award will apply from September 2024. Inflation is still currently running higher than 2% so a contingency of 1%

pressures (i.e. it nets off against those cost pressures).			has also been provided for in case a higher pay award is agreed. This figure includes the cost of removing the bottom pay scale point as per the pay agreement. This does not include the increase cost of pensions as this is offset by Government Grant.
Council Tax Additional funding raised from local taxpayers through increasing the precept to £13.	11.2	4.6	Incremental pay increases. All officers and staff are on incremental pay scales that increase each year, based on performance. All new recruits start at the bottom of the pay scale and receive an increasing scale of increments over the first 5 years. Therefore, with the increase in new officers' the cost of incremental pay is a significant pressure.
Collection Fund Surplus The estimated balance on the collection fund accounts of all billing authorities at the end of March 2024. This is £0.2m less than budgeted for last year hence the negative figure. In reality this figure is £1.0m less than the actual amount received from the previous year.	-0.2	0.7	Contract Inflation. This increase is for those contracts where inflationary increases are included. This covers contracts for IT hardware and software, some vehicle costs and cleaning and refuse costs.
		1.7	Other inflation and cost pressures. All costs are subject to inflationary pressures. Specific inflation increases for pay and contracts have been included above. In addition, a 2% assumption has been applied to all other non-pay lines as a central contingency to address variations to the budget for inflation as required.
		3.7	Revenue cost of the capital programme. This is the increase in the cost to the revenue budget for the capital programme. This figure includes £0.8m increase in our minimum revenue provision (MRP) for previous years borrowing to fund the capital programme; a £1.0m increase in the revenue contribution to capital that will help fund capital expenditure and £1.1m of additional borrowing costs. It also includes other revenue set up costs and works supporting the capital programme.
		1.7	Unachieved Savings. In 2023/24 there was £1.7m of on-going savings in the plan which were not achieved. The budget was balanced (and in fact an underspend is forecast at the end of the year) with one-off savings and income. On-going savings are required and therefore these are added back into the budget as a cost pressure for 2024/25.
		-2.0	Budget Adjustments/Savings/Income. Several changes to pay related budgets, some additional income (including one-off government grant applied as income) and other budget adjustments.
Total Additional Funding	15.4	22.7	Total Additional Net Cost Pressures

Commissioning Budget and Strategy

29. The PCC's Making Kent Safer Plan includes the guiding principle that puts 'victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do' with a priority to 'commission services for victims that are needs led.' The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has yet to announce funding for the specific victims' grant allocations for 2024/25. The CSR21 suggested that there would be more funding for victims' services over the life of the CSR21 period, some additional funding was received in 2023/24 but it is not clear whether any further funding will be available. Therefore, for this budget it has been assumed that the allocation will remain as per 2023/24 at £2.1m for Kent. This means that services will continue to be provided for those

affected by crime in Kent regardless of when the crime happened or whether it was reported to the police or not. This funding will be allocated as per the Commissioning Strategy on vital services for victims, including those delivered from Compass House, including the Victim Support service, the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor service, Schools service, and Restorative Justice.

30. The PCC has again agreed to put £2m of the budget towards victim services so in total, the MoJ funding plus the commissioning and victims support budget means £4.2m will again be available for allocation in 2024/25, the same level of funding as the previous two years. On top of that, several funding streams successfully bid for by the OPCC will continue into 2024/25 including the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme and Safer Streets amongst others.
31. As the PCC is still awaiting details of the MoJ funding no Commissioning Strategy is available for this paper but will hopefully be published on the OPCC website before the end of 2023/24 or when funding levels are known.

Medium Term Financial Plan

32. The MTFP is agreed each February as part of the budget setting process and is updated and refreshed throughout the year as further information becomes available. The five-year plan covers the current year plus four from 2024/25 through to 2028/29. For obvious reasons there is more certainty around the figures included in the early years than for those towards the end of the plan as we have no indication from government on funding, precept flexibility or officer numbers. A variety of scenarios are produced by the PCC and Force CFOs with differing assumptions, and these are discussed with the PCC and Chief Constable and their senior leadership teams before the final version is completed and presented in this report. The MTFP is a living document and is updated regularly for any major changes. The key assumptions included in the current plan are:

Funding assumptions

- The precept referendum limit is £13 in 2024/25. No assumption is made regarding any precept flexibility beyond 2024/25. Therefore, the plan includes a precept increase of 2% each year.
- The council tax base will increase by 1.5% in 2024/25, with continued growth of 1.1% in future years.
- The increase for the officer uplift, including the incentivisation grant in 2024/25 will form part of the base budget in future settlements.
- That the Kent PCC receives the same percentage of the national police funding in future years as in 2024/25 (i.e. there is no change in the funding formula).
- That overall government funding will increase by 1% each year.
- That the additional pension grant received in 2024/25 will be maintained as part of the ongoing funding to police, minus the one-off grant.
- Any top slicing and reallocating from the overall police grant by the HO will remain as described in the financial settlement.

Cost Assumptions

- All additional officers recruited under PUP will be maintained across the MTFP.
- These officers will form part of the ongoing establishment.
- Pay cost inflation for officers and staff will be 7% to August 2024 with a 2% increase every September after. A contingency of 1.0% will be included for any pay award greater than 2% in 2024/25.
- Any additional bonus payment or pay award or change in award date above those highlighted will have to be funded through any in-year underspend, reserves, additional savings, or additional government funding.
- Specific non-pay inflation is applied to individual cost categories and contracts so the general rate varies for 2024/25, but 2% has been applied in each year of the MTFP after that, in line with the Bank of England's target. This will be revised each year.
- That an investment in equipment and technology to support police officers through capital investment will continue with a further £1m in each subsequent year of the MTFP to help ensure Kent Police has the funds to provide the best support now and in the future.

33. With these assumptions, across the life of the MTFP there is potentially £34.8m of savings required to balance the budget. While the Force has a good track record of identifying savings, any changes in the assumptions above, for example pay awards or inflation, could lead to greater or in some cases fewer savings having to be made so will be monitored and managed on a regular basis.

Savings

34. A total of £7.3m is required to balance the budget for 2024/25. This is being achieved through savings and a small contribution from reserves. The Chief Constable has briefed the PCC with details of the savings proposals and provided assurance that front line policing will be protected as much as possible. The plan for 2024/25 to balance the budget is shown below.

Table 4: 2024/25 Savings Plan

Category	Description	£m
Police Staff	Review the number of staff roles across the organisation. Critical areas such as the Force Control Room are protected from staff reductions.	2.6
External Funding	Maximise the opportunity to fill posts through additional external funding.	1.3
Vacancy Factor	Increase the vacancy factor for all non-protected areas from 11% to 12%. The Force Control Room is a protected area.	1.1
Reserves	Use of reserves to support one-off expenditure within 2024/25, for example 3 in 1 jackets.	0.8
Non-Pay	A number of small savings from non-pay expenditure.	0.4
Minimum Revenue Provision	A reduction in the amount of borrowing for 2023/24 reduces the level of MRP required in 2024/25.	0.3
Allowances	A review and reduction of allowances across police officers and staff.	0.3
One-off	Several smaller one-off savings across all budget lines.	0.3
Project Delays	Delays to planned projects across Estates and IT.	0.1
Police Ranks	A review of police rank structure to reduce the number of officers at a higher rank.	0.1
Total		7.3

35. The PCC and Chief Constable are comfortable that the budget gap can be met for 2024/25 and therefore balance the budget. However, should further savings be required on top of the £7.3m then this would have to be found through further reductions.

36. A summary of the MTFP is set out at Annex A. The following table shows the level of savings required based on the assumptions in the MTFP alongside predicted funding from government and council tax.

Table 5: Savings requirement

Savings	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total over MTFP
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Increase in cost pressures	30.8	14.7	14.4	15.6	14.7	90.2
Increase in Government core funding	12.6	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	21.7
Savings requirement pre precept increase	18.2	12.5	12.1	13.3	12.4	68.5
Increase in precept income	10.9	5.7	5.5	5.7	5.9	33.7
Savings requirement post precept	7.3	6.8	6.6	7.6	6.5	34.8

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding

37. The table above shows the calculation of the expected budget gap over the medium term and shows the continued move away from government funding to local council taxation even with only a 2% increase in the precept.

38. The Force and PCC continually look for opportunities for further ongoing savings. Any savings identified during the year that are not required to balance the budget in 2024/25 will be used to support the investment programme over the medium term to reduce the revenue costs of capital.
39. Savings of this magnitude will require difficult decisions to be made around staffing levels within the organisation. All decisions will be carefully managed to protect the welfare of staff and minimise the impact to frontline policing.

Additional Income

40. There are effectively two methods of balancing the budget, the first is to reduce costs by making savings and these have been outlined above. The second is to increase income. The PCC does not currently have a General Power of Competence like local authorities or even the more limited power given to Fire and Rescue Authorities so there are limited opportunities to increase income and/or levy charges.
41. Almost all the PCC's income is from Government Grant and local precept. Although there is flexibility on the precept it is capped by the Government's referendum principles.
42. However, funding opportunities do arise during the year and the PCC has been successful in bidding for further funding into Kent. The PCC has attracted approximately £4.0m of additional funding into the Commissioning budget to provide additional services for victims. This is for specific service delivery during the year but due to this funding the Commissioning budget in 2024/25 is 93% greater than it was in 2015/16.
43. During 2023/24 the Force have had difficulty in filling externally funded posts leading to a budget pressure in 2024/25 of approximately £1.8m. It should be noted that these funds tend to be time limited or specialist posts which means recruitment can be difficult. The PCC has challenged the Chief Constable to maximise the use of external funding, and this is now under regular scrutiny. To meet the 2024/25 budget gap, the Force are expecting to utilise £1.3m of external funding.
44. Both the PCC and Chief Constable remain committed to finding and bidding for any additional funding into Kent and ensuring this is utilised effectively during the year.

Reserves Strategy

45. A principal element of the PCC's overall financial strategy is the use of reserves over the life of the MTFP. The following section summarises the current and medium term position on reserves. The full Reserves Strategy is attached at Annex B.
46. The PCC's Reserves Strategy has the following key elements:
- A general non-earmarked reserve of 3% of the net budget will be maintained for unknown and/or unforeseeable events.
 - A prudent approach to risk management will be maintained and accordingly earmarked reserves will be created where appropriate to cover for possible significant risks.
 - Reserves not required for the above purposes will be clearly identified as available for other discretionary opportunities.
 - In the interest of the council taxpayer, the PCC will where possible build up and maintain a level of reserves for investment, borrowing only where the life of the asset and economic environment make it the most efficient way of financing investment.
47. The total general and earmarked reserves are expected to be £24.2m as at 1 April 2024. Of this, the general reserve will amount to £11.9m or 3% of the net budget. This is in line with the Reserves Strategy policy of holding 3% of the net budget in general reserves.
48. The remaining reserves are all earmarked for specific purposes. Capital investment in 2024/25 will be funded from asset sales during the year, a revenue contribution to capital and borrowing. In the first instance this will be internal borrowing, where the PCC 'borrows' from cashflow during the year, reducing the level of funds available for investing in the money markets but reducing the cost of borrowing.

49. The level of reserves has reduced significantly over the last few years due to planned use to support recruitment, strong performance of delivering capital projects and reducing asset sales. This reflected a strong direction from the Government to reduce policing reserves from a high level in 2017/18. However, due to strong financial management reserves have stabilised and will remain relatively static over the medium term period.
50. For 2023/24 the Force are expecting to underspend on the revenue budget, the PCC has notified the Chief Constable that any underspend will be taken back into reserves to fund the capital programme and mitigate risks over the medium term. Any in-year reallocations of underspends will only be considered by the PCC where an exceptional business case is made.
51. The reserves position over the medium term is set out below:

Table 6: Reserves

Reserve	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General	11.9	12.5	12.9	13.7	13.8	14.3
Risk (inc. Insurance)	9.0	9.0	8.1	7.8	7.2	6.9
Investment Reserve	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Ring fenced (inc. PCC)	3.2	2.3	2.8	2.5	3.2	3.1
Total	24.2	23.9	23.9	24.1	24.3	24.4

52. Over the medium term, taking all the plans and provisions into account, total reserves are expected to be £24.4m in 2028/29.

Capital

53. The Capital Strategy is a key document for the PCC and forms part of the integrated financial planning process. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure and capital financing contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure. This document is published alongside the budget report and can be found at Annex C.
54. The key themes driving capital investment can be summarised as follows:
- Policy led with clear linkages to operational requirements and the Making Kent Safer Plan.
 - Maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of the estate.
 - Using technology and innovation to reduce demand, increase the time, and focus officers can devote to core policing.
 - Where possible, generate revenue savings.
 - Ensuring sound and reliable equipment and facilities for officers.
 - Exploiting tangible efficiency and effectiveness opportunities in partnership with others.
55. All projects expecting to be funded from the investment reserve will have to produce a business case and projects will be identified on the strength of that case and the priority to the organisations. This reflects a more agile way of working within a constantly changing environment and provides substantial flexibility to the delivery of the investment programme. As per normal practice, actual release of funding next year and in future years will depend on the completion of sound business cases.

Table 7: Investment Programme

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Information Technology	9.7	4.1	3.8	7.7	6.3	31.6
Estates	3.4	10.3	3.8	3.2	4.0	24.7
Replacement Programmes / Other	4.9	4.2	11.0	8.1	7.7	35.9
Total	18.0	18.6	18.6	19.0	18.0	92.2

Note: Table may not calculate correctly due to rounding

56. The capital programme is a mixture of projects that either update/refresh assets or are new projects. The IT programme includes the Digital Forensics platform which will revolutionise how the Force deal with storing and investigating digital devices, freeing up officer time and meaning victims won't be without their device for longer than necessary. The Estates programme is taking existing core buildings and ensuring they are fit for policing in the 21st century. The works undertaken at places like Coldharbour and Sittingbourne amongst others have made an improvement in officers and staff wellbeing and improved the efficient and effective use of workspace across the estate. It will also release revenue savings back into the budget, especially from utility and maintenance costs. Replacement programmes include projects for replacing vehicles and updating the Force's equipment as well as the electrification of the fleet.
57. The PCC is taking a personal interest in the capital programme, especially the work on the estate, receiving assurance regarding costs, delivery, and value for money. The PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account over the delivery of this programme.
58. The investment programme is funded by a combination of investment reserves, a revenue contribution to capital, borrowing and the use of capital receipts from disposing of assets during the year. All asset disposals are subject to a business case and require approval by the PCC. It should be noted that the Capital Grant from the Government has been abolished so therefore we no longer receive any government funding for capital expenditure.
59. The PCC will have to borrow to fund the capital programme. Any decision to borrow will be made, like all decisions, with value for money for the taxpayer in mind and only be done when it is the most cost-effective way of delivering a project and will consider the project, business case and asset life expectancy. A decision to borrow will also consider taxpayer equity, this is where taxpayers of today may be funding assets that future taxpayers will use. Spreading the cost of a long-term asset over its life cycle will ensure that all taxpayers who benefit from the asset will be contributing to the cost.
60. In the first instance, borrowing is likely to consist of internal borrowing. This is where the PCC will borrow against future cashflow, foregoing the interest that could have been earned through investing the funds in the money markets. This is a way of borrowing with the lowest cost. This internal borrowing does require repaying back into the cashflow and the impact of this has been considered within the MTFP amounting to approximately £0.8m increase in 2024/25 for the cost of borrowing for the 2023/24 programme. In essence this will be short-term borrowing for cashflow purposes, providing the most economical way of borrowing for the substantial investment that is being made in the Kent Police estate. This will ensure that the Force are maximising the benefit from the new way of working from a leaner, more efficient and effective estate. This will also release significant revenue savings.

PCC Chief Finance Officer – Section 25 Professional Statement

61. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that the designated Section 151 Officer, in this case, the PCC CFO must issue a professional statement on the adequacy of reserves, the robustness of estimates and the overall effectiveness of the systems of financial control and risk management.
62. In determining the above the PCC CFO has reviewed the financial environment and the risks facing policing in Kent and the PCC and has considered the following issues.
63. 2024/25 continues the financial challenges that the PCC and Kent Police have faced over recent years. The requirement to maintain the increase in police officers achieved through the PUP coupled with higher levels of inflation and higher pay award pressures and contract/utility inflation all while not receiving a commensurate increase in funding from the Government places the PCC and the Chief Constable in a difficult position. Challenging decisions are needed to meet these pressures as well as the increasing demand and scrutiny on policing.

64. The CSR announced in 2021 and to which the Government have largely committed to maintaining, included an expectation of 2% pay awards across the period. With inflation in double figures during 2023 a pay award of 7% was eventually agreed for all police officers. The Chief Constable and PCC agreed that this be extended to all staff. The Government committed to finding additional funding to allocate to PCCs to cover the full cost of this award. The additional funding from the Government for the 7% pay award given in 2023 for the period to August 2024 is helpful. However, the method of allocating the funding through the existing funding formula shows the inherent unfairness in the system and how poorly served Kent is by this process. For a similar SE PCC with 900 fewer officers to receive £12m more in grant is an obvious example of the inadequacy of the current formula. It adds a further unnecessary cost pressure and places a burden on local taxpayers to make up any difference in funding through the council tax. It highlights the inadequacy of a funding formula created in 2006 still being used today.
65. The Government has been reviewing the formula for distributing the national core Police funding to PCCs for several years. It is understood that the work is almost complete and the PCC and the PCC CFO have both been involved in discussions with the HO to champion Kent's case for a fairer settlement. As has been stated in previous budget reports this could be a significant risk or an opportunity for the funding received by Kent particularly post 2024/25. While changes to the funding formula should rectify the historic underfunding of Kent Police from central government, the formula itself only provides the share of overall police funding that Kent will receive. The opportunity is that Kent gains a larger share of the allocation with the risk being that the overall allocation to policing is smaller. However, due to the unknown timing of any implementation of the formula there is no requirement to have some protection against this risk and therefore no provision in reserves has been made.
66. Inflation appears to have peaked in 2023 and is the primary driver for pay awards. It is difficult to determine the level of pay award that will be agreed from September 2024. Each 1% increase in pay is the equivalent of £2m for officers and staff. In line with government expectations in CSR21, we have budgeted for 2%. Any pay award above 2% it is expected would be covered by additional government funding as was the case for the 2023 pay award. However, as this funding was found within government departments it is unclear as to whether this would be a viable option for future years. The fact that inadequate additional funding was given to Kent it seems appropriate to set aside a further 1.0% for 2024/25. Any increase above that level would have to be funded through reserves or additional savings.
67. The Minister's funding announcement included a proportion of funding for the maintenance of police officer levels. This funding was given as part of the PUP Incentive funding and means funding is not received unless police officer numbers are maintained. Kent Police have an excellent track record in recruiting and maintaining police officer numbers over the life (and before the) PUP. In fact, Kent have overrecruited by 5 officers and will receive £0.2m as a further incentive to maintain a higher number than is required. There is a risk to recruitment numbers and a subsequent loss of funding, but this risk is low and therefore the incentive grant has been included as part of the 2024/25 budget.
68. 2024/25 is the final year of CSR21 which means there are no details of funding beyond March 2025. It is expected that a CSR will take place after the next general election, which is due by January 2025 at the latest, but this may mean the first year of the next CSR may well be 2025/26 and potentially post a new funding formula implementation. Although there is still uncertainty over government funding for policing in the future, the key assumption on future funding is that the Kent PCC's share of the national funding settlement will remain over the CSR period. Although actual allocations are unknown it seems prudent to reflect the current settlement as a continuing commitment. Any further funding that is announced in future years will help offset proposed savings targets.
69. The increase in precept flexibility from an initial £10 to £13 for 2024/25 allows PCCs the scope to set a precept in line with their Police and Crime Plan priorities but as this is the final year of a CSR period there is no clear guidance as to future levels. Indeed, the precept referendum limit has fluctuated on an annual basis which makes it difficult to forecast appropriate levels for MTFP planning purposes. As PCC CFO it is my duty to plan different scenarios to account for changes in funding however, for planning purposes the MTFP for future years precept reverts to the pre-precept flexibility limit of 2%. The PCC will take any decision on future precept levels at the appropriate time when all the funding and costs are known.

70. The change in the precept referendum limit continues the Government's intentions for PCCs to fund their significant budget pressures through precept rather than central grant. The movement of funding away from central government funding to council tax places a significant burden on local taxpayers. It is inherently unfair and increases the disparity between those PCCs who receive a greater proportion of their funding from central government.
71. Due to historic differences in council tax the proportion that £13 represents can vary significantly between force areas. The £13 increase means that Northumbria's percentage increase is 8.5% and Essex is 6.3%. Kent's increase is 5.3% and towards the lower end of increases across the country. The proportion of funding raised through council tax also differs significantly between force areas too. Northumbria's council tax makes up 19% of their total funding, conversely Surrey has 54.6% of their funding coming from council tax. On average, nationally 34% of budgets are made up from council tax. Kent's council tax makes up 42% of funding, up from 28% in 2010/11.
72. As has been stated in previous CFO commentaries this reliance on council taxpayers to help fund budget pressures leaves PCCs facing potential fluctuations in tax collection and the tax base that any local tax incurs. This was reflected during the Covid pandemic where a reduced tax base (when growth was expected) and a deficit on the collection fund (when it is usually a surplus) caused additional pressure and meant the Government had to provide additional funding. Although the tax base has remained robust for 2024/25, the collection fund is less than was received for 2023/24. This may be an indication that the cost-of-living crisis is being felt hard and may impact on both collection rates and the tax base for future years. We have been prudent in our assumptions going forward and I am satisfied that these are achievable.
73. The Government's planned rectification to the public sector Pension Funds due to recent court cases (e.g. McCloud) has now been resolved and as expected has had a substantial financial impact on employers' contributions to the pension schemes as well as other administrative costs. This delay in implementation and one-off administrator costs has now been funded by the Government and funding has been enough to cover Kent's costs. The increased employer's contribution has been included within the budget and MTFP and therefore there is no need to provide any other funding within the MTFP for this issue.
74. In year financial monitoring shows an expected underspend on both capital and revenue budgets for 2023/24. This is due to many factors, including higher than anticipated vacancies and one-off savings. This follows an underspend in 2022/23 and it is hoped is now the normal spending pattern, although no presumption of in-year underspending should be made because, having agreed the budget the PCC authorises its spending. With strong budget management arrangements and the medium term savings plan, which sets out where and how savings may be found, this increases the Force's flexibility to bring forward or push back savings plans dependent on future cost and income pressures.
75. The level of general reserves has been maintained at 3% of the net revenue budget over the MTFP in line with the Reserves Strategy. This level of general reserves will account for any major event that may require recourse to the Government's Special Police Grant. The 3% in general reserves covers us for two such events and a further contingency. This policy is reflected in the Reserves Strategy and is reviewed annually and as such there is no change for 2024/25.
76. While the Force has a good track record of identifying and managing savings through effective financial management and planning, unfortunately these can be one-off rather than ongoing recurring savings. The greater level of recurring savings that are found reduces the pressure on the MTFP. The level of savings identified in the MTFP are only a forecast of the future and will change as we go through the years. The Force continuously seeks early opportunities to identify savings and deliver them wherever possible. Any savings identified and not required to meet savings targets will be taken into reserves.
77. It is recognised that the delivery of savings becomes harder each year. There are projects that will generate significant savings in future years including the redevelopment of the police estate. The scale of the task for 2024/25 cannot be underestimated and it is a sign of the positive attitude to tackling this issue that the Force report on savings through the financial monitoring process to the Chief Officer Team and to the PCC and his CFO. The Force have had to work innovatively to identify where savings can be

made without impacting on front line services. The Neighbourhood Policing model is a result of this innovative thinking and willingness to make difficult decisions and more will be required over the medium term. It should be recognised that the level of savings required is challenging and will require challenging decisions especially around staffing which adds complexity and cost to the delivery of the savings plan. The flexibility in our budget will be used to mitigate against the non or late delivery of savings in year.

78. The increased demand for capital investment due to an ageing estate and the increased need for technology, coupled with the reducing ability to produce capital receipts means that there is a risk that funding may not be available for the investment programme. This risk is being managed initially through borrowing, and particularly internal borrowing to fund elements of the investment programme. This significantly reduces the cost of borrowing as it is the opportunity cost of investing the funds that is lost. This does cause a revenue pressure as this borrowing still needs to be repaid (albeit without the interest element) and the cost of the project included within the MRP calculation. This has been included within the MTFP with a £3.2m increase across the MTFP to 2028/29. Wherever possible the PCC will look to reduce the impact of borrowing on the revenue budget. Any underspend for 2023/24 will be used to offset some of this cost in 2024/25. The investment programme is a crucial element of the PCC's determination to support Kent Police wherever he can.
79. The requirement for the electrification of the police vehicle fleet and the subsequent impact on the infrastructure and buildings is becoming clearer. Although the Government has delayed the date for when diesel vehicles will cease to be sold, the vehicle manufacturers are unlikely to delay as their plans are well advanced. In any event there will come a time when Kent Police must purchase electric vehicles for all its fleet. Some limited purchases have already occurred where cost efficient, but a full change to the fleet will require substantial investment. Although the timing and quantum is not certain an estimate has been included within the capital programme and therefore no further contingency is required.
80. The North Kent Police Station PFI contract was terminated by the PCC in 2023 on the grounds of contractor default. The building is now owned and run by the PCC but requires several defects to be rectified. There is also a need for a final agreement to be reached with the provider over settlement. This may be done through discussion and negotiation but could take the form of litigation. A full business case has been completed and all costs, even where there is uncertainty, have been included. It is expected that the HO will provide funding to assist the full transfer and rectification of the building to the PCC to a point where Kent is no better or worse financially ensuring that there is no burden on the Kent taxpayer. Therefore, there should be no financial impact on the budget and MTFP, however, there are risks associated with this issue and this will be monitored.
81. Due to its geographical location Kent is faced with issues around its border which require the involvement of the Force. The contingency planning undertaken by Kent Police and its partners around the initial exit from the European Union proved successful. However, planned changes to border rules and the use of Kent by the Government's immigration service does place demands on policing resources. The PCC has previously been successful in obtaining funding from the Government, so the Kent taxpayer is not funding the consequences of national decisions. It is still unclear as to what 'business as usual' will be at the borders post transition and therefore the impact that it will have on policing and in particular Kent. This will become apparent over the next few years. The PCC and the Force are actively engaging with the HO to ensure Kent's voice is heard on these issues and to take advantage of any funding opportunities should they arise. However, should business as usual have any unexpected impact or costs then this would be managed through the reserves in the first instance with a view to reimbursement from the Government.
82. The Force and the OPCC maintain active risk registers and associated risk management processes for operational and management risks which are monitored by the independent Joint Audit Committee. As well as the financial challenges described above, many of the key risks inevitably fall on the Force, rather than the OPCC, from both existing and newer threats. Examples of the former include the criminal justice backlog, electrification of the fleet, and cybercrime. Within the OPCC, on-going strategic risks relate to ensuring the core statutory functions of the PCC are met; this includes overall financial governance and value for money, the commissioning of victim's services and the complaints regulations.

83. Overall, I have considered the level and need for reserves against the strategic risk registers of the Force and the OPCC. There is a significant financial challenge facing the organisation but there are proactive plans in place to deliver the savings required in a managed way and a robust governance framework overseeing the challenge. The reserves position provides some resilience without increasing risk to the organisation and therefore, I am satisfied that the reserves for next year and over the life of the plan are prudent and appropriate after consideration of the latest key risk assessments. I am satisfied that the estimates have been drawn up in a robust way, recognising that medium term forecasts beyond 2024/25 will inevitably carry more uncertainty. I am also satisfied that the operation of internal and external audit and the implementation of new monitoring processes improve the sound operation of financial controls. Regular monitoring and review of delivery plans and active risk management, including via the Independent Joint Audit Committee, remain vital parts of the local governance arrangements.

Rob Phillips
Chief Finance Officer
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent
January 2024

Supporting information:

Annex A – Summary of Medium-Term Plan, 2024/25 to 2028/29

Annex B – Reserves Strategy 2024/25

Annex C – Capital Strategy 2024/25

Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure:					
Police pay	274.29	283.62	293.13	302.76	312.72
PSE pay	108.65	112.00	115.41	118.88	122.47
Overtime	8.03	8.35	8.44	8.53	8.60
Other pay costs	15.15	15.15	15.15	10.04	10.04
Premises inc. North Kent	23.57	23.85	24.10	24.15	24.35
Transport	9.21	9.28	9.35	9.34	9.42
IT services	19.29	20.13	20.55	20.37	20.52
Supplies & services	17.58	17.07	17.01	16.96	17.07
Third party payments	7.59	7.60	7.61	6.88	6.93
PCC including victim services	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Revenue Impact of Capital programme	6.61	7.14	7.43	7.69	8.01
Gross Spending	495.42	509.69	523.68	531.10	545.63
Income:					
Specific grant - counter terrorism	-14.52	-14.79	-15.08	-15.38	-15.69
Specific grant - victims funding	-2.12	-2.12	-2.12	-2.12	-2.12
Home Office grants	-21.46	-21.46	-21.46	-21.46	-21.46
Sales, fees, charges & rents	-4.54	-4.58	-4.60	-4.68	-4.68
Interest / investment income	-1.10	-1.10	-1.10	-1.10	-1.10
Reimbursed services	-37.34	-37.73	-38.17	-30.61	-31.17
Transfers to / from reserves	2.07	3.21	4.40	5.40	6.40
Net Spending	416.41	431.12	445.55	461.15	475.81
Savings required 2024/25 permanent	-5.07	-5.07	-5.07	-5.07	-5.07
Savings required 2024/25 one off	-2.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Savings required 2025/26	0.00	-9.00	-9.00	-9.00	-9.00
Savings required 2026/27	0.00	0.00	-6.64	-6.64	-6.64
Savings required 2027/28	0.00	0.00	0.00	-7.61	-7.61
Savings required 2028/29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-6.47
Spending After Savings	409.12	417.05	424.84	432.83	441.02
Funding:					
Police core and legacy grant	-237.10	-239.34	-241.60	-243.88	-246.19
Council tax precept plus estimated collection fund balance	-172.02	-177.71	-183.24	-188.95	-194.83
Total Net Financing	-409.12	-417.05	-424.84	-432.83	-441.02

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Reserves Strategy 2024/2025

Introduction

1. An important element of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) overall financial strategy are the reserves held over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This strategy outlines the level of reserves, how and why those reserves are held and any planned use of or transfer to reserves during the period covered.
2. The Reserves Strategy is published as part of the Police and Crime Plan and Budget Papers reported to the Police and Crime Panel in February each year. Alongside the MTFP, Capital Strategy, Commissioning Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision policy, the Reserves Strategy forms part of the overall financial strategy of the Kent Police Group (the PCC and Force).
3. In line with the financial papers listed above, the Reserves Strategy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The PCC Chief Finance Officer (PCC CFO) statement on the adequacy of reserves is included within the Section 25 statement in the budget report.

Background

4. Reserves are held as part of the overall MTFP, and it forms part of several legislative safeguards in place that help prevent the PCC from over-committing financially. These include:
 - The requirement to set a balanced budget as set out within the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
 - The requirement for the PCC to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer (the PCC CFO), or Section 151 Officer, to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
 - The requirements of the Prudential Code, Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice, and the Financial Management Code of Practice.
 - The PCC CFO's duty to report on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves when the PCC is considering his budget requirement.
5. This is reinforced by Section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 which requires the PCC CFO to report to the PCC, Police and Crime Panel and the External Auditor if there is or likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where the PCC does not have sufficient resources to meet expenditure in a particular year.
6. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires PCCs as a 'precepting' authority to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
7. It should be noted that there is no defined minimum level of reserves that PCCs should hold. Local circumstances in terms of resourcing, expenditure and demand vary significantly across the country and so the level of reserves held is a judgement by the PCC with advice from the PCC CFO considering all local and national circumstances. However, the Government have specified that any level of general reserves over 5% of the net budget requires explanation within the Reserves Strategy. Kent does not hold general reserves above 5%.

Financial Regulations

8. As all financing is issued to the PCC then it follows that the PCC holds all the reserves. Kent's Financial Regulations sets out the key responsibilities for the PCC's CFO, Force CFO (FCFO), Chief Constable and the PCC regarding reserves and how they are used and maintained.

Reserves Strategy

9. The PCC holds reserves for four reasons:
 - As a general contingency against unknown or unforeseen events
 - To manage strategic risks in the organisation
 - To manage change within the organisation
 - Held for statutory responsibilities

10. The PCC's Reserve Strategy has the following key elements:
- A general non-earmarked reserve of 3% of the net budget will be maintained for unknown and/or unforeseeable events.
 - A prudent approach to risk management will be maintained and accordingly earmarked reserves will be created to cover for possible significant risks.
 - Reserves not required for the above purposes will be clearly identified as available for other discretionary opportunities.
 - In the interest of the council taxpayer, the PCC will where possible build up and maintain a level of reserves for investment, borrowing only where the life of the asset and economic environment make it the most efficient way of financing investment.
11. These elements are the aims of the PCC's Reserves Strategy and have not changed, however, the attainment of these aims has become more challenging due to the current financial climate. The aims are the overarching guiding principles to which the Reserves Strategy aspires.

Reserve Levels

12. The number and type of reserves as well as the level held in those reserves is reviewed on a regular basis. The total general and earmarked reserves are expected to be £24.2m as at 31st March 2024. Of this, general reserves will amount to £11.9m or 3% of the net revenue budget. This is the current level of reserves recommended by the PCC CFO in the strategy to be held for general contingency. This level is regarded best practice and comparable with other PCCs. The MTFP, budget and Reserves Strategy all have clear guidance on the use of general reserves. If at any time general reserves are utilised so that their level falls below the recommended level, then the first call on the budget is to replenish the general reserves to 3% of the net revenue budget.
13. The remaining reserves are all earmarked. It should be noted that the investment reserve is expected to have a balance of £0.1m across the MTFP. Capital investment will be funded from asset sales during the year and borrowing. In the first instance this will be internal borrowing, where the PCC 'borrows' from cashflow during the year, reducing the level of funds available for investing in the money markets but reducing the cost of borrowing.
14. The level of reserves has reduced significantly over the last few years due to the planned use of reserves to support recruitment, delivery of capital projects and reducing asset sales. This reflects a strong direction from the Government to reduce policing reserves from their high in 2017/18 but also the strict financial environment in which policing operates. Reserve levels have recovered and stabilised since 2020/21.
15. The PCC has notified the Chief Constable that any underspends will be taken back into reserves to mitigate risks over the medium term. Any in-year reallocations of underspends will only be considered by the PCC by exception.
16. The reserves position over the medium term is set out below:

Table 1: Reserves over the MTFP

Reserve	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General	11.9	12.5	12.9	13.7	13.8	14.3
Risk (inc. Insurance)	9.0	9.0	8.1	7.8	7.2	6.9
Investment Reserve	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Ring fenced (inc. PCC)	3.2	2.3	2.8	2.5	3.2	3.1
Total	24.2	23.9	23.9	24.1	24.3	24.4

17. Over the medium term, taking all the plans and provisions into account, reserves are expected to total £24.4m at the end of 2028/29.

18. The expenditure from the investment reserve is reliant on borrowing and in-year asset disposals being realised and available to spend. A contribution to capital investment continues to be made over the life of the MTFP to support the investment in ensuring that police officers have the appropriate buildings, equipment, and technology to be as effective as possible.
19. Any revenue underspends not required for unforeseen expenditure will be taken back into reserves.
20. The four categories of reserves in Table 1 are held for the following:
- **General** is used to mitigate against unknown and unexpected events that incur considerable cost that could not be borne within the revenue budget. This could include public order, major investigation costs or to fund initial costs of major disruption/disaster response (i.e., Covid 19 pandemic, flooding). This would be used before applying to the Government's Special Grant scheme should the criteria be met. The Special Grant scheme usually only accepts applications from those PCC's who have incurred costs greater than 1% of their net revenue budget with a further 0.5% for a second event. This reserve covers two such instances plus a further 1.5% for unknown and unexpected costs.
 - **Risk** is used to mitigate any sudden or unexpected changes in funding levels. This also includes the Insurance reserve which is held to cover potential liabilities in any insurance claim. To keep our insurance premiums at a reasonable level we self-insure to a significant degree. The level of the Insurance Reserve is suggested by our Insurance advisors as an appropriate amount to keep in reserve should we incur a large insurance claim. This is reviewed annually by our actuaries.
 - **Investment** funds the capital investment in our investment programme. The investment programme consists of medium and long-term projects that are designed to improve, renew, or create assets that will reduce financial commitments and improve policing in Kent. All sales of assets (capital receipts) fall into this reserve to be used for future capital investment. Capital projects will typically incur some revenue investment, and this is included within the revenue budget.
 - **Ring fenced** are funds set aside to deal with a specific purpose. These can be reserves that have to be held for statutory purposes or where they have been designated to deal with a particular issue or risk. This includes the budget support reserves held to mitigate risks around the current year budget, including risk in the non-delivery or delayed delivery of the savings plans. It will also, where appropriate, fund costs for significant operations that would not lead to a claim for Special Grant avoiding the need to use general reserves. This also holds any partnership reserves that are held for statutory reasons and on behalf of specific partnerships. They can only be used for the purposes they were intentionally held for. This also holds the PCC reserve. These are funds set aside from the PCC's own budget to fund innovative projects to help transform policing and for schemes or services that will support victims and witnesses.
21. The expenditure from the investment reserve is reliant on borrowing as in-year asset disposals reduce. A revenue contribution to capital continues to support the investment programme and this contribution will increase over the medium term. Any fluctuations in asset disposals may mean a reduction in investment, or where appropriate for long term projects a need to borrow.

Home Office Classification

22. The Home Office set out clear guidance on publishing the Reserves Strategy. It also states that the information on each revenue reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into each of the following three categories:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Classification	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium-term financial plan	3.3	2.4	2.9	2.6	3.3	3.2
Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Funding held as a general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs in accordance with sound principles of financial practice	20.9	21.5	21.0	21.5	21.0	21.2

23. Further details of the PCC's reserves can be found in Annex B1.

Summary of Reserves Position

		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Reason	Planned Use
	Classification	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m		
General	Contingency	11.9	12.5	12.9	13.7	13.8	14.3	3% of Net Revenue Budget. Held to mitigate against unknown and unexpected events. Will fund major operations, public order, major investigation costs that are not expected or to fund initial costs of major disruption/ disaster response (i.e. Covid 19, flooding) before applying for Police Special Grant.	This is the minimum level of reserves we would be expected to hold. There is no expectation that these reserves will be used over the medium term, but should there be an unexpected event then they can be. The increase in the net budget means this reserve will increase over the medium term.
Risk	Contingency	9.0	9.0	8.1	7.8	7.2	6.9	This reserve is held to support the budget in times of funding changes (both increases and decreases) to avoid precipitous decisions being made. It also covers our potential liabilities in any insurance claim. In order to keep our insurance premiums at a reasonable level we self insure to a significant degree.	There is no planned use of the reserve during the MTFP. £3.0m is the minimum level of reserves we have been advised to hold by our insurance as it mitigates against large insurance claims of which we currently do not have any. This may fluctuate over the medium term depending on our advisor's advice.
Investment Reserve	Planned	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	This reserve funds the capital and revenue investment in our investment programme. The investment programme is a number of long term projects that are designed to improve / create assets for the Force that will reduce financial commitments and improve policing in Kent. All sales of assets (capital receipts) fall into this reserve to be used for future capital investment. This reserve funds the revenue investment involved in our investment programme. Capital projects will typically incur some revenue investment and this reserve helps fund that part of the investment programme without impacting on the ongoing revenue budget.	This reserve is used during the year as income and expenditure are incurred. This is the residual balance that can only be used for specific expenditure.
Partnership Funds	Planned	2.0	1.1	1.6	1.3	2.0	1.9	The reserves are held on behalf of partnerships within and supporting policing and can only be used for the purpose for which they are held.	There are estimated plans to use these during the medium term although this will depend on in -year partnership decisions. The final MTFP balance will broadly be the same as the starting balance.
PCC	Planned	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	This reserve holds funds set aside from the PCC's budget to fund innovative projects to help transform policing and fund local PCC priorities.	These reserves are held to support one-off initiatives to support policing or to support grant funded victim support services. There are no plans to use these over the MTFP however, the PCC will make any decisions on use during the year.
Total Reserves		24.2	23.9	23.9	24.1	24.3	24.4		

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Capital Strategy 2024/2025

1 Purpose

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to produce a Capital Strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability, and affordability.

The Capital Strategy is a key document for the Kent PCC and Kent Police and forms part of the integrated revenue, capital, and balance sheet planning. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure; capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides a summary of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability and an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

Throughout this document the term Kent Police Group is used to refer to the activities of both the PCC and Kent Police.

2 Scope

This Capital Strategy includes all capital expenditure and capital investment decisions for Kent Police Group. It sets out the medium to long term context in which decisions are made with reference to the life of the projects/assets.

3 Legislation

Expenditure on capital is bound by legislation and codes of practice. This strategy complies with and has regard to:

- Local Government Act 2003
- Localism Act 2011 (England)
- Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
- Capital Finance: Guidance on Local Government Investments, third edition (2018)
- Capital Finance: Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision, fourth edition (2018)
- CIPFA Prudential Code (2021)
- CIPFA Prudential Code Guidance Notes (2021)
- CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (2021)
- CIPFA Financial Management Code (2019)

4 Links to other Corporate Strategies and Plans

The PCC produces a Police and Crime Plan every four years. Making Kent Safer 2022-2025 is refreshed annually.

The PCC and the Chief Constable have produced a Joint Vision which is supported by the Chief Constable's Policing Model.

To support these overarching documents a number of interrelated strategies and plans are in place, such as the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Medium Term Capital Plan (MTCP), Reserves Strategy, Commissioning Strategy, Asset Management Plan, and the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS).

The operation of all these strategies and plans is underpinned by the Code of Corporate Governance and Financial Regulations.

Capital resources should be directed to those programmes and projects that optimise the achievement of the outcomes contained within those documents. The following processes are designed to ensure this happens.

5 Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is incurred on the acquisition or creation of assets, or expenditure that enhances or adds to the life or value of an existing fixed asset. Fixed assets are tangible or intangible assets that yield benefits to Kent Police Group for a period of more than one year (e.g. land and buildings, ICT, equipment, and vehicles). This contrasts with revenue expenditure which is spending on the day to day running costs of services such as employee costs and supplies and services.

The capital programme is Kent Police Group's plan of capital works for future years, including details on the funding of the schemes.

6 Capital vs. Treasury Management Investments

Treasury Management investment activity covers those investments which arise from the organisation's cash flows and debt management activity, and represent balances which need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

For Treasury Management investments the security and liquidity of funds are placed ahead of the investment return. The management of associated risk is set out in the TMS.

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code recognises that some organisations are entitled to make investments for policy reasons outside of normal treasury management activity. These may include service and commercial investments. However, like all police bodies, Kent PCC does not have a General Power of Competence, which gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and as such is prevented from entering into commercial investment activities.

7 The Capital Budget Setting Process

Kent Police Group is committed to a rolling medium-term revenue and capital plan that covers the current financial year plus four years. The plans are drawn up, reassessed, and extended annually and if required re-prioritised to enable Kent Police Group to achieve the aims and objectives established in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, the Chief Constable's Policing Model and to support national drivers like the National Policing Vision for 2030.

Although an MTCP is published the Capital Strategy takes a view beyond the medium term and looks at the long-term implications of the capital projects and the funding thereof.

The MTCP provides the Kent Police Group infrastructure and major assets through capital investment, enabling Kent Police Group to strengthen and streamline core assets and systems, and provides the framework for delivering innovative policing with a lower resource profile.

Key focuses of the Capital Programme:

- To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure, maintaining core sites, improving core training facilities and progressing the Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
- To ensure provision is made for ICT and Business Change Technology to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative digital policing services.
- The maintenance and replacement of other core assets where necessary, e.g. vehicles and communication infrastructure.
- Improving our environmental sustainability and mitigating our impact on the environment.

The plans acknowledge the constrained financial position of Kent Police Group and maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity to manage change projects.

8 Collaboration and Wider Sector Engagement

Although Kent Police Group has its own Capital Strategy and MTCP, the natural drivers that encourage local and regional forces to collaborate, such as cost and resource sharing, along with structured collaborations and national plans, can have a significant influence on local decision making.

One of the focal points therefore of Kent Police's Capital Strategy is to acknowledge regional and national partnership working, both with other forces/PCCs and in the wider context of engagement with local authorities, other emergency services, the Crown Prosecution Service and central government and its agencies, to improve overall service to the public.

9 Affordability and Financial Planning

Prior to submission of the draft MTCP in late autumn, a significant amount of financial work will have already been undertaken on revenue and capital budgets. This work will have identified the potential financial position for Kent Police Group in respect of the coming medium term, considering core known information and stated assumptions.

The work will include forecasts on inflation, committed growth requirements, forecast productivity and efficiency savings, assumptions around grant and council tax funding plus any other information introduced during the budget process.

The revenue financial position is also influenced by the Capital Bid process and the MTCP – in terms of both revenue consequences of capital programmes and through the ability or requirement to financially support capital investment, either through direct financing or borrowing.

10 Capital Sustainability

For a long time, Kent Police Group has benefitted from substantial capital reserves, supported by the sale of operational buildings or police houses or from revenue reserves built up over several years from in year revenue underspends. This position has changed.

Looking ahead over the medium term the prudent use of reserves, the level of overspending and the reducing number of assets available for sale means that alternative ways of funding the capital programme have been considered. A Revenue Contribution to Capital Outturn (RCCO) was introduced to set aside an increasing level of revenue expenditure over the medium term to provide revenue funding for short life programmes.

Kent Police Group will also use internal borrowing to fund the programme. This means borrowing against future cashflow. It is recognised that this reduces the availability of funds for investment and the impact of this is considered in the TMS. It is also recognised that borrowing internally will impact on the revenue budget as this borrowing is repaid into the cashflow. This will be considered when making decisions on the level of capital funding available.

These borrowing decisions are not made in isolation, nor are they made over a one year or five-year view. Borrowing plans are expanded across the long term to ensure that decision makers are aware of the financial impact their decision will have beyond the medium term.

The Kent Police strategy is to invest in core infrastructure now that will not only offer overall service improvements to the public, but also maximise revenue savings in the future through:

- A smaller, more efficient, and effective estate.
- Protecting our officers and staff, through the purchase of safety equipment.
- Making our officers and staff more efficient and effective enabled through improved Information and Communication Technology solutions.
- Improving our environmental sustainability and mitigating our impact on the environment.

Its Investment Strategy will also be influenced by and take account of national visions for policing, regional and local priorities.

The Force Chief Finance Officer (FCFO) and PCC's Chief Finance Officer (PCC CFO) believe that the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme proposed are sustainable.

11 The Formal MTCP Approval Process

The MTCP is continuously updated during the financial year but begins to crystallise formally in the autumn. The MTCP is presented to Chief Officers Management Board (COMB) and once agreed is then presented to the PCC as part of the overall suite of budget reports for formal approval. The programme will be a mixture of continuing projects, regular maintenance, and new projects. How this programme is funded will have been discussed and agreed through the FCFO and PCC CFO prior to the PCC's final approval. The taking of loans, if required, then becomes a decision for the PCC CFO in conjunction with the FCFO who will decide funding of the capital programme based on the level of reserves, current and predicted cashflow, and the money market position. It will then be determined whether borrowing should be met from internal or external borrowing. Where appropriate, both CFO's may seek advice from external partners, including but not limited to our Treasury Management advisors on the most appropriate and cost-efficient method of borrowing.

The PCC approves the funding envelope and a high-level view of projects in February each year. Once the PCC has approved the capital programme, then expenditure can be committed against these high-level schemes subject to a full business case being submitted, normal contract procedure rules and the terms and conditions of funding.

Whether capital projects are funded from grant, contributions, capital allocations or borrowing, the revenue costs must be able to be met from existing revenue budgets or identified (and underwritten) savings or income streams.

12 Individual Project Management

Capital projects are subject to scrutiny. This varies dependant on the type of project and may be influenced by size or by the makeup of regional involvement. Each project will have a Project Manager and potentially a team to implement the project.

Typically, projects will have a dedicated Project Board, which, if part of a larger programme may sit under a Programme Board. Programme and Project Boards will have a Senior Responsible Officer or Chairperson. Detailed oversight is further provided through ICT Project Management Office, Strategic Estate Groups and Force Change Boards. Regional Projects or Programmes may also report into Regional Boards.

For large capital projects or those that are of public, or PCC interest, the PCC or a senior member of the PCC's team will be invited to have a seat on the programme board for that project or regular personal briefings to the PCC will be requested.

13 Monitoring of the Capital Programme

The FCFO will submit capital monitoring reports as part of the regular financial reporting requirements to the PCC CFO monthly. These reports will have already been to COMB and be shared with the PCC on a regular basis throughout the year. These monitoring reports will show spending to date and compare projected income and expenditure with the approved capital budget. The report will also include current forecast of the funding of the programme alongside the revenue implications.

For proposed in-year amendments to the annual capital budget, for schemes not already included in the MTCP, the FCFO will prepare a business case for submission to the PCC for consideration and approval, including details on how the new scheme is to be funded.

Monitoring reports presented and discussed with the PCC at his Performance and Delivery Board meeting with the Chief Constable are published on his website. The reports are also presented to the Joint Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

In addition, for those business change programmes where a formal board has been established, a detailed scheme monitoring report is presented at each Board meeting.

14 Multi-Year Schemes

Payments for capital schemes often occur over many years, depending on the size and complexity of the project. Therefore, estimated payment patterns are calculated for each project so that the expected capital expenditure per year is known. This is called a cash flow projection or budget profiling.

The approval of a rolling multi-year capital programme assists Kent stakeholders in a number of ways. It allows the development of longer-term capital plans for service delivery. It allows greater flexibility in planning workloads and more certainty for preparation work for future schemes. It also allows greater integration of the revenue budget and capital programme. It also matches the time requirement for scheme planning and implementation since capital schemes can have a considerable initial development phase.

15 In Year Changes to the Capital Programme

An MTCP is produced which shows all planned expenditure over the next five years. This plan will include a schedule to show how the planned expenditure is likely to be funded subject to business case approval.

A separate annual capital budget is produced before the start of the financial year. Initially this budget will only include ongoing schemes from previous years as well as annual provisions such as vehicles, plant, and equipment. Additional schemes from the MTCP are included in the annual budget after cases have been accepted and timescales are known.

16 Funding Strategy and Capital Policies

16.1 Government Grant

The PCC no longer receives any direct Government support for capital expenditure.

16.2 Capital Receipts

A capital receipt is an amount of money which is received from the sale of an item on the fixed asset register. This can only be spent on other capital expenditure and cannot be used to fund revenue items.

These capital receipts, once received, are used to finance the capital programme. The sale of assets is a one-off receipt and means the pool of assets available diminishes with each sale limiting the ability to fund projects from capital receipts.

16.3 Revenue Funding

Recognising that the pool of assets available for sale is declining a RCCO is seen as a sustainable funding alternative. However, the pressures on the revenue budget are acute with substantial savings already being required. Where appropriate and affordable an appropriate provision for RCCO is included within the annual revenue budget and the MTFP.

16.4 Prudential Borrowing

Local authorities, including PCC's, can set their own borrowing levels based on their capital need and their ability to pay for the borrowing. The levels will be set by using the indicators and factors set out in the Prudential Code. The borrowing costs are not supported by the Government so Kent Police Group need to ensure it can fund the repayment costs. The authority's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, published within the TMS sets out a prudent approach to the amount set aside for the repayment of debt.

16.5 Internal Borrowing

The PCC holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus any balances and reserves held. The level of funds for investment is determined by the cashflow into and out of the organisation. To minimise borrowing costs, any surplus funds that would normally be held for investment can be used to fund projects within the capital programme. This is called internal borrowing and means the cost of borrowing is the return on investment foregone. The impact of this will be reflected within the TMS.

16.6 Reserves and Balances

Unspent capital grant and capital receipt monies can be carried forward in the Balance Sheet until they are required to fund the capital programme. The PCC can also hold revenue reserves built up over several years to fund elements of the capital programme. Reserves are held and controlled by the PCC through the PCC CFO. Details on Reserves is contained within the Reserves Strategy, published alongside this strategy and the Budget and Precept Report.

16.7 Leasing

Kent Police Group may enter into finance leasing agreements to fund capital expenditure. However, a full option appraisal and comparison of other funding sources must be made and the FCFO and the PCC CFO must both be satisfied that leasing provides the best value for money method of funding the scheme before a recommendation is made to the PCC.

Under the Prudential Code finance leasing agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing. Under the code Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) are classed as leasing. Kent has one PFI project, Medway Police Station. They are monitored carefully and reviewed to ensure they are operating effectively, retain value for money and that Kent are prepared for when the PFI financing ends and the buildings revert to Kent Police ownership.

17 Procurement and Value for Money

Procurement is the purchase of goods and services and the financial regulations clearly set out the processes and rules in place for effective procurement. Kent Police Group have recourse to two key partnerships to leverage the best value for money from our capital activities.

7F Commercial ensures that all tender processes and contracts, including those of a capital nature, are legally compliant and best value for money. It is essential that all procurement activities comply with prevailing regulations and best practice as set out in the Code of Corporate Governance, which includes Contract and Financial Regulations. Guidance on this can be sought from the 7F Commercial Team.

BlueLight Commercial is a government funded organisation that acts on behalf of all PCCs and Chief Constables across the country to obtain efficient and effective services providing value for money opportunities. This works on our behalf across both revenue and capital spending.

The main aim is to hold 'value for money' as a key goal in all procurement activity to optimise the combination of cost and quality.

18 Partnerships and Relationships with other Organisations

Wherever possible and subject to the usual risk assessment process Kent Police Group will look to expand the number of capital schemes which are completed on a partnership basis and continually look for areas where joint projects can be implemented. In support of this initiative Kent has a joint ICT Department with Essex Police and several ICT and business change programmes are being delivered collaboratively.

Where Kent Police Group procures capital items on behalf of other consortium partners only Kent Police Group related expenditure which will be included in the fixed asset register will be included in the MTCP and the annual capital budget.

19 Management Framework

All contracts are in the name of the PCC meaning that the PCC owns all the assets. However, the Chief Constable has day to day operational control over short life assets, such as ICT, equipment, and vehicles. Ownership of the estate belongs with the PCC, but as these are operational buildings, the Head of Estates manages the estate on behalf of the Chief Constable with regular reporting to the OPCC and oversight.

The PCC CFO and FCFO manage the MTCP and the annual capital budget. The FCFO provides regular updates to COMB who, collectively, maintain oversight of planned operational expenditure.

The PCC CFO is responsible for developing and then implementing the strategic documents; Capital Strategy; Reserves Strategy and the TMS in consultation with the FCFO.

During the budget preparation process COMB take a strategic perspective to the use and allocation of Kent Police Group capital assets and those within its control in planning capital investment. They receive reports on proposed capital projects and make formal recommendations to the PCC during the development of the capital programme.

Having approved the MTCP and the annual capital budget in February each year the PCC formally holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery of capital projects as part of the regular Finance paper at the Performance and Delivery Board meetings.

20 Performance Management

Clear measurable outcomes should be developed for each capital scheme. After the scheme has been completed, the Chief Constable is required to check that outcomes have been achieved.

Kent Police Group should complete post scheme evaluation reviews for all schemes over £1.0 million and for strategic capital projects.

Reviews should look at the effectiveness of the whole project in terms of service delivery outcomes, design and construction, financing etc. and identify good practice and lessons to be learnt in delivering future projects. These reports will be presented to COMB and then shared with the OPCC. They will be available for sharing to a wider audience (i.e. Joint Audit Committee, Police and Crime Panel) if required.

21 Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect Kent Police Group's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and to execute its strategies successfully.

Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences, and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the element of risk in all their activities.

The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. Both the Force and the OPCC have a corporate risk register which sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of Kent's corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks or maximise opportunities.

To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced, and monitored. It is important to identify the appetite for risk by each scheme and for the capital programme in its entirety, especially when investing in complex and costly business change programmes.

Kent Police Group accepts there will be a certain amount of risk inherent in delivering the desired outcomes of the Police and Crime Plan and will seek to keep the risk of capital projects to a low level whilst making the most of opportunities for improvement. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, Kent Police Group will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.

The FCFO and the PCC CFO will report jointly on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.

21.1 Credit Risk

This is the risk that the organisation with which we have invested capital monies becomes insolvent and cannot complete the agreed contract. Accordingly, Kent will ensure that robust due diligence procedures cover all external capital investment through its arrangements with 7F Commercial and where appropriate through BlueLight Commercial. Where possible contingency plans will be identified at the outset and enacted when appropriate.

21.2 Liquidity Risk

This is the risk that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed. This is also the risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example because of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates. Our exposure to this risk will be monitored via the revenue and capital budget monitoring processes. Where possible appropriate interventions will occur as early as possible.

21.3 Interest Rate Risk

This is the risk that interest rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Interest rates will be reviewed as part of the on-going monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.

21.4 Exchange Rate Risk

This is the risk that exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Where relevant, exchange rates will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations. However, for Kent Police capital projects this is unlikely to have a material impact.

21.5 Inflation Risk

This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations.

21.6 Legal and Regulatory Risk

This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Before entering into capital expenditure or making capital investments, Kent Police Group will understand the powers under which the investment is made. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.

21.7 Fraud, Error, and Corruption

This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes around capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. Kent Police Group has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through its values, principles, and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by the national Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Declaration of Interests.

22 Other Considerations

Capital Schemes must, as with all PCC and Force spend, comply with all appropriate legislation, such as for example, the Disability Discrimination Act, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and building regulations etc.

February 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police
Date: 6 February 2024

Introduction:

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not judge progress based on targets as he recognises that they can skew behaviour and that often, despite Kent Police's best efforts, it is not always possible to protect the public or bring offenders to justice. The PCC does though consider other feedback, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, other independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. HMICFRS independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes the answers in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.
4. This paper provides an overview of Kent Police's HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 Inspection, and also outlines how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account.

Background:

5. PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is HMICFRS' regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS use inspection findings, analysis and professional judgment to assess how good forces are in several areas of policing. Most of the areas then receive one of the following grades:
 - Outstanding – the force has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance
 - Good – the force has demonstrated substantially the characteristics of good performance
 - Adequate – identification of an appreciable number of areas where the force should make improvements
 - Requires improvement – identification of a sufficiently substantial number of areas where the force needs to make improvements
 - Inadequate – HMICFRS have causes of concern and have made recommendations to the force to address them.
6. The core questions that make up the PEEL assessment do not remain the same for each cycle of inspections. They adapt to changing priorities and circumstances; for the 2023-25 cycle they are as follows:
 - How good is the force's service for victims of crime? (This question is not graded)
 - How good is the force at treating the public fairly, appropriately and respectfully?
 - How good is the force at preventing and deterring crime, ASB and reducing vulnerability?
 - How good is the force at responding to the public?
 - How good is the force at investigating crime?
 - How good is the force at protecting vulnerable people?
 - How good is the force at managing offenders and suspects?
 - How good is the force at disrupting serious and organised crime?
 - How good is the force at building, developing and looking after its workforce and encouraging an ethical, lawful and inclusive workplace?
 - How good is the force at leading and managing its services to make sure they are efficient, effective and sustainable?
 - How effectively does the force vet its officers and staff?
 - How effectively does the force protect the information it holds and tackle potential corruption?

7. For this cycle, HMICFRS is assessing police forces against the characteristics of good performance as set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2023-2025](#). In force reports, HMICFRS also provide a narrative assessment that focuses on leadership based on the College of Policing leadership expectations, which are:
- Inspiring common purpose
 - Developing and valuing people
 - Building an inclusive workplace
 - Leading across boundaries
 - Performance and improvement
 - Understanding self and others
8. It is important to note that as a result of forces being assessed against the criteria set out in the PEEL Assessment Framework 2023-25 and a move to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual PEEL inspections used in previous years, HMICFRS state:

‘it isn’t possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because we have increased our focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public, and in some cases we have changed the aspects of policing we inspect.’

PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police:

9. On 17 November 2023, HMICFRS published Kent’s inspection report – the [full report](#) can be viewed on their website. The PCC notified the Panel Chair of its publication on 20 November.
10. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in 11 areas of policing and HMICFRS made graded judgements in 10 of these. They also inspected how effective a service Kent Police gives victims of crime, but do not make an overall graded judgment.
11. The findings follow eight months of continuous assessment consisting of document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and a Victim Service Assessment requiring the review of a number of calls for service, investigations, and subsequent outcomes.
12. The following is an overview of HMICFRS’ graded judgements in the 10 areas of policing:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers & public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership & force management			

13. Currently, of the nine reports HMICFRS have published under the 2023-25 cycle, Kent is the only force to have received a ‘Good’ grading for protecting vulnerable people.
14. In summary, HM Inspector of Constabulary Roy Wilsher said:

‘I am pleased with the performance of Kent Police in keeping people safe, reducing crime and giving victims an effective service. But in order to provide a consistently good service, it needs to improve in some areas.’

“It was pleasing to note that since our last PEEL inspection, the force has taken steps to improve how it communicates with communities to identify problems and gather intelligence. It also continues to work effectively in partnership with a wide range of other organisations on problem-solving, crime prevention and early intervention.

“I was also pleased to find that since our last PEEL inspection, the force has worked hard to improve the quality of its investigations. The force has effective governance arrangements for investigative standards. This results in thorough and well-supervised investigations. Investigators look for opportunities to bring offenders to justice even when victims are unwilling to proceed. They use bail effectively to protect vulnerable victims and reduce further crime. But these improvements haven’t yet resulted in more positive outcomes for victims.

“Since our last PEEL inspection, the force has also improved the way it records information about children or vulnerable adults to better support multi-agency risk assessments. The number and quality of referrals have increased, which allow the force and partners to intervene more effectively to protect those at risk.

“Kent Police has an average level of funding per 1,000 population in England and Wales. But the use of this funding doesn’t always result in a good service for the public in some important areas, such as its initial response to calls. The force doesn’t always answer emergency and non-emergency calls in a timely way. And it doesn’t always attend calls for service as quickly as it should. The force has tried to address these problems by increasing the number of call handlers and by improving the range of alternative ways to contact the force. But it needs to do more to meet the public’s needs.

“The force had a change in leadership in the year leading up to our inspection, with the appointment of a new chief constable and deputy chief constable. The new leadership team has reviewed the force’s operating model and how it uses its funding. This has resulted in changes to the way it provides neighbourhood policing. But at the time of our inspection, the force had only just made these changes, so they weren’t fully developed. It will take time to have the effect the leadership wants.

“We hope the changes to the way the force operates result in further improvements that help it meet the public’s needs. We will be monitoring its progress closely.”

15. As a result of the inspection, the Force received 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and has created a new Improvement Plan.
16. HMICFRS also agreed that 14 of the 19 AFIs issued in the previous PEEL 2021/22 inspection could be closed, with four of the remaining five being superseded. The remaining AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim’s protected characteristics is not referenced in the most recent report due to required ongoing national work, but the Force has carried this across into its new Improvement Plan to ensure continued monitoring.
17. It is important to note that whilst crime recording was not assessed in this cycle, Kent Police’s grade of ‘Outstanding’ from the previous PEEL 2021/22 inspection still stands and so it continues to lead the field nationally with one of the highest levels of accuracy. The reality is though, with a level of accuracy exceeding 96%, diligence in crime recording results in increased investigative demand and so Kent Police continues to deal with thousands more offences than many other forces who are resourced better and investigating fewer crimes.
18. Attached as Appendix A is a summary of the assessed areas and gradings prepared by Kent Police. Members may also recall that at his informal briefing to the Panel on 22 November 2023, the Chief Constable provided further commentary and context on the PEEL 2023-25 inspection findings.

Holding to account:

19. The PCC is pleased with the improvements made since the last report and that the report recognises the effort of the Force in making the changes required, showing momentum under the new Chief Officer team. The Force is commended for good practice in a number of areas and the commentary overall is more positive.

20. Performance in respect of 999 and 101 call handling was improving whilst the inspection was taking place, and as Members will be aware, it has quite simply got better and better – in recent months, 101 call attrition has been less than 3%.
21. The PCC is pleased the solve rates are increasing and given the extensive work that HMICFRS has rightly done to challenge forces on their crime recording accuracy, believes this context needs to be highlighted given the outcome comparisons used in the report are year ending March 2015.
22. Overall the inspection shows a more positive outlook for Kent Police, but the PCC acknowledges the appearance of two areas being graded 'Requires Improvement' and that there is work to do to improve outcomes for victims.
23. Whilst the Force has already taken some action to address the findings and developed an Improvement Plan, through his quarterly Performance & Delivery Board the PCC will continue to monitor the AFIs closely and hold the Force to account for delivering their responsibilities under the Victims Code, getting the right outcomes and bringing offenders to justice. He will also carry on scrutinising the roll out of the Neighbourhood Policing model so that it delivers for residents.
24. 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.
25. The 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity and in the future will regularly include updates on progress against the Force's Improvement Plan.
26. Progress updates will also be reported at the [Joint Audit Committee](#) and the PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings. In addition, he will routinely receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force and the PCC will be represented at the periodic Chief Constable Oversight Boards by his Chief Executive.
27. Whilst the PCC recognises that the Force has work to do to ensure it consistently provides a first-class service, he would like to acknowledge the effort that has gone into, and progress made since the last inspection. He would also like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service which they demonstrate every single day in trying to do their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime.

Recommendation:

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



Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) 2023/25 – An Inspection of Kent Police

1. On 17 November 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published their PEEL inspection of Kent Police. The inspections assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Forces are assessed against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the PEEL Assessment Framework 2023–2025. The inspection findings follow eight months of continuous assessment consisting of document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and a Victim Service Assessment in which HMICFRS reviewed a number of calls for service, investigations, and subsequent outcomes.
2. In addition, HMICFRS carried out a force wide staff survey to gather insight into the workforce's experience of working for Kent Police. Responses were received from 2,093 staff members which is estimated to be 33.9% of the total workforce. HMICFRS were highly positive of the return rate and the force was asked to provide the communication and engagement activity undertaken to inform other forces. The survey covers value, leadership, training, career development, workload, wellbeing, conduct and discrimination. The findings of this survey were provided to the force, key headlines include:
 - 70.8% felt a sense of belonging to Kent Police, 77.8% felt proud to be a member of Kent Police.
 - 80.5% agreed they were treated fairly at work.
 - 94.5% agreed that their line manager challenged discriminatory behaviour, 94.1% agreed their line manager created an ethical working environment and 90.3% agreed their line manager created an inclusive working environment.
 - 81.4% agreed the force had equipped them with sufficient training to carry out their role.
 - 86.7% had a formal PDR in the last 12 months, 66.9% agreed they were an effective tool in their development and 74.5% valued the process of these reviews / appraisals.
 - 78.4% agreed their line manager actively checked their workload was manageable.
 - 71.2% agreed working patterns considered individual wellbeing as well as business needs.
 - 90.4% agreed that counselling services were provided following incidents.
 - 93.4% reported not feeling bullied or harassed at work, 90.9% reported not feeling discriminated against at work.
3. The PEEL inspection assessed the force across eleven areas of policing and provided a grading for ten of these. Kent has been awarded six good gradings including treating the public fairly, preventing crime, protecting vulnerable people and serious and organised crime.
4. Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Chief Constable's Policing Pledge and it is reassuring that the work being undertaken in this area whether this is tackling violence against women and girls, safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people or working with partners to ensure victims of domestic abuse are safe has been recognised and the grading improved from the last PEEL assessment. At the time of writing Kent are the only force in the current round of PEEL assessments to have received a good grading for protecting vulnerable people.
5. In addition, the force improved its grading in respect of managing offenders. Whilst not inspected on this occasion the force has continued to ensure crime recording and data integrity is outstanding which is fundamental to being able to effectively address issues affecting our communities. Details of all the gradings are provided below.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers and public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership and force management			

6. Areas for improvement (AFIs) issued by HMICFRS are an indication of how well a force is performing. HMICFRS have agreed to close 14 of the 19 AFIs issued from PEEL 2021/22. Four of the five remaining AFIs have been superseded. The remaining AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim's protected characteristics issued in PEEL 2021/22 is not referenced in the most recent report as a result of the ongoing national work required to complete this however the force will carry this across into the new improvement plan to ensure continued monitoring and progress.

Victim Service Assessment – Ungraded

- 7. The victim service assessment (VSA) took place week commencing 10 April 2023 and reviewed 116 case files across a number of crime types. The period reviewed was 9 October 2022 to 9 January 2023 and the assessment reviewed the entirety of an investigation from the initial call through to the outcome.
- 8. The force demonstrated improvements across 25 of the 29 comparable areas from the VSA carried out in 2021. From the sample reviewed 100% of calls were triaged and graded appropriately, 100% of repeat victims were identified, arrests were made within an appropriate timeframe in 97% of those reviewed, 84% of investigations were judged to be effective and 89% were judged to provide a good level of victim service in line with the Victim Code of Practice (VCOP).
- 9. Focus on the administration of outcomes was identified and is covered more in investigations, however 88% of victims were found to have been consulted prior to an outcome being administered, 94% took the victims' wishes into consideration and 97% of victims were informed of the outcome.

Treating People Fairly, Appropriately, and Respectfully – Good (No AFIs)

- 10. Officers and staff were found to understand why and how they should treat the public as a result of effective communication and training programmes which equip them with the necessary knowledge, skill and understanding.
- 11. Stop and search powers were found to be used fairly and respectfully with 88.5% found to have reasonable grounds recorded (an increase on the previous assessment of 87.5%). In respect of stop and search on people from ethnic minorities this was higher at 91.6% (22 from 24). The force can demonstrate a link between the initial grounds for a search and what was found when compared to other forces (28.7% of stop and searches in Kent had linked outcomes which is higher than the linked

outcome rate across all forces in England and Wales at 22.2%). A review of officer's behaviour during stop and search encounters through a review of body worn video was described by HMICFRS as exemplary.

12. The force has effective oversight of stop and search and use of force through tactical and strategic policing powers boards which provide overview and scrutiny. Ownership and a review process which tests quality, ensures ongoing improvements and developments in stop and search encounters. An external IAG (Independent Advisory Group) provides external scrutiny of stop and search powers.
13. Use of force recording is highlighted for further enhancement. Kent can demonstrate a steady increase in the use of force in line with arrest figures which indicates improvements in the under-recording referenced in the PEEL report. Detailed analysis of use of force is provided and discussed at the tactical and strategic policing power boards detailed above. Work in this area will continue to ensure sustained improvements.

Preventing, Deterring Crime and ASB and Reducing Vulnerability – Good (1 AFI)

14. The report identifies positive practice in respect of the force's management of mental health demand which includes a dedicated helpline, safe havens, and reduction in Section 136 detentions (S136). Mental health incidents continue to rise with rolling year figures (December 2023) at 28,945 an increase of 4.5%. However, S136 detentions continue to reduce with the rolling year figure (December 2023) at 738 which is a reduction of 16.2%.
15. The new neighbourhood model, focused on community engagement, problem solving, and targeted activity has seen the creation of 210 warranted beat officers. The establishment of divisional prevention hubs provides expertise in licencing, tackling antisocial behaviour, designing secure buildings, drug liaison, offender management and community engagement. Child Centred Policing Teams work with partners and other police departments to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour linked to children and young people, with safeguarding at the centre.
16. The model was in its infancy when HMICFRS undertook their final reality testing in force however six months on the model continues to be resourced in line with agreed plans and is embedding into the wider policing model. The previous AFI regarding the training of neighbourhood officers has been closed as a result of the pathway developed as part of the new neighbourhood policing model.
17. The report recognises the effective preventative approaches to VAWG including walk and talk events and best bar none, the high visibility, targeted police patrols in hotspot areas that take place and Operation Engage focused on identifying and supporting repeat callers. The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit successes in reducing serious violence are positively referenced.
18. Problem solving was found to be the responsibility of all, not just neighbourhood teams and activity with partners and other policing departments was recognised. The force was working towards storing all OSARA plans in one central repository during the PEEL inspection therefore progress against the subsequent AFI is positive. Problem-solving plans are now stored on the force crime recording system, providing an easy search function, and facilitating the sharing of best practice. The force is currently migrating plans onto Athena with over 500 completed at the time of writing.

Responding to the Public – Requires Improvement (4 AFIs)

19. The force has increased the capacity and capability of Local Policing Teams and ensured repeat callers and vulnerable callers are routinely identified enabling an effective response to incidents. The work in these areas has addressed three of the four previous AFIs given to the force in the last round of PEEL 2021/22 and these have been closed by HMICFRS.

20. Performance in respect of 999 and 101 calls was adversely affected by significant shortages of police staff call handlers in the Force Control Room however an innovative recruitment campaign has seen the call handler establishment met since July 2023, resulting in improving performance. The data referenced in the PEEL report and the basis for the associated AFI is from the Beating Crime Plan (BCP) in March 2023 (69.4%). The most recent published BCP data (rolling year to December 2023) shows the force answering 84.5% of calls in 10 seconds. In respect of 101 performance, again the report refers to March 2023 data with an abandonment rate of 33.4%, resulting in an AFI. Current performance reflects the improvements made with rolling year to December 2023 reporting an attrition rate of 12.7%.
21. The report highlights the effective application of THRIVE, appropriate grading of calls and ensuring the public have channel choice in making contact whilst still receiving the same level of service and assessment of threat, risk and harm. The increase in Local Policing Teams and the capability of officers is also noted positively.
22. The force has reinstated the RETHRIVE process on all high graded calls across the Contact Handling and Dispatcher Desks, ensuring a timely response and repeated review of risk is provided. Evaluation of this process is underway to ensure improvements in line with the AFI to monitor and reassess outstanding calls for service are taking place.
23. Crime prevention advice and scene preservation advice to callers has improved significantly since the VSA in April 2023. All callers contacting the force on a mobile receive an automatic text message with crime prevention advice and links to additional information. Quality assurance checks are being undertaken routinely, providing assurance that the necessary advice in respect of both crime prevention and scene preservation advice is being provided to the caller. Evaluation will continue to ensure improvements are sustained and remain consistent.
24. The force is recognised for the innovative introduction of rapid video response (RVR) which allows officers to respond swiftly to victims of domestic abuse who do not require an immediate attendance. Using remote video recording technology, victims are spoken to by a trained officer who will work with them to complete an initial safeguarding risk assessment, consider preservation of evidence, and provide safeguarding advice. RVR has been recognised and implemented across a number of police forces, winning awards nationally and internationally.

Investigating Crime – Requires Improvement (3 AFIs)

25. The report narrative reflects the extensive work that has been undertaken in respect of investigations. The force has increased the number of accredited detectives investigating domestic abuse offences, investigations are allocated in a timely manner and to the right teams, investigation plans are evident, and evidence led prosecutions are consistently considered by officers. It is as a result of this work that five of the six areas for improvement given to the force in the last round of PEEL 2021/22 have been addressed and closed by HMICFRS.
26. Despite effective, thorough investigations overseen by good supervision, achieving good results for victims and providing a quality service to victims, charged and solved rates are not as high as the force would want. This is a national issue and was raised by HMICFRS in their 'State of Policing Annual Assessment 2022'. The current charge rate for victim-based crime for the rolling year is 2 percentage points above that referenced in the PEEL report which demonstrates the positive trajectory the force is on. Nationally, Kent is above the England and Wales average charge rate, however work continues. The force is increasing the number of officers dedicated to investigating domestic abuse including in cases where victims sometimes feel unable to come forward, and these changes and other improvements are pushing charge and solved rates even higher.

27. Immediate action was taken when HMICFRS made the force aware of issues with the administration of outcome 21. An interactive guidance tool has been developed to assist in decision making and approval has been elevated to Inspectors. The Data Audit Team are reviewing compliance on a weekly basis and have seen the use of outcome 21 reduce significantly which would indicate it is now being consistently and appropriately assigned. Rolling quarter data for December 2023 highlights a 92.2% reduction in the use of outcome 21 (575 down to 45).
28. Work continues to agree a long-term solution for recording victim needs assessments (VNA). A single approach to completing a VNA was introduced in February 2023, within the crime recording system. Robust governance has been introduced to monitor force progress, with performance reported into both the Investigative Quality Board (IQB) and Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB). Criminal Justice review cases each month to monitor and scrutinise the quality of the VNA. Whilst improvement is required in respect of VNA, the HMICFRS VSA evidenced positive victim support with victim contracts adhered to in 94.2% of cases reviewed and 89.8% of cases reviewed were judged to provide a good level of service in line with VCOP.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Good (1 AFI)

29. The force has moved from adequate to good in this area. The force was found to understand the nature and scale of vulnerability with a focus on early intervention, prevention, safeguarding and management of risk. VAWG and child centred policing are at the heart of the control strategy ensuring that offenders are held to account and victims are safeguarded and supported.
30. Repeat domestic abuse offenders are targeted by proactive teams who work closely with partners across a number of agencies to reduce offending and break the cycle of abuse. These teams use a range of measures to proactively manage offenders and safeguard victims including regular prison release visits and welfare visits. In addition to this, the force is recognised as being at the forefront in the use of Stalking Protection Orders. The force has set up a weekly multi-agency panel to discuss the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) and make joint decisions whether disclosure is appropriate and how to inform the individual.
31. Work continues to ensure that protective orders are being considered when appropriate in line with the AFI however the force has seen improvements since the last PEEL report which was evident in the VSA findings. In addition to protective orders, using bail with conditions also ensures victims are safeguarded from offenders and the force's use of bail was positively referenced in the PEEL report and said to be effective.
32. Significant work has been undertaken to enhance the range of wellbeing support available to staff to ensure those involved in protecting vulnerable people continue to be supported, this is further explored in the wellbeing section however the AFI previously given to the force in respect of this has been addressed and closed by HMICFRS.

Managing Offenders and Suspects – Adequate (2 AFIs)

33. The force has moved from requires improvement to adequate in this area. The force has undertaken a review of its operating model and the management of registered sex offenders has been further enhanced which is recognised in the report. Bail management policies and processes were reported as providing effective arrangements to deliver swift justice. As result the AFIs given to the force in PEEL 2021/22 have been addressed and closed.
34. Home visits were found to be compliant with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and a dip sample of risk management plans found well-structured, effective management of offenders. The force is confident that overdue active risk management assessments are identified through supervisory reviews however the AFI from HMICFRS in this regard is noted and a formal monitoring process has been established to provide assurance.

35. The Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) are ensuring that positive action is taken against suspects of online child abuse and investigations were found to be of a good standard. The establishment in POLIT has been increased meaning there are more officers dealing with investigations of online child abuse, identifying and protecting victims.
36. HMICFRS reviewed a sample of case files for offences linked to domestic abuse where a suspect had been arrested and found these were investigated effectively and promptly with officers seeking to gather enough evidence to charge and remand those offenders who had committed serious or repeat offences or who were particularly dangerous.
37. Promising practice is included in respect of the force's harm intervention tool which seeks to classify offenders according to the level of identified risk and prioritise action on those suspects posing a high risk to the public. The force has introduced a new Digital Forensics structure which seeks to improve current performance in this key area of business and address the AFI given.

Disrupting Serious and Organised Crime – Good (1 AFI)

38. The inspection of serious and organised crime (SOC) took place in 2022 with the report published in May 2023. The force received a good grading with a positive narrative referencing the effective strategic management and governance arrangements to manage SOC activity and the utilisation of intelligence to identify, understand and prioritise SOC and inform effective decision making.
39. The force was found to be committed to developing staff to respond effectively to current and emerging threats. Kent uses a problem-solving approach to tackle SOC threats and works effectively with partner agencies to safeguard those at risk of being involved in SOC.
40. One AFI was identified relating to the currency of SOC local profiles which outline problems and vulnerabilities for each area of the force. Local profiles are being produced in line with the AFI however through the SOC Strategic Board updates on SOC vulnerabilities are discussed on a quarterly basis with activity agreed on how the police or partner organisations will tackle them.

Building, Supporting and Protecting the Workforce – Good (No AFIs)

41. The report identifies promising practice in respect of the significant enhanced provision it provides to support members of staff working in high-risk roles.
42. Health and Wellbeing Services have developed an Investigator Wellbeing plan, there is a dedicated area for Investigator Wellbeing on the internal force website. The Counselling and Wellbeing team have regular engagement with POLIT to ensure ongoing contact with this critical investigation team. A peer support programme is in place to promote wellbeing locally and disseminate force-wide activities and initiatives to ensure all officers and staff are aware of the wellbeing support available to them.
43. Support to new recruits, development and investment of leaders, comprehensive PDR processes (95.7% compliance) and a dedicated positive action team are just a few of the positive elements of this section.

Tackling Workforce Corruption – Adequate (2 AFIs)

44. The inspection of vetting and counter corruption took place in early 2022 with the report published in November 2022. The force received an adequate grading and were given two AFIs, both of which related to vetting arrangements; the management of vetting to make sure all personnel have valid vetting clearance for their role and the introduction of a system to monitor and respond to disproportionately in vetting decisions.

45. Since the inspection took place, the force has made changes to meet the demands placed on the Force Vetting Unit. The force has provided additional resources and introduced a robust risk assessment process for when officers vetted to a lower level are required to move roles for operational reasons prior to their vetting upgrade being completed. This AFI remains ongoing to ensure improvements are sustained.
46. The force has introduced a Disproportionality Scrutiny Panel where anonymised vetting decisions are reviewed by a panel to ensure that decisions are not affected by conscious or unconscious bias. Results of this Panel are shared at the Diversity and Inclusion Board. As a result of evidence provided this AFI has been discharged.
47. The force complies with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and there is recognition of the hard work undertaken by officers and staff to ensure that counter corruption measures are robust and rigorous. This includes effective monitoring of IT systems, the use of computer software to develop intelligence, comprehensive counter corruption strategic threat assessment, utilisation of a wide range of investigative techniques and communicating effectively to the workforce on abuse of position for a sexual purpose.

Leadership and Force Management – Good (No AFIs)

48. The force was found to have effective governance and performance management processes in place, using relevant analysis and data to ensure performance objectives are aligned with strategy. The Chief Constable's Pledge has been created using the views of all ranks and feedback from HMICFRS during reality testing was that officers and staff liked and understood the priorities set.
49. Leadership at all levels was found to be inclusive and empowering, supported by effective leadership training and investment. Effective resource planning and change management is recognised and the integration of the Force Management Statement into the strategic planning cycle is seen as positive.
50. The force was found to make best use of its funding with sustainable plans and whilst the significant financial challenges are referenced there is an acknowledgement of the strong governance and plans to achieve the savings required.
51. The report states (within the HMI Summary) that the force receives an "average level of funding per 1,000 population". This has been queried with HMICFRS as the current Value for Money Profiles on the HMICFRS website clearly show that per population Kent is in the bottom quartile, furthermore, within our most similar group we are second bottom funded. The significant strategic areas of importance within Kent such as the ports, counter terrorism and small boat landings has an impact on the management of funding; these areas are not related to population size but geography. The force is required to use the funding received to police these areas as well as the wider county, which other forces without these important areas would not and as such, our resources are stretched thinner.
52. Looking at the value for money profiles and how the force allocates resources, our support services overall are again in the lower quartile meaning we are investing as much of the resource we do have into frontline policing.
53. The use of technology to support operational activities is positively referenced such as the introduction of the Digital Assessment Management System (DAMS) allowing officers to securely share evidence with the CPS and other criminal justice partners, the issuing of laptops to response officers and a self-service data hub which allows supervisors easy access to investigative workloads and performance information.

Next Steps

54. The previous PEEL Improvement Plan has now been closed and a new plan created. Progress will be monitored via the Future Improvement and Development Board (FIDB) chaired by the DCC.
55. In addition to the FIDB, regular reporting of progress will take place to both the PCC Performance and Delivery Board and the Joint Audit Committee. Periodic Chief Constable Oversight Boards will ensure scrutiny at the very highest level.
56. The latest PEEL report is an indicator of how Kent Police is doing, and it is pleasing to see recognition for the exceptional work officers and staff undertake daily and acknowledgement of the significant improvements made, especially in respect of investigation quality.

Police and Crime Panel - Future Work Programme – January 2024

July 2024

Election Chairman/Vice-Chairman	Annual Requirement	PCP
Neighbourhood Policing Review	Requested by the Panel/Offered by the Commissioner	PCC

Standard item at each meeting

Questions to the Commissioner

Items to note at each meeting

Commissioner’s decisions

Performance and Delivery Board minutes (if available)

This page is intentionally left blank