

Mr Mike Hill, OBE
Chair, Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel
Kent County Council
Sessions House
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Date: 12 March 2018
Our Ref: OPCC/MS/IOR/909/18

Dear Mike

Further to the 8 February meeting, thank you for the Panel's report on my draft refreshed 'Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan' and proposed precept for 2018/19.

I am pleased the Panel were supportive of my refreshed Plan and in particular that the Members:

- acknowledged the wide ranging consultation conducted by my office;
- noted the results were similar to last year, and therefore the priorities remain largely unchanged;
- endorsed the inclusion of 'tackling inequality' within the leadership section;
- recognised my work to develop custody diversion schemes; and
- offered their support in engaging with diverse communities in the future.

I have also carefully considered the three recommendations made by the Panel, and can update as follows:

- 1) The wording at section 5 relating to 'denying criminals use of the road network' has been amended to make the meaning clearer.
- 2) I have not amended my priorities to explicitly reference child sexual exploitation as the 'Tackle abuse, exploitation and violence' priority reflects my expectation that Kent Police addresses all such offences. Child sexual exploitation is explicitly referenced in the text, but further examples include human trafficking and the exploitation of other vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and disabled.
- 3) The 'Plan on a Page' cannot encapsulate all elements of the document and I have taken the decision not to include specific reference to supporting witnesses. In no way does this undermine the importance of ensuring witnesses receive the appropriate help and support which is clearly articulated within the text.

I am also pleased to note the Panel's unanimous approval of my proposed 7.6% increase in the police precept (equivalent to £12 per year for an average Band D household). Whilst a difficult decision and one I do not take lightly, aligned with a savings requirement of over £9m and a reduction in my own office budget of £200k, it will enable the Chief Constable to embark on the biggest recruitment drive in a generation. As well as up to 200 new police officers, with a substantial number supporting local policing, it will also enable Kent Police to recruit additional police staff with a large proportion going into the Force Control Room, and retain 300 PCSOs. With the policing challenges we face as a county, I believe this recruitment drive is really positive and I'm grateful for the Panel's support.

Yours
Matthew

Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner