



Cllr. Gill Mercer
Chairman of Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel
Via email

28th June 2019

Dear Gill,

Following the publication of your Review of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Police and Crime Plan on the 7th February, I am pleased to respond to the Panel in accordance with Section 5 (6) (d) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

I was very pleased that members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel supported the overall direction and aims as set out in my updated Police & Crime Plan. As you will know, a great deal has been achieved since my first Police and Crime Plan was published and this is reflected throughout the updated version. I believe it was important to set out what we have already delivered and how we will continue to build on these achieve my goal of a safer Northamptonshire.

Delivering an ambitious programme is a complex and far reaching undertaking. This is why the Police and Crime Plan is supported by a detailed Medium Term Financial plan, which was considered by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at the meeting held on the 5th of February 2019. This plan highlighted that whilst there was a balanced budget for 2019-20, without savings or increased funding moving forwards, there would be shortfalls in future years.

In my 2019-20 budget, I will be increasing investment in frontline services, in line with the views of the public and the panel. Although operational policing matters remain the responsibility of the Chief Constable, it is incumbent on both of us to establish a good working relationship. This relationship is key to help me to deliver my statutory responsibilities to maintain an efficient and effective police force and deliver the strategic direction and objectives of the force through the Police and Crime Plan.

The budget for 2019-20 is the second one in which I have been able to increase the police budget. This year it will be £130 million, a rise of £11.6 million from last year and almost £20million more than 2017 and my Police and Crime plan sets out how I want the Force to utilise this extra funding and deliver improvements and efficiencies to local policing.

The extra £3m I have invested into frontline policing will deliver additional capacity in local policing teams and will mean that there will be nearly 100 more police officers on the streets of Northamptonshire in two years' time. This is significant growth in police numbers that will increase the Force establishment from 1227 police officers to 1310 – the greatest number of officers the Force has had since 2010.

We will also improve policing in ways that people said are important to them – neighbourhood policing; rural crime; burglary; anti-social behaviour and low-level drug dealing. From now on, everyone whose home is burgled will be visited by Police, which will improve the service that people receive and support the investigation of crime.

The extra resources will also enable the Chief Constable to strengthen neighbourhood policing with its focus on local problem solving, to engage with local communities and partner agencies and provide visibility and reassurance. PCSO and police staff numbers have also been protected.

I will continue to work closely with the Chief Constable to identify and realise any savings, focusing on improved sharing of arrangements with the Fire Service to reduce costs and not only meet savings but also to identify opportunities for future investment in the frontline. This commitment is balanced with ensuring appropriate investment and maintaining a prudent, but not excessive level of reserves.

The medium term Financial Plan is reviewed regularly and updated for pay, price and inflation changes in addition to revising the assumptions for grant and precept. The Medium Term Financial plan and the Reserves Strategy are formally reviewed in line with the budget and precept and is included in the annual budget and precept report and is available on the website at: <https://www.northantspcc.org.uk/governance/what-we-spend/>

Following comments made by the panel, I have revised the Plan on a Page section to reflect the importance of partnership working to the effective delivery of many of my key priorities. A good example of this has been the creation of the County Community Safety Board. This new strategic body comprises of representatives from each of the local authorities and colleagues from the Clinical Care Group, Probation, Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and from the OPFCC and is in the process of developing a new Domestic and Sexual Abuse strategy for the county.

As the work of the County Community Safety Board evolves and develops, it will help to tackle systemic weaknesses within the local criminal justice system to help address the need for service users to provide information more than once.

This work is also underpinned by Voice who provide a confidential support service for anyone affected by crime. Thanks the work of Voice, increased feelings of safety and support have been reported and the changes we have made are helping to ensure that victims are at the work of everything we do. As we look forward, I am hopeful that the OFPCC will be able to use its position and influence to ensure that organisations across the local criminal justice system identify and learn from best practice to support and assist victims of crime.

As you will recall, under the old plan I provided a RAG'd spreadsheet of each area of work of the previous Police and Crime Plan which set out progress against actions. I recognise that reporting such a large amount of complicated performance data in such a manner was not entirely fit for purpose.

At the last Panel meeting, I did update the Panel briefing about how we were looking at improving this important performance update to help both the Panel and the public better understand the work we are doing and to judge our performance. It is my intention to bring it to the next Panel Meeting and in addition to this, I will publically publish performance information on a quarterly basis to ensure that there is transparency to the public in how well the Northamptonshire Police are performing.

The revised Police and Crime Plan represents an important new direction for policing in Northamptonshire. We have learnt from the past and are investing in the future. I look forward to working with you and the Panel as we deliver a Safer Northamptonshire for communities across our county, both urban and rural.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Mold". The signature is stylized with a large initial 'S' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner