



# ***NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL AGENDA***

**Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 2.00 pm**

**Meeting to be held virtually**

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From the Clerk, Sheena Ramsey

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Item Business

**1. Apologies**

**2. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)

The Panel is asked to approve the Minutes of the last meeting held on 8 December 2020 (attached).

**3. Feedback from National and Regional Events**

Members are asked to give feedback on issues relevant to the Panel.

**4. Complaints Protocol** (Pages 9 - 16)

Report of the Clerk (attached).

**5. Draft Northumbria Police and Crime Plan 2021-25** (Pages 17 - 48)

Report of the PCC (attached).

**6. Proposed Precept for 2021-22** (Pages 49 - 72)

Report of the Clerk (attached).

**7. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 2.00pm

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## **NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**Virtual Meeting held on 8 December 2020**

### **PRESENT:**

<b>Gateshead Council</b>	Councillor A Douglas (Chair)
<b>Newcastle City Council</b>	Councillors C Penny-Evans and K Webster
<b>North Tyneside Council</b>	Councillors J Mole and T Mulvenna
<b>Northumberland County Council</b>	Councillor M Swinburn
<b>South Tyneside Council</b>	Councillor J Welsh
<b>Sunderland City Council</b>	Councillors D MacKnight and P Stewart
<b>Independent Co-opted Member</b>	Mrs J Guy

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

#### **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria**

K McGuinness	- Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria
R Durham	- Chief of Staff and Monitoring officer
M Tait	- Chief Finance Officer
A Pearson	- Director of Planning and Delivery
P Godden	- Head of Corporate Development, Northumbria Police
D Garrigan	- Business Intelligence Manager, Northumbria Police

#### **Gateshead Council**

G Morton	- Representing the Clerk to the Panel
B Wilson	- Democratic Services

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors S Hawkins (Gateshead Council) and J Riddle (Northumberland County Council)

### **28. MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### **29. FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS**

There were no national and regional events reported.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

**30. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020**

In accordance with the agreed procedure, an update report about the complaints and purported complaints against the PCC and every conduct matter recorded by the Monitoring Office in October - November 2020 was submitted.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**31. DELIVERY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Panel considered the key performance areas and crime tables at force and local authority level relating to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan for July to September 2020.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

The number of 999 and 101 calls had reduced by 11%. It was thought that these may have increased because of the reporting of Covid regulation breaches. The PCC replied that more contact with the force was being made online which had impacted on the number of calls received.

There was concern about the increase in hate crime. The PCC replied that the force was working with the community to build better relations and increase reporting and awareness of why hate crime was not acceptable.

Although the number of 101 calls answered had increased from 84% to 92%, there had been less calls, it had taken longer to answer them and 8% had not been answered. Also, some information was only given in percentages and numbers should also be provided. The provision of additional data would be looked at and call handling performance could be a themed topic for a future meeting. The call centre staff may also have been reduced because of absences due to Covid.

Whilst 89% of calls were correctly assessed for threat, harm, risk and vulnerability, 11% were not. Although some areas had improved, the PCC was asked if she was satisfied that the force was focused on the HMIC/PEEL observations on protecting vulnerable people. The PCC had asked the force to focus on the observations and she was pleased with how it had dealt with them, identified issues and provided training. The force would be revisited as part of the inspection process.

It was asked how the number of sexual offences and domestic abuse during lockdowns compared with other forces. The PCC reported that the numbers were similar to other forces. A lot of pro-active work had been done during the lockdowns to identify those at risk with campaigns and visits to schools, etc.

It was asked if the Most Similar Group comparisons shown for the Area Command figures could also be included in the forcewide figures. This information was to be provided.

The increase in anti-social behaviour was disappointing but because of Covid this was not a true picture. The force had done a lot of excellent work and the public satisfaction figures remain high. The police had worked closely with the Universities to address issues with students and Covid regulation breaches. The PCC was to pass on the comments to the force. It had been a very difficult for the police to deal with the Covid situation and she had been pleased with the force's approach.

Victim satisfaction levels in regard to police follow up action in some areas required improvement. The PCC replied that she had identified this issue and was working with the force to address it.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the information be noted.
  - (ii) That call handling performance be considered as a themed topic for a future meeting.
  - (iii) That Members raise any detailed questions they have on the performance report before the meeting so that it can be considered by the PCC and a response provided.

## **32. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER REPORT**

The PCC presented her report which covered the following:-

Covid update  
Fighting crime  
Recruitment  
Preventing crime  
White ribbon day  
Operation Payback  
'Drive' launches to tackle abusive behaviour

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was asked if there had been an increase in the number police recruits from the BME community. The PCC replied that there was still a lot of work to be done to improve the numbers recruited but she was pleased with the progress that had been made.

A Member asked about the required criteria to join the force and this was to be sent to her.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

## **33. STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20 AND THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS CONCLUSIONS**

The 2019/20 Statement of Accounts were published by the PCC and the Chief Constable on 27 and 30 November 2020 respectively along with the External Auditor's Completion Report and opinion. They were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 and in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

The 2019/20 Group revenue budget was £280.082m. Net revenue expenditure of £277.379 million for the year reflects an underspend of £2.703 million.

The 2019/20 approved budget included a planned transfer to earmarked reserves of £4m to manage specific risks identified over the medium term. Of this amount, £2.6m will meet the future shortfall for the national Emergency Services Network implementation in Northumbria and £1.4m will provide the balance of £3.4m to manage the increased cost of police officer pensions for one year only if the full cost was not met by Government on a permanent basis.

The outturn position allowed the planned transfer to reserves of £4m to take place. In addition, it included a further transfer to reserves of £2.703m. £0.305m was transferred to the OPCC Innovation Reserve to fund emergency response Covid-19 grants in May 2020. £1m was held in the general reserve to meet the unfunded costs of Covid-19 for Northumbria in 2020/21. The balance was pre-planned to be held in the general reserve to support the 2020/21 budget by front-loading police officer recruitment above the target for police uplift in Northumbria.

The final 2020/21 outturn position was consistent with the plans set out in the PCC's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24.

Regulations require public bodies to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that provides an assessment of the adequacy of the governance arrangements and their effectiveness. This separate statement accompanies the Statement of Account for each body. The PCC and Chief Constable Governance Monitoring Group have undertaken a review of the governance and internal control arrangements and have prepared an AGS for each body. These were reported to, and scrutinised by, the Joint Independent Audit Committee on 16 November 2020 and subsequently authorised by the PCC and Chief Constable. The process did not identify any weaknesses in the governance arrangements.

The audit of the Statements of Accounts and Annual Governance Statements for both the PCC and Chief Constable was now complete.

However, there was an 'Emphasis of Matter' item included in the audit opinion from the external auditor's work to gain assurance in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This related to a material valuation uncertainty clause included by the Pension Fund's Property Investment Manager in some of their March 2020 property valuation reports, due to the possible impact of Covid-19. The outbreak of Covid-19 has had a significant impact on global financial markets. The valuation uncertainty clause means that a higher degree of caution should be attached to valuations of unquoted property assets than would normally be the case. Approximately 9% of LGPS pension fund assets are held in property. The audit opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

The external auditor Mazars has issued an unqualified opinion, without modification, on both the Statements of Accounts. The unqualified Value for Money conclusion also confirms that both organisations have made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources.

The Panel raised the following issue:-

The PCC commented that around £140m had been lost since 2010. A Member considered that the budget reports should be from 2012 when the PCC took

responsibility and not from 2010. The PCC stated that she would continue to use 2010 because that was when austerity and the major impact on the police started. The Member objected to this and reiterated that it should be from 2012 when the PCC was elected. The Chair stated that it was the PCC's prerogative to use the financial records she wanted to in her reports and this was supported by two other Members of the Panel.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the preparation of the 2019/20 Statements of Accounts and Annual Governance Statements be noted.
  - (ii) That the 2019/20 financial outturn position be noted.
  - (iii) That the arrangements for the scrutiny and certification, leading to the publication of the final Statements by 30 November 2020 be noted.
  - (iv) That the issuing of an unqualified opinion, without modification on the Statements of Accounts and Value for Money assessments for both the PCC and Chief Constable be noted.

Mrs Guy declared a personal and non pecuniary interest in the above matter because she is a Member of the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

#### **34. THEMED REPORT – FUNDING THE POLICE SERVICE**

The Chief Finance Officer gave a presentation which included: where police funding came from, the 2020/21 Police Settlement, core grant funding, force level allocations, police allocation formula, force level allocations, how Northumbria Police 2020/21 funding is spent, reserves treatment, capital budgets, investment, budget setting timeline and Spending Review 2020.

The Panel raised the following issue:-

It was considered wrong that the police service funding was only provided on a year to year basis. The provision of funding on a 3, 5 or 10 year basis was required to enable longer term planning and funding arrangements for the police to tackle and prevent crime instead of time limited funding because of how important and significant policing was.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the information be noted.
  - (ii) That the Panel's views on the current funding arrangements be outlined to the PCC.

#### **35. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 2.00pm

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## **NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

### **PANEL MEETING ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021**

#### **SUBJECT – COMPLAINTS PROTOCOL**

#### **REPORT OF THE CLERK TO THE PANEL**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider the revisions to the complaints handling procedures.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Panel is responsible for handling non-criminal complaints against the Commissioner and criminal complaints and conduct matters that are referred back to the Panel by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The only complaints that fall within the remit of the Panel are those which involve the personal conduct of the Commissioner.
- 2.2 Arrangements for the Panel's role in complaints handling are set out in the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations") and accompanying Home Office Guidance.
- 2.3 With the exception of the informal resolution of complaints, the Panel may delegate any of its powers or duties under the Regulations to the Chief of Staff (Chief Executive) of the PCC.
- 2.4 The Panel has had in place a longstanding delegation to the Chief of Staff recognising that for the Panel to discharge all these functions itself would take up a great deal of members' time and would stretch the limited resources directly available to the Panel.
- 2.5 The Panel continue to have overall responsibility for complaints against the Commissioner and the Chief of Staff is required to report to the Panel on the use of the delegation.
- 2.6 The Panel's decision to delegate responsibility to the Chief of Staff is intended to ensure that arrangements are in place to undertake an initial assessment on the appropriate course of action so that issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 2.7 Whilst the process to date has generally worked well and is regularly monitored by the Panel, it is recognised that some aspects of the process particularly in respect

of the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour require additional measures to ensure the Panel and by extension the Chief of Staff can effectively discharge the Panel duties. Accordingly, it is also recommended that the Panel agree a protocol on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Panel is asked to

- (i) Agree the unreasonable complainant behaviour protocol at appendix 1.
- (ii) Agree that the delegation to the Chief of Staff will include the application of the unreasonable complainant behaviour protocol.

(iii) **Appendix 1**

**Protocol on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Northumbria Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) is committed to providing an effective service to members of the public in respect of complaints made against the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (“the Commissioner”).
- 1.2 The only complaints that fall within the remit of the Panel are those which involve the personal conduct of the Commissioner.
- 1.3 Complaints about the administration of the Panel are the responsibility of the lead authority and will be dealt with under the lead authority’s complaints processes.
- 1.4 Complaints about individual panel members are the responsibility of their appointing authority. Complaints against independent panel members will be dealt with by the lead authority.
- 1.5 The Panel is committed to dealing with all complaints fully and in a timely manner.
- 1.6 The Panel has delegated part of its role in handling complaints to the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, including assessments relating to the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour. Delegation of this power to the Chief of Staff does not preclude a meeting of the Panel being called to determine a decision in respect of unreasonable complainant behaviour should it be deemed necessary by the Chief of Staff or in accordance with the procedures for calling a meeting of the Panel.
- 1.7 The Panel recognise that there may be times when a member of the public may not be satisfied with the outcomes reached by the Chief of Staff or the Panel itself. Should any individual not be satisfied with the Panel’s conduct in relation to a complaint, an option open to them is to refer a case to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 1.8 Most complaints reviewed by the Chief of Staff or by the Panel are subject to a straightforward process, but in a small number of cases complainants may pursue their complaints in a way that disrupts the way the complaint is reviewed or disproportionately takes officers supporting the Panel away from their other duties. Similarly, complainants who have had their complaints resolved by the Chief of Staff or by the Panel may continue to pursue their complaint, or request outcomes to their case that are outside the remit of the Panel or the Panel is unwilling to grant.
- 1.9 The aim of this protocol is to inform complainants about what the Panel considers to be unreasonable complainant behaviour, the options available to the Panel and the possible consequences to the individual.
- 1.10 The Chief of Staff or the Panel will only invoke this protocol after very careful consideration, the circumstances for which must be exceptional. Individuals may have justified complaints but may be pursuing them in an inappropriate way, or they may be intent on pursuing complaints which appear to have no substance, or which have already been investigated and determined. Such complaints may rarely occur, but if a complainant’s behaviour adversely affects the Panel’s ability to do its work, or the work of any of its supporting officers, the Chief of Staff or the Panel may decide to restrict the contact that person has with the Chief of Staff or the Panel.

- 1.11 If the Chief of Staff or the Panel decide to invoke this guidance, the Chief of Staff or the Clerk to the Panel (or an officer acting on their behalf) will write to the individual concerned to tell them why it is considered that his or her behaviour falls into that category, what action will be taken and the duration of that action.

## **2 Definition of unreasonable complainant behaviour**

- 2.1 The Panel has adopted an equivalent definition to that used by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Panel consider that unreasonable complainant behaviour occurs where:

2.1.1 there is repeated and obsessive pursuit of a complaint which appears to have no substance or which has been investigated and determined.

2.1.2 the contact may be amicable but still place very heavy demands on officer or Member time or may be very emotionally charged and distressing for all involved.

2.1.3 there is an escalation of behaviour which is unacceptable, for example abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour.

- 2.2 Examples include the way or frequency that complainants raise their complaint with the Panel, or how complainants respond when they are told of a decision of their complaint.

## **3 Considerations to be made before taking action to restrict access**

- 3.1 All complainants have the right to have their complaint considered at an initial stage by the Chief of Staff or by the Panel. The Panel will ensure that the complaints procedure is exhausted or ended at a point that is appropriate to each case and the complainant notified as such.

- 3.2 The Panel will consider and ensure they have an awareness of an individual's circumstances, how and why they feel as they do and what it is that would resolve the matter for them. The Panel will ensure that complainants have had a reasonable opportunity to express their views and opinions, that these have been listened to and that appropriate consideration and effort to resolving and explaining the position and the actions of the Panel have taken place.

- 3.3 Before deciding whether the protocol should be applied, the Chief of Staff or the Panel will consider and satisfy themselves that:

3.3.1 The complaint is being or has been adequately reviewed and any decision reached has been found to be appropriate based on the information presented to the Chief of Staff or the Panel at the time.

3.3.2 Communications with the complainant have been adequate and within the Panel's policies.

3.3.3 Any decision reached has been reviewed and is found to be appropriate.

3.3.4 The complainant is not providing any significant new information that might affect the Panel's view on the complaint.

3.3.5 There is not another, more specific path for the complainant to follow

- 3.4 Some individuals that may be considered to be unreasonable complainants may be behaving this way because of a specific circumstance or difficulty. Where this is indicated the Panel will take this into account in determining the reasonableness of the complaint made.

3.5 Any restrictive actions that may be taken will be tailored based on the circumstances and behaviour of the individual and their complaint.

#### 4 **Possible Actions**

4.1 Actions that could be taken to restrict access and contact:

4.1.1 Limiting the complainant to one medium of contact (telephone, letter, email etc.) and/or requiring the complainant to communicate only with one named member of staff. If this is by email, it will be automatically forwarded to the named single point of contact;

4.1.2 Placing restrictions on the amount of time the Panel and their officers will spend reviewing their complaints;

4.1.3 Letting the complainant know that the Panel will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint;

4.1.4 Refusing to register and process further complaints about the same matter.

4.1.5 In some circumstances, the Panel may decide that it is appropriate to severely reduce or completely stop responding to a particular complainant.

#### 5 **Process for the application of the Guidance Note on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour**

##### 5.1 **First Stage – Notification/Warning**

5.3 The Chief of Staff will review, in consultation with the Chair and the Clerk, why the complainant's behaviour is causing a concern, giving clear documented evidence to support this and outlining how the behaviour needs to change.

5.4 The Chief of Staff or the Clerk (or an officer on their behalf) will write to the complainant explaining to them the actions that may be taken if their behaviour does not change, along with a copy of this guidance.

##### **Second Stage – Application**

5.5 Should the complainant continue to demonstrate unreasonable behaviour, following receipt of the notification, the Panel, or the Chief of Staff, in consultation with the Chair and the Clerk, will determine whether to apply the unreasonable complainant protocol and what actions will be taken.

5.6 If the Panel or the Chief of Staff determines to apply the protocol on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour, the Chief of Staff or the Clerk (or an officer on their behalf) will write to the complainant explaining to them the actions to be taken. All letters should include:

5.6.1 Why this decision has been reached;

5.6.2 What specific action is being taken;

5.6.3 The duration of that action;

5.6.4 The date the decision will be reviewed;

5.6.5 The circumstances that the decision could be reviewed in advance of that date (for example new relevant information);

5.6.6 The right of the complainant to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about the fact that they have been treated as an unreasonable complainant.

- 5.7 Any decision taken to apply this protocol if not made by the Panel itself will be formally reported to the Panel at the first available Panel Meeting following the date of the determination.
- 5.8 A log of the decision made and records of contacts with the complainant will be kept. This information will be treated as confidential and only shared with those who may be affected by the decision in order for them to carry out their role.
- 5.9 Key information to be recorded includes:
- 5.9.1 when a decision is taken not to apply the guidance, or
  - 5.9.2 when a decision is taken to make an exception to the guidance once it has been applied, or
  - 5.9.3 when a decision is taken not to put a further complaint from the complainant through the complaints procedure for any reason, and
  - 5.9.4 when a decision is taken not to respond to further correspondence, make sure any further letters, faxes or emails from the complainant are checked to pick up any significant new information.
- 5.10 Any further contact from the complainant, for example on a new issue, will be treated on its merits.

## **6 Who will be informed about restrictions**

- 6.1 All officers and Members who have experienced unreasonable complainant behaviour relating to the specific complaint will be informed of the decision to impose contact restrictions.

## **7 Reviewing the decision to restrict access**

- 7.1 When imposing a restriction on access, a specified review date should be given. Once that date has been reached any restrictions should be lifted and relationships returned to normal unless there are continuing grounds to extend the restriction.
- 7.2 The Panel or the Chief of Staff, will review the restriction at the agreed time. If the decision is made to lift the restriction, the complainant will be informed of that decision. If restriction is to continue, the reasons for the continuation of the restriction will be given to the complainant along with the next review date.

## **8 Referring complainants to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

- 8.1 A complainant who is not satisfied with the determinations of the Panel or the Chief of Staff may make a complaint to the Ombudsman, who will consider the case. Should they determine that the referral of a complaint warrants further consideration, they will review the process followed by the Panel or its Chief of Staff in reaching any such conclusion.
- 8.2 A complainant who has been designated as unreasonable may make a complaint to the Ombudsman about the way in which they have been treated. The Ombudsman is unlikely to be critical where the Panel or the Chief of Staff has acted proportionately and in accordance with its adopted protocols.

## **9 Harassment and bullying**

- 9.1 Unreasonable complainant behaviour may amount to bullying or harassment. All Panel members and officers have the right to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. Behaviour by third parties that bullies, harasses or intimidates

individuals is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Panel will take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour.

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**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**2 FEBRUARY 2021**

**REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORTHUMBRIA**

**DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2021-2025**

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) draft Police and Crime Plan 2021- 2025.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The PCC turns the public's policing priorities in to a strategic plan for the police force by producing a Police and Crime Plan. This statutory duty must be carried out within the financial year in which each ordinary election is held. Due to the postponed of the ordinary election in 2020 the PCC has determined to consult and publish this police and crime plan at this point to prevent further delay to the publication of a new plan that reflects current community priorities and her commitments to local people. The Police and Crime Plan for Northumbria includes statutory requirements as outlined in the Police and Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, chapter 3, section 7.
- 2.2 The role of the Police and Crime Panel is to review the draft Police and Crime Plan and make a report and recommendations for regard by the PCC.
- 2.3 The Police and Crime Plan must include:
- The PCC's police and crime objectives
  - The policing the Chief Constable is to provide
  - The financial and other resources the PCC will make available to the Chief Constable to provide policing
  - How the Chief Constable will report to the PCC about policing
  - How the Chief Constable's performance will be measured
  - Information about any crime and disorder reduction grants to be made by the PCC and any conditions made.

## **3. Shaping the Plan**

- 3.1 The draft Police and Crime Plan has been shaped by a wide range of public consultation alongside consultation with key partners and organisations.

### 3.2 **Public consultation**

Following my election in a 2019 by-election, work began on setting out a consultation exercise to ensure the public's views were built in to a new Police and Crime Plan.

I committed to ensuring the plan reflected the priorities of our communities, and delivered on their needs – placing them firmly at the heart of the plan and the work we do. To enable the plan to be as representative as possible, and to understand the policing and crime needs of our communities, we engaged with residents via a variety of methods to allow for maximum inclusion. Despite the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing restrictions and lockdown rules, the OPCC was still able to collect the views of nearly 6,000 individuals and organisations. Given the inability to deliver any face to face engagement, our consultation was done entirely by virtual means, including; survey, telephone consultation, social media campaign, focus groups, online Q&A panels and partner meetings.

In doing the consultation completely digitally, whilst missing out on that face to face engagement element, the OPCC was able to speak to more groups and engage with a wider audience involving fewer logistical challenges. Ultimately, allowing more people to have their voices heard and reflected in the proposed Police and Crime Plan.

Consultation on the plan was supported by extensive news media press releases. The plan was also advertised on online social media and news media channels from local news organisations, with 600,000 page impressions. My team also worked with Newcastle University's Open Labs team to carry out qualitative research via online engagement. These findings have fed in to the drafting process of this plan, but we also intend to bring more detailed research from Open Labs on public perceptions of crime and their needs of the police to a future meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

In previous consultations public events would be held to ensure those without access to the internet have a chance to have their views heard. These public facing events capture in a very limited way the views of those who might not normally come in to contact with the OPCC. In order to replicate this involvement during the pandemic, the OPCC wrote to 100,000 households, using a delivery list based on all six local authority areas, explaining how to take part in the survey, including by phone.

By capturing the data in the methods we did, we have now been able to build localised data profiles that will allow us to ensure a more targeted and evidence based approach to our work in the year ahead, and focus our work in the areas with most need. Alongside our partners and local authorities, we now have a better understanding of the challenges faced by communities, and will in turn be able to provide more localised and impactful solutions.

As well as being able to engage a larger number of individuals through a digital consultation, we were also able to reach a younger demographic from those previously engaged in these consultations. Through our youth specific

survey we will be able to speak to over 1600 young people and understand their local problems and preferred solutions. The Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit, along with their commissioned partners, will now use this data and insight to help deliver impactful interventions to the most in need communities.

Following our first round of consultation, we sought the views of communities and partners once again on the contents of the newly drafted Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025. The OPCC engaged with local authorities, communities, educational establishments and key delivery partners that will ultimately help deliver the plan and bring the commitments to life.

We are now confident that the plan has been endorsed by those it will impact, and those that will support the delivery of it – enabling us to fight crime, prevent crime, and improve lives to the best of our ability across Northumbria.

### **3.3 Consultation meetings with key strategic partners**

Consultation with partner organisations was carried out in two forms. Organisations and individuals were asked to complete the initial public survey, while at the same time key organisations were asked to provide written feedback detailing their more detailed thoughts on policing. The OPCC received 135 written responses. These were used to help steer the draft of the Police and Crime Plan. I also held online discussions with some key organisations regarding the plan. The draft of the statutory plan was then emailed to all key organisations as part of the second round consultation. Responses to this were all supportive of the draft and its priorities, with some raising issues to be added at this stage.

### **3.4 Community Safety Partnerships strategic assessments**

All Community Safety Partnerships have shared with us their latest thinking about community safety and policing priorities and we have ensured that the strong messages around domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and working in partnership have been incorporated into the draft plan.

### **3.5 PCC Advisory Groups and Victims Panel**

The PCC has well-established advisory groups that are drawn from the communities which are protected by the Equality Act 2010 and that help shape the PCCs thinking about a wide range of policing and community safety issues. All of the groups including the Victims Panel have been consulted about the priorities they feel are important for the next few years and all groups were clear that more of a focus should be given to building an effective and efficient criminal justice system that not only supports victims to recover from their experience of crime but also rehabilitates offenders to stop crime from happening in the first place.

### **3.6 Police and Crime Panel consultation**

In December 2020 the PCC held outline discussions with the Police and Crime Panel were consulted about their priorities for the Police and Crime Plan. Among the feedback at this stage was:

- The local authority community safety partnership should be included to help get a strategic overview. Domestic abuse and the perpetrators' programme were a priority to stop this escalating.
- Anti-social behaviour and young people required resources to tackle it. The PCC referred to the Violence Reduction Unit and its work with young people.
- It was suggested that the work done by the police to identify and address anti-social behaviour should be highlighted to make the communities more aware of what was being done. Local Councils and Councillors could help with this in a pro-active approach.

These considerations were taken into account in the development of the draft plan which was then sent to panel members in January 2021.

### **3.7 Northumbria Police performance**

Northumbria Police have a clear framework in which they report performance of their work to deliver the Police and Crime Plan to myself. Following the publication of the plan I will work with the Chief Constable to ensure that the performance management framework and reporting to myself enables me to scrutinise delivery of the plan and ensure that I meet my commitment in the plan to share the information with the public on a regular basis.

### **3.8 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection findings**

HMICFRS continue to monitor and report on forces policing and efficiency activity. Recommendations and areas identified for service improvement both nationally and local sit alongside recognition of good practice. The information and findings within these reports can shape and improve service delivery. Action following local inspection or contained within a thematic report will be responded to, as appropriate, by Northumbria Police to support the effective delivery of my Police and Crime Plan.

### **3.9 Northumbria Police Strategic Assessment/Force Management Statement**

The Annual Strategic Assessment gives an overview of the current and long-term issues affecting or likely to affect Northumbria Police and is used to inform future policing strategy around prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance priorities. The Force Management Statement is self-assessment that chief constables prepare annually to identify and explain the demand the force expects to face in the next four years and the impact this will have on resources, both financial and in respect of the workforce.

### **3.10 National Policing Vision and Strategic Policing Requirement**

In November 2016 Police and Crime Commissioners and Police Chief Constables launched a vision for policing in 2025 that makes far better use of digital technology, is integrated with other agencies to focus on preventing crime and delivering effective services to provide best value for money for the public. The Police and Crime Commissioner is focused on ensuring that transformational change in policing is delivered, with local policing and accountability to the public very much at the core.

The Strategic Policing Requirement sets out the threats that require a national policing capability to ensure they are tackled effectively. This requirement is placed on all police forces across the country and we must ensure that here in Northumbria we give the right level of acknowledgement to these demands and prepare accordingly to ensure the safety of the public. Key threats in the most recent SPR include terrorism, serious and organised crime, cyber crime, and child sexual abuse as well as a range of other issues of national importance. Many of these challenges can only be tackled by collaborating with other forces and for this reason as well as others collaboration runs as a theme throughout the draft plan.

### **3.11 Victim services funding priorities**

We engage with partners and our commissioned service providers to understand the victim services landscape in Northumbria and ensure that the services provided to victims reflect their needs and are a high quality. This understanding and insight into the needs of the most vulnerable victims of crime in Northumbria has been used to shape priorities and aims in relation to victims and most specifically the need for Northumbria Police to continue to provide timely and comprehensive information to victims about their individual cases and to enhance safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people.

## **4. Proposed Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

4.1 The initial first phase consultation, supported by the findings of the second round, showed clear areas of concern from the public. There was widespread support for a renewed emphasis on targeting criminals and those who commit anti-social behaviour. The public also gave strong backing to a preventative approach to crime fighting, endorsing the PCC's view that diversionary activity and targeted interventions for young people are key to keeping out of crime. The survey showed that people want to see:

1. Fighting crime:
  - a. ASB & alcohol related crime tackled
  - b. Drug related and Serious and organised crime tackled
2. Preventing crime:
  - a. Higher police visibility and better community engagement
  - b. Multi agency public health approach to preventing crime
3. Improving lives:
  - a. Communities support and lives improved to prevent crime
  - b. Hate crime tackled

Alongside this, there was wide-spread support from partner organisations for a continued focus on tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims of sexual violence.

From this consultation clear priorities emerged that would underpin the structure and aim of the Police and Crime Plan. These are:

Fighting Crime: Ensuring the police are backed to deal with existing and emerging crime trends in the Northumbria, including efforts to deal with ASB and reduce crime.

Preventing Crime: A commitment to preventing crime before it is able to manifest itself in our communities, including a promise to preserve visible neighbourhood policing and change lives with a successful Violence Reduction Unit.

Improving Lives: Ensuring victims of crime and local communities get the best possible support and they are put at the heart of the criminal justice system, including improved support for victims of crime and continued backing for those working to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence.

## **5. Recommendation**

5.1 Panel members are asked to:

a) review the draft plan and make a report or recommendations on the draft plan to the PCC; and

b) give support to the PCC and Chief Constable to deliver the plan over the next four years.



2021 – 2025  
NORTHUMBRIA  
POLICE & CRIME  
PLAN

FIGHTING CRIME

PREVENTING CRIME

IMPROVING CRIME



## **Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025**

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## 1. Intro

I have always been passionate about the North East and I am honoured to have been elected to represent the views of local people so we can work together to make real change happen. As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I am here to give you a voice on police and crime matters. My job is to oversee our police force because that is what it is – our force.

To everyone who took part in the huge consultation we held to help shape this plan, I am very grateful, and in return you have my word; I will make sure Northumbria Police delivers on its commitments to keeping you, your family, and your community safe. I want to make sure that not only are officers out there fighting crime and responding to emergencies but that we are planning for future generations and preventing crime from happening too.

So what we have created here is a four year plan which, crucially, will also see us through a critical time when we are learning to live with and recover from a pandemic which has placed immense strain on us all. Northumbria Police has certainly had to adapt to a great deal over the last 12 months and I am very thankful for the hard work and dedication we have seen right across our force during such challenging times.

Here in the North East, we have a force that listens well, responds to views and ideas and puts them into action. A force that isn't afraid to be bold and do things differently and a force that is committed to improving its performance and the service it provides. We all want the North East to be the very best it can be and feeling safe, secure and supported by our police is at the heart of this.

We are already delivering real change and this plan is our opportunity to build on that. Before Covid took hold and we went into lockdown, our region saw knife crime fall 17 per cent compared to the previous year - a really promising drop. And from April 2020 to March 2021 the force will have taken on 459 new officers. Not only is this well above the targets set by Government but it's record level recruitment for the force as we work to reverse the numbers cut by austerity. I know that building our force back up is what local people want to see – a strong police force, fit for the future and that's what this plan sets out to achieve.

This is your plan so let's keep talking. You can follow the work of my office on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram where I will regularly keep you informed of everything that's happening. You can sign up to my newsletter on my website too.

I look forward to working with you and Northumbria Police on bringing this plan to life.

**Kim McGuinness**

## 2. About this plan

This Police and Crime Plan sets out how your priorities will be acted on by Northumbria Police, covering the years 2021 to 2025.

The document goes over the key areas of focus the force will be expected to deliver on, alongside other national policing requirements. It was put together after a region-wide consultation process in which thousands of residents and organisations had their say on what those priorities should be.

This plan will form the basis of how I hold the force to account for you the public, and as part of that process I will report regularly on the force's performance towards your priorities.

The plan also commits our region to working together, and I will continue to work with community safety organisations, victim support, criminal justice services and others to ensure our streets are safer.

Alongside this, the Strategic Policing Requirement identifies threats to national security and risks that need to be countered by countrywide policing capabilities. I am committed to supporting Northumbria Police in playing a full and active role in tackling national threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, threats to public order, national cyber or digital crime and child sexual abuse. Forces need to work collaboratively on these issues and the Chief Constable and I will ensure that Northumbria Police can play its part.

Of course, policing is a constantly evolving process, and our lives and community needs also change. That's why I am committing to an annual refresh of this plan, making sure it is still relevant to the needs of our region.

If you have any thoughts on policing and crime prevention, you can contact me [enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)

### 3. Policing at a glance

Our wonderful region stretches for more than 2,000 square miles, from the Scottish Border to County Durham; from the Pennines to the North East coast. It is made up of North and South Tyneside, Sunderland, Newcastle, Gateshead and Northumberland. Our region has it all – rural, urban and coastal communities – and they all need their own special focuses.

There are 632,061 households in Northumbria, 32% of the population is aged 20-44 years old whilst 18% is aged over 65. 29% of families (181,208) have someone with a long term health problem or disability. Almost 95% of the population is white, while 5% (77,106) are from minority ethnic groups, mainly Asian or Asian British (3%). 69% of Northumbria people identified with a recognised religion. 66% said that they were Christian, 2% are Muslim and many other religions were also followed in smaller numbers.

Northumbria has three large shopping centres - the MetroCentre, Eldon Square and The Bridges and four universities - Northumbria, Newcastle, Sunderland and the Open University in the North.

Ours is the 6th largest force in the country and is made up of three Area Commands.

Working for Northumbria Police are 3154 police officers; 1,649 police staff; 125 Special Constables and 204 Police Community Support Officers. At the time of writing we are going through our biggest recruitment drive yet and are working hard to build our police officer numbers up after a decade of austerity.

My office has a relatively small team who work to make Northumbria Police accountable to you, managing the budget and the police estate, driving collaboration, working with a wide range of partners, commissioning services and helping me to fulfil my statutory role.

#### **Northumbria Police on a typical day:**

- Phone calls received 2,444
- 999 calls 672
- Incidents recorded 1,134
- Crimes recorded 402
- Arrests made 84
- Miles travelled 30,991
- Injury road collisions attended 4
- Breath tests administered 12

#### **Officers will deal with - amongst other crimes:**

- Residential burglary 14
- Thefts 83
- Thefts from motor vehicle 15

- Thefts of motor vehicle 6
- Violent crimes 146
- Robberies 2
- Attended 16 road traffic incidents
- 29 missing person reports

## 4. Your priorities

### 1) Fighting Crime

The North East is one of the safest places in the country and my job is to ensure Northumbria Police maintain their great record here. That's why my number one priority is fighting crime in our region.

#### **Giving the force the tools to do the job**

From anti-social behaviour to serious and organised crime, we need to make sure the force has the resources it needs to keep our neighbourhoods safe.

I will continue to ensure Northumbria Police has a solid financial footing from which to plan and respond to public safety demands. After ten years of austerity, police forces now urgently need long-term funding certainty from Central Government, and I will continue to lobby for this for our region.

As Police and Crime Commissioner I have backed the force with the frontline resources needed to fight crime. As part of this, I have authorised budgets which will ensure that over the course of this plan **every police officer will have access to taser training if relevant to their role**, ensuring those who protect us are kept safe and those who threaten our safety face well-equipped officers.

I have also committed to reversing the impacts of austerity when it comes to officer numbers. Since 2010 Northumbria Police has lost some 1,100 officers and £140m from its budget. The Government has so far offered to replace only around a third of those officers, a figure which doesn't go far enough. In response to public demands for a strong police force **I have committed to going above and beyond Government recruitment targets**, including for example replacing departing and retiring officers.

Alongside this, **I will oversee the multi-million pound refresh of force infrastructure**, especially digital infrastructure, ensuring Northumbria Police is equipped to deal with emerging crime trends.

By giving Northumbria Police these resources I can ensure that the force is ready to deliver on your priorities.

#### **Tackling crime**

Whether it is a small number of people making a neighbourhood unhappy with anti-social behaviour or the organised crime gangs that infuriate our sense of justice, crime has no place in our region.

This Police and Crime Plan commits the police to tackling crime, using all available resource to reduce crime and to stand by our communities for the greater good.

## **The illegal drugs trade**

Drug addiction destroys lives, spreads crime and fear and puts money in the hands of organised criminals; **Northumbria Police will target and disrupt the illegal drugs trade at all levels** and I will ensure they deliver on this commitment. Part of the answer to the drugs misery we see on our streets is direct police action, investigating drug dealers, arresting them and taking them to court. But part of the response has to be about supporting those with addictions, those people who often turn to crime to fund their addiction. **I will work with others to try and rebuild drug treatment programmes lost to austerity. This will include looking at wider help available to those suffering from substance abuse and mental health concerns.**

A new threat that has grown since the last police and crime plan is the emergence of County Lines. These are drugs networks in which organised crime groups and professional criminals from elsewhere exploit vulnerable people in rural locations, towns and smaller cities to sell drugs, often forcing people into committing criminal acts based on violence, debt, addiction and lies. For the people at the top of these networks this is a business and it can be a sophisticated operation. For the victims that are sucked in this ruins lives and blights communities.

Part of the solution to this will be **ensuring Northumbria Police use the full enforcement options available to break up County Lines gangs**, and punish those responsible. But part of the solution will involve finding those at risk and getting them out of a life of crime.

## **Reducing crime – regular crime data – see pull out box**

### **Serious and Organised Crime**

Organised crime often operates at an international level, but its impact can be seen on our streets. Every part of the force has a role to play in tackling this, especially neighbourhood policing, and I will continue to ensure Northumbria Police has the resources it needs to contribute at every level.

We know, for example, that criminals involved in serious and organised crime frequently commit ‘low level’ crimes in their local area, sometimes creating a climate of fear. **I will back Northumbria Police to disrupt organised crime at every level**, ensuring the public can see that those who try to profit from crime are targeted and inappropriate role models are stopped in their tracks.

I will ensure your police continue targeting the organised crime groups behind the illegal drugs trade, ensuring those who seek to profit from the misery of addiction are in our sights and brought to justice.

Northumbria Police works regionally with Durham and Cleveland police forces to tackle serious organised crime as a Regional and Organised Crime Unit, as well as with the National Crime Agency, which comprises operational teams, Regional Asset Recovery Team, Regional Intelligence Unit, Regional Cyber Unit and other functions.

The North East Regional Special Operations Unit provides specialist capabilities to tackle Serious & Organised Crime in support of Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland Police forces.

## Reducing burglary

Burglary is a crime that often feels deeply personal, and many people taking part in my police and crime plan survey said they wanted to see those who commit this crime brought to justice. I'm proud to be Police Commissioner for a force that has a strong track record in tackling burglary, and I **commit to regularly publishing burglary data** so the public can see that Northumbria continues to have a strong record on tackling burglary. I'll also back home safety measures in the most at risk areas to help people feel more secure in their own home.

## Online crime

Cyber-crime, including online fraud, is a growing threat both regionally, nationally and internationally.

The type, frequency and sophistication of cyber-enabled crimes are continually increasing, ranging from organised crime groups to individuals targeting victims via social media.

I'll commit to raising awareness of cyber-crime and fraud and enhance the force's investigation of these cases. I'll explore with the force the potential for **more dedicated cyber fraud campaigns, and back the cyber volunteers who bring even more expertise to Northumbria Police**. Many cyber-enabled crimes lead to complex investigations, and I'm committed to ensuring the force has the resources to carry these out. But we must recognise that online crime ignores all borders, and it's clear our response has to be part of a co-ordinated national approach.

Northumbria Police also need to be backed to tackle other online crimes, including abuse and exploitation. I'll work with the force to ensure those grooming children online or those who download or share images of abuse are found and those at risk are helped. I will continue to ensure early identification of child and adult sexual exploitation cases and provision of long-term support for victims to assist their recovery.

## Rural crime

Rural crime can have a devastating impact on our more isolated communities, of which there are many within our region. So, it's important to me that these communities feel heard, well-connected and supported by their police force. Recent reports have found that Northumbria continues to be amongst those least affected by rural crime but it is happening and while the figures represent lots of hard work, the fight against rural crime is still as important as ever.

Stolen farm equipment, livestock thefts and sheep worrying are all typical crimes known to impact those living in rural areas but I want to make sure issues like domestic abuse and violence aren't hidden crimes that get forgotten about in the remote parts of our region too. To make sure of this, I'm determined to keep supporting rural policing. Over the past year I have allocated funds for investment in the police vehicle fleet, as well as tools for rural policing and **I want to keep investing further to help fight and prevent all crimes that take place in the countryside**.

I understand the negative impact rural crime can have on remote communities, but there is a real positive in the way that volunteers and local partners come together to keep neighbourhood's safe and I'm proud of this. **We will remain proactive in policing rural crime to ensure communities are protected**. In recent years we've seen FarmWatch and Operation Checkpoint, our network of rural crime volunteers, go from strength to strength and we need to build on this. With such a vast, largely isolated landscape, every bit of

intelligence gathered and every report of suspicious activity can make a difference, and it does.

### **Responding to your needs**

In order to fight crime, people need to have the confidence that the force will respond when they are called upon. We know that satisfaction is linked to the experience at the first point of contact with the police and in keeping the caller updated. **I will ensure that when you call the police there is an appropriate response.** Emergency calls to the police need an emergency response, and **I will ensure the force continue to focus on response times.**

When incidents come into our control room they are assessed using an approach called THRIVE, which is used by policing nationally to determine how best to respond. THRIVE stands for Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation opportunities, Vulnerability and Engagement. This assessment allows a judgement to be made about the response required and places the needs of the victim at the centre of that decision. Your force will continue its commitment to this approach to help provide victims with a bespoke response fitting their needs based on what has happened.

As part of this commitment I will publish regular information setting out call handling and response time data.

### **Business Crime**

In the North East we boast a strong, vibrant business community and it's vital we do all we can to protect it. The impact of business crime can be very damaging, particularly to small or medium sized enterprises - losses can ruin them. I'm pleased with how local business owners recognise the importance of working closely with our officers, sharing intelligence and making sure they're taking the right steps to prevent them from being targeted by criminals. I will make sure Northumbria Police keeps building on its focus on preventing and fighting business crimes such as theft, cyber-crime and fraud.

I will also continue to give my full support to schemes and initiatives that help raise awareness and tackle issues in the workplace too, from the continued roll-out of our nationally acclaimed hate crime champions scheme to lending my support to the Co-op's Respect for Shopworkers campaign.

## **2) Preventing Crime**

I will continue to fight for a well-resourced police force to ensure public safety, but we cannot simply arrest our way out of crime. As your Police and Crime Commissioner I have worked with the Chief Constable to ensure we are intervening to stop crime in its tracks.

One key tool in that mission has been the Violence Reduction Unit. I established this team with the belief that if we improve lives we can prevent crime, especially violent crime.

I am committed to **using a public health approach to reducing violence.** That means treating violence the same way we would a disease, recognising the symptoms, understanding the causes and then stopping its transmission, helping people to avoid it and giving people the tools they need to tackle it.

There is a strong commitment across Northumbria to tackle the root causes of violent crime and in the years ahead the prevention element of the region's violence reduction efforts will focus on a package of measures to reduce crime.

This will include taking a direct approach to intervening with those who are showing signs of vulnerability or are on the fringes of criminal/anti-social activity. This will take the form of **direct intervention with young people, working with those who could become the biggest risk to others**, alongside services and organisations to address wider needs of other family members such as siblings.

I will **back continued funding for the life-changing youth workers at the You Only Live Once (YOLO) project. This scheme involves matching young people to footballing and other mentors** from the Foundation of Light and the Newcastle United Foundation and has had many success stories to date. Working with 8-14 year olds, the scheme supports those who are at risk of slipping into a life of crime. It's about showing young, often vulnerable people, that there is another way – anti-social behaviour, knife crime, violence don't have to be a part of your life, it is not too late.

Alongside this, it is clear that after ten years of Government austerity we need to **increase the provision of family support within areas of most need**. This approach has two elements: the promotion of universal services to all and the targeting of specific services to those who need them at the earliest opportunity.

The community link worker projects, funded by the Violence Reduction Unit, are an example of the long term approach we are seeking to support families most in need – empowering them to develop resilience and seek out support services at the earliest opportunity. By utilising those with lived experiences to develop relationships with families and knock down previous trust barriers we aim to reduce the burden on frontline services such as the police.

One way I will help keep people, especially young people, out of crime is **support for youth services**. Effective youth diversion can reduce crime and create better outcomes for young people. But after a decade of austerity youth services are already cut back. There is strong evidence that early involvement in the criminal justice system significantly increases the likelihood of young people reoffending, but there is also evidence that effective youth diversion is better for young people than getting stuck in the criminal justice system. I will work with others to ensure young people have the option of doing more than just hanging around on street corners and getting enticed into anti-social behaviour and other crimes.

We see the benefits of youth diversionary work when we look at the criminal gangs that young people could otherwise be involved with, and this is especially true of the emerging County Lines style drugs trade.

In order to prevent vulnerable people being coerced into gangs or exploited through the people behind County Lines drugs dealing operations, **I will ensure young people are aware of the dangers and risks involved in criminal gangs**.

We will continue to do this through education and intervention – both in school and colleges, and community settings. Through our Education Engagement Team we are able to engage thousands of young people a month in a safe and trusted setting. Then to complement that, our intervention partners can engage with a different audience in the community and work with young people to direct them away from criminality, and address any needs identified.

We live in a safe region, and part of the reason for that is across many different sectors there are people dedicated to keeping the North East safe. As your Police and Crime

Commissioner I will **coordinate this early intervention and prevention approach and implement a serious violence and criminal exploitation strategy** to ensure we are all working together to prevent crime.

One key way to prevent crime is by working with local councils and their Community Safety Partnerships, and I will continue to work with these organisations as a key part of delivering on your priorities.

### **Reducing reoffending**

In some cases, the police and other criminal justice organisations are dealing with people for who criminality is already a way of life. A small number of repeat offenders are responsible for a significant proportion of all crime. As is the case nationally, evidence shows that short-term custodial sentences are ineffective in terms of rehabilitation and desistance from crime. 64.5% of prisoners released from sentences of less than 12 months reoffend within one year. This is much higher than the 38% who reoffend after serving a community-based sentence. For dangerous criminals, prison should always be an option, but we need to explore out of court action for others where swift justice can benefit everyone.

There is local evidence to suggest that most victims are happy with the outcome of a conditional caution which requires the offender to engage in a rehabilitative intervention and makes sure the offender faces up to the impact they have had on the victim.

I will work with probation and other services to **promote changes which are known to reduce reoffending such as opportunities around employment, training, and education**. We will seek to engage at the earliest opportunity and support and guide individuals to access services to address their issues.

Access to employment and training is widely recognised as a significant factor in relation to offending and successful rehabilitation. By providing additional support to address the need we are increasing the likelihood of individuals maintaining engagement with support services and reducing offending behaviour.

**I will develop and implement a strategy on reducing reoffending which understands and addresses factors which can lead to criminal behaviour including mental health and substance misuse.**

### **Roads policing**

Many of you have expressed your concerns about people driving too fast and not paying attention to the roads in your neighbourhood. Every year too many lives are lost on our region's roads due to reckless, dangerous or criminal motorists. So, our objective is clear - **reduce harm on the roads and promote safer driving.**

I will work with the Chief Constable to enhance our road safety initiatives throughout both our rural and urban areas. We will also make sure Northumbria Police's long-standing commitment to road safety through Operation Dragoon continues to address your concerns. Together **we will develop fresh educational campaigns and carry out targeted enforcement**. While we continue to focus on education, cameras are another tactic to help tackle those unwilling to follow the rules. **Speed camera vans will be out in the areas where local residents have asked for them and there is intelligence to suggest they will make a difference.** We will do all we can to keep neighbourhoods safe.

Road safety doesn't just concern those behind the wheel either, and from what you've told me we need to **keep promoting the message that roads are a shared space for all**

**users.** As well as working with others offering advice to vulnerable road users, **we need to ensure action will be taken against those who endanger other road users and pedestrians.**

### **3) Improving Lives**

Crime, and the fear of crime, can cause far reaching damage both to individuals and local communities. I want to make sure no one suffers alone, and that there is always support available for victims of crime or parts of our region that have been hit by crime.

As part of this commitment, I have reformed how victim services are delivered, to ensure there is a support team there to help those feeling vulnerable after being a victim of crime.

I have also committed to **taking money illegally earned by criminals and giving it back to local communities.** I set up a community fund that used money recovered from criminals to benefit grass root projects, and over the course of this Police and Crime Plan I will top up that fund with money recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act.

#### **Supporting people through the justice system**

Whether you are a victim of crime or a witness I understand that navigating the criminal justice system can be daunting, and as your Police and Crime Commissioner I want to put victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system. I will work with partners to ensure a **fair, just and effective progression of cases.** In particular work will continue to **improve the timeliness and effectiveness of domestic abuse trials within Northumbria Magistrates Courts.**

The Victims Code of Practice sets out a level of service victims should receive from the criminal justice system. As PCC I will **monitor Northumbria Police's performance against the code** and ensure that they comply with the things that you said were most important to you including:

- written acknowledgement that a crime has been committed;
- an assessment of your support needs as a victim of crime;
- opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement telling us how the crime has affected you;
- feedback on the progression and outcome of your case; and
- the Victim Contact Scheme that, if needed, provides advance notification of a prisoner's release.

At present a priority for us all remains the impact that Covid 19 has had on the progression of cases through the Criminal Justice System. Locally I have commissioned a Recovery Group where the police, CPS and courts are working together to reduce delays and **provide opportunities for victims and witnesses to give evidence remotely.**

I'm also committed to influencing, where I can, the bigger picture. By changing the whole system nationally we can improve the experience of everyone seeking justice. This is why I have, and will continue to, lobby Government to roll-out an innovative Northumbria pilot scheme, which has seen the success of offering free and independent legal advocacy to complainants of sexual violence and abuse.

As was evidenced in a report by Loughborough University, it would cost the Government just £3.9 million annually to get legal help to victims in need, in England and Wales. We've seen how doing this has improved best practice in police and CPS responses, and improved the overall victim experience. Committing funding to this would be a small price to pay to help improve conviction rates and treat victims with the respect they deserve. I will do all I can to continue speaking out for victims so we can improve lives and prevent further crime.

### **Stalking and harassment**

I am pleased that Northumbria Police have pioneered new ways of investigating stalking, harassment and coercive control using a range of advanced technologies. Welcome improvements have also been made to the risk assessment process.

Stalking, whether in person or online, is a distressing and potentially life threatening crime and must be taken very seriously. **I will work with Northumbria Police to ensure that relevant legislation and powers are effectively adhered to, and measured in my scrutiny process.** I know that many victims of stalking want to see concerning behaviours result in immediate action – to protect the victim and effectively deal the perpetrator. With thorough training, **officers will be able to intervene and take action at the earliest opportunity.**

### **Hate crime**

Tackling hate is an area in which we are leading the way - with a nationally acclaimed hate crime champions' scheme. This programme helps people explore the impact of hate on victims and the wider community, the barriers to reporting and the best ways to seek help.

While I am proud to be Police and Crime Commissioner of such a welcoming region made up of many diverse communities, there are always some people who want to incite hatred and that's completely unacceptable. I want all victims to feel listened to, whoever you are, whatever your background. I want you to know that Northumbria Police are there for you and **we are committed to ensuring that all victims get the right support to overcome their experience.**

I recognise the importance of reaching out to those communities who are perhaps uncomfortable contacting the police. **We will do all we can to strengthen relationships with all communities and we will continue striving to recruit from a diverse range of backgrounds** to better reflect the communities we serve.

My vision for equality, diversity and inclusion is one where everyone is treated fairly and with respect, and has the right to the same opportunities, freedoms and equal access to services. We value and celebrate the differences of individuals and communities by embracing people's different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture to strengthen communities. By recognising the benefits of a diverse workforce where difference is welcomed, people can use their unique talents to provide services that meet the needs of diverse communities across Northumbria.

### **Community cohesion and extremism**

It is crucial that people get on well together, respect differences and work towards achieving shared goals.

Working with communities is at the heart of what Northumbria Police does. I will continue to support all efforts working with partners to strengthen relations, understand issues and improve cohesion. As well as actively tackling extremism, I will ensure our force continue to

build on collective efforts to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist activity.

### **Mental health**

After a decade of austerity and cuts to public services, mental health concerns are a regular feature of day to day policing. Like other forces, Northumbria is now routinely dealing with the consequences of reduced availability of mental health services. Northumbria Police have been responding to an increase in complex cases in which their frontline officers are acting as the first point of contact to people with mental health needs that are in crisis.

Alongside this pressure, our victim support services report that mental health is the main support need being presented by victims and referrals to specialist mental health services remain high.

Northumbria Police will continue to promote mental health awareness and **work with other emergency services to make sure that people facing a mental health crisis get the appropriate support**. But this will not in itself solve the problems we face. I will continue to lobby for better resourced mental health services.

### **Complaints**

I take complaints about Northumbria Police very seriously and want to make sure that the service provided to communities is professional, effective and efficient.

It is important your complaints are listened to and that you receive a timely response from Northumbria Police. Often complaints can identify areas where service delivery can be improved and I receive regular reports from Northumbria Police that tell me how many complaints have been received. These can identify any trends in complaints, disparity between different communities or geographical areas within Northumbria and most importantly any learning that Northumbria Police have identified from analysis of their complaints process.

### **Use of Force and Stop and Search**

I know that for the public to have confidence in the police there needs to be trust that the police will treat them with respect, make fair decisions and take time to engage and explain their actions.

Some areas of business cause concerns for communities and can impact on confidence and trust in a significant way. We all know that for the police, the power to stop and search people who they suspect of being involved in crime is an important crime-fighting tactic. As part of my scrutiny programme I will **ensure that Stop and Search is only used when police have sufficient grounds to act** thereby protecting communities. Where there is disparity between different racial groups the police will work to reduce this rate.

When fighting crime there will sometimes need to be a use of force, such as handcuffs. On your behalf **I will monitor the use of force by Northumbria Police**. I want to know that they understand where and how these tactics are used, any disparity in their use and that ongoing internal and external scrutiny can see that force, when used, is applied lawfully and proportionately.

### **Environmental policy**

Northumbria Police is a major employer and provider of services to the community, and its activities and operations will inevitably have an impact on the environment. I will continue to

ensure the force works to reduce its carbon footprint, especially in areas such as building design or supply chain issues.

## **Flagship boxes**

### **Box1 Anti-social behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour is a concern in many parts of our region; it is one of the most frequent issues reported to the police and undoubtedly impacts on the lives of many people.

ASB concerns include the behaviour of some neighbours, people behaving in a loud and disorderly manner, public drinking or drug use, dog fouling, littering and riding of motorbikes. The people involved often concentrate in public areas such as parks and can impact on the sense of safety of the wider community.

Northumbria Police are committed to addressing anti-social behaviour in both urban and rural settings. We know that to do so effectively requires working with others including local councils, youth services, housing providers, schools and further education providers, businesses and the voluntary sector to understand the causes and intervene to change behaviour.

We saw the benefits of working together like this during the Covid-19 pandemic, when reports of anti-social behaviour increased. The police deployed dedicated task forces and met weekly with each local authority to discuss the response in that area and coordinate work with businesses, public transport providers, education and voluntary sector organisations.

#### **I will improve this by**

Working with your councils to build joint ASB task forces, ensuring every local organisation plays their part in working alongside the police to address concerns about ASB. I will support the roll out of this approach to some of our most affected communities. Such projects are already established in Gateshead and Southwick and are being developed in Ashington, Wallsend and other areas. These are working. Let's establish more.

Ensuring your ASB concerns are acted on. The police and local authorities, in consultation with my office, will review and re-develop the ASB case review process to ensure repeat incidents of ASB are identified and get a prioritised response. I will ensure these are used to their full effect to support victims of ASB and that you can find out about this easily.

Continuing to hold senior police and local authority leaders to account for their response to community concerns around ASB. My expectation is that the public will get a prompt and effective response with these organisations jointly taking ownership to address the causes and prevent repeat incidents. I will continue to support investment in youth services and diversion programmes to provide young people with life opportunities.

#### **I will publish regular crime and policing data to show you –**

Every three months I will tell the public exactly how many incidents of ASB the police have dealt with, whether this has gone up or down and what is being done to keep crime down.

### **Box 2 Reducing crime**

At the core of my work for the public is a simple aim; I am elected to ensure the police fight crime and keep you safe. And whether that is alcohol-fuelled incidents in our city centres on a night time or theft in our rural and farming communities, your priorities must be translated

into policing targets and outcomes. After a decade of austerity and cuts to the force worth £140m, the police have never been under greater pressure in their work to reduce crime. But I am proud that Northumbria Police has maintained our region's reputation as one of the safest places to live. Crime and anti-social behaviour can damage and destroy lives, and the public want to see crime reduced. The consequences of even a single offence can be devastating and widespread; going beyond the immediate victim to impact on the lives of wider family, friends and communities. Myself and the Chief Constable will continue to work together to reduce these crimes.

### **I will ensure the force continues to fight crime by**

Ensuring the force reduces the volume of crimes committed and that Northumbria continues to have a lower recorded crime rate compared to other similar forces.

Monitoring levels of crimes being committed and ensuring the police and others are tackling them.

Prioritising crimes which present the greatest risk of harm to vulnerable people.

Ensuring the force has the technology and training needed to keep our streets safe while maintaining a focus on serious and organised criminals.

### **I will publish regular crime and policing data to show you**

How many crimes are being committed in different parts of the Northumbria force area.

## **Preventing crime**

### **Box 3 Preventing violent crime**

Getting more police officers on our streets and in our neighbourhoods is one way to tackle violent crime, but it is only one part of the solution. We need a plan to prevent people, particularly young people, getting into a life of violent crime. If we offer people an alternative, alongside a targeted focus on those already routinely turning to violence, we can make a real difference. That's why I set up a Violence Reduction Unit to ensure the police are not alone in standing up to violent crime and I am committed to its long-term success.

### **I will improve this by**

Ensuring the Violence Reduction Unit Response Strategy to reduce serious and violent crime is clear and co-ordinated across the Northumbria force area.

Encouraging partners to improve data and intelligence sharing, which will allow for more effective targeting of interventions and resources at those areas most in need.

Lobbying Government for more funding to ensure the Violence Reduction Unit can continue to make a difference.

Ensuring the force targets the illegal drugs trade and the crime that follows this.

Supporting organisations seeking to help people out of gangs and the cycle of crime.

### **I will publish regular crime and policing data to show you the result of efforts to reduce**

The number of crimes involving serious violence with a knife.

The number of hospital admissions for knife related serious violence.

#### **Box 4 Neighbourhood policing**

Early intervention keeps crime down, and the best way to achieve this is with trusted neighbourhood police officers and staff. The Chief Constable and I have agreed that neighbourhood policing is a top priority, alongside working with other organisations such as local councils to help keep our streets safe and intervene in anti-social behaviour.

But after ten years of Government austerity and spending cuts, maintaining a local neighbourhood police service has not been easy. The force has had to make some difficult decisions in order to prioritise use of officers and staff out in our communities. I stand by these choices, and, for example, when it comes to deciding between having a police station open at 3am or having officers out in your local community, I back a visible police presence. I will also back residents looking for increased CCTV in some areas, where funding allows.

Whether it's in a rural village or a city estate, neighbourhood policing is the key to safer streets. I will ensure it is easy for people to find out who the officers and PCSOs are in their area. Different neighbourhoods will often have different needs and by having a local policing team that understands the area we can tackle local problems at the source. The force will continue to focus on problem solving with our partners in our communities.

#### **I will continue to back your neighbourhoods by**

- Protecting frontline policing and giving the force the resources to deter, detect and deal with criminals.
- Committing to investing in and supporting neighbourhood policing teams.
- Engage with communities to build relationships and to provide safety advice, education and guidance in particular to young people, vulnerable people and marginalised communities and I will ensure information is always provided in a way which ensures all can access it.

#### **I will publish regular crime and policing data to show**

How local residents feel about the police – including the results of regular satisfaction surveys including public confidence data and police insights reports. If satisfaction levels fall, I'll ask the force to explain why and what it will do to rebuild that relationship.

#### **Box 5 Support for Victims**

Being a victim of crime can undermine a person's confidence and make them unhappy or frightened. It can affect a person's outlook on life, that's why it is so important that we put victims at the heart of policing. We absolutely have to put victims first and make sure we are doing things right by them. I plan to further enhance the delivery of victim support services across Northumbria, by streamlining the whole process, making things simpler and doing everything we can to ensure that all victims receive the help they need. In doing this we will

deliver genuine end to end support for all victims, including those pursuing a route through the criminal justice system, resulting in an improved offer to victims and witnesses across the Northumbria Police area. Everyone involved in the criminal justice system wants the best for victims. One route to this is restorative justice. This is where victims get a chance to get answers to questions and tell their offender how they have been affected, it also gives offenders a chance to understand how what they have done affects others and a chance to make amends for their behaviour. We have evidence to show that it makes a real difference in helping victims to recover from their experience of crime. My challenge is to make high quality restorative justice available to all victims of crime in Northumbria by linking together victims services, offender-focused organisations and a wide range of agencies.

Protecting vulnerable victims is absolutely the number one priority for Northumbria Police and I will continue to make sure this focus remains clear.

### **I will improve victim support by**

- Introducing a new co-ordinated and streamlined approach to supporting victims of crime from report to court, ensuring consistent professional input and effective communication with victims.
- Investing in victim services to give people a greater chance of coping with the impact of crime and recovering from their experience.
- Encouraging the police and criminal justice system to develop trauma informed practice so the support options made available to victims best meet their needs.
- Asking the police to effectively cooperate with our communities so information about crime within neighbourhoods can be shared but also to build trust and confidence for victims to report crime and be assured of Northumbria Police's ability to protect them and their local values.
- Supporting the introduction of a multi-agency victim h, set up to support our most vulnerable and exploited victims.

### **I will publish regular crime and policing data to show you –**

Every three months I will tell the public exactly how many victims of crime have been supported, how many are satisfied with their service from Northumbria Police and how we are meeting obligations in the Victims Code of Practice.

### **Box 6 Tackling Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence**

Violence and abuse can blight communities and lead to devastating consequences. It has devastating, traumatic and long-lasting impact on victims, families and wider communities. Domestic abuse is one of the biggest contributors to violent crime locally and nationally and PCCs have a hugely important lead role in tackling this. Domestic abuse and sexual violence can affect anybody – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability. I will make it my business to encourage people to come forward and report it, support them through their experience when they do, and oversee Northumbria Police's role in bringing those responsible to justice. Children must not be the forgotten victims of abuse and the right support is crucial and must be there at an early stage to help avoid trauma in later life.

### **I will improve this by**

- Continuing to develop my Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions scheme, so more than ever, workplaces can recognise abuse and offer support to their staff, building on the important role that friends, families and communities can play in connecting loved ones to the right help and support as early as possible.
- Working with partners to focus on perpetrators of abuse, providing behaviour change and stabilisation work to the highest harm/high risk domestic abuse perpetrators. By its very nature, this will result in improved safety and feelings of safety for survivors and their children.
- Enhancing the role of the VRU's Education Team who have a key role to work with schools and communities around healthy relationships, and other issues such as knife crime awareness.
- Continue to build on the work of the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy to bring together in one place our vision, ambition and actions to tackle violence against women and girls, strengthening our work to change attitudes, improve prevention and where possible rehabilitate offenders.
- Introducing focussed and regular challenge sessions with the Chief Constable and his team where we explore together what has been achieved and what more needs to be done to best support victims and improve criminal justice outcomes.

**I will publish regular crime and policing data to show you –**

Every three months I will tell the public exactly how many victims have reported these crimes, how many of these are repeat incidents and how many victims are satisfied with their service from Northumbria Police. I will also focus on criminal justice outcomes and will tell you how we are performing as a criminal justice system to bring crimes to justice.

## 5.How I will report back to you

I want you to have confidence that I am holding the force to account on your behalf. That means being open with crime data and letting you know where we are succeeding in the fight against crime and the mission to prevent people heading into crime.

To ensure you know what my office and Northumbria Police are doing on your behalf, I will publish the following as a minimum every three months.

### **Anti-social behaviour**

- Number of ASB incidents
- % of people that feel that ASB is a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood

### **Reducing Crime**

- Total recorded crime
- Serious Violence offences

### **Preventing violent crime**

- Knife enabled serious violence offences
- Hospital admissions for knife related serious violence

### **Neighbourhood policing**

- 'I have confidence in the police in this area' – our score in the National Crime Survey data
- 'Police deal with things that matter to the community' - our score in the National Crime Survey data

### **Support for victims**

- Victim satisfaction – action taken
- Victims code of practice compliance

I'll also make sure you have "at a glance" crime data available on my website keeping you informed with high level performance data on issues such as

- Total recorded crime
- Number of ASB incidents
- Knife enabled serious violence offences

## **6. Delivering on the plan**

I will monitor and review the work of the Chief Constable on your behalf and ensure that you receive the service from the police and criminal justice system that you have been promised in this plan.

On your behalf I will look at and monitor the work of Northumbria Police in a number of ways:

- Going out and talking to local communities.
- Considering what the public are telling me through the Safer Communities Survey and the Northumbria Police User Satisfaction Survey.
- I will hold regular engagement sessions with the public to get an ongoing picture of local policing needs.
- Discussing with specialist advisory groups and others covering the characteristics of age, gender, disability, BME, faith, religion, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.
- Holding regular performance oversight meetings and one to ones with the Chief Constable and his senior team across all areas of policing.
- Receiving Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports
- Looking closely at inspection results from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service and ensuring service improvements are implemented
- Chairing the Local Criminal Justice Board, working with partners to ensure an effective and efficient criminal justice system in our area.
- Holding quarterly performance meetings with local Victim Services commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Learning lessons and responding to findings from Internal and External Audit and the Joint Independent Audit Committee ensuring good financial and organisational governance of both Northumbria Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Want to know more? If you want to know more about the work I will do to ensure delivery of this plan please visit my website – [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)

## **7. Finance and Resources**

Our police need the right resources to deliver on your priorities and keep you and your community safe. I will do all I can to make sure Northumbria Police has the resources it needs and is efficient and cost effective in the service it provides.

Northumbria Police receive two main sources of funding; grant income from central Government and the part of Council Tax which is allocated to the police called the 'police precept'.

Additional funding is sometimes made available by the Government to help encourage new ways of working. We are always eager to explore innovation to deliver better services and to save public money and for this reason we are keen to bid for some of these extra resources. We have been very successful.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has been successful in securing Innovation and Transformation Grants in excess of £11m over the last 4 years. These awards have been used to focus on a number of key areas ranging from early youth intervention to preventing serial perpetrator offending reflecting our ongoing commitment to fighting crime, preventing crime and improving lives.

For Northumbria, 82% of total funding comes from central Government, the highest proportion of all forces in England and Wales. The remaining balance is raised locally through the precept.

The current financial climate remains a difficult one. The last 12 months has reinforced just how important our police force is and we continue to need resources to deal with the ongoing pressures presented by the Coronavirus pandemic. And the last decade saw unprecedented cuts to the Government's policing grant. Northumbria was the hardest hit of any force in England and Wales, with the expectation that the shortfall would be met through the local precept.

Local precept income is therefore essential to grow our force back and keep serving the public to a high standard.

Part of my role as Police and Crime Commissioners is to set the annual police budget and determine the level of precept required for our force area.

My Medium Term Financial Strategy describes the financial direction of my office and the force over a four year period. The strategy demonstrates an affordable position, balancing costs with available resources and provides an overarching framework for police budgets over the medium term. I will make sure your money is spent as effectively as possible.

#### HOW FUNDING IS ALLOCATED TO POLICING SERVICES:

Policing Services	Resource Allocation
Local Policing	48.1%
Investigations	10.4%
Public Protection	9.3%
Dealing with the Public	9.3%
Intelligence	6.8%
Criminal Justice Arrangements	6.0%
Operational Support	5.0%
Roads Policing	2.3%
Investigative Support	2.3%
Police and Crime Commissioner	0.5%
Total	100%

#### **8.Ways to keep in touch**

I want to keep you updated on our work to deliver this plan, and I want you to tell me how you think we are doing.

There are many ways we can keep in touch:

- You can email via [enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)

- You can learn about my work by visiting my website [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk), where you can also sign up to my newsletter
- You can follow me on Twitter [@northumbriapcc](https://twitter.com/northumbriapcc)
- You can like my Facebook page [@KiMcGuinness](https://www.facebook.com/KiMcGuinness)
- You can follow me on Instagram [@pcc\\_kim\\_mcguinness](https://www.instagram.com/pcc_kim_mcguinness)

Through these channels I will keep you up to date with what I am doing to ensure the very best policing services for Northumbria. I will keep you up to date with key decisions I have made and I will ask you to tell me what you think about certain policing and crime issues. I will also get out and about and talk to local communities to get their views.

If you would prefer to write to me, you can write to: Kim McGuinness, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, Victory House, Balliol Business Park, Benton Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 8EW.

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## **NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

### **PANEL MEETING ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021**

### **SUBJECT - PROPOSED PRECEPT FOR 2021/22**

### **REPORT OF THE CLERK TO THE PANEL**

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#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) proposed precept for 2021/22.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The PCC has provided the attached report setting out her proposed precept for policing in Northumbria for 2021/22.
- 2.2 The Panel must review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept by 8 February 2021. The report may include recommendations, including recommendations as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.

#### **Next steps if there is no veto**

- 2.3 If the Panel decides not to veto the precept then the PCC will:

- have regard to the report referred to in 2.2 above and any recommendations made by the Panel;
- respond to the Panel;
- publish the response; and
- issue the proposed precept or a different precept if this is in accordance with the Panel's recommendation

#### **Next steps if there is a veto**

- 2.4 The Panel can only veto the proposed precept if it has the agreement of at least two thirds of the Panel's members (that is 9 members).
- 2.5 If the precept is vetoed by the Panel then the PCC cannot issue the precept and by 15 February 2021 will:
- have regard to the report;
  - respond to the Panel with a revised precept; and

- publish the response.

The revised precept must reflect the Panel's recommendation ie if the Panel states that the precept is:

- too high, then the revised precept must be lower; or
- too low, then the revised precept must be higher.

2.6 By 22 February 2021 the Panel must:

- review the revised precept;
- make a second report to the PCC, accepting or rejecting the revised precept (rejection does not prevent the PCC from issuing the revised precept);
- make recommendations, including recommendations as to the precept that should be issued.

Failure to report by this date will end the scrutiny process and the PCC may issue the revised precept.

2.7 By 1 March 2021 the PCC shall:

- have regard to the second report, including any recommendations;
- give the Panel a response to the second report; and
- publish the response.

2.8 The PCC may now issue the revised precept or a different precept. The different precept must still be higher or lower than the vetoed precept as detailed above, unless the second report recommends a different level of precept.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Panel is asked to

- (i) consider the PCC's proposed 2021/22 precept; and
- (ii) decide whether it wishes to accept or reject the proposed precept and whether it wishes to make any recommendations in its report to the PCC.

**Police and Crime Panel for Northumbria**

**02 FEBRUARY 2021**

**Report of Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria**

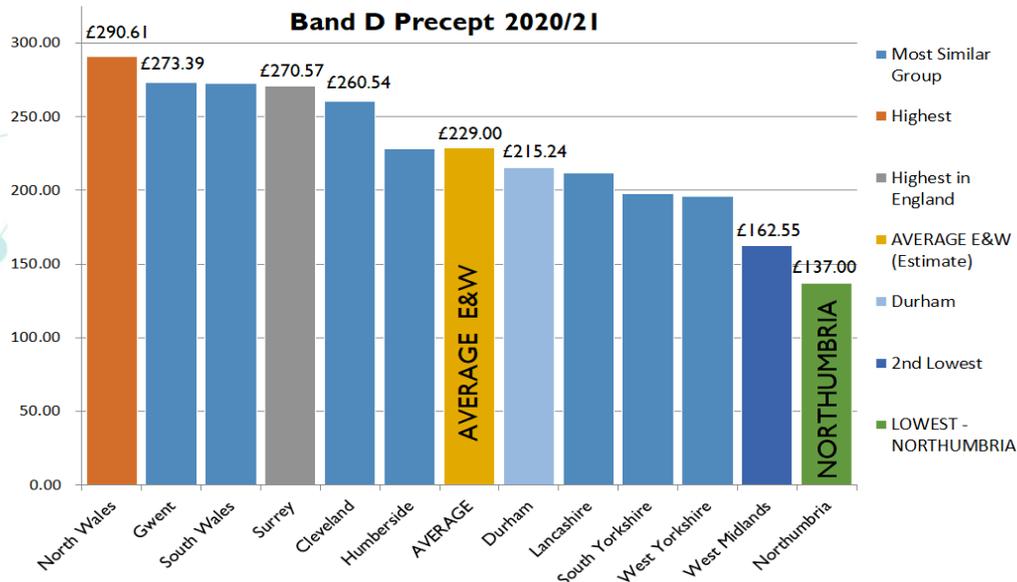
**Report on Proposed Precept for 2021/22**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out my proposed Council Tax Precept for the policing area covered by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Northumbria for the 2021/22 financial year, with a recommendation to agree to the proposal.
- 1.2 I am seeking agreement on a 4.99% precept rise. In proposing this precept rise I am mindful that this last year has been one of financial challenge for many households. But it is important our police force have the funds available to keep us safe and respond to emerging crime trends. While the Government has said it will allow Police and Crime Commissioners to increase precepts by a maximum of £15 per household, equivalent to 10.95% in Northumbria, I believe the smaller increase I am proposing is fairer to households while still ensuring Northumbria Police is well placed for the future.
- 1.3 In order to address the increase in demand and complexity of investigations, as well as looking to improve the quality of investigations, the Council Tax precept will be used to deliver an additional 60 police officer investigator posts in 2021/22, over and above existing recruitment plans and the Uplift target set by government. The £2.7m raised through the precept increase will provide for all salary and employer costs including training, IT, uniform and personal protective equipment, allowances, recruitment costs and personal issue kit such as Taser capability and body-worn video.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Schedule 5 states that, "A Police and Crime Commissioner may not issue a precept under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for a financial year until the end of the scrutiny process is reached." The first stage of the scrutiny process is that I must notify you of the precept I am proposing to issue for the financial year 2021/22.
- 2.2 The Council Tax Precept is a source of revenue for policing in Northumbria, the following graph shows a comparison of Northumbria's position to other Force areas for the current financial year 2020/21:



2.3 As is clear from the graph above the Northumbria Band D precept charge of £137.00 for 2020/21 is the lowest of any PCC in England and Wales. The Band D precept charge is the contribution paid toward policing by a homeowner in that category, and is the common criteria by which information and comparison is based. It should be noted that the majority of properties in the Northumbria area are Band A, i.e. the lowest banding for which the charge is £91.33. For 2020/21 18% of our core resource funding is derived from the Council Tax Precept, with the majority (82%) being through government grant.

2.4 Since 2010, Central Governments 'Austerity' drive saw unprecedented cuts to the funding provided to Policing, with Northumbria being the hardest hit of any Force in England and Wales. Central Government formula funding for policing in Northumbria was reduced by more than 31% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2018/19, as confirmed independently by the National Audit Office (NAO). By March 2020 Northumbria had made £144.3m of cuts and efficiencies to manage the reductions imposed by government.

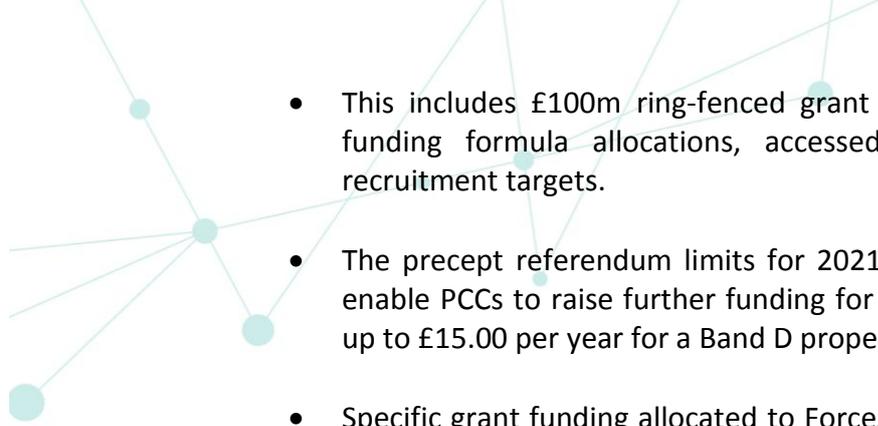
2.5 Whilst government funding for policing has increased over the last 2 years it was made clear that no inflationary increase was being provided by government, with core grant increases covering only part of the increased cost of police officer pensions for 2019/20 and delivery of the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) in 2020/21.

2.6 Local precept income is therefore essential to maintain spending power and make sure the Force has the resources it needs to keep our neighbourhoods safe. The Council Tax Precept raised £54.651m towards the total funding requirement for Northumbria in 2020/21. Residents in Northumbria have provided additional funding to support Northumbria Police year-on-year and that support has been vital to help the Force deliver the Police and Crime Plan priorities.

### 3. Police Settlement 2021/22

3.1 In summary, the main elements of the 2021/22 Home Office settlement included:

- £415m increase in Government funding to PCCs to support the recruitment of an additional 6,000 officers by March 2022.

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- This includes £100m ring-fenced grant allocated to Forces in-line with their funding formula allocations, accessed through progression against their recruitment targets.
  - The precept referendum limits for 2021/22 have been set by Government to enable PCCs to raise further funding for local priorities, through an increase of up to £15.00 per year for a Band D property.
  - Specific grant funding allocated to Forces to manage part of the increased cost of employer pensions in 2019/20 and 2020/21 has been confirmed for one further year.

3.2 Whilst the Government continue to fund the Police Uplift Programme, delivery has been slowed against the original profile with the 2021/22 target being reduced by 2,000 officers.

3.3 Whilst the increase to government grant will enable delivery of Uplift targets it does not include inflationary increases or funding to meet the ever-rising costs of transforming police services and building the digital infrastructure essential to respond to emerging crime trends.

3.4 Northumbria have argued for a number of years that the Government settlement should deliver the additional funding required by Forces to maintain high standards of policing services to the public. Police forces now urgently need long-term funding certainty from Central Government, as opposed to one-year settlements.

3.5 Despite the challenges faced in 2020 Northumbria Police has continued to deliver on the priorities of its communities, reduce crime and begin the biggest digital transformation the Force has ever undertaken. The budget proposal for 2021/22 will allow the Chief Constable to continue to deliver those priorities and investment plans, maintaining the excellent level of service Northumbria Police provides.

3.6 The attached report at **Appendix 1** sets out the proposed revenue budget and capital programme for 2021/22 including my precept proposal, together with a review of the current year's budget position and future funding.

#### **4. Precept Options**

4.1 Consideration of the Council Tax Precept has to be taken alongside both the overall funding made available to the Force and the impact on households of any increase. The Government has proposed precept referendum limits for 2021/22 that enable PCCs to raise additional funding for local priorities through an increase of up to £15.00 for a Band D property. For residents in Northumbria this would equate to a further 10.95% on Council Tax bills for 2021/22.

4.2 In considering the right precept proposal for 2021/22 I am mindful that this last year has been one of financial challenge for many households. But it is important our police force have the funds available to keep us safe and respond to emerging crime trends. While the Government has said it will allow Police and Crime Commissioners to increase precepts by a maximum of £15 per Band D household, equivalent to 10.95% in Northumbria, I believe a smaller increase will be fairer to households while still

ensuring Northumbria Police is well placed for the future. Therefore my decision is to propose an increase of only 4.99% on the precept.

4.3 The funding available through the precept increase of 4.99% on the tax base would provide an additional £2.708m in 2021/22. It would also increase the underlying precept base and provide continued financial benefit in future years. For context, an increase of 4.99% equates to £6.84 per year for a Band D property, approximately 57p per month. For a large proportion of the residents in Northumbria, those in a Band A property, the actual increase will be approximately 38p per month (£4.56 per year).

4.4 On 7 January 2021 I launched a consultation with the public on the precept, asking people how much they are prepared to pay to support their police force. This was supported by a press release sent to local media and regular reminders to take part on social media. This consultation followed on from the Police and Crime Plan survey carried out in October and November 2020, which included funding questions alongside policing priority questions.

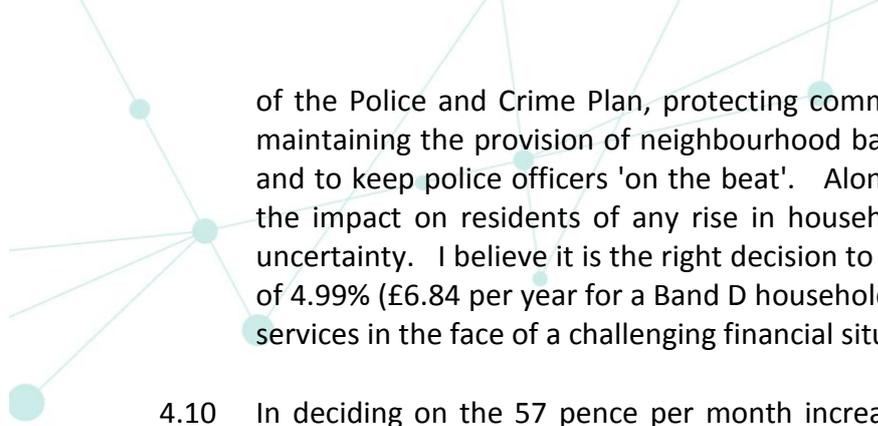
4.5 The online survey was active from 7 January until 21 January 2021, in which people were asked their view on range of actions. Respondents were asked their view on a zero council tax rise, an increase of 23 pence per month for a Band D property (1.99%), an increase of 57 pence per month (4.99%), and a £1.25 per month increase (10.95%). Of the responses received from the online survey 57% of survey participants were supportive of some form of council tax increase. 43% said that they were not prepared to increase their council tax.

4.6 During the two month consultation period on the Police and Crime Plan more than 3,200 people completed a survey on their policing priorities including a question on whether they would be prepared to pay more for improved policing. 64% said "I can afford a little more" and 36% said "the current amount is what I can afford."

4.7 Over two weeks in January 2021 a telephone consultation was carried out by the Public Insight team at Northumbria Police. 610 households were contacted, just over 100 in each local authority area. In order to ensure a higher success rate in the phone calls, just two options were used compared to the four in the online consultation. Those taking part were asked if they would support an increase, with information provided around the monthly increase for a Band A and Band D. Overall results show that 85% of respondents agreed that they would support a 23 pence increase per month (1.99%) on their council tax to help the police cover some of the shortfall in government funding. When asked about a higher amount, 76% of respondents agreed they would support a 57 pence increase (4.99%) for the same purpose.

4.8 The reasons cited by respondents for supporting the potential increase to the police Council Tax precept included: wanting to support the police; due to positive encounters with the police; for public safety; and due to the strain upon local policing as a result of budget cuts. Conversely, respondents that expressed that they were opposed to any increase cited reasons such as: feeling that they could not afford any increase; that they already paid enough council tax; and as they felt that the current provision of public services did not justify an increase.

4.9 I have considered the options available to me and have taken into consideration the consultation feedback. My primary considerations are to ensure the effective delivery



of the Police and Crime Plan, protecting communities and the most vulnerable, and maintaining the provision of neighbourhood based policing services as far as possible and to keep police officers 'on the beat'. Alongside that I have to take in to account the impact on residents of any rise in household bills during a period of economic uncertainty. I believe it is the right decision to recommend an increase in the precept of 4.99% (£6.84 per year for a Band D household), to continue to support local policing services in the face of a challenging financial situation.

- 4.10 In deciding on the 57 pence per month increase of 4.99% alongside the increase in grant funding, I am confident that the Chief Constable and myself will be in a good position to continue to deliver for residents in the Northumbria force area.
- 4.11 I think it is also important to acknowledge that this increase in central government funding does not yet undo the impact of ten years of austerity and the overall funding reductions Northumbria Police have had to adjust to. Uplift targets allocated to date do not go far enough towards replacing the 1,100 officers that Northumbria lost between 2010 and 2019. Indeed, this is yet again only a one-year settlement which does not provide any certainty beyond March 2022.
- 4.12 Both myself, the Chief Constable and Northumbria Police are committed to fighting crime, preventing crime and improving lives – but without appropriate and suitable funding, we will face challenges and difficult decisions ahead.

## **5 Proposals**

- 5.1 I propose that the precept is increased by 4.99% which equates to £6.84 per year for a Band D property.
- 5.2 The impact of this decision in 2021/22 will allow for an additional and recurring £2.708m contribution to resources.
- 5.3 This proposal is made in the context of the budget needed to invest in policing resources, with essential expenditure to deliver the Police and Crime Plan.

## **6. Recommendation**

The Police and Crime Panel are asked to:

- I. Review the recommended precept proposal.
- II. Make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept for the forthcoming financial year.

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## **Proposed Council Tax and Revenue & Capital Budgets 2021/22**

### **1. Summary of Proposed Council Tax and Revenue & Capital Budgets 2021/22:**

- A proposed revenue budget of £320.243m for policing and crime reduction that includes:
  - Continued budget provision to deliver the previously agreed plans for investment in Northumbria that will enable the force to continue delivering on the priorities of communities and provide an excellent standard of policing services.
  - Delivery of the Northumbria police officer Uplift target by March 2022.
  - Maintaining the investment agreed in 2020/21 which was phased over 2020/21 (6.3m) and 2021/22 (£2.0m).
  - Capital investment in buildings, vehicles and new technology of £17.634m.
  - Proposed increase of 4.99% on the Council Tax Precept (£6.84 per year for a Band D property) in 2021/22 to raise an additional £2.708m income.
  - Investment of £2.700m in the provision of an additional 60 police officer investigator posts over and above existing recruitment plans and the Uplift target set by government.

### **Considerations**

### **2. In preparing the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021/22 the following have been considered:**

- The key principles underlying the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- The Police Grant settlement for 2021/22 which has provided detail on Home Office core grant funding for both revenue and capital, legacy Council Tax grants, Special Pension Grant, National police officer Uplift and the referendum limits for increases to the Council Tax Precept.
- The overall financial position of the force including: the likely revenue and capital outturn for 2020/21; budget pressures and savings identified for 2021/22; and the level of reserves available to the PCC.
- Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.
- Risk assessment.
- The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

### **Financial Strategy**

### **3. The 2021/22 budget is part of the four year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).**



4. The overall financial strategy seeks to deliver the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, support the Police 2025 Strategy, the mission, vision and values of Northumbria Police and meet the requirements of the National Strategic Policing Requirement.



## National Police Finance Settlement

5. The provisional police grant settlement was published on 16 December 2020.
6. The key headlines from the settlement are:
  - Police Core Grant – Core grant allocations to PCCs to be increased by £415m, to support the recruitment of an additional 6,000 officers by March 2022. This figure includes ring-fenced grant funding of £100m allocated to PCCs in-line with formula funding allocations and accessed through progression against their recruitment targets.
  - No direct inflationary increases have been allocated to core grant funding over and above the funding provided for additional officer recruitment.
  - Legacy grants relating to Council Tax and freeze grants for 2011/12 and 2014/15 remain payable.
  - Specific grant funding allocated to forces to manage part of the increased cost of employer pensions in 2019/20 has been confirmed for one further year only.
  - Council Tax Referendum Limits - The Government has proposed precept referendum limits for 2021/22 that enable PCCs to raise additional funding for local priorities through an increase of up to £15.00 for a Band D property.
  - PCCs to receive a portion of additional grant funding for local council tax support.
  - Police Capital Funding – Capital grants to PCCs remain in-line with 2020/21 allocations.
  - The provisional settlement announcement in December stated that further detail for a number of funding areas would not be available till after the New Year. Whilst some additional information has been released during January and through various media, there remains at the time of writing this report no formal confirmation of funding for Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) or Serious Violence (Surge) capability.

## Northumbria Settlement

7. The core grant increase for Northumbria including the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) grant is £12.761m, equivalent to 5.3%.
8. The increase is provided for recruitment of the Northumbria share of the national Uplift target of 6,000 officers by March 2022. The Northumbria target for Uplift during 2021/22 is an additional 181 officers.
9. It is important to acknowledge that the targeted central government funding to deliver the Police Uplift Programme will not return police officer numbers to the levels of 2010 or undo the overall funding reductions Northumbria Police have had to adjust to. Uplift targets allocated to date do not fully replace the 1,100 officers that Northumbria lost during that period.
10. Northumbria will continue to receive legacy grants totaling £8.168m, relating to Council Tax and freeze grants for 2011/12 and 2014/15.
11. Capital grant funding allocated by the Government for Northumbria is £0.338m. This represents less than 2% of the total funding required for capital investment in 2021/22 and is

a negligible amount when compared with the level of capital investment required by the force year-on-year.

12. The provisional settlement announcement in December stated that further detail for a number of funding areas would not be available till after the New Year. Whilst some additional information has been released during January and through various media, there remains at the time of writing this report no formal confirmation of funding for Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) or Serious Violence (Surge) capability.
13. This is, yet again a one-year settlement for policing which does not provide any certainty beyond March 2022.
14. **Council Tax Precept** - The Government has proposed precept referendum limits for 2021/22 that enable PCCs to raise additional funding for local priorities through an increase of up to £15.00 for a Band D property. For residents in Northumbria this would equate to a further 10.95% on Council Tax bills for 2021/22. However, it is for locally accountable PCCs to take decisions on local precept and explain to their electorate how the additional funding will be invested in police services.

### Capital Programme

15. The Commissioner has a capital budget for 2020/21 of £19.320m. The Quarter 3 capital monitoring report outlined a revised capital estimate of £12.134m as at 31 December 2020. The reduction is attributed to planned refurbishment work being placed under review, as a consequence of understanding the full implications of 'Covid-secure' requirements and contractual obligations.
16. The following table sets out the forecast outturn position for 2020/21 and a summary of the capital programme for 2021/22:

Capital Programme	Revised Budget 2020/21 £000	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 £000	Forecast Variance 2020/21 £000	Budget Estimate 2021/22 £000
Building Works	8,150	1,909	(6,241)	4,012
Information Technology and Digital Transformation	6,186	5,807	(379)	9,852
Vehicles and Equipment	4,984	4,418	(566)	3,770
	19,320	12,134	(7,186)	17,634

17. Key areas to note in the proposed programme are:
  - **Major and Minor Building Schemes** – The force has a programme of refurbishment and adaptation aimed at improving the condition of the estate with a focus on staff wellbeing as well as being able to fully accommodate the Uplift in officer numbers.
  - **Information Technology** - The Force have a number of significant improvement schemes to deliver change and efficiency through transformation which includes considerable investment in IT and digital infrastructure. We are going to start the process of replacing IT infrastructure which will include the replacement of all core operating systems; investment in data and analytics; and the future implementation of the National Emergency Services Network (ESN) within Northumbria.

- **Vehicles and Equipment** – Continued planned investment in replacement of force vehicles in accordance with delivery of the rolling programme of fleet investment. The provision and upgrading of personal issue equipment including body armour replacement, an Uplift in Taser capability and body-worn video. Ensuring those who protect us are kept safe, and those who threaten our safety face well-equipped officers.

### Revenue Budget Position 2020/21

18. The Commissioner’s Group revenue budget for 2020/21 is £296.393m. The Quarter 3 revenue monitoring report shows a projected underspend of £0.451m as at 31 December 2020.

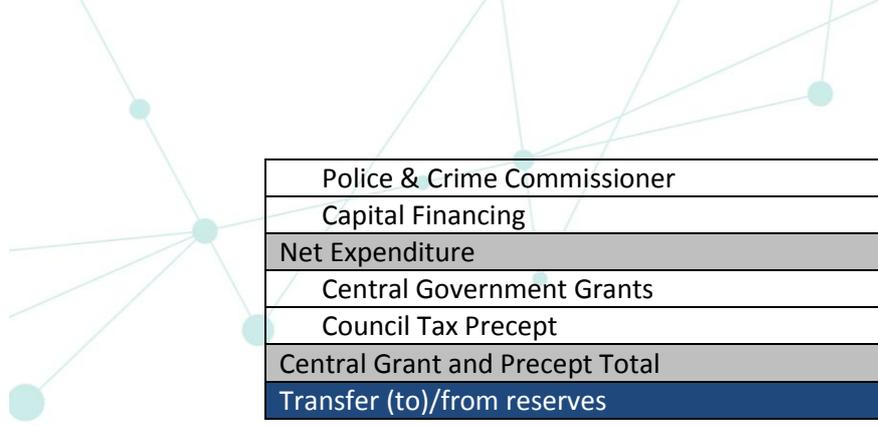
Revenue Budget 2020/21 Group Position	Approved Budget 2020/21 £000	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 £000	Forecast Variance 2020/21 £000
Chief Constable	283,382	284,011	629
Police & Crime Commissioner	2,264	1,966	(298)
Capital Financing	10,747	9,965	(782)
<b>Group Position Total</b>	<b>296,393</b>	<b>295,942</b>	<b>(451)</b>

19. The Chief Constable’s revenue budget for 2020/21 is £283.382m. The forecast overspend of £0.629m is attributable to the unfunded impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on force budgets. The Commissioner has allocated funding from within the general reserve to manage costs resulting from the pandemic that are not met by government in 2020/21.
20. The underspend against the Commissioners budget reflects a reduction in forecast expenditure against the Discretionary Fund during 2020/21.
21. For Capital financing the underspend relates mainly to the principal repayment of capital which is lower than the original budget estimate based on reduced expenditure in the final capital outturn for 2019/20. In addition interest costs are lower than budgeted which is attributable to the reduced borrowing requirement and the two emergency cuts to Bank Rate in March 2020.
22. The overall Group forecast represents an underspend of £0.451m, a variance of less than 0.2% of budget.
23. The forecast closing position on the general reserve for 2020/21 is £10.0m which is above the minimum set out in the Commissioners reserves strategy.

### Revenue Budget 2021/22

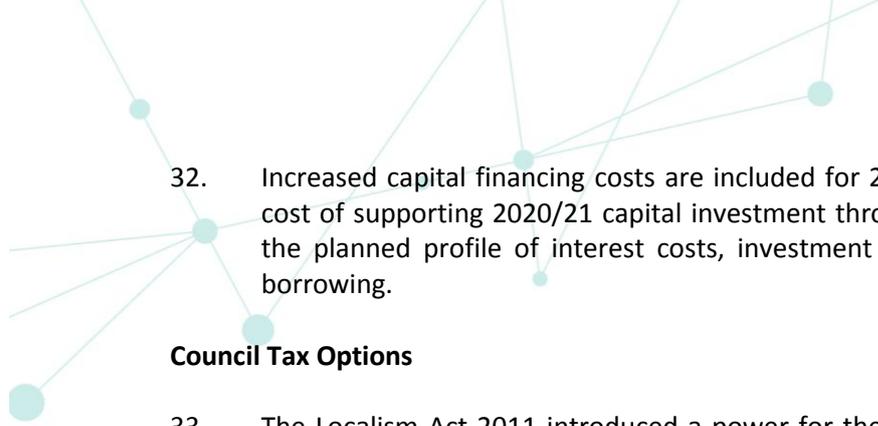
24. For the financial year 2021/22, the proposed Group revenue budget is £320.243m as set out below:

Group Revenue Budget 2021/22	Proposed Budget 2021/22 £000
Chief Constable	305,927



Police & Crime Commissioner	2,264
Capital Financing	12,052
Net Expenditure	320,243
Central Government Grants	(263,460)
Council Tax Precept	(56,783)
Central Grant and Precept Total	(320,243)
Transfer (to)/from reserves	nil

25. The group budget is held by the Police and Crime Commissioner who provides financial resources to the Chief Constable to deliver operational policing. The Commissioner has a small specific budget for the Commissioners Community Fund and the OPCC running costs. The Commissioner is maintaining the OPCC budget element at flat cash for 2021/22. The Capital Financing budget comprises the revenue provision for repayment of borrowing, interest costs and investment income.
26. The proposed revenue budget for 2021/22 will fully deliver the Northumbria share of the National police officer Uplift of an additional 6,000 officers by March 2022. The Northumbria target for Uplift during 2021/22 is an additional 181 officers.
27. The approved investment of £8.3m which was agreed last year and phased over 2020/21 (6.3m) and 2021/22 (£2.0m) is fully included in the revenue budget set for 2021/22. This significant investment provided the opportunity to invest in the infrastructure necessary to take Northumbria Police forward to 2025. Investment in IT and digital infrastructure, investigative capacity, digital forensics, public contact and maintaining focus on the most vulnerable members of our communities will continue to be delivered in 2021/22 and across the MTFS period.
28. In addition, in order to address the increase in demand and complexity of investigations, as well as looking to improve the quality of investigations, the Council Tax precept will be used to deliver an additional 60 police officer investigator posts in 2021/22, over and above existing recruitment plans and the Uplift target set by government. The £2.7m raised through the precept increase will provide for all salary and employer costs including training, IT, uniform and personal protective equipment, allowances, recruitment costs and personal issue kit such as Taser capability and body-worn video.
29. As the total cost of policing continues to rise, consideration has been given to all known budget pressures to make sure that the budget meets the challenge of providing Northumbria with the right resources to keep people safe. This includes the replacement of over 200 officer retirements and other leavers in addition to Uplift and the 60 police officer investigator posts. Pay progression is included for existing officers and staff along with the full year effect of the 2020 pay award, inflationary increases on injury pensions, rents and utilities, known contract increases and other non-pay inflation.
30. Budget pressures incorporated include ICT revenue costs associated with capital schemes, IT software licenses, storage and new software solutions, known operational budget pressures and budget provision to support Home Working arrangements across the force.
31. The force continues to apply scrutiny to all budgets, every year and on a line-by-line basis to ensure that all opportunities for savings are identified and budget increases are subject to robust challenge.

- 
32. Increased capital financing costs are included for 2021/22 reflecting the additional revenue cost of supporting 2020/21 capital investment through prudential borrowing. This includes the planned profile of interest costs, investment income and the principal repayment of borrowing.

### **Council Tax Options**

33. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to issue principles that define what should be considered excessive Council Tax, including proposed limits. From 2013 onwards, any PCC that wishes to raise its Council Tax above the limits that apply to them will have to hold a referendum.
34. The excessiveness limit for 2021/22 is £15.00 per year for a Band D property.
35. During 2020/21 the Council Tax base in the Northumbria force area reduced by an average 0.74% to 395,950 (Band D equivalent properties). The reduction in the Council Tax base for 2021/22 represents a loss of £0.406m in precept income when compared with 2020/21. When set against the expected increase of 1.40% (£0.800m) within last year's MTFs, based on anticipated growth in the number of properties, this represents a shortfall of £1.206m.
36. In addition, the net position estimated on the Commissioners share of Collection Fund balances at 31 March 2021, across the six local billing authorities, is a net deficit of £0.608m. Regulations governing the recovery of a deficit would ordinarily require the full amount to be paid to the Local Authority Collection Fund over the following financial year. However, on 1 December 2020, *'The Local Authorities (Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit) (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020'* were implemented and the changes to regulations require that an element of this deficit is spread across 3 years. The net deficit payable by the Commissioner in 2021/22 is £0.170m with £0.438m deferred to the following 2 years.
37. The PCC will receive a share of additional grant funding for local council tax support in 2021/22 of £1.686m. This is a one-off grant for 2021/22 only. This funding is being provided to compensate precepting and billing authorities for losses in Council Tax income as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Tax Base.
38. In calculating the overall settlement for policing in 2021/22 the Government has proposed enabling each PCC to raise further funding for local priorities through an increase of up to £15.00 per year for a Band D property. For residents in Northumbria this would equate to a further 10.95% on Council Tax bills for 2021/22. Consideration of the Council Tax Precept has to be taken alongside both the overall funding made available to the force and the impact on households of any increase.
39. The proposal is to increase the Council Tax precept by 4.99% (£6.84 per year for a Band D property) to raise an additional £2.708m over 2020/21. The Commissioner has stated that she is mindful that this last year has been one of financial challenge for many households and whilst the Government has said it will allow an increase of £15 per household (equivalent to 10.95% in Northumbria), the smaller increase of 4.99% is fairer to households while still ensuring Northumbria Police is well placed for the future.
40. The anticipated receipts of £56.953m from the precept are fully reflected within the proposed budget for 2021/22 as set out earlier in the report.



## Reserves

41. The Commissioner's reserves policy is set out in the MTFS and the Annual Reserves Strategy Statement and is subject to regular review.
42. The MTFS sets out the Commissioner's reserves strategy which is to maintain the general reserve at a minimum of 2% of the net revenue budget for the year. As at 31 March 2021 the balance is estimated to be £10.0m which equates to 3.1%.
43. Earmarked reserves are held by the Commissioner to address specific risks identified for Northumbria and these reserves will remain broadly unchanged across the 2021/22 financial year. These reserves remain appropriate, of sufficient value and fit for their intended purpose.

### **Adequacy of Reserves and Robustness of Budget Estimates**

44. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Joint Chief Finance Officer to undertake an assessment of the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves.
45. The budget and MTFS allows the Commissioner to consider the prudent use of reserves in the context of the future spending pressures and risks arising from potential changes to the funding formula without having a detrimental effect on policing.
46. In assessing the robustness of the budget, the Joint Chief Finance Officer has considered the following issues:
  - The general financial standing of the group made up of the OPCC and Northumbria Police.
  - The underlying budget assumptions, including an assessment of the estimates for pay and price increases and known budget pressures.
  - A risk assessment of expenditure and income estimates.
  - The future budget pressures identified in the MTFS.
  - The adequacy of the budget monitoring and financial reporting arrangements.
  - The adequacy of the Commissioner's governance arrangements and internal control system.
  - The adequacy of general reserves to cover any potential financial risks faced by the Commissioner.
  - The impact of funding cuts and the uncertainty around future budget pressures, Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2021 and the levels of grant support beyond 2021/22.
47. At 31 March 2021, the Commissioner's General Reserve is estimated at £10.0m (3.1% of revenue expenditure), in addition to other reserves which are earmarked for specific purposes. In estimating the level of reserves the Joint Chief Finance Officer has taken account of known commitments and the financial risks faced by the Commissioner which could impact on the level of reserves over the MTFS period.
48. The Joint Chief Finance Officer confirms that, after taking account of these issues, the revenue and capital estimates contained in this report are considered robust and that the

level of reserves is considered adequate to cover the financial risks faced by the Commissioner in 2021/22.

### Council Tax Requirement

49. The notified Council Tax Base figure across the six billing authorities is a total of 395,950 for 2021/22 which is a reduction of 2,966 against the previous year (0.74%).
50. The Localism Act requires the Commissioner to set a Council Tax Requirement. The calculation of the Council Tax Requirement, based on the proposed revenue budget and contribution from reserves is set out in the following table:

Council Tax 2021/22	£m	£m
<b>Total Revenue Expenditure</b>		<b>320.243</b>
<b>Add:</b> Appropriations to/(from) Reserves		-
<b>Budget Requirement</b>		<b>320.243</b>
<b>Less:</b>		
Home Office Core Grant	250.183	
Special Pension Grant	3.423	
Localised Council Tax Support Grant	6.867	
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2011/12	0.912	
Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014/15	0.389	
Local Council Tax Support Grant (Covid-19)	1.686	<b>(263.460)</b>
<b>Balance to be Raised Locally</b>		<b>56.783</b>
<b>Add:</b> Estimated Net Deficit on Collection Funds		0.170
<b>Council Tax Requirement</b>		<b>56.953</b>

51. The proportion of collection funds' net deficit payable by Northumbria Police to its constituent billing authorities is £0.170m for 2021/22 (£0.938m surplus in 2020/21), with a further £0.219m payable in each of 2022/23 and 2023/24.

### Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

52. Regulations came into effect from March 2008 with regard to preparing an Annual MRP Statement. MRP is the amount that needs to be set aside to reflect the depreciation of capital assets and provide funds for the principal repayment of borrowing. There are no proposed changes to the method used to calculate MRP and the Annual MRP statement for 2021/22 is attached at Annex A.

### Financial Considerations

53. Financial implications are considered throughout the report.

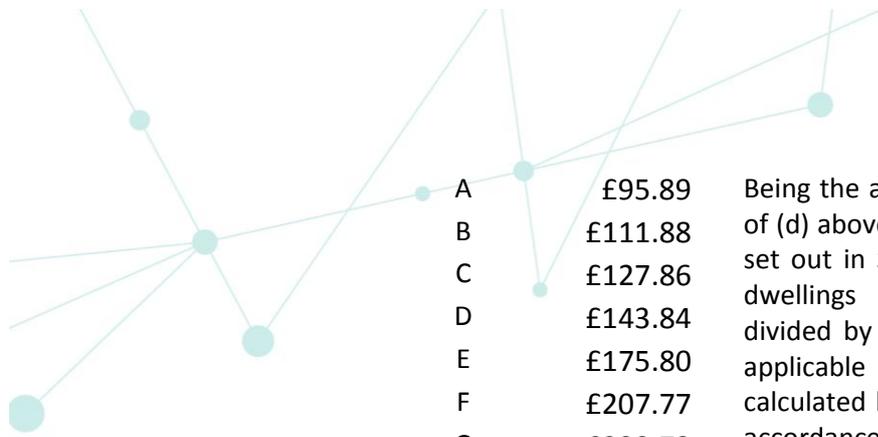


## Risk Management

54. Associated risks have been considered and recorded as appropriate, set out in Annex B

## Recommendations (Proposed)

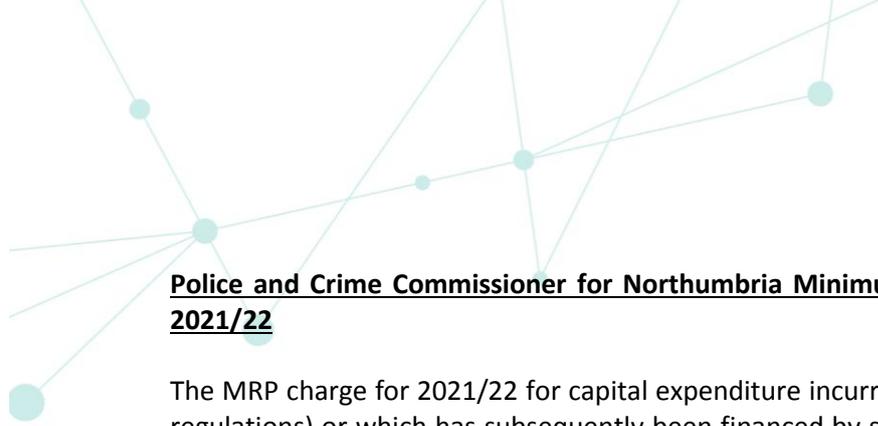
55. The Commissioner is requested to:
- I. Approve the capital programme and authorise the Joint Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer) to undertake the appropriate financing.
  - II. Approve the revenue budget.
  - III. Agree the review of the reserves policy.
  - IV. Note the recommendations of the Joint Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer) in respect of the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
56. Note the Council Tax Base of 395,950 for the year 2021/22 as notified by the billing authorities within Tyne and Wear and Northumberland (item T in the formula in Section 42B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended).
57. Approve the following amounts for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 42A, 42B and 45 to 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended:
- |     |                 |   |
|-----|-----------------|---|
| (a) | £337.236m       | Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Police and Crime Commissioner estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (2) (a) to (d) of the Act.  |
| (b) | £280.283m       | Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Police and Crime Commissioner estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (3) (a) to (b) adjusted for the item set out in S42A (10) of the Act.   |
| (c) | £56.953m        | Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Section 42A (4) of the Act, as it's Council Tax Requirement for the year (item R in the formula is Section 42B of the Act). |
| (d) | £143.84         | Being the amount at (c) above (item R) divided by the amount noted in Recommendation 2 above (item T), calculated by the Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Section 42B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.                              |
| (e) | Valuation bands |   |



A	£95.89
B	£111.88
C	£127.86
D	£143.84
E	£175.80
F	£207.77
G	£239.73
H	£287.68

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount of (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Section 47 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of the categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

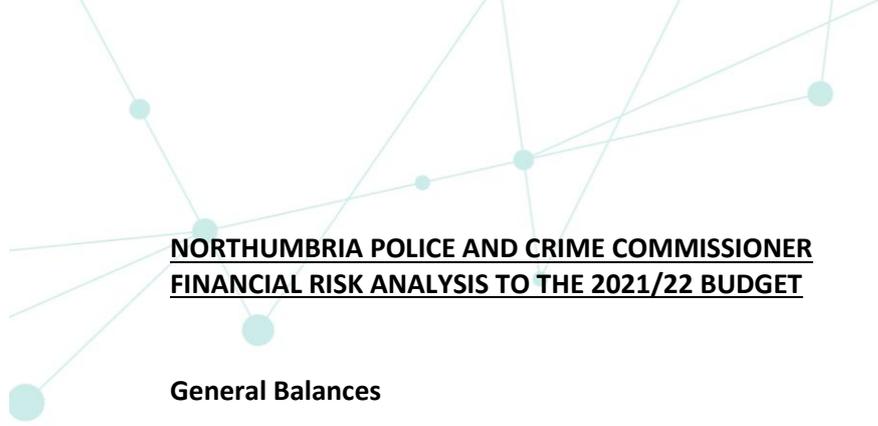
58. Resolve that under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act, the Commissioner’s relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined under Section 52ZC (1) of the Act for 2021/22.
  
59. Resolve that in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, the billing authorities within the area of this authority be issued with precepts in the amount of £56,953,423 for the financial year beginning 1 April 2021, the amount of the retrospective precepts to be issued to each billing authority’s area in accordance with the Sections 42A, 42B and 45 to 48 of the 1992 Act, as amended.
  
60. Accept the recommendation of the Joint Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer) for the method of calculating MRP for 2021/22 as set out in the Annual MRP statement at Annex A to this report.



**Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2021/22**

The MRP charge for 2021/22 for capital expenditure incurred before 01 April 2008 (prior to the new regulations) or which has subsequently been financed by supported borrowing will be based on the previous regulatory method of Capital Financing Requirement at a minimum of 4% of the opening balance less prescribed adjustments.

For all unsupported borrowing, exercised under the Prudential Code, the MRP Policy is based on the Asset Life Method. The minimum revenue provision will be at equal annual instalments over the life of the asset. The first charge will not be made until the year after the asset becomes operational.



**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**  
**FINANCIAL RISK ANALYSIS TO THE 2021/22 BUDGET**

### **General Balances**

The Commissioner's strategy for General Reserves is that these will be maintained at a minimum of 2% of the net revenue budget, to cover any major unforeseen expenditure or loss of funding. The financial risk is that the minimum level is threatened by the need to use reserves. For budgetary purposes the Commissioners MTFS plans aim to maintain a prudent General Reserve level set at 3% of net revenue budget.

The proposed budget as presented for 2021/22, and subject to robust and effective budgetary controls, does not create a risk to the General Reserve. The Commissioner is proposing a balanced budget with the forecast General Reserve remaining unchanged across the year at £10.0m representing 3.1% of net revenue budget, which is well above the minimum in the strategy.

### **Pay Increases**

In the Spending Review 2020 on 25 November 2020 the Government announced a pay freeze for most public sector workers including police officers and staff, other than those on lower incomes (below £24,000). The revenue budget for 2021/22 has therefore been set on that basis. The risk is that the Government's decision is rescinded and changed, with the effect that pay increases for 2021/22 exceed the level provided for within the budget.

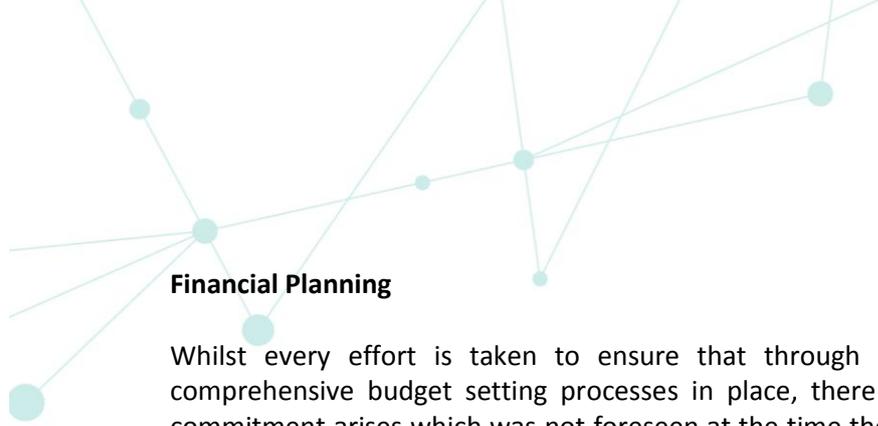
### **Price Increases and Inflation**

The risk is that price increases may exceed the levels provided for within the budget. This is mitigated by applying inflation on an individual basis to provide for contractual commitments and premises related expenditure. All other inflation will be managed within existing budgets reflecting the current economic climate. The risk that prices may rise is mitigated by budget monitoring arrangements and the Force's current approach to efficiency in challenging and managing spend pressures.

### **Capital Financing**

The risk is that Capital Financing Charges will be greater than budgeted. This is mitigated by:

- Revenue implications are considered as part of the capital planning process, reviewed and revised each year as part of the budget and MTFS process. Monthly budget monitoring ensures that potential variances are identified at the earliest opportunity in order to consider remedial action.
- Advice is taken from the Commissioner's external treasury management advisers Link Asset Services (LAS) in relation to revenue estimates for borrowing and investment interest.
- The principal repayment in respect of debt is the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), calculated on an asset by asset basis as part of the capital planning process. Any change in interest rates will not have an effect as 100% of debt is at fixed rates and any refinancing of existing debt will only take place if it will lead to a long term saving in interest charges.



## Financial Planning

Whilst every effort is taken to ensure that through all the detailed financial planning and comprehensive budget setting processes in place, there remains a risk that a major liability or commitment arises which was not foreseen at the time the budget was approved. This is mitigated by:

- The MTFS forecasts and planning processes include robust assessments of potential medium term spending pressures, to be assessed for inclusion in the Commissioner's budget, identified by the Chief Constable by reference amongst other sources to the Local Policing Plan.
- In addition, regular liaison by senior officers of the Force and the Commissioner's Office help to strengthen and coordinate the financial planning of the Commissioner.

## Loss of Deposit

The risk is that funds deposited by the Commissioner are lost due to the collapse of the financial institution with whom the deposit is placed. The risk is limited by the controls in the Treasury Management Strategy which focus on control and safety of deposits rather than maximising investment returns. The potential impact is limited by the strategy of a diverse portfolio with strict creditworthiness criteria and regular advice on the placement of new investments provided by the Commissioner's external treasury management advisers Link Asset Services (LAS).

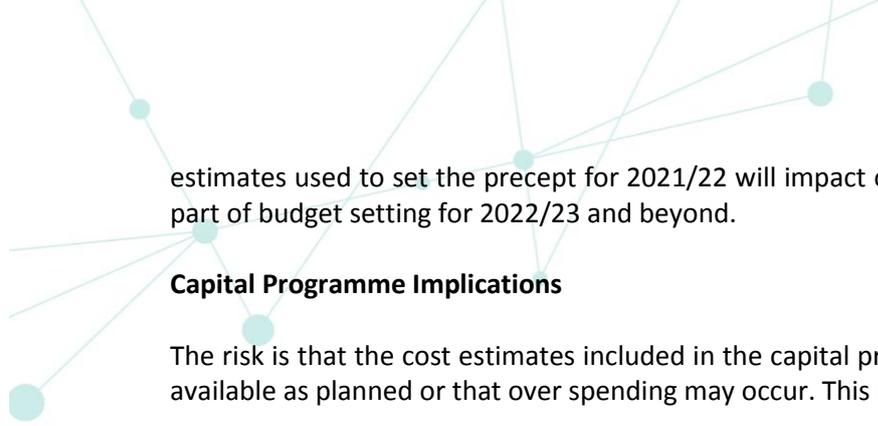
## Interest Rates on Deposits

The risk is that interest rates will be lower than expected. As a result of the 2 emergency cuts to Bank Rate in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, interest rates remain at historically low levels and the economic outlook suggests they will remain flat for this year and next. Advice has been taken from the Commissioner's external treasury management advisers Link Asset Services (LAS) on appropriate budget rates for borrowing and investment interest and prudent assumptions on likely interest rates for 2021/22 have been incorporated into the budget. The investment income budget for 2021/22 is therefore minimal at £0.040m and any fluctuation below that estimate would have little impact on the Group position.

## Council Tax

There is a significant degree of uncertainty on all matters relating to Council Tax income as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact on both the economy and employment. Local Authorities have reported a fall in collection rates, slowing of the growth provided by the house building sector and greater demand placed on Local Council Tax Support Schemes. The impact on precept income for Northumbria has been largely managed for 2021/22 with losses resulting from the net reduction in Tax Base across the six local authorities and the net deficit on the 2020/21 collection funds being offset by additional grant funding for Local Council Tax Support.

There remains a risk for future years which requires prudent estimates to be applied to MTFS forecasts for Council Tax. The additional grant funding has been confirmed for 2021/22 only but it is likely that the impact on Tax Base will extend into future years. Any deficit on the Collection Fund



estimates used to set the precept for 2021/22 will impact on future years, and will be considered as part of budget setting for 2022/23 and beyond.

### **Capital Programme Implications**

The risk is that the cost estimates included in the capital programme are understated, funding is not available as planned or that over spending may occur. This is mitigated by:

- Capital financing and affordability is considered in detail alongside the budget setting process. Capital expenditure in 2021/22 will be financed from borrowing with internal borrowing being maximised in-year through the use of reserve balances to minimise borrowing costs, and short-term borrowing applied as and when required to manage cashflow.
- Quarterly capital monitoring reports to the Commissioner provide assurance in the accuracy of forecasts.

### **Risk Management**

The risk is that all risks have not been identified when the budget has been set and that major financial consequences may result. This is mitigated by:

- Risk management arrangements.
- Comprehensive self and external insurance arrangements in place.
- Adequacy of the insurance reserve.
- Adequacy of the general balances and the overall reserves policy.

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