

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER REPORT MARCH 2020**

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**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2023/24**

Since the last regular panel meeting the Government has announced the latest Police Settlement and the panel has reviewed the police precept. As we discuss elsewhere on this agenda, Northumbria Police is looking to invest now to both reverse some of the effects of austerity and to look to the future and be ready for the new and emerging crime trends. In my discussions with the Chief Constable I have made clear that I want him to have the resources he needs to fight crime, but also that I want us to be a force that stands by our communities to prevent crime.

I have attached to this agenda my Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020/21 -2023/24 covering the financial considerations in the coming years. A key part of my role is in working with the police to ensure we are served by a force fit for the future. That means having a well-staffed workforce that is equipped to keep us safe, both from the challenges we face now and the ones that are a growing threat.

Two big features of that are recruitment and new technologies.

My MTFS sets out how £4.7m will be used to recruit new officers. This is additional investment that takes us well above the Government target. If we want to reverse the 1,100 officers lost to the force we have to move faster than the Government plans.

But having those new recruits, and, crucially, replacing retiring officers, is only one part of the solution to the challenges we face.

Northumbria Police is reliant upon an IT system that frankly is outdated and at odds with the demands of modern policing. I want to invest in cyber-crime specialists, but that targeted work must go hand in hand with a major new IT roll out, giving police officers the tools they need to do the job.

Despite the investment I set out in the MTFS, the financial outlook remains troubling. The overall financial context for Northumbria Police remains extremely challenging. The increase in central government funding provided by the 2020/21 settlement does not yet undo the impact of ten years of austerity and the overall funding reductions that Northumbria have had to deliver. Indeed this is a one-year settlement which does not provide any certainty beyond March 2021.

The force may face further budget pressures in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. The messaging from HM Treasury is that the CSR 2020 will be tough and future settlements will not be as favourable.

I will go over some of the wider challenges and responses in this update report, but if you would like to read the comprehensive performance data it can be found on my website at [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk) under the Police and Crime Plan section.

## **Coronavirus**

I have discussed regularly with the Chief Constable the rapidly developing Coronavirus situation. Force-wide guidance is in place on the steps to take during the outbreak, and the force itself has robust workforce plans in place to cope with staff shortages.

It's important that those providing an essential public service themselves remain healthy.

All front line officers and staff have been given specific guidance on how to deal with people including those dialling 999 to report symptoms, although obviously calling 111 is the best option for anyone who suspects they have the virus.

The guidance also includes a process for people entering police stations and custody suites with symptoms.

## **Conducted Energy Devices – ‘Tasers’**

We need a police force that is safe and that can keep us safe. That's why I'm proud to have announced a major roll out in Tasers.

Over the next two years Northumbria Police will increase the number of Taser-trained officer numbers from around 650 at present to an expected 1,889 – meaning most of the frontline force will have the ability to use the devices.

Operational decisions on deploying these officers is a decision for the force, but for me this is a core crime fighting technique. These devices are rarely used in the sense of them being discharged, but they have a wider benefit.

Often, just the potential for their use can help calm a situation down, reminding people of the seriousness of the situation and giving officers the chance to talk to a person calmly.

Funding for these devices is essentially from two places. The Home Office provides some grant funding, and alongside this my budget for the force provides the day to day funds to keep them in use, which amounts to around £400,000.

I think a Taser-trained force is essential to keeping us safe, and I'm confident we have the standards of professionalism required within the force to make these a

useful contribution in fighting crime. For information I can assure you that I scrutinise 'use of force' within my annual scrutiny programme focusing on ensuring that Northumbria Police have appropriate review systems in place where there has been use of force and also invaluable external scrutiny which ensures that force is being used legitimately and appropriately. Any issues identified are addressed by Operational Training or Professional Standards

### **Supporting Victims Fund**

Last month I confirmed the latest funding from the Supporting Victims Fund, as part of my commitment to helping victims affected by crime.

This is the first round of victims' funds to be announced this year, with more funding to be allocated to specialist services and charitable organisations over the coming weeks.

My office awarded nearly £1m to a range of organisations who help those considered to be the most vulnerable victims – domestic abuse and sexual violence victims, young people, victims of hate crime, those with mental health needs and those with other vulnerabilities.

Some of this year's beneficiaries include Sunderland Counselling Services, The Angelou Centre, Tyneside and Northumberland Mind, and Streetwise Young People's Project.

Alongside that, I have worked with NHS England to support a range of specialist services. NHS England has announced £140,000 of funding to help support sexual violence help lines, counselling services and specialist tailored support to help victims and survivors to cope, recover and rebuild their lives.

Some of the local services receiving funding include: Community Counselling Cooperative, Children North East, The Angelou Centre and Victims First Northumbria.

### **Regional Commissioning of Sexual Assault Referral Centres**

Sexual violence and assault are harrowing experiences which impact significantly on the health and wellbeing of adults, young people and children. There are currently a range of SARC services operating across the North East and Cumbria and commissioning arrangements are complex. There are multiple variable contracts and current services vary with different levels of service and standards.

To solve this, my office is working with PCCs in Cleveland, Cumbria and Durham and NHS England on jointly procuring a contract for the following services from:

- SARC Service Delivery and Management,
- Forensic Medical Examination, and
- Crisis Work

The proposal is to move away from multiple, variable contracts and agreements by adopting a standard service specification based on what users need.

Alongside this, a project board consisting of appropriate representatives from the four PCCs and NHS England has been established to take forward this work. The project board has undertaken a programme of engagement including collating the views of service users and wider stakeholders. We have considered what works now, what could improve, any unmet needs or future emerging demands and how services could work differently in future.

## **Recruitment**

Northumbria Police are continuing with their ongoing recruitment campaign as we seek to replace some of the 1,100 officers lost to austerity. As well as the new, additional officers we're recruiting, it's important we also hire to replace retiring officers and others leaving the force. If we don't start to replace them now we will face a much a bigger shortfall in years to come.

To support this, a bold targeted campaign is underway to increase police officer numbers. The force is harnessing this opportunity to be more representative of the area it polices, and as such it aims to increase the numbers of female, BAME, and officers from the rural community.

An innovative approach has been adopted by the Force's Communications & Engagement team which have used the latest digital marketing opportunities to target those specific demographics. Led by research, the approach addresses some of the perceived barriers that candidates from these groups have when thinking about joining the police.

The approach is working with a 360% increase in visitors to the careers website page and sell out engagement events for female and BAME candidates.

I will update the panel on recruitment throughout the year following the regular assessment processes.

I look forward to meeting the new recruits.

## **Hate Crime Champions**

Sometimes we need a little support in order to stand up to Hate Crime, that's why I'm proud to be funding the Hate Crime Champions scheme.

The initiative is a direct response to concerns of under-reporting and is designed to highlight that hate crime is totally unacceptable in our region and together we can put a stop to it.

The nationally acclaimed hate awareness packages explore the impact of hate on victims and the wider community, the barriers to reporting and the best ways to seek help.

At the end of the training session is an appeal for volunteers to take their commitment a step further and become hate crime champions. The role is designed

to provide a visible presence, educating those around them within organisations or local communities.

As well as helping to fund the scheme, my office has also had a training session and I'm told the team found it very engaging.

I support this training because with hate crime rising it is clear we need to do everything we can to tackle it. Wherever you were born, whoever you worship, whoever you love – we should all feel safe. I am proud to be Police and Crime Commissioner of such a welcoming region but there are always people who spoil things, who incite hatred and that's completely unacceptable.”

I want victims to feel listened to, and to know that there are people around them who have got their back, who will call out hateful behaviours and help people get the right support to overcome their experience. It's especially important that we try and reach out to those who are perhaps uncomfortable contacting the police. Our champions are there to make getting help easier – it's such an important role and I'm thankful to everyone who takes it on. I want there to be hate crime champions everywhere.”

### **Violence Reduction Unit**

Work is ongoing on the second phase of my Violence Reduction Unit and I look forward to bringing you more information on that shortly. At the core of the team's mission is the belief that as well as fighting crime with our police force, we have to support our communities to prevent crime.

In many cases, that means finding trusted local voices who can work with those at risk of violence and helping them make better choices. Nowhere has this more approach being more powerful than in the recent visit of the Knife Angel.

The Knife Angel left the region at the end of February following a month long stay in Gateshead that has seen impactful workshops delivered to nearly 40 schools, youth groups and colleges.

Through the workshops, more than 1,000 students have heard Samantha's story and listened to the lasting damage suffered by the Madgin family following the horrifying murder of 18-year-old Samantha in 2007.

Samantha's Legacy, ran by Alison & Carly Madgin, the mother and sister of Samantha, have been present at the Angel every day since its arrival on 30th January, delivering the workshops, engaging with visitors to the monument, and ensuring Samantha's story is heard far and wide.

The workshops delivered by the family are hard-hitting, detailing the horrific events that led to the murder of Samantha Madgin, and the effects it had on the family and still has to the day.

Students attending the workshops are also informed on the wider legal ramifications of carrying a knife by Northumbria Police and the services available to young people who may need help and support in relation to this issue.

A number of projects are currently under review and an options appraisal process being undertaken looking and working with the Strategic Violence Reduction Board we will develop a Response Strategy to continue to deliver a range of interventions to deliver on the VRU aim of improving lives to prevent crime.

## **Out and About**

Since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting, I have met the following groups / visits. It's always good to hear first-hand from local residents what the police are doing well, and where improvements could be made and I am able to talk direct to the Chief Constable about any of the issues raised by local people ensuring that local policing responds to the needs of our communities. . A sample of that activity includes:

- Meeting with Metro staff and police officers in joint operations to tackle anti-social behaviour on the transport network.
- Launched my VRU in Boldon with over 150 partners and guests to outline plans for Phase 1 of project.
- Hosted a Knife Ambassadors meeting with Inspectors Bosson & Hetherington hearing views of Youth Parliament and Youth Council members.
- Joined the Whitley Bay street pastors for an evening.
- Joined Special Constables McCaughey and Simm in Ryton for the Police & Neighbourhood Watch meeting.
- Attended the UK Home Office Tackling Crime Forum in London with other PCCs.
- Met with Alice Ruggles Trust with Northumbria Police to hear about advances in stalking and coercive control investigations.
- Joined the Chief Constable in visiting a group to mark the International Day to End Female Genital Mutilation.
- Met with staff from Children North East to see how they support young people that have been victims of crime.
- Visited a Kicks session by Foundation of Light which is funded through my VRU.
- Celebrated the achievements of local women in the community with Sunderland International Bangladesh Centre.
- Met with Forward Assist who provide specialist health and wellbeing support for veterans.
- Hosted NE Youth to hear their plans to mark their 85<sup>th</sup> year of supporting young people across the region.
- Held advice surgeries in Birtley, Byker, South Shields, Hexham, West Denton and Central Newcastle.