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Sent via email

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Dear David,

Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025

Thank you for your letter and for all the comments made by the panel. These have really helped me shape the final plan and I have provided a response to each point, with the panel comment in italics and my response below.

The draft Plan and its priorities are reasonable and generally supported by the Panel. However, the language used is of concern, as the content of the draft is presented primarily in terms of providing assurance and support to residents and victims of crime, rather than reducing and responding more effectively to crime and disorder.

Thank you for this comment, I do wish to make sure the plan reflects the aims to reduce crime and disorder. I have been through the plan and am satisfied that there are references throughout the plan on reducing crime types and anti-social behaviour.

The use of varying terms, including 'ensure, support, reduce and tackle', in priorities and actions could lead to confusion; and whether there is a practical distinction between reducing and tackling matters is of concern.

I note that there is varying language in the plan, and we have reviewed this. In part, this is for ease of reading rather than using repetitive language. However, many of the terms used are purposefully describing the intention. For example, the OPCC cannot 'tackle' or 'reduce' crime being non-operational but can 'ensure' a focus through scrutiny and accountability. Victims need to be 'supported' when crimes happen, which is important alongside aims to reduce crimes. And in many cases, we are aware that whilst the outcome is to 'reduce' crime and ASB, the likely effect in terms of measurement of increased action will be to increase reporting in many cases, hence preferring the terminology of 'tackle'. We will review the plan to make sure each term best describes the action but will still have varying language.

The focus on preventing violence against women and girls is welcome. However, it is unclear why the title of the priority refers only to women and girls when a sub-heading and actions refer to men and boys; and it is also unclear whether the priority as drafted promotes protecting and supporting non-binary people. It is therefore suggested that the priority be redrafted to clearly encompass all people.

This was a good debate at the panel, reflecting national debates. Of course, I wish to reduce violence for all, but make no apology that for the next few years the focus needs to be on VAWG. It is part of the national Governments Strategic Policing Requirement and is recognised

as a national threat to safety. Therefore, I won't be changing the heading. However, I have asked my office to amend the section on men and boys to better reflect the panel's views.

There are apparent overlaps between the priorities of 'preventing violence against women and girls' and 'protecting people from harm in Surrey' and between 'working with Surrey communities so they feel safe' and 'strengthen relationships between Surrey Police and Surrey residents'. Therefore, the inclusion of actions under certain priorities but not others creates ambiguity in respect of whether those actions will also be undertaken in relation to other apparently relevant priorities.

I note the panel comments and agree to an extent. There are always going to be overlaps in a Plan, no matter how you cut the priorities. The overarching priorities set the direction of what policing and community safety partners should achieve and the actions provide focus. I recognise that actions in one area may also achieve improvements in other priorities.

The sole action for your Office under the heading 'to support men and boys' – for your Office to 'review and understand the current provision of services to male victims, including the police response, victim support services and the effectiveness of safety planning for male victims' – will in all probability be fully discharged early in the life of the Plan, after which your Office will be subject to no further Plan obligations regarding supporting male victims of violence and sexual assault.

As above, we have amended the section on men and boys to reflect the panel comments.

The draft Plan does not sufficiently address two key priorities of your residents and partners as reported in the findings of your consultative surveys: tackling anti-social behaviour; and increasing visible local policing. Those priorities should be accorded greater weight in the Plan.

Tackling ASB and improving visibility, in its widest sense, is included in the plan. Tackling ASB is the top action in keeping communities safe. Visibility is the top action in strengthening relationships. I believe that the overarching aims of safe communities and good relationships are the right ones, with the actions underneath being an integral part of achieving those aims. Visibility, for example, in itself isn't an outcome. The outcome is a good relationship so that communities feel safe, feel confident to report crime and support the police.

The reference to directing increased resources to areas of greatest need could be detrimental to increasing visible local policing in other areas.

Thank you for this comment. The greatest need referred to in the plan is around crime types, rather than geographical area. For example, we know that crimes committed in homes (domestic abuse, online abuse and child abuse) continue to increase. 'Visibility' needs to be in ways which impact on those crimes – schools, community groups and online presence, not just street presence. I will make sure this comment is amended to reflect that, rather than implying geographical need.

The focus on ensuring safer roads is welcome. However, more visible enforcement is desirable.

The Road Policing Unit (RPU) and Fatal Five Team do carry out enforcement as well as reduction activity. We have suggested that the head of RPU speak to the panel at a later date. But I have asked my office to add the word 'enforcement' to this section.

The commitment to 'seeing how workforce diversity in Surrey Police can be improved' should be updated to a commitment to improving the diversity of Surrey Police's workforce, as the Chief Constable has accepted such change is needed.

The wording of this commitment has been changed to "improving" rather than "seeing how.. can be improved".

Text in respect of working with partners, including government, to reduce backlogs in the criminal justice system and increase its efficiency should be strengthened.

Under current accountability and governance, I can do no more than 'work' with others to reduce backlogs. But I will continue to campaign for improvement.

The following should be considered for inclusion as priorities in the Plan:

- ***providing value for money; and***
- ***tackling rural crime.***

A section of resources was initially included as a priority in the plan. However, after much discussion we decided to move this to a section within the plan, rather than a separate priority. However, the text originally included in that 6th priority remains, as does the focus – we need to achieve best use of resources to meet the priorities.

As said at the panel, I don't agree that tackling rural crime should be a separate priority. 'Rural' crime isn't a distinct crime category – theft, wildlife crime, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour happens across our communities in urban, semi-rural and rural settings. However, there is a separate action in plan, reflecting the need to have dedicated staff for some types of 'rural crime' such as plant theft and wildlife crime, and my team have added some actions under this section to further bolster support for our rural communities.

Please also number the priorities in the Plan for ease of reference.

I have considered this and decided against numbering. The priorities aren't in order of focus and I don't want to suggest they are. In the word version of the plan it would aid reference, but I hope the panel will see that in the designed version the priorities are quite easy to read without numbering.

Reference to the following should be considered for inclusion in the Plan:

- ***increasing positive outcomes for all offence types;***

I don't want to include this for all offence types, as we have prioritised areas in the plan. There is reference to solving crime in the plan, which I consider a more reader friendly term. But I have added the word 'arrest' to make this clearer.

- ***tackling climate change;***

This has been added in the resources section.

- ***engaging with and improving outcomes for BAME and LGBTQ+ communities specifically;***

We have purposefully used the wording of 'all' and 'diverse' communities under engagement and other sections. We don't wish to pick out two communities, or risk exclusion of any one community by providing a list of all communities.

- ***promoting understanding and awareness of the community trigger process;***

This is something we can discuss with the panel and their Districts and Boroughs outside the plan. It is the responsibility of the Districts and Boroughs to promote and lead on the community trigger process and I don't wish to cause confusion by implying that the OPCS leads on this process.

- ***in-person and online engagement with local communities by Surrey Police;***

In person engagement is already reflected in the plan. I have added in online engagement.

- ***tackling traveller incursions;***

This is already reflected in the plan, using the term 'unauthorised encampments'.

- ***the professionalism and training of Police officers;***

This has been added to the plan.

- ***supporting the wellbeing of residents through close collaboration with partners, particularly in respect of addressing anti-social behaviour and its effects;***

Wording with regard to wellbeing has been added to the section on partnership.

- ***publicising neighbourhood watch groups,***

I consider this too tactical for the plan, but I will ask my office to speak to the police on how this can be better done through means such as "In the Know".


So that we and the public can hold you to account for the implementation of your Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025, it should include measures linked with its priorities and, where appropriate, associated targets.

As said at the meeting, we have not included measures and targets within the plan. We will use a set of measures for monitoring progress against the plan, although not targets which are considered inappropriate for most policing measures.

I wish to thank the panel for their support in the development of the plan. This is the first time that a Surrey PCC has carried out such extensive consultation and engagement before issuing a Police and Crime Plan. I am grateful for the involvement of the panel members in the consultation process which helped shape the draft plan. I very much welcome these comments, showing support for the plan but also giving some really good suggestions to ensure the final product is right for Surrey. We aim to publish the plan later this week, in advance of the budget consultation.

Please also pass over my thanks to Benjamin and Amelia for prioritising the Panel's response to the plan.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Townsend
Police and Crime Commissioner