Helping Police to Help the Public
Building Better Policing for Bedfordshire

The Police and Crime Plan for our county
Introduction by Kathryn Holloway, your Police and Crime Commissioner

This Plan represents the strategic direction I am setting for Bedfordshire Police for the next four years. It explains the priorities which I am establishing, having listened to communities from throughout our county of 644,000 residents during the recent Police and Crime Commissioner Election Campaign, from the point at which I became a candidate on October 15 2015 to the vote on May 5 2016. It will be for the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police, Jon Boutcher, his top tier team and the Force as a whole to deliver on these priorities over my four-year term to follow this direction of travel to its ultimate destination; greater confidence in Bedfordshire Police and the service we provide to the public.

My Plan is designed to be accessible to all. It suggests common sense, practical, achievable and affordable solutions to Bedfordshire’s Policing challenges. It aims to be the opposite of a complex business or technical manual, with impenetrable data. I want it to set the tone of my term of office as your Commissioner, clearly explaining my goals and progress to the public.

Funding

It is appropriate to address the issue of funding first. Bedfordshire Police have a budget of approximately £100 million. There have been historic issues with this level of funding of police in our county as a result of the way the National Police Funding Formula is constructed. It does not take into account data concerning Counter Terror or Serious Organised Crime, like drug dealing or human trafficking, which are expensive to police given the very significant investment in detective work, including surveillance, which is generally required to bring about successful prosecutions.

This has been a problem under administrations across the political spectrum, not just under the current Government. It is also why Bedfordshire’s budget issues have long been characterised as funding for a rural force, despite our urban problems, principally – though not exclusively – relating to crime in our three largest towns of Luton, Bedford and Leighton Buzzard.

At the time of writing, in May 2016, the second election of Police and Crime Commissioners has led to a change of administration in Bedfordshire. Only weeks before the election, I met with the current Policing Minister, Mike Penning, who told me on the record that he is “personally committed to fairer funding of Bedfordshire Police, as is the Government” but that this would not amount to “a blank cheque.” In other words, the will and intention appears to be there at national level to increase Bedfordshire Police’s budget to more adequately reflect the demands we face across communities ranging from large town centres to market towns, villages and hamlets, but it will be up to me, as your choice for Police and Crime Commissioner, to spend any increase in our budget wisely and make the money work to maximum effect. The Minister is responsible for the overall National Funding Formula for all 43 forces and will determine what “fairer funding for Bedfordshire” ultimately amounts to.

In making this judgment I trust due consideration will be given to the fact that our county faces significant challenges that relate more commonly to the very largest city environments. The events of my first fortnight in office, in the last two weeks of May 2016, exemplify this; on May 11 a man died during his arrest in Bedford and the coroner confirmed, in opening the inquest, that he had ingested a quantity of drugs. This event was followed, within days, by the brutal murder of an Asian mother of four in Luton. This crime caused a wave of anxiety among the 50,000-strong Muslim community in the town as a result of a single line of inquiry relating to the possibility of a burglary at her home. Managing this response required the deployment of high-visibility police patrols around the clock; the Chief Constable’s presence in the town to talk with councillors and faith leaders and my own similar involvement to try to reassure the community and restore calm. Despite this, some individuals sought vigilant action against those they considered might be responsible, based purely on rumour, producing further policing challenges. Within a week, the conclusion of the annual Luton carnival was marked with a public order issue despite the presence of 100 officers to police the event. A brawl broke out in St George’s Square, Luton, and groups of threatening youths appeared sporadically at other locations in the town including the Luton and Dunstable Hospital, after four stabbings. Officers faced youths armed with improvised weapons, including iron bars and a machete-style large knife. Bedfordshire Police called in reinforcements from our tri-force colleagues and those in Thames Valley and Leicestershire.

In addition, the town produces other policing challenges more akin to the capital. It has required high-cost policing of demonstrations by organisations such as the English Defence League and Britain First. The costs of policing these, since 2010, have been approximately £3.9 million. The Counter Terror threat from Bedfordshire as a whole means the county is ranked third in the country, behind London and Birmingham, in terms of risk, and we face other significant issues from Serious Organised Crime, including drug, human trafficking and modern slavery, gun, knife and gang crime.

This level of local demand is the reason why Bedfordshire is the lead force in the tri-force collaboration arrangement including Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, and leads the East as a region in the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) including our Counter Terror Intelligence Unit (CTIU) and the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROC(U)). It is the case, therefore, that I hold the Chief Constable, Jon Boutcher, to account on behalf of the region’s Police and Crime Commissioners for these units. I hope this assists the reader in understanding the rationale behind this arrangement and the key benefits of having strategic leadership over these specialist areas within our Force, since it faces by far the biggest challenges in the region as a whole in relation to organised crime and terrorism.

Financial Position

The Police Funding Settlement for 2016-17 confirmed a grant reduction of 6.6% for Bedfordshire (£400,000). This level of reduction to grant, along with the requirement from Central Government to increase the police share of Council Tax by 1.99% to secure this funding, means that the budget for the Force should be very similar for the next four years through to 2019/20. This does not mean the Force will not need to make savings during this period. Based on available information, it is likely that Bedfordshire Police will need to make £11.5 million worth of savings (following £25.3 million worth of previous savings made between 2011-12 and 2015-16). Bedfordshire will continue to show strong budget management and planning in the delivery of the savings required through transforming the way the Force delivers its services, both in collaboration with other Police Forces and with other blue light services and local authorities.

However, in comparison, to similarly sized areas and those with comparable levels of demand – especially in relation to Counter Terror and Serious Organised Crime – we are still very much a low-funded force and as Commissioner for Bedfordshire I will not only oversee the strongest possible management of our finances but will continue to lobby Government to ensure that our county receives an equitable financial settlement.

Due to the level of funding and the savings already achieved, this Force will find it harder to achieve further savings than others, but it will continue to protect local policing teams, safeguard vulnerable people and deliver its purpose of effectively fighting crime. Together with my financial audit team, I will relentlessly explore new opportunities for maximizing the available resources to protect our communities.
### How Bedfordshire Police is Funded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it is spent in £m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officers and Staff</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies, Contracted Services, Premises and Vehicles</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioner Funded Initiatives</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108.9</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**Where the money comes from 2016-17 £m**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Government Funding</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Precept</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Fund</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Budget</td>
<td>101.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and Charges</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Government Grants</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>108.9</strong></td>
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### Evidence-based Arguments

I am entirely convinced that Evidence Based Policing is the way forward to best support our arguments over funding and staffing and to carry the public and officers with us, creating confidence over the effectiveness of any change where new policing initiatives are concerned. According to the Economic and Social Research Council, “Evidence-based policing is a way of making decisions about what works in policing, it helps the police service make more informed decisions about what policies and practices are cost-effective and improve their service to the public.”

In the past we have made our case of requiring 300 extra officers on the basis of comparing the ratio of staff against population and pointing to London and other areas to justify this. It should be evident that no such easy comparison exists; the Luton area may stand fairly close comparison with the capital and there are plenty of examples of cross-over crimes and similar levels of threat, from gang, knife and drug crime to Counter Terror, but much of Bedfordshire is rural or comprises far smaller towns and settlements. Only by making a study of the genuine level of demand, and where and where it exists, and working back from this to an analysis of how many officers would be needed to best meet this need can a proper, evidence-based, argument be made.

This is why I am supporting Bedfordshire Police working together with Cambridge University, the College of Policing and the Home Office to provide a modern demand profiling method to deliver reliable data and proof to strengthen our argument.

In exactly the same way we need to prove the effectiveness of policing projects and pilot studies and provide proper measurement of the work of those to whom the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) provides grants for Victim Support, Community Safety or Crime Prevention to prove we are more effectively tackling crime, getting value for money and providing satisfaction to our public.

There are also further opportunities for our force to apply for grants from within Government, relating to new initiatives bringing genuine innovation and to help build stronger, safer communities and prevent crime. Wherever such an opportunity exists you may rest assured that I will seek to access it on behalf of Bedfordshire Police and the public we serve.

### Collaboration across other forces.

I will work to make my money work across the public purse, sharing facilities and supporting other services where possible. Bedfordshire Police is already involved in significant sharing of specialist services and their costs with its neighbours, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, in an arrangement known as Joint Protective Services (JPS) as a tri-force initiative. This is not a merger or amalgamation but just what it says, a mutual support network which aims to avoid the on-going duplication of costly services where one department could serve all three counties equally well. Whenever there are genuine savings and efficiencies for this county I will support and extend this joint-working, but I will not do so if overall benefits do not result for Bedfordshire and its communities. I am your Commissioner and you rightly expect me to put your interests first.

Currently the Major Crime Unit, Counter Terrorism and Detection of Extremism, Scientific Forensics Services, Armed Policing, Civil Contingencies, Public Order Policing, the Police Dog Unit, Roads Policing/Automatic Number Plate Recognition, Firearms Licensing, Professional Standards, Procurement, ICT and HR are all delivered collaboratively. A working total of savings achieved so far stands at £15 million across the three force Strategic Alliance and the ambition is to save a further £14 million in this way. These savings are required by the three forces to ensure that we continue to protect and maximise our frontline local policing capability. On-going plans for further joint-working, as I take on the role of Commissioner, include a shared Control Room on two sites answering calls to common standards, Custody management and Criminal Justice. Increasing collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire remains a critical part of my plan to deliver effective policing within the available budget.

But the drive to collaborate will not proceed at all costs. A business case will always have to be made that this works for Bedfordshire and it is the best option compared with alternatives to provide a balance between the best price and the best possible service for the public here. For example the tri-force is not the only prospect for collaboration: more and more opportunities have evolved to collaborate across the other 999 services, especially with our colleagues in Fire and Rescue, who so often work alongside us, whether in road accidents or major emergencies. I will be exploring these possibilities and business cases as well to make sure that the choice made represents both best value and the best possible service to you.

Further exciting opportunities lie ahead with a commitment to working as part of seven surrounding county forces, not just three, given the success of such joint-working in the recent past which makes the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire tri-force the most successful collaborative hub in the county. These seven counties are Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent. The Police and Crime Plan for our county

### Athena – a common IT platform

Effective joint working across the seven Eastern forces, as well as maximum efficiency within the tri-force, will depend on the introduction of the Athena common IT platform. The programme to deliver this £32 million project launched in 2010. Athena is set to allow forces to manage intelligence, investigation, custody details, case preparation and warrants, all from the same system, replacing the multi-system set up and allowing each force to be aware of the policing activity of the other Athena forces so that the arrest of an individual wanted in another police area will be shared, for example, as well background intelligence concerning a particular individual. It is, in essence, a means to join up information among neighbouring forces.

Athena has been introduced in Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk and has not been without its teething difficulties. There have been examples of loss of service which have fallen below the required 99.999% availability. Athena had been due to be introduced in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire on November 14 2016. However, the supplier has been asked for further work to ensure efficiency and operability of the system. I can assure you that neither I nor Commissioners in these neighbouring forces, will be launching the system here without proper assurances that these matters have been addressed and that the system has proper resilience and is fit for purpose.

### Future Update

This Plan, which is a legal requirement of your Police and Crime Commissioner, which needs to be updated annually with a report to you on progress, looks both at the challenges we currently face here in Bedfordshire and ahead to those which are part of a changing pattern of crime and policing demand in the twenty-first century, to try to anticipate and make provision for emerging threats to secure an umbrella of protection for our residents, wherever they live, into the future.
The “and Crime” agenda – working with Victim Support and Community Safety Partners

In addition to my responsibilities towards victims, I am tasked with distribution of specific funds to assist to strengthen the safety of our communities and to try to break the cycle of crime. The majority of such funds were distributed by my predecessor for the financial year ahead, which means my plans are partly aspirational for 2016-17. However, a total of £449,392 remains and I am inviting bids by June 2016 from organisations helping to tackle key issues of demand in this county. I am particularly interested in bids dealing with the urgent issue of emergency refuge for those fleeing domestic violence and supporting its victims or helping the recovery of those who have suffered child sexual abuse, whether in the present or historically, youth-orientated projects to help combat online bullying or gang-related violence and counselling for the vulnerable, such as victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

I have arranged for this grant funding to be more widely advertised than ever before, in newspapers throughout the county as well as within the local public and voluntary sector, so that the maximum number of potential partners may be made aware of this possibility to apply for grant funding to encourage the best range and standard of applications for these public funds.

Public Sector Partners

In the past, individual agencies, local authorities, parts of our National Health Service and the police too often worked in “silos” dealing with their own particular area of activity without truly linking with others across the public sector to handle problems more collectively. All that, thankfully, is now changing and I believe enormous benefits can result. We have collective resources, facilities and workforces, which together can produce solutions as never before. In Bedfordshire, for example, a police officer, paramedic and mental health nurse are starting to work together in a single vehicle to try to ensure those with mental health problems do not end up in the cells or criminal justice system but on a pathway to appropriate care. I supported this system but on a pathway to appropriate care. I supported this approach. It is now accepted that the joined-up approach to crime is the way forward since those involved in repeat offending are generally known to, and a challenge for, a host of other related services from housing, education and health back to policing. This is the concept of Integrated Offender Management across services and offers the direction of travel.

It has twenty different methods of contacting the police and it has twenty different methods of contacting the police and it has twenty different methods of contacting the police and it has twenty different methods of contacting the police and it has twenty different methods of contacting the police and it has twenty different methods of contacting the police. It sent 14 million public communication with the force and public easier.

Helping the Police to Help the Public

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I was elected to represent you and to spend Bedfordshire Police’s budget to reflect your priorities when you gave me the democratic mandate to become your Commissioner. These priorities are as follows:

1. A return of more visible Community Policing across the County.
2. To re-build public confidence in Bedfordshire Police.
3. To ensure that the police are available when we need them most.
4. Putting victims at the centre of the way we police and prosecute.
5. A fair deal on policing wherever you live – in the town or country.
6. Protecting the police to protect the public with a proper duty of care.
7. Genuinely being a Commissioner for all communities.
8. Working with partners to break the cycle of serial offending and to prevent crime where possible.

Spending money wisely in my own office

In addition, I will use taxpayers’ money wisely. I will not employ a Deputy or a Public Relations (PR) Agency for example, dispensing with the services of the latter when the three-month notice, required under its Contract with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, expires.

I intend to increase full-time employment within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner only where absolutely essential, where required by law, for example, as in the case of a Chief of Staff and to handle Transparency so you can see clearly what decisions we make, when, where and why. I believe we need quality employees to handle such challenges as managing the police budget to best effect and will recruit a Head of Financial Scrutiny to oversee this and to examine the business case for all individual projects. Where possible I will amalgamate roles. For example, I have made this clear since joining Bedfordshire. The removal of local policing as a means to provide the cuts demanded by the previous spending review has had an ever more detrimental impact on the Force. I am an absolute advocate for Community (local) Policing. This will enable us, over time, to reduce our demand.

With my support we will now put this right, despite the significant financial pressures we face. Action is being taken immediately to do so. I am supporting a minimum of 7 Community Policing Hubs across the county. These will provide grass-roots policing of the neighbourhoods in which they are based and the surrounding area.

Each Hub is headed up by a Sergeant and supported by a combination of Police Constables and Special Constables (with full warranted police powers) together with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

Bedfordshire Police is in the process of recruiting officers, Specials and PCSOs currently for this specific purpose. There will be three intakes of police officer recruits in 2016, with the first cohort of 32 joining our Community Policing team on December 1st. There will be at least two further intakes before the end of the financial year 2016/17 and this recruitment drive aims to direct such recruitment directly to 999 Response and Community Policing, to increase the effectiveness of both.

Any unacceptable disparity that we have within the Joint Protective Services – providing more officers than our share compared with Herfordshire and Cambridgeshire – will also be

With Assistant Chief Constable Mike Colbourne, signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

My Priorities, and Yours

1. A return of more visible Community Policing across the County.

It is true of every single one of the communities I have visited across the county as I prepared for this site over the last seven months, that each expressed the desire for more visible police in their neighbourhood as their number one priority. This remarkable consistency extended from the rural villages of North to South Bedfordshire, was voiced in market towns like Ampthill, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard and was the same key priority of those addressing me in diverse communities in Bedford and Luton.

The police watchdog body, HMIC, commented in 2013 that the police generally are in danger of ‘sleep-walking’ away from communities. More accurately, this observation should perhaps have been ‘sleep-driving’ as policing, without a Community Policing component, is delivered via police vehicles, rather than by an approachable force, on foot where appropriate, speaking to the citizens it protects and building relationships with them.

I attended the Rural Fire and Crime Event at Scald End, on March 21, 2016, alongside our Deputy Chief Constable, Mark Collins, who was commendably frank, he believed that it had been a ‘big mistake’ for Bedfordshire Police to lose Community Policing four years ago in the pursuit of savings and that this had resulted in the loss of both public confidence and local crime intelligence, providing the force with the vital knowledge of what is actually happening on the ground in each area.

The Chief Constable, Jon Boucher, echoes this view saying: ‘I have made this clear since joining Bedfordshire. The removal of local policing as a means to provide the cuts demanded by the previous spending review has had an ever more detrimental impact on the Force. I am an absolute advocate for Community (Local) Policing. This will enable us, over time, to reduce our demand.’

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part of my role of holding the force to account. I will be holding rural communities, there need to be bases in Luton, Bedford, for example – and will be examining the possibilities which exist for police presence. I want Community Hubs outside our mainsimply locating them in buildings with a significant existing in communities I want them, where appropriate, to be based in this fast-expanding community. We will hold the forum for Leighton Buzzaard together within weeks.

I intend to turn around the “closed” sign on the station door. Our officers are often out of the building in the course of their duties but, if the building is occupied, the principle has to be that “if we’re in we’re open” and will not refuse to take enquiries, especially since the Estate Review of 2012 established that there are only a handful of these per day. Residents need to understand though that it will be necessary to ring the 101 number to register concerns if officers, Specials and PCSOs are out of the station in the course of their police duties in the community. DCC Collins is backing me in a drive to recruit local volunteers who may be prepared to provide extra back-up to ensure a more regular presence at the station, by day.

To achieve the maximum benefit of new, more visible, policing in communities I want them, where appropriate, to be based in this fast-expanding community. DCC Collins is backing me in a drive to recruit local volunteers who may be prepared to provide extra back-up to ensure a more regular presence at the station, by day.

Talking to PCSOs from the Leighton Buzzard Safer Neighbourhood Group

DCC Collins, also served in another force area with the "Closed" sign at Leighton Buzzard Police Station

The "Closed" sign at Leighton Buzzard Police Station

DCC Collins, also served in another force area with the "Closed" sign at Leighton Buzzard Police Station

The deployment of police is a matter for the Chief Constable but it is important that Jon Boutcher and his senior team understand that they have my total support of such operational solutions. For those who scoff at the notion that such traditional policing methods work to reduce crime, and suggest that this is some form of window-dressing to pander to uninformed public concerns, I would like to point to proven results, shown to me at the Evidence-based Policing Conference at Portcullis House, Westminster, on April 20 2016.

In just one example, the Metropolitan Police (Imp: Ben Linton) presented the results of a Community Policing initiative involving bus stops in neighbourhoods around the capital which had been identified as “hot-spots” of crime. Fifty were selected for brief, but visible, policing on foot at three points in the day by a police or community support officer, and a control group of fifty were also monitored, which were not subject to these visits, for crime occurring within 50 metres of the bus stop. The controlled study showed a 38% decrease in crime relating to the bus stops with visible police patrols within the 50 metre zone.1 I support the Local Community Policing initiative of Operation Sentinel – our squad battling anti-social behaviour – which moves into areas en masse to pick up local crime information and reassure the public and I have recently seen and heard for myself the very positive reaction of residents (in Luton’s Bury Park) to one such patrol.

I will protect the budget to continue recruitment of officers for the specific purpose of Local Community Policing and support recruitment of Special Constables. Project Boost the Frontline, already described, will aim to release as many officers already employed by us to frontline duties as possible, which can only further support this commitment.

There are, of course, arguments, at a time of austerity and acute pressure on budgets, that Local Community Policing is a less important component of police work than others. I disagree. The police rely on the public’s support in all that they do. It is, in effect, a Contract with them, since they fund the police service, to ensure that we deliver the type of policing which makes them feel secure in their communities and homes. Without this solid foundation it is an exaggeration to state, on the basis of thousands of conversations, I have had since becoming a candidate for this role, that public confidence has falttered in Bedfordshire Police due to the lack of visible policing by approachable officers in recent years. The restoration of Local Community Policing in Bedfordshire is, to my mind, the most critical single component in restoring that confidence once more.

This does not mean we will be ignoring our regional and national responsibilities of course. These include the security of the capital to which it is our constitutional and rail links lead – UK public and safety, although I will continue to robustly argue that the back door to London cannot be kept safe without full funding of Bedfordshire’s Counter Terror operations (and anti-radicalisation programmes.) We cannot subsidise such operations from within our existing budget and there is a moral responsibility to ensure that we are not asked to, since protecting the capital in this way should not be left to the taxpayers of Bedfordshire.

1 Obtained from the Evidence-based Policing presentation

2. To re-build public confidence in Bedfordshire Police.

I fully understand the critical importance of communicating effectively with the public, given my own background, working across television, radio and print in my early career as a reporter and presenter, together with 17 years as a specialist in the release of public information, advising police and fire chiefs, military leaders and boards of our largest companies, especially in an emergency.

Open and transparent public communications, working hand in hand with the media who can provide information most accessibly, quickly and widely across the population, is a vital component to win – and retain – public trust.

This should never be regarded as a reluctant afterthought by any sophisticated organisation, let alone one which is paid for by the public and which has a duty to explain its actions to them. In almost any police event of any magnitude, explaining what has happened and what we are doing about it, and doing so as quickly as possible is essential. This is especially true given the speed of social media in responding to breaking events.

If we want to reassure our residents and give them accurate information from an authoritative source, which they can trust.

For example, in the aftermath of the tragedy which unfolded in Shoreham in August 2015 when a vintage Hawker Hunter jet crashed onto the busy A27 causing multiple deaths at 1.30pm in the afternoon of August 22 2015, the first tweet was sent within the same minute, according to The Daily Telegraph.

At Bedfordshire Police we need the capacity to respond instantly to such events, to pass on reliable information through both social and conventional media and to update it regularly across all our communication platforms.

I will ensure that we are gatekeepers to information in the sense that we are a conduit through which information flows to the public and not in the sense that we are seeking to withhold or restrict facts. We will communicate openly as far as practically possible within the limits of litigation or independent investigation of police operations and officers. In my view, withholding information is the hallmark of an organisation which fails, especially in handling a crisis.

We must be prepared to be able to communicate in even the most demanding events. We have the M1 and A1 running through our county, the former directly alongside an international airport in Luton, plus main rail lines running North out of the capital. We are ranked third after London and Birmingham in terms of Counter Terror risk.

I will ensure that we have a Crisis Communications Plan that is fit for purpose to handle a mass media response in the, thankfully rare, event that it is required and am well qualified to do so.

This is another area where collaboration with our neighbouring forces would prove vital, to assist and bolster our small press team in terms of the numbers of communications officers which prove necessary in a major emergency. We would, naturally, provide similar assistance in a reciprocal manner. These are arrangements which I need to formalise as part of due diligence to ensure we are prepared and a Head of Public Information will arrange and oversee them.
Project Open Justice. Effective communications, as a force, is not just a matter for emergencies. Justice must be seen to be done and the public can be heard.

While I understand the recent decision to close Bedford’s Magistrates Court, along with others around the county, to produce savings by moving hearings to Luoton, I am deeply concerned regarding the impact of this on Open Justice. As a former reporter, I can understand from the press bench first for a local everypaper, then for an ITV regional television programme and, later, national breakfast station. As a result I saw, at first hand, the results of the reporting of the courts.

This has been of real importance in maintaining public confidence in the police by allowing the public, and especially victims, to learn of successful prosecutions and hear of the detective and forensic work which brings justice to those victims and punishment to offenders, which is especially true of Crown Court coverage. Even the process of being identified in the local press acts as a deterrent and can stop the first-time burglar, shoplifter or drink driver from becoming an habitual offender.

Our county newspapers no longer have the staff to cover courts on their own doorstep on a daily basis nor to travel from outlying towns where they are based to Luoton to do so. I will launch Project Open Justice to help. I will ensure that news services are much more effectively informed of approaching cases in both Magistrates and Crown Courts. I will encourage the freelance news agencies which report such cases to cover our courts in support of local media. I will make the force’s investigating and forensic staff available in key cases to explain the vital work undertaken to bring about successful prosecutions to prepare the “backgrounders” which follow verdicts.

I will, in short, ensure we explain Bedfordshire police action to the public, build confidence in the force and, where possible, remove the secrecy which could now surround court to the public, build confidence in the force and, where possible, remove the secrecy which could now surround court

Explaining when things go wrong. It takes an organisation which is confident to explain matters as fully as possible and as quickly as possible when things go wrong. This is constant risk since officers are in contact with the public in circumstances where, on occasion, they have to be physically restrained.

They deal with people who may already have a series of vulnerabilities which are not immediately apparent. Those who come into police custody are disproportionately more likely to suffer from mental health issues, to be under medication which may or may not be being used correctly, and to be under the influence of drink or illegal drugs or both, as the result of which they can be in a correspondingly fragile state of health.

It follows that accidents do happen, people do suffer health emergencies and, on incredibly rare and deeply regrettable occasions, officers themselves can make mistakes which have tragic consequences.

What happens next is critical. We have just seen the outcome of the Hillsborough Inquiries (on April 26 2016) and the jury’s finding relating to that tragedy. South Yorkshire Police were found to have made errors on the day and responded wholly inappropriately afterwards in altering records. We already live in a cynical time and will be aware of the increased distrust of the police, wherever they operate in the UK, that this episode will be likely to create.

Closer to home, a recent disciplinary hearing resulted in the dismissal of two of our officers in the Faruk Ali case. They were found to have behaved in a manner which was unacceptable in any force towards a young man with autism. We had not communicated well about this hearing in my professional view. It was held at a venue 10 miles from Welwyn Garden City where our Force are based and it was on a direct link with the town, making it difficult for family members and supporters to attend what was a public hearing. The hearing itself was poorly attended. I am aware of the increased distrust of the police, wherever they operate in the UK, that this episode will be likely to create.

There are three components to ensuring this is the case. The first is the effectiveness of call-handling when it comes to what the police refer to as a “Centre Contact” and what the public more usually refer to as a “Force Control Room.” I will work to support enhanced training of our call centre team to ensure that calls are processed according to threat and given the correct level of priority. This is a huge level of responsibility and I have seen for myself the dedication of the team who handle our calls in a crisis at Bedfordshire Police.

Our Force has made enormous improvements in its call-handling efficiency in recent years and especially over the past 18 months. I intend to build upon the success of our Control Room. The Force entered an agreement for Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire to take the lead on Public Contact – or Control Rooms – within the TriForce collaboration of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A plan is in place to move our Control Room staff to either of two bases in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, at Welwyn Garden City or Hinchinbrooke, to allow fully integrated and modernised Control Room structure, backed by the new Athena IT platform, with calls being handled to a similarly high standard across the three force area. Some £2.3 million worth of public savings will result. I fully appreciate the emotional connection of a Force to its Control Rooms but two years of collaborative planning have been invested in this move and those public savings are dependent upon it. I will ensure that our staff are kept updated, as has not always been the case in the past, and that we work with them to minimise the disruption this causes. The overall objective must be that the public have a guarantee of the best possible service in a modernised environment which is fit for twenty first century policing.

We also need to ensure that call-handling is conducted in a way that ensures that vital evidence is preserved for efficient crime detection so our public is best-served and I intend that training will be provided with this aspect in mind.

Fast response times are essential to public confidence in the police. When people dial 999 they should only ever do so in a life-threatening emergency and it is, therefore, imperative that a response arrives as soon as practically possible. Between April 2015 and March 2016, we had more than twice the responses to call for such events – graded by our Force as ‘Fast Incidents’ – increased compared to the previous year by between 1% and 2% with 40% of Fast Incidents being attended within 15 minutes. Buildings on this success is critical to public confidence in Bedfordshire Police and conflicts with an anecdotal belief that such targets are not being achieved. I will hold the Force to account to ensure that we continue to move in this direction of improvement.

The second element is ensuring sufficient police officers are available to respond. This is why a combination of robustly policing for more Government funds, with an evidence-based argument, and Project Boost the Frontline, to release as many officers back to frontline service as possible, is so important. In addition, the more services we deliver closely with our partners to ensure our officers are not diverted to handle the responsibilities of others will prove critical. I have mentioned the Mental Health Street Triage car scheme to keep patients out of the criminal justice system and prevent officers from being detained during the sectioning process within the NHS, among many other benefits. If we work more closely with social services and other partners, including highly experienced Domestic Violence workers in a similar way, more officers should be released, more quickly, back to 999 duties, and those we are called on to help should also be placed on a pathway to more appropriate care.

The Police and Crime Plan for our county

Helping Police to Help the Public – Building Better Policing for Bedfordshire

Discussing mental health issues with Aslak Burt the Minister with responsibility for Mental Health and Bedfordshire Police’s Mental Health lead Chief Insp. Jody Whitehead.

The third element is public education. I have mentioned the poor level of awareness of the 101 number. Both in schools, and at every Outreach event delivered to the public by my team, and me we have to explain the correct use of our 999 service and the consequences of both hoax calls and diversion of police and call-handlers from those most in need. The Fire Service already deliver excellent school programmes and we need to reinforce this message too as the demands upon us are so closely linked.
4. Putting victims at the centre of the way we police and prosecute.

I believe that investing in Restorative Justice can offer an enhanced service for victims by giving them some control over the justice process, in the knowledge that a subject of a crime takes such control away. This, in essence, means offering them a chance to make their voice heard.

I intend to achieve this in several ways. First, all victims whose cases go to court should be offered the opportunity, if they wish, to write to a magistrate or judge to explain the impact of the crime upon them and what they would see as the suitable punishment. Clearly, this process must be managed to ensure that expectations are realistic and this element of preparation for an approaching court case is, in any case, a key component of professional support for a victim.

Additional Community Remedy Options can also be made available which intend to give victims of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour a say in any out of court punishment of the perpetrator and chance to influence the outcome with a “Community Remedy Document.” This document is compiled by the PCC, following agreement with the Chief Constable, and after a process of public consultation. It is therefore my intention to progress such a process and to overcome a public consultation on Community Remedy Options.

Victims should be offered a properly managed chance to communicate with the offender, including meeting them in circumstances where their safety can be assured by a trained facilitator in a secure location. This allows them to have their say directly to assist them in moving forward and recovering from the crime. A dual benefit is provided by the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) who cite multiple examples of offenders who have been rehabilitated after being confronted with the reality of their crimes, by meeting the victim and hearing about the impact of what they have done. The victim has the potential to hear an apology and explanation and to see the reality of the feared crime.

Above all we must ensure that crime is not under-reported. 4. Putting victims at the centre of the way we police and prosecute.

I will give continued backing to high visibility crime prevention and hamlets, policing in the most visible manner possible, to prevent crime. In “area saturation” policing, arriving without notice at villages and hamlets, illegal activity such as hare-coursing, since police back-up can clearly take longer to arrive than if they lived in the town and closer to the Bedford and Luton 999 response hubs. The police watchdog HMIC found Bedfordshire Police could do more to protect vulnerable children. I will work with the Chief Constable to ensure the improvements already embarked on continue and increase, including proper risk assessment of “looked after children” who have a higher than usual tendency to run away from their place of care. We need to be looking below the surface to find out why these children go missing, where they are going and who they are meeting, to prevent a current or future tragedy. Again, this work cannot wait.

Above all we must ensure that crime is not under-reported, and as a consequence un-investigated or victims are entirely failed. Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Honour-Bound Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Hate crimes, rape and many Sexual Assaults are only now being reported to police in significant numbers after a long culture of private shame, silence and intimidation. It will be impossible within our budget and policing strength to ensure such matters are treated with the gravity they deserve and properly investigated. It is easy to misunderstand existing police rules and policies by members and to view them as a failure of a force. A reverse is true since it means our police are, finally, being trusted by victims to reveal their most intimate problems and to respond appropriately.

Helping victims to cope with the initial aftermath of a crime and, subsequently, assisting them to move forward and recover are key concerns of both Bedfordshire Police and the PCC. The Force aims to become a top ten performer for Victim Satisfaction and is working to meet victims’ expectations around the politeness, empathy and concern shown by officers, the practical advice given, staying in contact, explaining police terminology and being professional at all times. It is moving in the right direction, with the Force’s Victim Satisfaction Rating rising 14 places from 47th to 33rd nationally. I am committed to championing the needs and views of victims in Bedfordshire and to working with the Force to improve still further on the current ranking over the next few years.

5. A fair deal on policing wherever you live – in the town or country.

I have met with the National Farmers’ Union regularly in the north to better advise them on your PCC. The issue of consensus among farming members seems to be that for too long our countryside has lost out when it comes to tackling crime. Farmers and their neighbours told me that they feel quite literally isolated and, occasionally, in genuine danger when having to face those arriving to commit break-ins, to poach or take part in other illegal activity such as hare-coursing, since police back-up can clearly take longer to arrive than if they lived in the town and closer to the Bedford and Luton 999 response hubs.

Such crime in the country also comes at a cost; the National Rural Crime Survey has estimated that the true cost of rural crime is over £800 million per year nationally with farmers and young families the most frequent victims. The Survey, in 2013, indicated that the average cost of such crimes to a country household was £8,400 and £7,000 to the police. In Bedfordshire itself, in six months from September 2015 to March 2016, the Force recorded 101 rural crimes, nearly half of these were not simply unoccupied farm buildings but rural business premises and stables. The crimes were not clustered in one area, indicating the challenge of responding effectively to crime in the countryside across the county as a whole.

Four years without Community Policing in Bedfordshire has meant an erosion of those who live in the rural communities that thieves have become bolder, stealing large-scale equipment like tractors to ram-raid cash machines and breaking repeatedly into farm buildings to steal tools and stock. Rural communities also have to deal with extensive fly-tipping and vandalism, including arson, for which they are expected to pick up the tab to the tune of substantial insurance premiums. I have been listening and so has the senior team at Bedfordshire Police.

We will be delivering an improved response to Rural Crime with my backing. A team of rural Village Specials, with full warranted powers, is being put in place to respond to crime in the villages and countryside. They will also operate across the county in “area saturation” policing arriving without notice at villages and hamlets, policing in the most visible manner possible, to deter criminals and reassure the public.

I will give continued backing to high visibility crime prevention days in the countryside, known as Operation Vision, of the type which took place in Harold on April 30 2016. This offered a demonstration of strength of Police, Surgery, property marking pens to deter burglars, bicycle marking and officers to provide general crime prevention advice. The local neighbourhood Watch Coordinator was also invited to attend to encourage sign-up to the village’s schemes.

This would, of course, be an ideal venue to provide details of sign-up to the Beds Alert service which provides a link-up to Bedfordshire Police to pass on advice and other crime prevention messages and receive messages on police progress, of particular benefit in areas which generally are without access to delivered local newspapers.

Beds Alert is the replacement for the former Ringmaster community messaging service and is hosted by the National Neighbourhood Watch Scheme “Our Watch” This has allowed the Force to combine Ringmaster and Neighbourhood Watch contacts into a single service which is shared by all Watch schemes as well as the Fire Service. Any one of these organisations can now message sections of the database and send messages via relevant information that members sign up for. There are currently over 20,000 members of Beds Alert and my Ambassadors will help me in my aim to recruit more.

Where the countryside is concerned, different issue groups with rural themes have been merged into Beds Alert including Farm Watch and Horse Watch.

A new Rural Liaison Officer (RLO) is now in post and has been tasked with contacting strategic partners in the countryside, including Parish Councils, attending key meetings. The officer will be coordinating police activities and in the rural areas as part of a road map to achieving stronger partnership working to protect those who live in the countryside and fight crime together. The RLO will also synchronise work done by different police departments such as the Travellers Liaison Officer, Community Policing Teams and the PCSOs. This officer is designing a message template to be sent out to all key contacts for a weekly update and report on issues and events in rural communities, by email or whatever format suits the advice for farmers, for example encouraging the installation of CCTV and the new alert technology known as Dakota Wireless Alert, which is an instant containment gates, alerting the farmer where a vehicle is driven down the approach road. Farmers will also be made aware of the CESAR (Construction and Agricultural Equipment Security and Registration Scheme) and TRACER (agricultural equipment tracking scheme) protections for large-scale plant. The officer will also monitor rural community tensions over movements of the Traveller community and pass on advice regarding liaison between the farmer and the Traveller. Local communities will be encouraged to join both Beds Watch and as Special Constables with the latter bringing full policing powers to rural communities. Social media will be used to gather and spread country crime intelligence as well as email for effective communication and networking.

As PCC I will go further to support the rural crime team: I have the backing of the county membership of the National Farmers’ Union (NFU) in supplying an extensive network of contacts who really know the countryside and can pass on details of current crime problems from the ground. I will work with them to create a Rural Crime Intelligence Network of designated contacts for Bedfordshire Police. They will liaise regularly and provide feedback on crime problems, solutions, from the heart of our country community, the real grass roots on crime, as the people who know it best.
I will also make myself available, supported by Bedfordshire Police’s Deputy Chief Constable, Mark Collins, who is heading up the Rural Crime Strategy, to meet with them at regular intervals to ensure this work and to gain further feedback on how our improved rural crime initiatives are bringing improvements.

A draft Rural Policing Strategy is being developed and will be provided to stakeholders for consultation. I wish to be part of this consultative process.

Given my requirement for an evidence-based approach to policing, we will assiduously monitor rural crime to measure how these projects are delivering better public satisfaction and crime reduction as we move forward.

In addition, I appreciate the menace that fly-tipping has become throughout the county. I am determined to work with our local authorities to make it easier to dispose of larger-scale household waste, like beds and fridges, and smaller-scale trade waste, such as paint pots and timber off-cuts. If we do not make it easier to dispose of waste in properly designated locations, at council tips, it will inevitably lead to more dumping of refuse, spoiling the Bedfordshire countryside. This, to me, is common-sense.

The urban environment brings different crime challenges and requires other common-sense solutions. I have spent time with our officers on patrol and in the Night Time Economy vans in both Bedford and Luton town centres at weekends, seeing the challenges associated with a busy pubbing and clubbing culture.

By night, the policing needs of these town centres escalate. The High Streets and service roads are lined with pubs and clubs, which require a disproportionate level of policing – several vans of officers and police on foot, often until 3am, as I have seen for myself. It is not just a question of pubs and clubs creating demand, on Bedford High Street I was told by officers of the late night fast food outlets, which represent such a magnet for policing problems that they employ their own security, yet still are unable to cope without extra police assistance. It has been suggested that such outlets, stay open for a significant time beyond their scheduled period, which encourages drunks to remain in the area until 5am. I cannot permit this, extra, and unnecessary, burden on our limited police officers. I will work with the local authorities to ensure such premises close down, at the hour stipulated by their licenses, and release officers to other duties.

No council taxpayers require this level of demand except football clubs and they contribute to the cost of policing. I am proposing a Night Time Levy to help pay for this as a similar cost of doing business. It only seems fair. But any extra money will work with the local authorities to ensure such premises close down, at the hour stipulated by their licenses, and release officers to other duties.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 invested raised this way must be used in the town centres for this precise cost of doing business. It only seems fair. But any extra money will work with the local authorities to ensure such premises close down, at the hour stipulated by their licenses, and release officers to other duties.

The Levy scheme is a particular consequence of the lower numbers of officers in Bedfordshire in relation to the size of the general population and of the funding formula which, in the past, has not recognised Bedfordshire’s urban as well as rural requirements. I will, of course, robustly make our case for funding to support higher numbers of officers and Project Boost the frontline is designed specifically to release as many of those police already employed as possible to support their colleagues in this, often dangerous, work.

I am keenly aware that when our officers call for back-up it can be an unexpectedly long wait, unlike the position in London where Metropolitan Police officers report their back-up arrives in only a few minutes.

The Project Boost the Frontline team is already examining anecdotal evidence to establish the facts suggesting that, even within Bedfordshire, when we are deployed in small numbers, those Sections involved in vehicles carrying more than one officer are more productive, potentially as officers have the confidence to support one another in actions they would not be prepared to attempt alone.

I want to work to reduce single-crewing where possible giving priority to this in key periods such as late at night and in the early hours at weekends, I see this as a duty of care to our officers and part of holding the Force to account.

I am entirely prepared to explore a variety of potential solutions to provide accompanying individuals, where insufficient police are available to double-crew. Clearly such individuals must come from an appropriate and disciplined background to operate as part of such a “buddy” scheme and the views of police officers themselves are paramount and must be sought through a full consultation process. The rules of engagement and insurance for any such scheme are also of critical importance.

The solutions may include working with the Fire Service – since this is the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service with potential to provide support to both police officers and the public. A precedent for joint working between the Blue lights already exists since the Fire Service in Bedfordshire has already forged close links with the East of England ambulance service and, as of the week of 9 May 2016, has started a joint initiative from its Control to dispatch either a service in a health emergency, on the basis of whichever is nearer, for example.

Another option is to approach retired police officers as Specials specifically tasked with a buddy scheme to help younger colleagues, who could also learn from their experience.

In addition, my work with the Cabinet Office’s Emergency Planning College for eight years included training the army for use as Military Aid to the Civilian Authorities, in other words helping the police in exceptional circumstances; such as public emergencies. I know of no opportunity for military police or officers to gain experience of working within a civilian environment to prepare them for such deployment. If the solutions above prove unworkable, it may prove possible to explore the option of offering such experience by accompanying our officers late at night and in the early hours of the morning, at weekends, in some of our more demanding urban areas for crime. Naturally there is no suggestion whatever that they would be armed. We have our own firearms officers for the circumstances which require such deployment.

7. Genuinely being a Commissioner for all Communities

I made a commitment which I stand by to every single community I visited during the run-up to the PPC election, that every officer deployed in rural Bedfordshire will be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be treated equally to any officer deployed in the city. I support and promote a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of this county. They shall be granted the same opportunities for promotion and development as those in urban areas, which benefit from additional resources and trained officers.

There is a key aim of the Chief Constable, Jon Boutcher, to further boost the diversity of Bedfordshire Police and I support him in this aim. We both understand that a police force must look and sound like the community it serves to have its full confidence. There are also real practical benefits to diversity including language skills to deliver policing to those residents who do not speak English as a first language. I will work to deliver a targeted
Bedfordshire has been making improvements in this area since 2012 but a faster pace of change is required. The Black and Minority Ethnic Population of the county is 33% but only 6% of officers, 7% of Specials and 19% of PCSOs are of BME origin.

We cannot guarantee, of course, that every single one of these applicants will be accepted into one of the most demanding professional roles in existence. All communities, irrespective of diversity, require us to select high-quality candidates who are entirely suitable for the job and I believe any suggestion of tokenism would only undermine the credibility of those who join us and of those excellent officers from diverse communities who already work with us as a highly valued part of the existing team. We will always choose the best but our recruitment process must ensure that no inadvertent discrimination against any candidate whatever is present. For this I want Bedfordshire Police to work with our independent Scrutiny Committee members, and others with relevant backgrounds, to review recruitment materials and processes to this end.

I have to go further to be a genuine Commissioner for all. During a meeting with Afro-Caribbean community leaders and spokespeople in Luton on April 27th 2016, a comment from a midwife gave me food for thought. She said: “Working as a midwife in London I don’t expect a black midwife to be provided for every black mother or an Asian, White, Turkish, Greek or other midwife to be provided for others, depending on their background. What is more important is that the person doing the job behaves in an appropriate and professional way at all times.”

The meeting exposed a level of distrust which appears to indicate a fault-line in at least part of this community’s confidence in the police and the comments made represented a venalising of anger and anxiety which caused me deep concern. I am to work with the community to get to the bottom of this and to establish both the history and the current facts of the position. We cannot have any single community within the county which invests less trust in the police than others of the same community.

The Bedfordshire Police’s policy relating to its use and it will be a public information tool for me and my Outreach Team to spread the word about this to build public confidence in the process. However, the operational use of Body Worn Video “must be proportionate, legitimate and necessary” (to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998, Data Protection Act 1998 and Surveillance Camera Code of Practice). The College of Policing guidance confirms this, stating: “Continuous, non-specific recording is not permitted.” In other words, the camera cannot be permanently on.

There is an argument for taking the decision out of an officer’s hands, but the majority of police calls are for non-criminal matters and in such cases it might not be appropriate or helpful for officers to record an interaction with a vulnerable person or child, for example. There is no reason, however, why a member of the public should not be able to ask for an officer to switch the camera on or to enquire if this or her camera is in use and no insult should be inferred by this reasonable request.

Many of those attending the meeting to which I have referred were unaware of the implementation of Body Worn Video or the Bedfordshire Force policy relating to its use and to be a public information tool for me and my Outreach Team to spread the word about this to build public confidence in the process.

“The user should (also) be mindful (of) the potential impact of not recording an incident on the Force’s reputation. It is evidently important to record as much of an incident as possible therefore recording should begin at the earliest opportunity at the start of an incident. Users should therefore commence recording upon arrival at the scene of an incident (and/or) as soon as the user becomes aware that any encounter is likely to be the subject of a pocket note book entry.”

8. Working with partners to break the cycle of serial offending and to prevent crime where possible.

A clear direction of travel is emerging in policing to make money work across the public purse and to ensure properly joined-up action to prevent and contain crime and harm.

In terms of crime prevention, I wish to further develop our Integrated Offender Management Programme in Bedfordshire which aims to make a real difference in the prevention of further offending.

The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme is a response to crime and reoffending which also depends on the joint effects of licensed premises and those which retail alcohol when considering further license applications. The Police and Crime Plan for our county is to work more closely with local authorities’ licensing departments to prevent and contain crime and harm.

Other opportunities for joint working with local authorities exist to help control and prevent crime. In approaching the problems caused by alcohol sales in our towns, the police also need to work more closely with local authorities’ licensing departments than previously to examine the likely demands on policing that a new premises might create since it is wasteful to, retrospectively, discover a drain on such resources that early intervention might have prevented. This is, for example, the thinking behind Bedfordshire’s Midland Road Impact Plan considering the joint effects of licensed premises and those which retail alcohol when considering further license applications.

In planning too, police have been less involved than is desirable in the planning of new developments both in the public and private sector - in the past. They have the expertise to advise the designing out of crime such as blind alley and...
In others, as previously mentioned, a police station has been services in Bedfordshire, leading to costly duplication of public addressing Ampthill Town Council

Both Police and Fire are now actively considering the joint

Deputy Chiefs, which I wish to support and attend.

The Fire Service has been exceptionally successful in driving down the incidence of fires, particularly through the introduction of smoke alarms. There is some spare capacity in the service, therefore, to assist its partner agency - the Police - especially in spreading a community safety message, including crime prevention and correct use of the 999 and 101 numbers. The two services are looking at the benefits of combined Crime Prevention and Community Protection Teams in multi-service vehicles, delivering community fire safety and crime prevention advice. Recent analysis, for example, shows demand patterns for both services are often very similar. For example, the long-term arson statistics from the Bedford Fire and Rescue Service match the long-term burglary trend in Houghton Regis. Combined teams would ensure a more efficient, streamlined service for the public and, arguably, better protection for each community.

There are some elements of operational work which fire and police personnel could share. The Fire Service could attend incidents to force entry, in the case of fire, for example, as they are equipped to do so. They could assist in the search for vulnerable missing people to better protect the public.

Fire and Police frequently respond together to 999 (life-threatening emergencies but there are occasions when multiple vehicles are not required when the scene is assessed, on arrival. It seems particularly sensible, therefore, to consider a joint approach already introduced over the border in Northamptonshire, where a jointly staffed Fire and Police vehicle is dispatched to traffic accidents to assess what is actually required.

Genuine opportunities exist for joint-working between the Police and Fire services here in Bedfordshire and, at the top of both blue light services, there is a real will to make this work for the benefit of the people of this county. In a Memorandum of Understanding exchanged between the services. There are more than 10 different work-streams for joint-working under consideration by a joint Steering Group, chaired by both service Deputy Chiefs, which I wish to support and attend.

In the long term there is the possibility, which common-sense dictates must be investigated, relating to a joint police and fire headquarters to create a Police, Fire and Rescue response facility for the county. Given the intense pressure on Bedfordshire Police funding, this could only proceed if the two existing headquarters could be sold in such a way that such a facility could be paid for from the joint proceeds, releasing funds for further frontline police staff, given the level of demand. Savings based on our inefficient, badly-insulated headquarters could produce a drop in revenue spending to this end, for example. I will not be building a new HQ to frontline policing does not receive a boost as a result.

The Prime Minister’s announcement, on January 5 2016, that responsibility for fire and rescue policy has transferred to the Home Office from the Department for Communities and Local Government demonstrates the path forward to closer working. This provides an excellent opportunity for sharing good practice to deliver better outcomes for the public and make savings, from the sharing of the back office functions like HR to joint-use of buildings.

New legislation will enable PCs to take on the functions of fire and rescue authorities where a local case is made which could create a single employer for fire and police personnel. Our vision is to explore and exploit every possible opportunity from collaboration, in which case little advantage could be gained from full combination.

In January 2016 a Bedfordshire bid to the Police Innovation Fund for joint working with the Fire and Rescue Service was unsuccessful but I am determined to explore the prospects for this partnership.

New Crime Challenges

Historic Child Sexual Abuse

These include Child Sexual Abuse in a culture where increasing access to support and information is, thankfully, encouraging victims to come forward. Changing social attitudes also mean that 36% of people have sent or intend to send intimate images to others. It is entirely true to say that every one of us is more likely to become a victim of technology-based Cybercrime in the next four years than of any other type of threat.

The Police and Crime Plan for our county

Looking ahead to anticipate new technology-based crime is also vital. I am aware of criticism levelled at the police in the past that they had not foreseen the impact of mobile phone technology, particularly 5G. This provides an excellent opportunity for sharing good practice to deliver better outcomes for the public and, arguably, better protection for each community.

in revenue spending to this end, for example. I will not be building a new HQ to frontline policing does not receive a boost as a result.

The Prime Minister’s announcement, on January 5 2016, that responsibility for fire and rescue policy has transferred to the Home Office from the Department for Communities and Local Government demonstrates the path forward to closer working. This provides an excellent opportunity for sharing good practice to deliver better outcomes for the public and make savings, from the sharing of the back office functions like HR to joint-use of buildings.

New legislation will enable PCs to take on the functions of fire and rescue authorities where a local case is made which could create a single employer for fire and police personnel. Our vision is to explore and exploit every possible opportunity from collaboration, in which case little advantage could be gained from full combination.

In January 2016 a Bedfordshire bid to the Police Innovation Fund for joint working with the Fire and Rescue Service was unsuccessful but I am determined to explore the prospects for this partnership.

New Crime Challenges

Historic Child Sexual Abuse

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Looking ahead to anticipate new technology-based crime is also vital. I am aware of criticism levelled at the police in the past that they had not foreseen the impact of mobile phone technology, particularly 5G.
I need to support the Cyber Hub further, as PCC, in this growing area of risk. I will support a Cyber Security Advisor to work with partners in organisations like the Chamber of Commerce, small business organisations, the Economic and Business Development Managers in councils, universities and charities (as the housebound are much more likely to be IT dependant and more likely to become victims.)

This advisor also needs to work with academicitas within the Cyber Hub. Bedfordshire Police are working with the University of Bedfordshire’s National Centre of Cyber Stalking Research and have submitted a £2.1m project to the Home Office Police Innovation Fund to fund a study to identify the threat, harm and risk presented by those who start “trolling” online to identify what may prove the trigger for higher-level crime and who is at most risk. The research also seeks to identify the lower risk person who does not act the same way in real life as they do behind a keyboard. It is believed that many will not offend again if offered Restorative Justice as this provides mandatory social media training to make them aware of the damage their behaviour does. The study will provide the necessary evidence to see if this is true, hence it will be crucial groups with both victims and offenders supported by Greater Manchester Police and Dyfed Powys to test findings in urban and rural areas.

I will support a Schools Advisor, working with parents and children aged 11 to 15, to provide advice on cyber security and prevention of stalking online. Ofsted, the school’s inspectorate body, has made this their number one required project, working with the police, given the level of potential risk.

Bedfordshire Police’s Cybercrime Unit has proved forward-looking in its willingness to work with young talent to enhance the protection it can offer to business and the wider public. The University of Bedfordshire has provided students to work alongside the police, for example, to clean up systems and get them back into operation after one fraud attack where a company’s entire phone system was hacked and transferred to premium foreign call lines.

We can go further, as the larger corporates like IBM do, in setting tasks and competitions for emerging IT talents to hack into systems to inform detectives about new threats or to design apps to protect systems from attack. I believe they will be happy to participate and to earn a testimonial for their fledgling CVs as a result.

Stalking

The sharing of personal information through social media, including relationship status, may exacerbate the general threat of stalking. According to recent research by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, national figures suggest up to one in five women and one in twelve men in Bedfordshire may experience stalking at some point in their lives. This can clearly have both an emotional and psychological impact on victims which can last for years, even if no violence results.

The Trust’s research shows that one in ten victims of stalking end up moving house to get away from their stalker and 38-40% of stalking cases are estimated to involve violence. Stalking is recognised as a risk factor in homicide, particularly domestic homicide. However, in the view of the charity, the local response to stalking victims in Bedfordshire suggests that this crime may be being under-reported here.

A report published by Suzy Lamplugh Trust in April 2016 - "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" - has drawn attention to the low numbers of police recorded stalking crimes as well as the under-investment in services for stalking victims by previous Police and Crime Commissioners on a local basis. In Bedfordshire, it suggested only 179 crimes of stalking were recorded by the police between 1st April 2011 and 4 February 2016. Given the high prevalence of stalking identified by both the Crime Survey for England and Wales and the research launched by the Trust, this figure causes me concern. The Trust says the following, although there is no suggestion that our Force is specifically described:

"From our experience of operating the National Stalking Helpline, victims regularly report that that when they do go to the police, the response is often disappointing. Our research has found that 43% of victims who had reported found the police response either not very helpful or not helpful at all."

I have agreed to the following as a result, to work to ensure that all police officers and relevant civilian staff get the training they need to recognise stalking when a victim reports it to them - and to record it accurately when they do.

I want to assign resources to commission specialist services for stalking victims so that they have the support to cope with the trauma that stalking causes.

I will also work for a joined-up approach with local partners to ensure that anyone participating in a domestic homicide review, for example, has the training they need to recognise stalking when it has featured in the lead-up to the murder and, of course, to aim to ensure that our partner organisations draw police attention to such problems arising from their own case reviews (long before we reach a tragic conclusion as the multi-agency hub will always aim to do).

Anti-radicalisation

There is ample evidence of the distaste felt by the overwhelming majority of our county’s Muslim population towards the murderous and discriminatory practices of ISIS (also known as Daesh and Isis) in Syria and Iraq and for the so-called Islamic State or Caliphate. For example, Youtube footage shows members of Luton’s Bury Park community – part of Luton’s 50,000 strong Muslim population – angrily urging supporters of radical Islamic groups Al-Muhajiroun (ALM), who follow banned London hate preacher Anjem Choudary, to leave the town when they attempted to speak to passers-by in Dunstable Road.

It would be foolish, however, to believe that nobody is attracted to the radical message. Not all are able to resist online attempts to recruit foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq and to instil a message of hatred to inspire others to attack members of the military service within Britain or to turn on the wider public in the manner of the recent attacks in Paris and Brussels.

It is clear that the young, in particular, must be protected from such brain-washing. Immediately before the Police and Crime Commissioner election, Lord Tariq Ahmad, the Home Office Minister with responsibility for anti-radicalisation, visited Bury Park in Luton with me. I have pledged to work with him, and local mosques, to identify or create suitable youth schemes to promote a healthier message to counter that which represents such a threat to the harmonious decades of multi-faith living in Luton which their parents and grandparents have done so much to create and promote. This would create positive precedents for expansion of successful anti-radicalisation schemes elsewhere in the country, where a similar threat exists. Such schemes should not be imposed on the community but constructed in genuine partnership with those within it.

The Migrant Crisis

Bedfordshire Police is already dealing with the results of illegal migration, with, sadly, regular discoveries of those being trafficked in the back of lorries, often at service stations or other stopping points on the M1 motorway or main roads.

The refugee crisis is a modern tragedy and we cannot ignore the fact that many of those who are part of the flow from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are fleeing in fear of their lives and are not economic migrants in any sense. However, the evidence of the Paris terror attacks in 2015, and those in Belgium in 2016, suggests others may be hiding among the desperate to infiltrate our countries and perpetrate acts of terror on arrival. We must establish the identity of those who travel here to prove who they are and that they mean us no harm. This is not hard-hearted, it is common-sense.

The Government is committed to accepting migrants from the refugee camps, most recently accepting unaccompanied children, and they must be made welcome when they get here as they have suffered appalling and many have youngsters who need to be assimilated into our schools. The entire migrant community will need help with accommodation and to learn our language to be able to have better prospects in future. We must not create a ghetto but integrate.

Police officers will need to be trained to understand this issue and the terror these people leave behind them. This is especially important since the past experiences of these new arrivals may have left them with a fundamental distrust of police.

The crisis is yet another driver of multi-agency hub working as it will be for Bedfordshire Police to work with housing, education, social care and employment services in a fully joined-up way to bring this about.

Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

Desperation will always be exploited by criminals wherever there is an opportunity to make money. This is true of those who take payment to arrange illegal migration and also of those who seek to exploit migrants on arrival here through low-paid or unpaid work or even worse outcomes, such as enforced prostitution. Our Force must work assiduously to disrupt and prevent such criminal activity.

A key component of joint working here in Bedfordshire is our activity with the Housing Departments of our local authorities.
who are often the first to pick up information of those living in overcrowded and poor conditions, "under the radar," where Modern Day Slavery often occurs.

As Commissioners, I need to spread the message to the public concerning the need for vigilance and what signs to look for which suggest such practices are taking place in the areas where they live. Above all, the public must be given confidence to report suspicions to the police and reassurance that they will be taken seriously when they do.

Honour-based Crimes, Female Genital Mutilation and Enforced Marriage

I will not allow political-correctness to prevent the investigation of such matters. It is indisputable true that there are practices which have been brought to the UK from other countries and cultures which are illegal here, including the intimidation and violence against women and girls represented by Honour-based Crimes, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Enforced Marriage. Bedfordshire Police has a strong record in this area, having brought the first prosecution for FGM, for example. Our committed officers in the field face tremendous difficulties and challenges in helping women to find permanent refuge from violence and enforced marriage because of the overwhelming demand on places of safety. I will work as Commissioner to assist them in every way I can, through funding where possible and working with local authority and charitable partners, which is why I have made the provision of extra refuge places a priority in my first commissioning and police plan.

I also need to work with our schools and colleges to spread the message that such matters are intolerable crimes and that no girls and women should face them in silence and without a guarantee of police assistance.

On-going Challenges

Serious Organised Crime

Ever closer working at regional level across the East will prove necessary to counter the challenges of dealing effectively with the serious threats which Counter Terror, Human Trafficking and Slavery, Drug Dealing, Weapons Crimes, Robbery and other Serious Organised Crime represent. This is particularly true since the serious threats which Counter Terror, Human Trafficking and Slavery, Drug Dealing, Weapons Crimes, Robbery and other Serious Organised Crime represent. This is particularly true since the introduction of the Domestic Crimes Act 2018.

Wildlife Crime

According to the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), wildlife crime takes a variety of forms in the UK including:

- Smuggling live animals and body parts such as ivory and rhino horns through ports of entry contrary to CITES (Control of Trade in Endangered Species) regulations.
- Hare coursing (which is banned under The Hunting Act 2004.) A problem reported to me via The National Farmers’ Union since April 2015. I want more of these effective schemes, which show local residents promoting good citizenship and supporting a better neighbourhood by patrolling their own streets, to be set up in ever more diverse areas.
- Smuggling live animals and body parts such as ivory and rhino horns through ports of entry contrary to CITES (Control of Trade in Endangered Species) regulations.
- Poisoning of birds of prey.
- Badger-baiting, snaring and setting disturbance (with such badgers frequently left by the highway to simulate road deaths)
- Poaching of deer and fish, increasingly on a commercial scale.

We are a largely rural county and such crimes, therefore, matter within our communities, in particular. Across the whole of the UK, the National Wildlife Crime Unit provides specialist knowledge to assist in the prevention and detection of such crime, acting against criminals exploiting British wildlife and international traders using UK ports of entry illegally.

Luton Airport

A different area of challenge for Bedfordshire Police is Luton Airport. At the point of becoming your Commissioner, negotiations are being concluded to set the budget for our force to continue to oversee security at the key regional transport hub, at a time when it is growing exponentially. It is growing to the point where it will handle some 16 million passengers, putting it on a par with Stansted. Expansion of the main airport buildings is underway, a new over-ground passenger transfer service linking the Luton Airport Parkway railway station with the terminal is planned and the airport wishes to develop adjacent land as an industrial park, widely extending the parameter.

The deal we struck to provide the airport last time was not for purpose. It lost money, where Bedfordshire Police are concerned, which means the taxpayers of Bedfordshire have been, in effect, subsidising the airport operation. In brief, the deal covered the expenses of officers policing Luton Airport itself, but failed to cover the considerable additional cost of processing those wanted by other forces, especially the Metropolitan Police. Some 3% of those stopped at arrival or boarding gates are sought by the Metropolitan Police. Our officers were lost to other duties while transferring them to Luton Police Station and during the, often lengthy, process of formally booking them into police custody at Luton Police Station. This was unacceptable, unsustainable and commercially unviable for our force.

We cannot make a profit out of the policing of the airport but we should certainly not be making a loss and any settlement must reflect this.

The simple business requirement is that Bedfordshire Police must receive full cost recovery for the policing of the airport.

Recent events in Brussels should remind us all of the need for a secure and safe airport facility.

The airport represents an on-going crime challenge, beyond immigration issues, from drug-smuggling to wildlife crime (meaning, in this context, the importation of live animals and banned animal materials such as ivory.) I am committed to providing the resources to deal with such crimes.

Speedwatch

Speedwatch is by far the most visible presence of volunteers within the county. In 2012 there were two separate schemes, one managed by the police and the other by Bedford Borough Council. These schemes were merged producing 450 volunteers, some of whom were not actively involved in patrols to combat speeding. Since this time Speedwatch has been heavily promoted and linked closely to the work of the Casualty Reduction Partnership and is administered by the police. As a result there are approximately 1,500 warning letters sent out to motorists each month in Bedfordshire.

I wish to encourage more communities, especially in BME areas, to get involved in this vital work.

The Specials Frontline

Special Constables support their local communities by volunteering in their free time to work for Bedfordshire Police. Specials help the same powers, uniform and equipment as their regular colleagues. They can volunteer at 18 and work to 65, giving at least 16 hours a month. They undertake a written and fitness test and 2 weeks continuous training if their employment means part-time training is needed, a training programme spread over 8 weeks. They are mentored through the first 2 probationary years and volunteer for duties via an electronic Duty Sheet.

As of November 2013, the Force had 251 Specials in post across Bedfordshire. Over the past year, the county’s Specials have contributed a total of 82,200 policing hours. 10 people on leaving the service (62) have progressed onto the Retained Duty System of volunteer firefighters, for example. Reaching 500 Specials proved impossible under the previous PCC due at least in part to the fact that, since volunteers have become Specials, the appeal of policing in our county often leads them to apply to become full-time officers. For example, since 2013, over 50 officers have now moved from being Specials to full-time duty. I cannot see this as undesirable as both the individual and the Force therefore have had the opportunity to "try before they buy" and such recruits enter the service with realistic expectations and enthusiasm based on experience.
Getting round the County – this time with Leighton Buzzard Rotary Club

Subject Matter Experts.

I am also keen to mimic industry in the recruitment of volunteer Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) - sometimes referred to as “Special Specialists” - with relevant current or recent commercial experience in a particular area, such as Estate sales or Cybercrime Security, to advise our Force and provide cutting edge information and up to date guidance of a type which exceeds that which is available to advise our Force and provide cutting edge information and up to date guidance of a type which exceeds that which is available to

interpreters in cases where command of a foreign language is required to investigate in full.

Police Cadets.

I have already written of the potential value of volunteer work as a Special Constable when it comes to attracting the attention of a future employer. The same is true of an academic institution for a Special Constable when it comes to attracting the attention of a future employer. The same is true of an academic institution for a

Making Sure that Crime Does Not Pay

I am certain that both victims and the wider law-abiding public endorse the principal that crime should not pay. Where proceeds of crime can be seized and retained to pay for policing in our Force area, this seems to be an area of natural justice.

I will ensure we work closely with our partners in the Eastern Region to seize criminal assets wherever practically possible. The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) is gaining increasing experience and ability in the successful targeting of criminal assets, to the mutual benefit of the public and the public and private sector and is a robust and effective ICV scheme running in Bedfordshire, with visits taking place regularly in all areas of police custody including those relating to terrorism detention (where the ICV is used to prevent detainees from acquiring tools and weapons). The Scheme Manager delivers regular reports on issues within custody for me to review and ensure individuals are treated with integrity. It is important to the visitors that the detainees are treated in a manner that ensures they are not given any advantage.

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More than £20,000 - has also been ring-fenced to directly

Making the Case

... and that of my office.

I will be meeting the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable (or a combination thereof) at least on a weekly basis in a Police Business Meeting to review our progress in a number of areas already identified by this team and with respect to areas to submit on behalf of the public, based on the outcomes of this Plan, or as pressing matters arise and are brought to my attention.

I intend that the Chief Constable and relevant members of the Executive Team join me in public meetings to explain the outcome of such holding to account and the plans for improved policing which result.

I will commission an annual report from the Chief Constable on delivery as it relates to this Plan and an update on recorded crime which I will share with the public.

I will chair quarterly Strategic Performance Reviews of Bedfordshire Police and of Joint Protective Services (JPS), the tri-force services which the Force leads on behalf of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. I will also meet regularly with the Strategic Performance Board and Audit Committee for a review of what we have achieved.

In addition, I will also meet regularly with the Police and Crime Panel for Bedfordshire Police, comprised of cross-party members from councils across the county and independents, all of whom have responsibility to hold me to account as your Commissioner.

Holding to Account

Since Bedfordshire Police’s Chief Finance Officer oversees both the accounts of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and that of the Force, and as I have a duty to hold the force to account financially, I am recruiting a Head of Financial Scrutiny to perform the function of on-going audit on behalf of the OPCC. This individual will have the accountability and skills and experience to make a full and continuous examination of the Force’s budget and that of my office.

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is a national organisation that leads, supports and represents custody visiting schemes. PCs in every region nominate a representative to its Management Board to represent the local scheme. Through the Board we can share learning, practice and findings as part of the visitors’ contribution to the National Preventive Mechanism.

The Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers who are detained must be thoroughly searched (though not all

Police Constable and a PSV (Police Support Volunteer).

I support the Force in recognizing a gap in life experience and maturity which has existed at the end of the two-year Cadet Programme and addressing it. In October the Force will introduce a third-year programme for cadets who sometimes struggle to make the transition from cadet to Special Constable at just 18. Traditionally the Force encourages its cadets to become Specials and move on into regular officer roles in later years, however a number have been unable to progress in this way without extra help. The new three-year programme will offer coaching and mentoring as well as encouraging the cadets to give us a young person’s perspective on emerging crime issues such as hate crime and cybercrime.

Independent Custody Visitors.

Bedfordshire Police is emerging from a deeply unfortunate period relating to two deaths in police custody which have been tragedies for those most directly involved and which have, inevitably, reduced public confidence in the Force. The PCC has a legal duty to oversee and monitor the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme to allow third parties access to our custody arrangements to see for themselves that they are maintained and administered correctly.

My specific responsibilities as a PCC include ensuring there is a robust and effective ICV scheme running in Bedfordshire, with visits taking place regularly in all areas of police custody including those relating to terrorism detention (where the ICV is used to prevent detainees from acquiring tools and weapons). The Scheme Manager delivers regular reports on issues within custody for me to review and ensure individuals are treated with integrity. It is important to the visitors that the detainees are treated in a manner that ensures they are not given any advantage.

This is particularly important, at the time of writing, in the wake of the recent reforms to the second tier of the Policing Act 2011, which ensure that volunteers are trained and well-managed with the Scheme Manager delivering regular reports on issues within custody for me to review and ensure individuals are treated with integrity. It is important to the visitors that the detainees are treated in a manner that ensures they are not given any advantage.

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Feedback from you

Feedback from the public is critically important, to learn from the grass roots how you feel about the initiatives we are introducing at Bedfordshire Police and in development of this Plan as we move forward. This is why I wish my office to provide an Outreach Team of Ambassadors to engage with the public through meetings with all our Parish Councils and other community groups on request, wherever possible.

I will meet regularly with the three unitary local authorities in the county to the same end and will also visit our town councils wherever possible, on invitation. I will hold the annual Parish Councils’ Conference for the same purpose and to keep local communities informed on policing progress.

I will regularly liaise with the senior representatives of Community Safety Partnerships and review their own statutory annual reports on aims and objectives.

I will write regular features within our county-wide press titles and make myself available to broadcasters as far as possible to update you on progress and keep you up to date with my activity and that of my office on social media.

This document represents my initial thinking as I come into the role of Commissioner. Inevitably some of these ambitions will be honed and altered by changing circumstances and additional actions will also be undertaken. You will doubtless have a view on how well or otherwise I am making a difference to policing in your area, within the constraints of police numbers and budget. The funding position determined by Central Government will also be a key factor in effective delivery.

I will endeavour to respond as quickly and fully as possible to your communications through my office, so all comments and complaints are handled fairly and equitably, so that we can all genuinely work together to help the Police to help the public and build better policing for Bedfordshire.