



Home Office

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Thank you for your letter of 25 March about Oldham Council's resolution on police funding. I am sorry for the delay in my response.

Prior to this year's Police Funding Settlement being announced, we reviewed the changing and increasingly complex demands on the police. We responded by increasing funding for policing by over £1 billion, including precept and the £100 million fund to tackle serious violence, and will enable the police to manage their pension costs of approximately £330 million next year while continuing to recruit and fill capability gaps, such as the shortage of detectives.

Overall, funding direct from the Government has increased by over £520 million this year, with a further £512 million coming from council tax. Setting a cash limit on increases of £2 a month for a typical household across the country is also a fair approach for taxpayers. Setting the police precept is ultimately a matter for individual Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) or Mayors, taking into account the views of the local community and Police and Crime Panels.

PCCs have already announced plans to recruit over 2,900 additional police officers, and around 600 additional police staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) this year. The police need to use this money well, which means every force saving money on procurement and the back office, so it can be re-invested in the front line to continue improving the service to the public. As you point out in your letter, Greater Manchester Police will see their funding increase by £35.8 million this year with the Mayor planning to recruit at least 320 more police officers.

I understand your worries about violent crime and I can assure you and your fellow councillors that the Government is deeply concerned about the recent rise in serious violence, particularly knife crime, which is robbing too many children and young people of their futures. This is a challenge that affects all of society, and the Government is determined to ensure we have the strongest possible response in place to tackle serious violence.

On 9 April 2018 we published the Serious Violence Strategy to take action to address serious violence and in particular the increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. The Strategy outlines an ambitious programme involving 61 commitments and actions to make a real difference and reduce violent crime.

Since launching the Strategy, we have made significant progress in delivering our key commitments, including:

- Our Early Intervention Youth Fund of £22 million is already supporting 29 projects in England and Wales. Over £17 million has already been allocated to projects delivering interventions to young people at risk of criminal involvement, gang exploitation and county lines.
- Providing £3.6 million for a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre. The centre was established to tackle violent and exploitative criminal activity associated with county lines and became fully operational in September 2018. The National County Lines Co-ordination Centre has co-ordinated two separate weeks of intensive law enforcement action resulting in more than 1,000 arrests, over 1,300 individuals engaged for safeguarding, and significant seizures of weapons and drugs.
- An anti-knife crime Community Fund which provided £1.5 million in 2018/19 to support 68 projects.
- Introducing a new Offensive Weapons Bill to strengthen up legislation on firearms, knives and corrosive substances.
- £1.4 million to support a new national police capability to tackle gang-related activity on social media.
- The National knife crime media campaign - #knifefree - to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime, and
- Providing additional oversight and external challenge of this critical work by establishing a cross party, cross sector, Serious Violence Taskforce which is chaired by the Home Secretary.

We were pleased to have awarded Positive Steps in Oldham £19,654 to deliver the 'Blunt' programme to young people aged 10-18 who have been identified as being at risk of perpetrating knife crime under the anti-knife crime Community Fund 2018/19. We were also pleased to have offered Greater Manchester Combined Authority £1,014,500 to run a project which will support a whole-system approach to early intervention and prevention of youth violence under the Early Intervention Youth Fund.

The Strategy represents a step change in the way we think and respond to serious violence. Our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends also on a multi-agency approach across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, victim services and others. In particular, the Strategy stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of serious violence and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence.

In addition to this, on 2 October 2018 the Home Secretary announced further measures to help tackle violent crime building on the work outlined in the Serious Violence Strategy. The new package of announcements to be taken forward by the Government includes:

- a consultation on new legal duty to underpin a 'public health' approach to tackling serious violence - this would mean police officers, education partners, local authority and health care professionals will have a new legal duty to take action and prevent violent crime. This statutory duty would make serious violence a top priority for all key partners, ensuring that all agencies are working together to prevent young people being caught in the criminal cycle. The Consultation launched on 1 April, for a period of eight weeks, closing on 28 May. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/serious-violence-new-legal-duty-to-support-multi-agency-action>;
- a new £200 million youth endowment fund - this will be delivered over ten years and will support interventions with children and young people at risk of involvement in crime and violence. It will focus on those most at risk, such as children who may not be engaged with education, who are displaying signs of aggression or involvement in anti-social behaviour. Its role is to find and test the best ideas and approaches, and work with partners to scale these up. The fund will be run by the charity Impetus, working in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business; and
- an Independent Review of Drug Misuse - on 8 February, we appointed Dame Carol Black to lead a major review that will look into the ways in which drugs are fuelling serious violence. The initial stage of the review will look at who drug users are, what they are taking and how often in order to build the most in-depth and comprehensive picture of this issue to date. The Review, which will build on existing Government strategies to combat drugs, serious violence and serious and organised crime, will examine the harms that drugs cause and the best ways to prevent drug taking. It will also examine the drivers behind recent trends such as the increased recreational use of class A drugs by young adults.

However, in view of the continuing level of violence, it has become clear that we must go further. That is why the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced £100 million funding in 2019/20, including £80 million of new funding from the Treasury, which will help in the police's immediate response to the rise in serious knife crime, enabling priority forces to immediately begin planning to put in place the additional capacity they need.

The funding will also be invested in Violence Reduction Units, bringing together a range of agencies including health, education, social services and others, to develop a multi-agency approach in preventing serious violence altogether. It is important that we recognise that greater law enforcement on its own will not reduce serious violence and that we must continue to focus on prevention.

The majority of the investment will go towards supporting police forces where violent crime is impacting the most, to take immediate action to suppress the violence we are seeing, to make our streets safer. We are engaging with partners including the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and we are developing the criteria by which forces will receive this funding.

I hope this reassures you and your fellow councillors about the action the Government is taking to tackle serious violence and the increase in police funding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Hurd'.

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP