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Dear Home Secretary

As Northumbria's Police and Crime Commissioner I have always operated from the guiding principle that if something works in the fight against crime we should run with it, regardless of the politics. It is disappointing then to learn that the Home Office will no longer be funding two key projects which have succeed in making the North East safer.

Officials in your department recently made clear that they will not be allowing any further bids into the Safer Streets fund for two existing schemes – one designed to keep women safe in bars and clubs, and another which tackles anti-social behaviour and crime on public transport. Both have had incredible success; both are a model of direct crime reduction.

The first of these Safer Streets projects, Operation Cloak, sees plain-clothes officers proactively target men who seek to take advantage of women in vulnerable situations in the Night Time Economy. Northumbria Police has seen incredible success with Operation Cloak. Over the last 12 months alone more than 700 patrols have seen 821 policing interventions and 62 arrests. Women are safer because of this police work.

The second Safer Streets project saw extra police, security personnel and youth workers deployed across the transport network to tackle rising ASB. The investment reduced crime. One example from this fund is Operation Princess, which since its launch has seen theft offences fall 78 per cent and public order down by 68 per cent on key sections of the Metro network.

The people of the North East have seen what works, they are safer as a result. We should be allowed to invest where there is proven success, based on our local needs.

The problem with the Safer Streets Fund speaks to a much bigger challenge – the Home Office is intuitively opposed to devolution. There is too much reliance upon one-off funding announcements in which officials and ministers in Whitehall decide what is best for people living hundreds of miles away.

People in the North East, and elsewhere, need to know that they can elect officials empowered to act on their local concerns. I urge you to show your commitment to this principle by reversing the decision not to fund existing Safer Streets projects.

Regards,

Kim McGuinness

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner