

## Five-year plan to combat drugs and violent crime in our county



*Adam Simmonds*

By [Michael Whelan](#)

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Tackling the county's drugs trade and reducing violent crime are just two of the promises the police and crime commissioner made at the unveiling of his five-year plan.

Newly-elected Adam Simmonds said he has set himself the ambitious aim of making Northamptonshire the safest county in England between now and 2018.

However, he admitted he will have to do so in the face of financial cuts.

Mr Simmonds said: "Crime in Northamptonshire is too high. Further large cuts in national funding mean we must think and deliver in radically different ways."

One of the top priorities in Mr Simmonds' plan is a pledge to cut violent crime across the county by 40 per cent in the next five years by tackling alcohol-related violence and combating domestic abuse and hate crime.

A spokesman for the commissioner said violent crime in some parts of the county is currently comparable to inner city areas like Merseyside – and this is not acceptable.

He added: "It is a big concern. Although the plan sets out priorities for five years, we are aiming to make some inroads on that 40 per cent target in the next 12 months."

So-called 'acquisitive' crime, such as thefts from vehicles and burglary which is often linked to drugs, is also a priority.

However, Mr Simmonds said one of the most important elements of his vision was the creation of a victim's commission which will put the needs of victims centre stage by improving support services and championing restorative justice.

Mr Simmonds said: "The victim's voice will be heard loud and clear."

His spokesman said all commissioners had been tasked to create a five-year plan, even though the next elections were taking place in three years.

Political opponents attacked Mr Simmonds' budget this week, saying the commissioner was setting aside a further £323,000 for back-office roles. However, his spokesman said this was a mistake, and that sum was for victim support and other elements of the strategy.

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