

Police and Crime Panel

26 October 2017

Police Precept 2018-19

Report of Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner



Purpose

1. To inform the Panel of proposals to consult on changes to the Police Precept, and to seek their views.

Background

2. Every January the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC) consults on changes to the level of precept which contributes to Police funding. Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires PCCs to gather the views of the public to inform the decision.
3. In recent years the Government has stipulated that the increase should be less than 2%, unless there is a referendum to agree a higher increase. In Durham and Darlington, the consultation has focused on the need to raise precept in order to retain Police Officers in post, and public consultation has indicated strong support for this.
4. However, the compressed time for consultation in January has led to a situation where fewer people have been able to contribute to the consultation than would have been possible if the consultation operated over a longer period. In order to enable more members of the public to take part, the PCVC is considering opening up community activity at an earlier stage, before proceeding to formal consultation during the normal window in January.

Engagement on the precept for 2018/19: January 2018

5. Police and Crime Panel members will be asked to approve a formal consultation document at the meeting on 4 January, and formal consultation will take place in the same way as in previous years. At that point there should be clarity about the maximum precept increase which Government will permit – which we are expecting to be announced alongside the settlement in December. The formal consultation document will make clear proposals on the back of clearer information that exists at present, about the parameters for consultation.
6. The January consultation will include public meetings (Area Action Partnerships and other opportunities including in Darlington) and a survey of the general public, looking for agreement to what are likely to be firm proposals to increase the Police precept.

Engagement on Police Funding for 2018/19: October - December 2017

7. Meanwhile, the PCVC is proposing to take views from the public on some specific points relating to Police funding. The following is the text of a flier which he intends to release from Saturday 28 October – at the Celebration of Superheroes event in Shildon. Please note that the flier has already been produced in hard copy in time for that event:

Police Funding in 2018/19

- The Government has reduced the funding for Policing in Durham and Darlington every year since 2010.
- Durham Constabulary now has around fewer 360 officers than in 2010 – a reduction of 1 in 4.
- There is a risk that Police Officer numbers will have to fall unless funding from the Police element of Council Tax increases.
- I am therefore intending to minimise the reduction in Police Officer numbers, by increasing the precept by the maximum I am allowed to. I expect this to be around 2% - or 4p a week for a household living in a property in Council Tax Band A.

Please show which of the following statements you agree with the most (please tick one box only)

1. I would support a Council Tax increase of more than 2% in order to maintain the current number of Police Officers
2. I strongly support an increase of 2% Council Tax in order to minimise any further reduction in Police Officer numbers
3. I reluctantly support an increase of 2% in Council Tax, but I am prepared to do so in order to minimise any further reduction in Police Officers numbers
4. I would prefer no increase in Council Tax, and would be prepared to see a larger reduction in Police Officer numbers as a result

Please let me have any further views on this matter in the box below:

8. In those parts of County Durham where no meetings of Area Action Partnerships are scheduled to take place in January, the PCVC proposes to present these proposals in November and December 2017. They will also be presented on the PCVC's website to obtain on-line responses, and the flier will be made available at the PCVC's

engagements towards the end of 2017. There will also be significant social media activity.

Recommendation

9. Panel members are invited to comment on the proposals.

Ron Hogg

Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

There will be financial implications but as yet unclear

Staffing

Will depend on Government funding decisions

Equality and Diversity

n/a

Accommodation

n/a

Crime and Disorder

n/a

Children's Act 2004

n/a

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

n/a

Environment

n/a

Collaboration and Partnerships

n/a

Value for Money and Productivity

n/a

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

n/a

Commissioning

n/a

Other risks

n/a

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