

## **Police and Crime Panel**

**4<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

### **Consultation on Council Tax Police Precept 2018-19**

#### **Report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner**

---

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To advise members of the Police and Crime Panel of my proposal to seek the views of the community on an increase in the policing element of Council Tax (the "precept") for 2018-19.
2. A report will go to the Police and Crime Panel on 1<sup>st</sup> February proposing the precept for 2018-19. Under Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Panel is required to review the proposed precept, and to make a report on it. The report can include recommendations on the level of the precept. The panel has the power to veto the proposed precept, requiring a two-thirds majority in favour of a veto for it to be successful.
3. This paper is to advise the Police and Crime Panel about my intentions to increase the precept and to seek the views of the community on that proposal.
4. For the avoidance of doubt, this particular report is about my intention to consult, not the final proposal, and therefore the requirements set out in paragraph 2 do not yet apply.

#### **Background**

5. The total provisional grant to be received by Durham Constabulary for 2018-19 was announced on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017. It will be the same in cash terms as 2017-18: £84.67m. This is better than previously expected, but represents a cut in real terms of c.2%.
6. There are significant cost pressures the force is facing in terms of pay awards, pension costs, and IT costs. There are also cost pressures arising from increased demand and improving service delivery in key areas. Furthermore, we expect the Government to introduce a new funding formula in the next few years which could result in a cut to Durham Constabulary's budget of up to £10m. This means the Council Tax contribution to policing is vital.
7. For the last few years, there has been a cap of 2% on the increase which Police and Crime Commissioners are able to apply to Council Tax. The Government have announced that this will change in 2018-19. The cap will now be £12 on a Band D property (which means £8 on a Band A and £24 on a Band H). This equates to a 7.09% increase in Durham.

## Precept Proposal

8. Durham Constabulary has retained its 'outstanding' grading by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for all three questions in the PEEL Efficiency Inspection. In order to maintain the excellent service they deliver I propose to increase the precept by the maximum allowed, but to seek views on this proposal during January.
9. A 7.09% increase will cost a household in a Band A property an additional 15p per week.
10. An increase of less than 7.09% would result in a lower baseline for any increase in subsequent years. The budget would be permanently lower and the difference could never be recovered.
11. I am reluctant to ask local council tax payers to pay more, and recognise that households are under pressure. However, I am also mindful of my responsibility to maintain an effective police force. In view of the pressures which I am advised the force is going to be facing – in terms of pay awards, increased pension contributions, inflation, and rising demand – in my opinion that budget needs to be in as strong a position as possible.
12. I am therefore proposing to increase the precept by the maximum available, but would like to seek the views of local people.

## Consultation

13. I am proposing that the consultation will run from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017 until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The consultation will be available online on my website and hard copies will be available from my office. The consultation will be promoted by press release and through social media. The online survey sets out my proposal, details of what it would cost, and then asks respondents for views. A draft of the document is attached at **Appendix 3**.
14. Details of the precept proposal will be widely circulated including to Elected Members, the County Durham Partnership, the Darlington Partnership, the Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Criminal Justice Board, Town and Parish Councils, Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), and the Voluntary and Community Sector, for views and onward cascade.
15. I am undertaking 'Community Days' during the engagement period where I will also seek public opinion. As part of these community days I am attending a number of AAPs across County Durham. At the AAPs I plan to present my proposals for increasing the precept and seek the overall opinion of the group rather than to elicit individual survey responses. If I am not able to attend the AAP or if they do not have a scheduled meeting during this period, the AAP Coordinators have agreed to circulate details of the proposal to the AAP Board Members and wider forum members.
16. I have undertaken pre-consultation during November and December 2017, on the expectation that a cap of 2% would be imposed on the precept increase. I will provide members of the Panel with a verbal summary of the responses so far at the meeting.

## **Recommendations**

17. The Panel is recommended to:

- Note the intention to consult; and
- Comment on the draft consultation document.

Ron Hogg

**Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner**

---

## Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

---

**Finance:** The Council Tax Precept 2018-19 proposed to rise by 7.09% (as per main body of the report).

**Staffing:** None

**Equality and Diversity:** No specific implications.

**Accommodation:** No specific implications

**Crime and Disorder:** The money received through the increase will be put towards reducing crime and disorder and ensuring matters are dealt with as efficiently as possible.

**Children's Act 2004:** No specific implications

**Stakeholder/Community Engagement:** Feedback on the proposed increase has been sought from the community, and further consultation is planned as set out in the report.

**Environment:** No specific implications

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** No specific implications

**Value for Money and Productivity:** The precept increase proposed is the largest it can be without holding a costly referendum.

**Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities:** No specific implications

**Commissioning:** No specific implications

**Other risks:** No specific implications

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Jon Carling</b>
<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Head of Policy and Communications</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>0191 375 2149</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Jon.carling@durham.pcc.pnn.gov.uk">Jon.carling@durham.pcc.pnn.gov.uk</a>

---

**Appendix 2: Table Showing the Impact of the Precept Increase by Council Tax Band**

---

	<b>Band A**</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D*</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
Precept 2017-18	£112.83	£131.63	£150.44	£169.24	£206.85	£244.46	£282.07	£338.48
<b>7.09% increase</b>								
Proposed Precept 2018-19	£120.83	£140.96	£161.11	£181.24	£221.52	£261.79	£302.07	£362.48
Increase Per year	£8.00	£9.33	£10.67	£12.00	£14.67	£17.33	£20.00	£24.00
Increase per week	£0.15	£0.18	£0.21	£0.23	£0.28	£0.33	£0.38	£0.46

\*Typical property is classed as Band D.

\*\* 55% of households in County Durham and Darlington are classed as Band A.