

Precept FAQ's 2017

1. Why does the leaflet state that the increase will support extra officers, and as a result strengthen local policing, but the figures show that spending on Police Officers and PCSOs will reduce?

The numbers of officers and staff have been reducing year on year and the 2017/18 budget includes further reductions. However, those reductions would have been more had it not been for the investment provided by the £5 increase.

Over the last 7 years, Sussex has had to make £76m of reductions and efficiencies to head towards balancing its books (source: HMIC PEEL assessment and 2016/17 revenue budget). These have resulted from unprecedented reductions to the funding provided by the Government to Policing Bodies in England and Wales. This pressure is continuing and further savings of £35.7m will be required over the next four years in order to achieve a balanced budget. As employee costs make up 80% of the total spending plan we have and will have to continue to reduce officer and staff costs.

So, had the £5 increase not been approved we would not have been able to employ over 100 new officers and specialist staff for Community Priority Teams, Specialist Firearms Officers, Public Protection Investigators and Expert Youth Teams as set out in the precept leaflet.

2. How do you plan to achieve investment in extra officers?

Further savings will be achieved across the Force from procurement opportunities, rationalising the operational estate property and from joint vision and services with Surrey Police and other collaborative arrangements.

Community Investigation Teams are already in post and will be operational from 1 April 2017.

We are currently training our armed response officers. Detailed recruitment plans for the Expert Youth Teams and Public Protection Officers will be completed in the first quarter and will be overseen by our Investment Board.

3. What is included in 'Other Spend' and 'IT and Mobile' that is cause for an increase of £5.1M and £2.6M respectively?

"Other spend" includes a large number of different costs across the business including but not exhaustive to; printing, postage, stationery, specialist equipment, clothing and uniform and insurance. The increase in this spend is affected by inflation and other unavoidable cost pressures including a new national Apprenticeship Levy Scheme of £0.8m.

The increase to "IT and Mobile" spend is the result of Sussex Police transforming and modernising the way it works which requires a greater use of mobile technology, along with contractual cost increases.

4. How many people were consulted?

The Commissioner consulted with the public between 11 November 2016 and 8 January 2017. A total of 4,504 responses were received across this period and the percentage in favour was the highest to date. Almost 8 out of 10 responses (78%) were in favour of an increase of £5 or more.

5. Why is there no funding for Neighbourhood Wardens?

The Commissioner funded pilot schemes for Business and Community Wardens during 2016-17. These pilots are currently being evaluated.

6. Total spend has only increased from £289.90 to £290.50. Has the £2.4M difference gone into reserves?

The gross budget has increased by £0.600m.

7. Apart from the increase in council tax, have all the other streams of funding for Sussex Police been cut?

The Police Core Grant has been reduced £2.1m (1.4%) in 2017/18. In addition, the grant for equipment and asset purchases reduced from £1.766m to £0.906m.

Sussex Police maximise other sources of income for example income from policing Gatwick Airport, Brighton & Hove Albion football matches and other large events in the county.

8. The table within the leaflet shows that income from Council Tax will rise by £4.4M but wording within the leaflet states £3M. Which is correct?

The £5 increase in the precept provides a further £3m of recurring funding over and above the current draft budget proposal. In addition, Sussex Police can contribute a further £1.2m that it has generated through efficiencies to provide a total annual investment of £4.2m to strengthen local policing.

9. How are the rural crimes being addressed?

The Commissioner is clear that the geographic make-up of Sussex means that it is essential that a proportionate focus is placed on tackling rural crime and Mrs Bourne will hold the Chief Constable to account for ensuring that an appropriate balance between what is happening in rural areas and urban centres exists.

The Commissioner challenged the Chief Constable on rural policing at February's Performance & Accountability Meeting in which the Chief Constable highlighted rural specific initiatives in Sussex; Farm Watch, Horse Watch, Path Watch and Heritage Watch.

Minutes of this meeting and a webcast are available to view online [here](#).

10. Are Special Constable's still offered a refund of the precept?

The proposal to refund precept to Special Constables was never adopted.

11. Is money raised through fines considered when setting council tax?

Sussex Police do not retain any money raised through fines, such as speeding or parking fines.

12. How are police officers being rewarded?

Sussex Police officers are paid in accordance with national pay scales and are offered a range of other job benefits, including training and career development.

13. Have the Government changed the way that they calculate police funding?

The police core grant distribution formula allocation has not changed but a review is currently underway to determine the most suitable method for future years.

14. What is a Band D Property?

Council Tax is a local charge on all households and pays towards the cost of local services including the Police. The Council tax year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

How much you pay depends on which band your house is in. Each band is calculated as a proportion of band D. You can check your band at www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands.gov

15. What is a Council Precept?

It is an element of your Council Tax which is raised for specific services for example by fire & rescue authorities and more recently by the local Police and Crime Commissioner.

Other helpful information;

[Revenue and Capital Budget 2017/18 and Setting of the Precept for 2017/18](#)

[Proposed Precept Report for Police & Crime Panel](#)

[Statement of Accounts](#)

[HMIC Police Efficiency Report 2016](#)

[HMIC Value for Money Profiles](#)