

To:	The Police & Crime Panel for Sussex
From:	The Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex
Subject:	Precept Option 2015/16
Date:	23 January 2015
Recommendation:	That the Police & Crime Panel – <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> i) review the proposed precept; and ii) report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept. </div>

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Police & Crime Commissioner to notify the Panel of the proposed precept. The Panel in response is required to provide a report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept, including if appropriate, recommendations as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year.
- 1.2 The Commissioner has sought public opinion on the precept options and the results are set out in this report. The Panel is asked to review the proposed precept increase and to note the investment areas identified by the Chief Constable.
- 1.3 The provisional local government finance settlement for 2015/16, which includes police funding, was announced on 18 December 2014. It confirmed that any proposed precept increase of 2% or more will need to allow local people the opportunity to approve or veto the increase in a referendum. The increase proposed in this report is below the cap and will not trigger a referendum.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In January 2014, when considering the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget for 2014/15, the Police and Crime Panel supported a precept increase of up to a maximum of 3.6% or any lower limit that would not trigger a local referendum in 2014/15.
- 2.2 Subsequently the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that the level at which a referendum would be required for 2014/15 was 2%. No additional flexibility for Police and Crime Commissioners was announced. Therefore, in February 2014, the Police and Crime Commissioner approved a 1.95% increase in precept for 2014/15.

- 2.3 The HMIC 2014/15 Value for Money profiles show that nationally, Sussex has the 4th lowest Band D council tax and has the 5th lowest net expenditure per head of population of all police force areas in England and Wales. The current band D council tax police precept is £141.12.
- 2.4 The draft budget for 2015/16 is based on a 0% precept increase and does not include any increase in investment for operational policing, over and above on-going investment funded from the precept increase in 2014/15 . The draft budget includes nearly £14m of savings through efficiencies and improvements. It is based on Police & Crime Plan priorities with any new demands and risks being managed within existing resources.

3.0 Investment proposal

- 3.1 The new investment proposals for 2015/16 are based on the Police and Crime Plan priorities. The priority areas previously identified by the Chief Constable in January 2014 remain the same. Investment in frontline policing, responding to sexual violence, child exploitation and cybercrime is still required to address key service and operational issues and demands.
- 3.2 The Chief Constable has requested that the additional funding is invested on delivering in full the proposals, which were made as part of last year's budget setting (2014/15).
- 3.3 **Frontline policing:** to fund the on-going revenue costs associated with the roll-out of mobile policing, which will improve the productivity and effectiveness of officers in frontline line roles and enable greater visibility and customer service. Investment required is £0.3m per annum, which will support the on-going use of approximately 1,800 devices.
- 3.4 **Safeguarding:** to fund the full implementation and recruitment to Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLO) posts to enable dedicated full time 24/7 provision of investigation into sexual offences, high risk domestic abuse, child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Investment required is up to £0.7m to increase capacity of SOLOs to 36 FTE. This investment will also enable additional capacity in frontline policing teams where officers are currently undertaking some elements of this work.
- 3.5 **Cyber:** to continue to fund investment (jointly) with Surrey Police in capacity, skills and resources. Proposals and on-going funding is subject to agreement with Surrey Police.
- 3.6 Further details of the proposals, including the progress made to date are contained in Appendix A.

4.0 Precept Proposal

- 4.1 The Police & Crime Commissioner is proposing a precept increase of 1.98% in order to fund the investment proposal. A public consultation has been carried out, as detailed in section 5 of this report, and shows public support with 73% of respondents in favour.

- 4.2 The current medium term financial forecast (MTFF) is modelled on a 0% precept increase for 2015/16 and beyond. The MTFF therefore assumes that Sussex Police would receive a Council Tax Freeze Grant worth £0.8m, equivalent to a 1% increase in precept.
- 4.3 A precept increase of 1.98% provides at least £0.8m of additional funding over and above the current draft budget proposal. When added to the 2014/15 increase this provides £1.6m in additional funding in 2015/16 and future years.
- 4.4 The provisional finance settlement (18 December 2014) confirmed that funding for the 2015/16 council tax freeze grant scheme will be included in the spending review baseline for future years. Once in the baseline this will be subject to any reductions in government funding.

5.0 Public Consultation

- 5.1 The Police & Crime Commissioner has a statutory obligation to set the police budget and has sought the views of Sussex taxpayers regarding a potential increase in the budget precept. The consultation was open from 28 October 2014 to 9 January 2015.
- 5.2 A total of 2,061 Sussex residents completed the survey and 73% of the respondents said that they would support an increase. This represents a 9% increase in the number of respondents that supported an increase last year. Of the respondents that were in support, 95% agreed that a 1.98% increase was appropriate.
- 5.3 The breakdown of the consultation results are attached at Appendix B.

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Appendices

- A. Detailed Investment Commentary
- B. Public Consultation Results – Sussex Police Budget Precept

Introduction

This report provides an update on the implementation of investment proposals agreed as part of the budget for 2014/15 and proposals for increasing this investment in 2015/16.

Background

The Operational Delivery Budget for 2014/15 included funding for new investment in frontline policing; and responding to sexual violence, child exploitation and cyber crime. This is being delivered through additional recruitment of police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables, new safeguarding teams, the introduction of specialist Sexual Offences Liaison Officer (SOLO) posts and creation of a new joint cyber crime team and approach across Surrey and Sussex.

The original plans were based on a phased delivery/implementation during 2014/15 leading to a higher level of investment in the following two years to be funded as follows.

Investment and Funding Profile to 2016/17

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Recruitment	300	250	250
Safeguarding	550	900	1,100
Cyber Crime	250	250	250
Total	1,100	1,400	1,600
Precept Funding	750	750	1,600
Reserves	350	650	0

Frontline Policing

By March 2015, Sussex Police will have significantly increased the number of new police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables joining during the year.

Police Officers

- overall recruitment of 165 new police officers in 2014/15 (compared with 60 in the previous year)
- to date recruitment of 25 transferee officers and 60 student officers
- plans for further recruitment of student officers in October and March of 40 in each in-take.

The 60 student officers who started in June will reach the independent patrol standard in December. The 40 student officers who start in October will reach independent patrol standard in March 2015.

PCSOs

- recruitment of 38 new PCSO's this year but no plans for further recruitment.

Of these 19 PCSO's are already fully trained and deployed on Districts and the remainder are currently in training.

Special Constables

- expect to have 190 new Special Constables in 2014/15 (compared with 120 in the previous year)
- to date we have recruited 40 Special Constables with plans for further recruitment in September, December and March of 50 in each intake

The investment on recruitment has been used to complete the recruitment process: competency on-line assessments, drug testing, biometric testing and medical assessment, additional uniforms and kit required. The additional costs for the recruitment uplift in 2014/15 are forecast to be in line with budget allocated.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding functions are part of Specialist Crime and jointly managed across Surrey and Sussex. A public protection business case was agreed by joint Surrey and Sussex Chief Officers in February 2014 for implementation by April 2015, which included proposals for safeguarding and responding to sexual violence, domestic abuse and child exploitation.

The original proposal included the creation of 6 new Sergeant posts (in total) to work within the three Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) in Sussex and creation of a dedicated Sexual Offences Liaison Officer (SOLO) function across Sussex. In order to work within the additional funding available the number of new SOLO posts has been set at 22, this provides significant additional dedicated support for sexual investigations but is less than the original proposal for full 24/7 coverage and dedicated support. The new 22 posts will be filled in phases in line with the agreed funding.

Posting to the 6 new Sergeant roles has been prioritised. The MASH go live dates are Brighton (2 September 2014), West Sussex (1 December 2014) and East Sussex (6 January 2015).

Posting to SOLO roles is subject to recruitment plans and overall workforce planning and resourcing including frontline teams. Taking this into account the plan for posting to new SOLO roles is 14 in December 2014 and a further 8 in March 2015. The impact of this is a later implementation than originally planned for the first tranche of SOLOs (by 3-6 months) but a faster implementation to full establishment (by 12 months).

This implementation plan requires a re-profiling of the planned funding from 2014/15 to 2015/16 of £200k.

Cyber Crime

Plans have been developed for a joint Surrey/Sussex cyber team and capability as part of Specialist Crime. These were agreed by joint Surrey and Sussex Chief Officers in April 2014.

Posting to new police officer posts have been made and the unit is expected to be fully operational by November 2014 based at Haywards Heath. Ahead of this the new team is already dealing with operational referrals and a programme of training commences in October across both forces.

One off costs have, and will be, incurred during 2014/15 on setting up the new unit (estates, vehicles, training and equipment). The running costs for the new unit will be part year in 2014/15 and full year for 2015/16. All costs will be shared between Surrey and Sussex in line with the Section 22a cost sharing agreement. The Sussex shared of estimated one off and on-going costs are in line with the agreed funding.

Summary

Plans for delivery of investment proposals agreed as part of the 2014/15 budget are on track to be implemented in year. The only delay is in relation to posting to the new SOLO roles, the first phase of this will be achieved later than originally planned in 2014/15 but with the remaining posting brought forward to April 2015.

Revised Investment and Funding Profile to 2016/17

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Recruitment	300	250	250
Safeguarding	250	1,100	1,100
Cyber Crime	250	250	250
Total	800	1,600	1,600
Precept Funding	750	750	1,600
Reserves	50	850	0

In summary:

- funding from the precept increase will be fully used in 2014/2015 to deliver the investment proposals as set out in the approved budget ;
- a lower level of funding from reserves is required over the three years (£100k)
- a re-profiling of funding from reserves is required, transferring £200k from 2014/15 to 2015/16

This change will be reflected in future budget plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Investment Proposals 2015/16

New investment proposals for 2015/16 will be based on the Police and Crime Plan priorities. The priority areas previously identified by the Chief Constable in his investment proposals in January 2014 remain the same. Investment in frontline policing, responding to sexual violence, child exploitation and cyber crime is still required to address key service and operational issues and demands.

The Chief Constable would propose that any additional funding for investment is focused on delivery in full of the proposals put forward in January 2014.

Frontline policing: to fund the on-going revenue costs associated with the roll-out of mobile policing, which will improve the productivity and effectiveness of officers in frontline line roles and enable greater visibility and customer service. Investment required is £0.3m per annum, which will support the on-going use of approximately 1,800 devices.

Safeguarding: to fund the full implementation and recruitment to SOLO posts to enable dedicated full time 24/7 provision of investigation into sexual offences, high risk domestic abuse, child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Investment required is up to £0.7m to increase capacity of SOLOs to 36 FTE. This investment will also enable additional capacity in frontline policing teams where officers are currently undertaking some elements of this work.

Cyber: to continue to fund investment (jointly) with Surrey Police in capacity, skills and resources.

Additional Investment Proposals for 2015/2016

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Current Investment Plans	800	1,600	1,600
Mobile Policing		300	300
Safeguarding		500	700
Total	800	2,400	2,600

Public Consultation Results – Sussex Police Budget Precept Appendix B

The survey responses were monitored for unusual patterns of response but none were observed. Two surveys from non-Sussex residents were removed from the results.

A full breakdown of the results is provided below.

Online Survey

A total of 2,061 people responded to the consultation through the online survey. The table below details the number of responses across each of the three divisions:

	Count	%
Brighton & Hove	180	9%
East Sussex	1,058	51%
West Sussex	821	40%
<i>(Don't know)</i>	2	0%

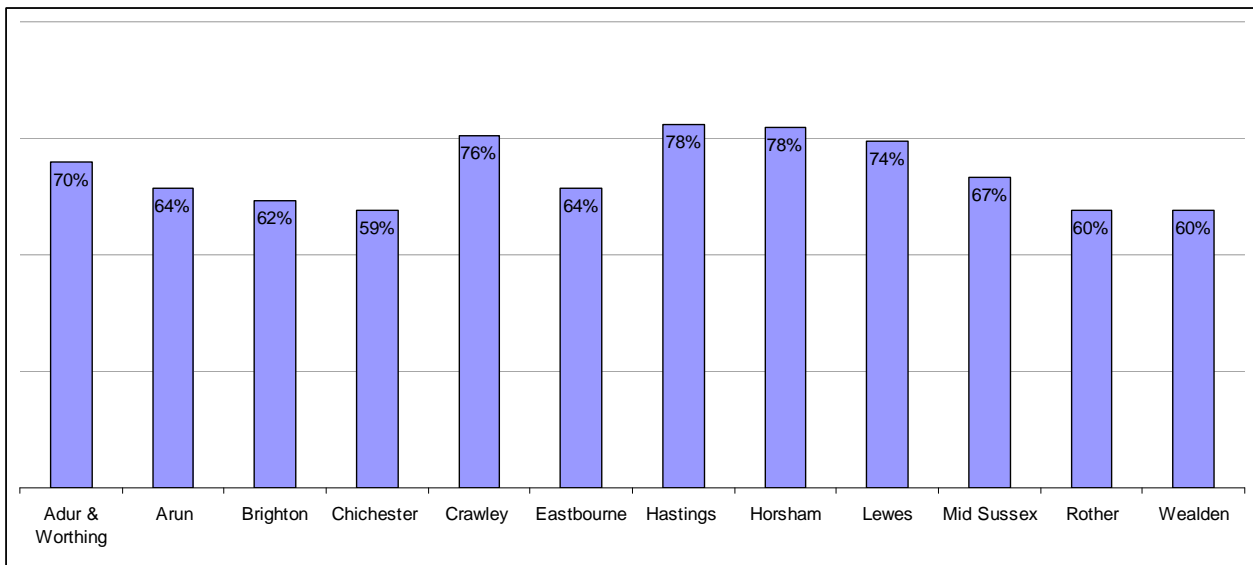
The table below details the results from the survey and is segmented by the three divisions:

Would you support a precept increase in 2015/2016?				
	Yes		No	
Sussex	1,498	73%	563	27%
Brighton & Hove	143	79%	37	21%
East Sussex	776	73%	282	27%
West Sussex	577	70%	244	30%
<i>(Don't know)</i>	2	100%	0	0%

The following table details the number of responses from each of the Sussex Police districts (excluding the two respondents that stated "Don't know"):

District	Count	%	District	Count	%
Adur & Worthing	179	9%	Hastings	100	5%
Arun	168	8%	Horsham	121	6%
Brighton & Hove	180	9%	Lewes	123	6%
Chichester	129	6%	Mid Sussex	146	7%
Crawley	78	4%	Rother	346	17%
Eastbourne	122	6%	Wealden	367	18%

The following chart shows the proportion of residents in each Sussex Police district that supported an increase in the budget precept:



Paper Version of the Online Survey

A total of 59 people responded to the consultation through the paper version of the online survey. The table below details the results from the survey:

Would you support a precept increase in 2015/16?				
	Yes		No	
Sussex	52	88%	7	12%

Sussex Police – Local Neighbourhood Survey

To support the public consultation, Sussex Police included similar questions in the Local Neighbourhood survey during October to December 2014. This is a telephone survey amongst Sussex residents that uses a randomised sampling technique.

Through the telephone survey, a total of 601 Sussex residents were asked:

Would you be willing to pay an additional £2.79 on your council tax precept toward policing?

Yes	403	67%
No	100	17%
Depends	72	12%
Don't Know	26	4%

Respondents that answered 'no' or 'depends' were then asked if there was a particular reason why they answered this way. Common answers included lack of affordability, the high cost of existing taxes and reservations about the benefits that would be realised by the respondent.