

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey



Cllr Dorothy Ross-Tomlin
Chairman, Surrey Police & Crime Panel

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Dear Councillor Ross-Tomlin,

6th February 2015

Re: Precept for 2015/16

I am pleased that the Panel has supported my recommendation to increase the police precept by 1.99%, thus affording some protection to Surrey Police against considerable cuts to its budget. However, I need to be clear, this does not mean the police budget goes up next year - it means that the police budget will reduce by slightly less than it might otherwise have done.

As I stated at the meeting, I am particularly concerned about what is coming over the horizon for the financial year 2016/17, where we face a budget gap of £7m. That will hit the police headcount and their ability to deliver the service residents expect, there is no question about it.

As I see it, there are three options to solve the problem, all of which I have discussed with the Panel on a number of occasions:

- 1) Merge police forces – this is the best option, one that would release hundreds of millions, if not billions of pounds for front line policing by doing away with the 41 sets of HQs, Chief Officers and PCCs currently in place. I put proposals to do this to the Police Minister just a few weeks ago. The Government has no interest in taking them forward.
- 2) Improve the way the Government allocates its police funding - I've sent the Government independent analysis by Oxford Economics into how they allocate money to police forces and given achievable ideas for improving that to make sure the money goes to where it is really needed. Surrey is losing out on as much as £6m per year because the formula doesn't work as well as it could. I sent this to the Home Office in 2013. We've not heard anything since.



- 3) Significantly increase what we raise via our other stream of income – the council tax. I asked the public about this and the support isn't yet there for it.

The Panel has made it clear that it does not support addressing the budget gap through local taxation, and I will therefore instead be looking for Members to support me in my future efforts to encourage the government to review the national policing model and funding formula. The Panel agreed at the meeting to write collectively to Surrey MPs to draw attention to the challenges we are facing and I would be grateful if a copy could be sent to my office for our records.

With regards to the Panel's recommendations:

- Let me assure Members that had I decided to recommend a 24% precept increase to the Police and Crime Panel I would have provided a detailed business case in support of my proposals. I would look to take the same approach in future years.
- During my discussions with residents I was always open about the likely costs of holding a referendum. These were also detailed on our consultation website - safersurrey.co.uk. I would look to take the same approach in future years.
- With regard to the Panel's suggestion that I commission an independent review of Surrey Police's expenditure, I will consider how this could be best accomplished. I will however have to carefully consider the potential costs of undertaking such a piece of work.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Hurley
Police & Crime Commissioner for Surrey

