

Kevin Hurley - elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

In November 2012 the public of Surrey elected me to be their first Police and Crime Commissioner, responsible for overseeing the work of Surrey Police on their behalf and making sure that the people's priorities are tackled by the force.

I promise to bring a Zero-Tolerance approach to policing and crime in our county.

Zero Tolerance is about making sure we always do something about inappropriate, criminal behaviour whenever we encounter it and don't turn away. By always challenging antisocial or criminal behaviour, the police lay down a marker of what is - and what is not - acceptable conduct in our society.

About this year's Surrey Police budget

If we are to succeed in this mission, we need to make sure that Surrey Police have the resources to do it.

Part of my role is to make sure that is the case.

Surrey Police's funding comes from two sources –Government grants and our share of the council tax.

Over the last three years Government cuts have reduced our annual budget by around £7m. This is a significant reduction in our funding and some difficult decisions have been made to protect our core service to the public – front line police officers and staff out there tackling crime.

To enable the Chief Constable to keep our front line as strong as she possibly can, I have increased our share of council tax this year by 1.99%. In money terms, this means an increase of around 32p per month for a Band D property.

I have decided not to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant which the Government is offering in return for freezing the precept at the previous year's level. This grant, which is payable for a period of only two years, would result in a permanent reduction to our long term income base of £1.9 million. This is equivalent to the cost of employing 40 police constables. With Surrey Police already having to find savings to cope with central government funding reductions, I have carried out consultation events with the Surrey public on my council tax proposals and could not find any significant support for a policy of reducing front line policing in the County. This could well be the long term result if I had been minded to recommend freezing our share of council tax at last year's level.

I want to be clear that this is not a decision I have taken lightly. I do not believe the police or any public service has an automatic entitlement to more and more of the public's money. I know it is hard-earned.

I also know the financial strain our police force is under. It is a difficult decision but I believe the public want the police to have every advantage possible in the fight against crime and antisocial behaviour.

Getting a better deal

We have never done well on what we receive from the Government. While Surrey Police gets half of its money this way, other forces receive more, in some cases over 80%. This has meant that we have to rely more heavily than other forces on our share of council tax. Last year, a Band D household in Surrey had to pay over £200 in council tax for policing. A Band D household in the West Midlands – which receives over 85% of its funding from Government - paid less than £100.

I think this is wrong. Surrey provides more in taxes to the Government than any other county. Our police force should be better funded than it is. You should not have to be paying more tax.

I took urgent action when I was elected to raise this with the Government. I am pleased to say that the Government has now announced that it intends to review how it distributes money to police forces and I will be playing a part in that review to make certain that Surrey's case is heard loud and clear. This is not likely to be a quick process but I hope you can feel assured that I am taking action to try and get a better deal for Surrey taxpayers.

For more information:

For more information on the Police and Crime Commissioner visit www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk

For more details about the Police budget from the year from April 2013 or to obtain a copy of our most recent Statement of Accounts, please call our office on **01483 630 200**, email at SurreyPCC@surrey.police.uk, or write to us at PO Box 412, Guildford GU3 1BR

Call **999** if you have a genuine emergency requiring the attendance of the police or if a crime is in progress.

Call Surrey Police on **101** for non-emergency policing matters only.

If you are hard of hearing or speech impaired, you can textphone Surrey Police on **18001 101** (non-emergency) or **18000** (emergency) or text on **07786 204020** or **999** (register at www.emergencysms.org.uk).

Call your local council for abandoned vehicles or noise problems.

Call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** if you have information about a crime and don't want to leave your name.