



Please ask for: Clive Grunshaw
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Dear Panel Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present to your panel on Tuesday 26 January. I am sorry that I am not able to attend in person but want to be able to provide information regarding my Council Tax Precept consultation and other budget issues affecting policing in the area.

Since 2010, Lancashire Constabulary have identified or made savings of £75.2 million pounds from our budget and for the financial year 2016/17 our settlement is £1.03m lower than the current year. These cuts are lower than were previously feared but we still await the Government's funding formula review which could see Lancashire lose money to other forces as it is re-allocated based on new criteria.

In a difficult financial context it is my duty to ensure value for money as well as preserving the quality of service that people in Lancashire expect from their police. Reports by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary published last year showed that Lancashire is delivering well force when it came to providing value for money¹ and one of the top four forces when dealing with vulnerable victims².

In terms of where and how the money is spent, Lancashire Constabulary has taken great steps to reduce back office costs. Now employee costs (£223.5m) make up 80% of the overall expenditure in this tax year (£280m). Sticking to my priority of protecting frontline services I have minimised the cuts in this area. Unfortunately, due to the amount we have had to save, the Constabulary will have reduced staffing levels by 1600, of which 900 are officers, by the end of the next financial year.

In November last year as part of the Comprehensive Spending review (CSR) we were given the news that there would be no cuts to police budgets. However, in the documentation which followed, the calculations were predicated on the fact that Police and Crime Commissioners should increase the council tax precept by 2% year on year for the duration of the CSR period. We estimate that another £18.7m of

¹ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/lancashire-2015-value-for-money-profile/>

² <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-lancashire.pdf>



savings will need to be found by 2019/20 basing estimations on a 2% reduction over this five year period if no changes are made to precept levels.

I have consulted with members of the public across Lancashire on whether to freeze or increase the precept on their Council Tax. In all 2685 people took part either through telephone research, online surveys or at one of the roadshow events I conducted throughout the county- including one in Lancaster on 08 January. The overwhelming majority of respondents (86.5%) supported a rise of 2% or more. In the Lancaster area, that figure was above 90%.

I appreciate that this is a difficult time for all residents and our partners and I understand that difficult decisions continue to be made. Community safety is a partnership between the police, communities and residents and I remain grateful for the support the police receive from councils and other organisations. I also maintain our pledge to work with you. My funding offer for PCSOs in communities like Lancaster remains as does our commitment to a neighbourhood policing model ensuring a local team for every inch of the County.

I recognise that there is a real issue and challenge for local authorities around CCTV cameras in the light of budget cutbacks. However, CCTV is an invaluable tool in monitoring town and city centre activity, in particular any potentially criminal acts. Efficient use of CCTV is in the public interest and is a key tool which can help the police apprehend offenders, reduce crime, protect the public and obtain justice for victims. In other parts of the County I have pledged to support different CCTV schemes where they are improving services and increasing efficiency.

I have included a copy of my precept report to the Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire for your consideration and if any members of the Panel or Lancaster City Council have any follow up questions I would be happy to respond to these if they contact me through my office.

Yours Sincerely,

Clive Grunshaw

Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire