



BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Councillors,

RE: Lancaster Budget Panel

Thank you for the invitation to present to your Budget Panel on 22 January 2019. Unfortunately I am unable to attend in person, but wanted to provide information regarding my Council Tax Precept consultation and other budget issues affecting policing in the area.

Since 2010, Lancashire Constabulary has had to make savings of over £86m with a further estimated £22m still to find by 2023. This means even with the additional funds through maximising the rise in the precept, Lancashire Constabulary will still have to find more ways to save money. Combined with rising demands on the service, increasing costs through inflation, and growing online threats, we have to ensure the police has sufficient resources to keep our county safe.

In his statement on 13th December 2018, Policing and Fire Minister, Nick Hurd MP, set out funding for Police and Crime Commissioners in 2019/20. For Lancashire this included an increase in core grant of £6.8m. However, the impact of this increase is shown in the following table:

	£m
Increase in Police Grant	3.721
Specific grant for pension costs	3.104
Total additional funding from government in 2019/20	6.825
Forecast additional pension costs	7.100

The Minister recognised in his statement that Police and Crime Commissioners' budgets are facing significant cost pressures resulting from a change in pension costs for police officers. Although the increase in grant mitigates some of this pressure, it does not meet it in full and savings made elsewhere in the budget will be required to bridge the gap.

The Minister recognised that investment is needed for additional policing resources to meet the significant and on-going increase in demand faced by the service. To deliver this investment the Minister expects Police and Crime Commissioners to raise the precept by a maximum of £24 per year (or 46p per week) for a Band D property. If realised, this will generate an additional £10.5m of funding for Lancashire Constabulary and afford me the opportunity to make some investment in additional police resources rather than simply avoid having to make cuts to police services.

Subject to a precept increase, it is my intention to invest in the following areas in 2019/20:

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- A task force that increases the number of neighbourhood police officers in every district in Lancashire that will focus on targeting crime and anti-social behaviour impacting upon local communities
- Tactical officers that support local policing teams in addressing cross border crime and the threat from Organised Crime Groups that do not recognise county boundaries when committing serious offences

Over the past four weeks I have been consulting the public about an increase to the council tax precept with 63% of the 4,600+ respondents indicating they are willing to pay more council tax at 46p per week (£24 per year) to support police services and invest in resources.

This shows an understanding of the difficult position I am in when trying to balance the need to accommodate these cuts imposed on the force by national Government, but also the need to ensure the Constabulary is best placed to tackle the needs of the future.

In response to the outcome of this consultation, I am proposing to raise the Council Tax Precept by £24 per year for a Band D property. Other properties will receive raises proportionate to their respective bands. These proposals will be presented to the Police and Crime Panel on 21 January 2019, so will show up on resident's bills during 2019/20.

This was a difficult decision to take and I understand will lead to strong views from residents across Lancashire. However, it is the only option the Government has given Lancashire to receive any additional funding for the Constabulary.

If any members of the Panel or Lancaster City Council have any follow up questions, on the precept or on any other issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Grunshaw
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire