

2016/17

Consultation text

PCC asks: how much are you prepared to pay to maintain frontline policing?

Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner Ron Ball wants to hear your views as he considers setting the police budget for 2016/17. He is asking members of the public if they are willing to contribute around a penny a day extra in order to maintain frontline policing levels.

In November, the Government announced plans in its Comprehensive Spending Review to keep policing budgets at current levels during the life of this Parliament. As has now been made clear by the Home Secretary in a letter to PCCs, the only way that police funding will remain at the same level will be if the police precept – the small portion of each council tax bill that pays for policing – is raised by the maximum permitted amount of 1.99% each year by every PCC. Without this, Government resource funding to policing will actually be reduced by 1.3% in real terms over four years.

If the current police precept rate was frozen, Warwickshire Police would lose around £0.709 million next year and £0.709 million in each subsequent year, resulting in a financial gap of around £2.836 million by 2020. This would have a significant impact on frontline policing and could reverse the recent efforts which have seen the proportion of officers on the frontline increase to 95 percent, which is above the national average.

As a result, the Commissioner is proposing that the police precept is raised by 1.99% next year – equivalent to 31p per month or £3.75 per year on average for a Band D property – less than the price of a coffee and a cake at a leading high street coffee shop.

Speaking about his proposal, Mr Ball said: “While it’s certainly true that the financial settlement offered by the Chancellor is fundamentally better than the one we were anticipating, there will still be pressures on police budgets. There is a need to increase investment in counter-terrorism and armed policing, while the pressures to keep the public safe from harm are greater than ever, in particular from cybercrime and child sexual exploitation. No additional money is being made available to fund this by the Government so there will be an inevitable impact on budgets locally but at the same time the public will rightly expect that frontline policing must be maintained.

“In Warwickshire we have a strong track record of delivering considerable savings while increasing public satisfaction in policing. In the last five years according to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary we have reduced spending by £28 million – around 28% – and since I took office in 2012, I have actually been able to keep the numbers of police officers and PCSOs at the same level, while actually increasing the proportion in frontline policing roles by eight percent.

“While Warwickshire Police is investing heavily in seeking new and better ways of working in order make further efficiency savings, it is clear that there are still considerable financial pressures in the years ahead. The decisions we take now will have an impact in every subsequent year and I am determined that I will not leave my successor in a bind with a continually eroding police budget.

“I don’t make proposals to increase the police element of council tax lightly but I believe at the current time it is essential. With only a very small increase in the amount each tax payer contributes across the year, significant resources can be raised to maintain frontline policing and ensure that the public continues to receive a high-class service. I don’t believe this is

unreasonable but I am keen to hear the public's views on this before I make my final decision.”

You can have your say by completing an online survey, answering the simple question:

“Are you willing to spend an extra 31p per month for an average Band D property in order to maintain frontline policing levels?”

Give your feedback by:

- Visiting warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/preceptsurvey
- Or emailing opcc@warwickshire.gov.uk and stating ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question, plus any other supporting comments
- Or write to Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, 3 Northgate Street, Warwick CV34 4SP, again indicating whether you wish to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question and including any other supporting comments.

The consultation closes at midday on Monday 18th January 2016.

Consultation Questions

Q1 Are you willing to spend an extra 31p per month for an average Band D property in order to maintain frontline policing levels?

Q2 Are you responding as an individual member of the public, on behalf of a business or as a member of an organisation?

Q3 Do you live in Warwickshire?

Q4 Do you have any other comments?