



## **Council Tax Consultation 2019/2020 – Frequently Asked Questions**

### *1. Why is the PCC asking us to pay more this year?*

Although the majority of funding for PCCs comes directly from general Government grants, around a third comes from a share of council tax, known as the police precept.

This year the government will provide the PCC with £65.9m which is £2.4m more than last year. However this is entirely required to meet increased pension costs. Cumbria Police is experiencing higher costs through inflation and increased demand for services, therefore without the increase in precept they will not have enough money to sustain the level of policing service in the county, or invest in the increased demands for service, especially in the more complex crimes, such as online crime and serious and organised crime. There is also a need to increase resources in order to do more to protect children and vulnerable people, help prevent unsafe driving, and tackle anti-social behaviour.

In addition to these factors, the Commissioner wants to ensure that Cumbria remains one of the safest counties in the country, and retains its overall 'good' rating from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies, Fire and Rescue Services – Cumbria being one of only 11 out of 42 forces in the country to achieve this. To enable this to be maintained, more funds are needed, hence the request to increase the policing element of council tax.

### *2. What can we expect to see for the extra money?*

The additional money will allow us to build on the investment we have already made in our policing service and maintain the additional 25 police officers recruited in 2018/2019, who are already making a real difference in pursuing criminals and will continue to work proactively in your neighbourhood policing teams. It would also allow us to recruit another 20 officers, giving us even more capacity to tackle serious and organised crime, dealing with the issues which matter most to you in your local area - including preventing anti-social behaviour and unsafe driving, looking after children and vulnerable people, and tackling serious and persistent offenders.

### *3. Will there be more police officers on the streets?*

Ultimately, it will be for the Chief Constable to decide where to deploy her officers. However, our plan is that the extra 20 officers will go into increasing resources and capability in the areas described above, which involves more 'behind the scenes' type of work, for instance carrying out criminal investigations and managing complex case work.

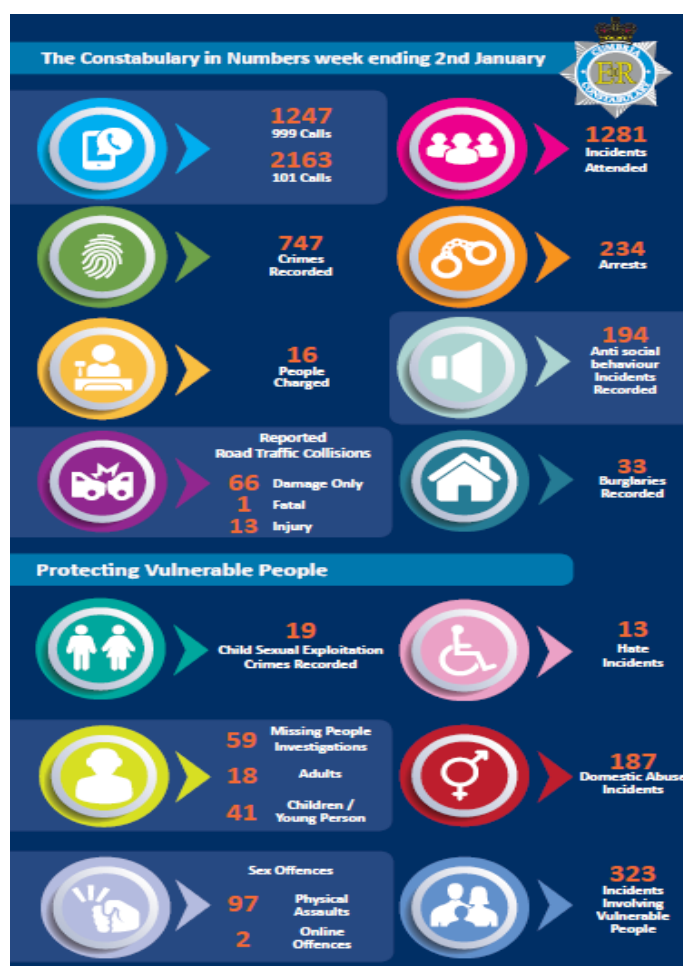
However, this in turn should free up uniformed officers to go out on patrol, who otherwise might be needed to carry out some of this work.

4. *We were asked to pay more last year, what has the PCC done with that money?*

With last year's increase in funding, we were able to recruit 25 additional police officers. These officers are dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing which means that they are out and about in our communities working pro-actively to solve the issues that you tell us about. One example of what has been achieved through the investment in these additional 25 police officers is that in October alone, an extra 85 arrests were made for such crimes as drug offences, as well as officers proactively tackling instances of anti-social behaviour.

5. *We never see the police, what do they actually do?*

An example of the type of calls for service on the police in one week is in the graphic below. Much of this is unseen, which is why you may not be aware of the level of demand on police officers.



6. *How can I be sure that the money I pay for the police, goes to the police?*

The money raised through the Police Precept part of your council tax goes to pay for the provision of police services. You can see how much you pay for the police on your council tax bill, as this is usually itemised.

7. *Why can't the police make cuts to staff and save more money themselves?*

The proposed council tax increase needs to be seen in terms of the overall police budget and funding position. In basic terms, costs are increasing, at the same time Government grant funding is remaining static.

Over the last seven years of austerity the Constabulary has delivered £24m of savings and throughout this difficult period has consistently sought to improve efficiency and protect frontline policing resources. The Constabulary has always sought to protect police officer numbers, with the majority of savings having been made from reducing staff and support services.

8. *What about the PCC's own office costs?*

The PCC's office budget for 2018/2019 is £723k. This has reduced over the last year when the PCC took the opportunity to restructure the senior management team, saving £81,000 per annum. Savings were also made in 2017 when the PCC combined the role of the Chief Finance Officer for his Office with the Constabulary role.

9. *What if the majority of people don't support the proposals?*

If the Commissioner is unable to raise the necessary funds through an increase in council tax, it is likely that police officer numbers will need to be reduced and services could be vulnerable in order to balance the budget.

10. *How much more will I need to pay for the police this year for my Property Band?*

2019/20 Proposed Council Tax					
Council Tax Band	Proposed Council Tax (pound.pence)	Annual Increase (pound.pence)	Increase %	Weekly Increase (pence)	Daily Increase (pence)
Band A	171.12	15.96	10.29%	31	4
Band B	199.64	18.62	10.29%	36	5
Band C	228.16	21.28	10.29%	41	6
<b>Band D</b>	<b>256.68</b>	<b>23.94</b>	<b>10.29%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>7</b>
Band E	313.72	29.26	10.29%	56	8
Band F	370.76	34.58	10.29%	67	9
Band G	427.80	39.90	10.29%	77	11
Band H	513.36	47.88	10.29%	92	13