

Commissioner seeks the public's views over proposals to recruit extra officers to support policing

20 December, 2018

Lancashire's Police and Crime Commissioner has today launched a survey asking council tax payers across Lancashire if they are willing to pay more to support the recruitment of 80 police officers and increase proactive policing in their community.

The consultation follows the budget announcement last week, where the Government has once again passed the burden of the cost of policing onto council tax payers.

The latest financial settlement for Lancashire sees it increase by £6.8m and whilst the Commissioner welcomes any additional grant, it does not even cover the increase to employer pension contributions for policing, announced in September.

The real world consequences of dealing with this pensions deficit alone, is forecast to cost Lancashire Constabulary around £7.1m per year from 19/20 – the equivalent to over 150 police officers.

However, since 2010 Lancashire Constabulary has had to make over £84m of savings as a direct result of the Government cutting £50m of central funding during the same period, with an additional £18m of savings required by 2022. In the same period Lancashire has lost 800 police officer posts and 350 support staff, meaning there are increasingly fewer places where savings can be made. Despite the cuts, the Constabulary is still deemed to be efficient and effective by external inspectors.

Clive Grunshaw, Lancashire's Police and Crime Commissioner said:

"I strongly believe that more funding should come from the Government and I will continue to lobby the Home Secretary and Policing Minister.

"The current funding for policing isn't sufficient to deal with growing demands on the police and the financial settlement allows me to raise further funds but only through passing this burden onto council tax payers. This isn't fair and it isn't sustainable."

"However, raising funds through council tax contributions is the only option the Government have given me to protect and bolster policing and if I did not consider this, it would mean a cut to our budget. There are over a million calls for service every year to Lancashire Police and investment is needed to keep up with ever increasing demands on policing and to deliver a service the public expect. Police officers and staff are working round the clock to keep people safe but, they are over stretched."

The public are being asked if they would be prepared to pay an extra 46 pence per week for a Band D property to invest in policing services in their area. Three quarters of Lancashire residents are in lower bands and so would pay less, and this would raise over £10m for policing in Lancashire." Increased revenue raised through council tax would help to deal with the changing nature of crime and provide more local, visible and accessible policing that is more responsive to local issues.

Mr Grunshaw explained, "Across the county residents tell me that they want to see better investment in policing. More detectives are also being recruited by the force following public feedback asking to prioritise investigations around major crimes, child exploitation and domestic

abuse but they want more police officers, and they want to see them out on the streets, tackling crime and keeping us safe.

"The reality is the ability to invest in our policing teams and meet the pressures on the service is completely reliant on raising council tax by the highest amount we can. With rising demands, increasing costs through inflation and growing crime we cannot accept a further reduction in our police budget.

"Asking for more money, the public quite rightly expect to get something in return and need to feel the difference which is why if the proposals go ahead, it would be spent on 80 extra police officers.

"These officers would form task forces in every district in Lancashire to support neighbourhood policing teams to solve problems in communities, focusing on reducing and preventing crime, anti-social behaviour, public order and supporting public events. This would include three officers dedicated to tackling rural crime in each of the county's policing divisions.

"Specialist target teams would be increased to strengthen the force's ability to tackle cross border crime and criminality, focusing on burglary and robbery 24/7 to ensure police are making an impact around the issues that really matter to people and cause the biggest misery and concern.

"These extra officers would also work alongside drones funded by proceeds of crime to locate and track offenders and support searches for missing people."

Residents can have their say on the proposals by completing the [online survey](#) and the Commissioner's office will be conducting a telephone survey with a sample of residents from every part of the county in the coming weeks.

A series of engagement events are also planned at locations across the county. Anyone who wants to receive a paper copy of the survey can telephone 01772 533587 and one will be posted out.

Monday 7th January 10am – 12pm Sainsbury's St Annes

Monday 7th January 2pm – 4pm St Nicolas Arcade Lancaster

Tuesday 8th January 2pm – 4pm Sainsbury's Clitheroe

Wednesday 9th January 10am – 12pm Concourse, Skelmersdale

More dates to be added.

Ends

Rachel Whittle

Communication and Engagement Lead

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire

Tel: 01772 536786 | Mob: 07989 418736