

Budget and Council Tax Consultation 2019/20

Dear resident

The Thames Valley Police budget has been cut by £101 million over the last eight years which has resulted in significant cuts to police officer and staff numbers. This year the Government has encouraged all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to raise the policing element of the council tax precept by £2 a month for a Band D household (the increase for other property Bands is set out in the table below) . To prevent further damaging cuts to policing and restore some important frontline policing capability I would like to make use of this Government advice and raise the council tax precept accordingly.

On Thursday 13th December the Home Secretary announced the provisional police funding settlement for 2019/20. In response to the exceptional operational demands on the police, particularly in areas such as Thames Valley, the Government is increasing the funding available to PCCs by up to £813 million. This is provided all PCCs, including myself, increase their council tax for a Band D household by £2 a month, or £24 a year in 2019/20 (the increase for other property Bands is set out in the table below) which, collectively, will raise £509 million of the £813 million increase in funding. This new settlement will mean that forces can continue to provide an effective service, against the rising tide of demand and complexity in their critical work to fight crime and protect the public.

Demand on police forces nationally has risen significantly in the last year as a result of higher crime numbers, the increasing complexity of crime, and the increasing reach of criminals both physically and via technology. This includes an increase in the reporting of high harm and previously hidden crimes such as child sexual abuse and modern slavery. The challenge from serious and organised crime networks is also growing both in economic value and the geographical spread, whilst nationally there has also been a spike in serious violence and knife crime alongside the increase in a gang culture. A significant amount of the more serious crime is now being committed by foreign national offenders.

In addition the police are dealing with a large amount of non-crime business, especially in relation to mental health. My focus will continue to be on delivering strong neighbourhood policing for all of the communities across the Thames Valley whilst addressing the serious threats and hardship posed by criminals operating in, or out of Thames Valley on our communities.

Despite increasing council tax by £12 last year (for a Band D property) the increasing demands and price rises means that policing continues to be under significant financial pressure. Our costs continue to rise as a result of police officer and staff pay increases, price inflation, police officer pension contributions and committed growth items. We remain efficient and effective but having already taken out £101m of cash savings and cuts from our base budget since 2010/11 the process of identifying new cash savings is becoming ever more challenging, however we are committed to making policing even more efficient and have already identified over £4m of new savings in 2019/20.

I am proposing to increase council tax by £24 for a Band D household and will ensure that all the extra cash generated from council taxpayers will be spent on operational policing. The draft budget for 2019/20 will provide additional funding to:

- **Increase Local Frontline Policing** – we will recruit additional officers and staff to respond to increasing crime demand and complexity and the impact of the reduction in the resources of and services provided by other agencies (particularly in the areas of mental health and children’s safeguarding).
- **Improve our investigation capacity and process** - stretched resources are operating in an increasingly expanding and complex environment with investigations at all levels growing in size and complexity.
- There has been an increase in organised crime which exploits the vulnerable as well as cyber enabled crime fraud and economic crime. We will recruit more investigators and invest in appropriate new technology and tools.
- **Improve Contact Management** – the rise in demand and the complexity of that demand have increased the length of time it takes to assess the threat, harm and risk and ensure every call receives the appropriate response. We will reduce call handling times, particularly for 101 calls, by recruiting additional staff to deal with the additional demand and more complex crime and incidents being reported.

- **Increasing our digital capability** – we will exploit the modern platforms we have been investing in through the development of operational designed tools, expanding our mobile capability and improving connectivity will allow officers and staff to maximise the use of online digital applications facilitating the fast access and transfer of data, while investing in Intelligence technologies will improve the efficiency of transactional processes.
- **Sustainable funding for the capital programme** – to ensure the long term financial stability of the force we have to provide revenue support to the capital programme to ensure that we can continue to invest in new technology and other infrastructure projects in future years.

The majority of police funding (57%) comes from Government grants, with the remaining 43% coming from the Council tax precept. There are eight Bands of council tax depending on the value of your property.

In 2018/19 the policing precept was increased by £12 (7.0%) for a Band D property. The Government has again given PCCs the flexibility to increase council tax by up to £24 (13.2%) for a Band D household, which I propose to implement. The impact of this increase on your council tax is shown in the table below.

Band	Current Police share of council tax in 2018/19	Proposed council tax 2019/20	Proposed monthly increase
A	£121.52	£137.52	£1.33
B	£141.77	£160.44	£1.56
C	£162.03	£183.36	£1.78
D	£182.28	£206.28	£2.00
E	£222.79	£252.12	£2.44
F	£263.29	£297.96	£2.89
G	£303.80	£343.80	£3.33
H	£364.56	£412.56	£4.00

Anthony Stansfeld
Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

Background information

Public consultation 2018-19

Before increasing council tax by £12 earlier this year I conducted a public consultation exercise to garner ratepayers' opinions. In order to reach as many people as possible the online survey was sent to:

- All users of TVP Alert - at least 80,000 residents
- All town and parish councils
- All councillors from county, unitary and district councils
- All media in the TVP area via a press release
- Regular social media updates via Twitter

In total, 5,600 people voted of which 4,723 (84.3%) supported the proposed increase

Financial Strategy 2018

The Financial Strategy sets out how Thames Valley Police (i.e. the PCC and Force) will structure and manage their finances to support delivery of the aims and objectives of the service and to ensure sound financial management and good stewardship of public money. The aims and objectives are set out in the four year Police and Crime Plan supported by the Force Commitment, Annual delivery Plan and the new capital strategy.

The Financial Strategy, which was last updated and published on 26th November can be found here <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/information-hub/what-we-spend-and-how-we-spend-it/tvp-financial-strategy/>

Crime trends and demands

Like all forces Thames Valley Police has had to cope with an increase in volume crime as well as the more complex crime areas such as child sexual abuse, domestic abuse and modern slavery. However, the recent increases in Thames Valley are less

than in most other forces. Overall crime is still considerably lower than it was 10 years ago, but the mix is very different.

This has resulted in the following crime trends in Thames Valley during the first 6 months of this year (April to September 2018):

- Residential burglary – up 2% compared to last year
- Violence against the person – up 46%
- Domestic abuse related crime – up 59%
- Volume of rape offences recorded – up 2%
- Volume of other sexual offences recorded – up 35%

In addition, we are currently responding to over one thousand missing person incidents per month

Draft revenue budget 2019/20

Providing you support my proposal to increase council tax by £24 (the equivalent for a Band D property) the net revenue budget will be around £436 million, an increase of £29 million or 8% on the current year's budget. A high level breakdown of the draft revenue budget is provided below:

	£m
Pay and price inflation	10.1
Police officer pension contributions	9.5
Growth items	13.4
Sub-total	33.6
Less cash efficiency savings	- 4.6
Proposed increase in net revenue budget	29.0

The £13.4 million of growth items will help deliver the service improvements listed on the previous page

Efficiency and productivity

The Force has a long history of delivering productivity savings and using these cash savings to either balance annual budgets or reinvest in frontline policing, a strategy that has been widely scrutinised and praised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) during various inspections and reports.

Since 2010/11 over £101 million has been removed from the base revenue budget. A further £4 million is planned for 2019/20, of which nearly £3 million will come from collaborative units with other forces and £1 million from formal Efficiency and Effectiveness reviews

Capital Programme

We have a substantial capital investment programme planned for the next five years. We will be investing £101 million, including £32 million, in the current financial year, in rationalising our estate, modernising our IT systems maintaining our vehicle fleet and adopting the new Emergency Services network, to ensure our officers and staff have the right equipment to do their job efficiently and effectively. To fully realise the return on these investments we will continue to embrace business change as we have in recent years. The capital plan will ensure:

- The continued rationalisation of our property estate ensuring it remains fit for purpose and cost effective
- ICT have the capacity to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in those core technologies required to provide innovative digital policing services
- That core assets such as vehicles and communication equipment are maintained and replaced as and when necessary, but not before.

Beyond policing

The vast majority of the police budget is spent on operational policing, under the direction and control of the Chief Constable. However, I retain a small but important part (1.8%) to run my own office and to invest in projects that help to prevent crime, reduce reoffending and protect the vulnerable.

I also receive an annual grant from the Ministry of Justice (£2.76 million) to support victims and witnesses of crime. In the main I do this through my new Victims First hub <https://www.victims-first.org.uk>