

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section provides answers to a number of the most commonly asked questions in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) budget, expenditure and council tax levels. Please click on the links below to obtain further information.

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1. **Who approves the budget?**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is required to produce a draft revenue budget, in consultation with the Chief Constable, which provides the necessary resources to deliver the objectives and outcomes in his Police and Crime Plan.

The annual revenue budget is funded by a combination of government grants and a charge on local council taxpayers – commonly referred to as the council tax “precept”.

In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the PCC must notify the Police and Crime Panel of his proposed precept for the ensuing financial year before 1st February.

The Panel has to review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC on the proposed precept setting out whether it has accepted the proposed precept or vetoed it (at least 2/3 of the Panel membership of 20 must vote in support of a veto)

The Panel met on 29th January 2016 to consider the PCC's proposed 1.99% increase in council tax precept. They asked a number of written and oral questions on the draft budget and precept which the PCC answered to their satisfaction. The Panel agreed unanimously to support the proposed 1.99% increase in precept.

Having received the Panel's response on 29th January the PCC formally approved his annual revenue budget for 2016/17 and issued the council tax precept to the 16 billing authorities in the Thames Valley Police area.

2. What is the budget for Thames Valley Police in 2016/17?

The revenue budget is £386.641million which represents an increase of £3.968 million or 1.04% compared to the current year's budget.

Revenue Budget Summary 2016/17

	2015/16 Budget	Inflation	Savings	Virements	Growth	2016/17 Budget
PCC Controlled Expenditure						
Office of the PCC	£899,194	£2,217	0	-1,018	49,000	£949,393
Democratic Representation	£167,479	£278	0	24,156	0	£191,913
Other Costs	£230,179	£3,092	0	-24,000	0	£209,271
Commissioned Services	£5,587,755	£0	0	95,712	-31,000	£5,652,467
	£6,884,607	£5,587	0	94,850	18,000	£7,003,044
TVP Operational Budget - Direction and Control of Chief Constable:						
Employees	£321,727,817	£3,153,942	-15,758,101	-985,683	9,084,550	£317,222,525
Premises	£19,806,465	£487,570	-1,680,371	-583,847	-1,250,000	£16,779,817
Transport	£9,152,280	£65,900	-440,409	-7,775	0	£8,769,996
Supplies & Services	£43,467,918	£615,933	2,125,827	2,944,541	4,685,000	£53,839,219
Third Party Payments	£9,756,456	£263,462	0	536,747	650,000	£11,206,665
Force Income	-£27,229,319	£0	690,000	-1,817,240	-452,370	-£28,808,929
	£376,681,617	£4,586,807	-15,063,054	86,743	12,717,180	£379,009,293
Net Capital Financing Costs:						
Capital Financing	£3,147,486	£0	-549,000	0	498,626	£3,097,112
Interest on Balance	-£650,000	£0	0	0	-350,000	-£1,000,000
	£2,497,486	£0	-549,000	0	148,626	£2,097,112
Appropriations to/from Balances:						
Appropriations	-£3,390,427	£0	0	100,000	1,822,451	-£1,467,976
	-£3,390,427	£0	0	100,000	1,822,451	-£1,467,976
Cost of Services	£382,673,283	£4,592,394	-15,612,054	281,593	14,706,257	£386,641,473
Funded By:						
Council Tax - Surplus on Collection	-£2,499,030	£0	0	0	481,110	-£2,017,920
Council Tax Precept Income	-£138,091,041	£0	0	0	-5,413,470	-£143,504,511
Formula Grant	-£74,314,342	£0	0	0	423,953	-£73,890,389
Legacy Council Tax Grants	-£15,278,329	£0	0	0	0	-£15,278,329
Police Current Grant	-£142,031,693	£0	0	0	810,271	-£141,221,422
Specific Grant	-£10,458,848	£0	0	-281,593	11,539	-£10,728,902
	-£382,673,283	£0	0	-281,593	-3,686,597	-£386,641,473
Total Funding	-£382,673,283	£0	0	-281,593	-3,686,597	-£386,641,473

3. What does this mean for Council Tax?

The police element of the Council Tax for 2015/16 will be £166.96 for properties in band D, with the charge for other bands as set out below. This represents an increase of 1.99% over the 2015/16 figure of £163.70, which equates to an extra £3.26 per year or 6 pence per week for a band D household.

Please see section 4 below for the council tax level in other property bands

4. Is the council tax level the same throughout Thames Valley?

Yes. The Police and Crime Commissioner decides how much money he needs to raise from local council taxpayers to help pay for local policing services. This sum (around £143.5 million) is then divided by the total number of Band D equivalent properties in the Thames Valley area (this is known as the taxbase). The result of this relatively simple calculation is the council tax level for a Band D property.

Other property bands are calculated as a proportion of a Band D property, as the following table shows. For example, a person living in a Band A property will pay two thirds ($\frac{6}{9}$) of the amount paid by a Band D householder. At the other end of the scale, a person living in a Band H property will pay twice ($\frac{18}{9}$) the amount of council tax as that paid by a person living in a Band D property.

Property Band	Relevant Proportion	PCC Element of the Council Tax £
A	$\frac{6}{9}$	111.31
B	$\frac{7}{9}$	129.86
C	$\frac{8}{9}$	148.41
D	$\frac{9}{9}$	166.96
E	$\frac{11}{9}$	204.06
F	$\frac{13}{9}$	241.16
G	$\frac{15}{9}$	278.27
H	$\frac{18}{9}$	333.91

5. How will the budget be spent?

As in previous years the majority of the budget will be spent on employees. Please see the summary revenue budget in question 2 above.

6. What are your service priorities for 2016/17?

The PCC is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan to cover his term in office (i.e. 2013 – 2017)

The Police and Crime Plan sets out the PCCs strategic policing and crime objectives for the Thames Valley with regard to:

- the policing of the area;
- crime and disorder reduction and community safety, and
- the discharge by Thames Valley Police of its local, national or international functions

The Plan was reviewed and updated during 2014 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to meet the needs of local communities. In addition to the following key priorities which were clearly specified in the original Police & Crime Plan:

- Domestic burglary
- Safeguarding vulnerable people
- Rural crime

the 2014 refreshed plan identifies some emerging new issues which will need to be dealt with in 2014/15 and later years, such as:

- Commissioning of victim services and restorative justice
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the setting up of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs
- Fraud and Cyber Crime
- Police file quality – ‘Trial ready for Crown Prosecution Service’
- Trunk road closure
- Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel

The Police & Crime Plan is available on our website or by contacting the office of the PCC.

One purpose of the Plan is to set out the resources allocated by the PCC for policing and community safety.

A new Police and Crime Plan will be developed following the PCC elections in May and will cover the five year period 2016 - 2021

7. Will the financial situation be any easier next year?

We're not sure. The Chancellor has announced that police funding will be protected in cash terms over the Spending Review period (i.e. 2016/17 to 2019/20). However, apart from 2016/17, we have not been provided with annual grant allocations at individual force level for the remaining three years of the Spending Review.

Despite the lack of force level allocations for the years 2017/18 through to 2019/20 we have still produced a realistic and robust medium term financial plan (MTFP) as set out below.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Base Budget	382,673	386,641	389,906	393,406
In Year Virements	282	0	0	0
Inflation	4,592	4,747	4,975	4,995
Productivity Savings	- 15,612	- 10,556	- 7,008	- 2,844
Committed Expenditure	8,395	3,028	993	1,185
Current Service	- 1,316	95	109	- 42
Improved Service	5,804	8,412	2,140	- 60
In Year Appropriations	1,822	- 2,461	2,290	365
Net Budget Requirement	386,641	389,406	393,406	397,005
Total External Funding	- 386,641	- 389,406	- 393,406	- 397,005
<i>Cumulative Budget (Surplus)/Shortfall</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Annual Budget (Surplus)/Shortfall</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

Budget Risk & Uncertainties

Increasing Demand and Specialist Capabilities

There is an increasing demand on the police arising from new and emerging crimes but it is very difficult to predict the growth in resources required to deal with this changing demand. In addition the Home Secretary and Policing minister have stated that there will be an increase in the level of armed response vehicles (ARV's) by 50% alongside an increase in the number of Counter Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers (CTFSO's) and have reallocated £34m of Police Grant into a Transformational fund to deliver this increase in Firearms capabilities. However the allocation of the £34m has not yet been announced. The implications of this for TVP and the potential funding issues are currently being worked through.

Future Years Forecasts

The future years of the MTFP still carry some significant risks which could alter the currently identified plans either upwards or downwards. Primarily these include:

- The recent funding announcement for police forces provided national police grant level figures for 2016/17 through to 2019/20 showing annual increases nationally of 1.3%, 1.4%, 1.6% and 1.8% respectively but detailed allocations were only provided for 2016/17 which gave forces a 0.6% reduction on the previous year (due to increased reallocations and baseline adjustments). Hence future estimates of Government grants are at this stage based upon assumptions taking into account the statements made by the Policing Minister and the Home Secretary regarding a flat real settlement for police forces when taking into account the ability to raise council tax.
- Included within the MTFP, we have assumed that when main grants (Main Grant & Formula Grant), are combined with potential increases in council tax, the force will achieve a 1% increase in cash terms per annum on its available funding. This approach is a mid range option which allows for a neutral real terms budget over the period should inflation run at 1% per annum (pay awards are currently capped at 1%).
- At this stage the worst case scenario appears to be that the force faces a cash flat budget over the period, whereby the assumed annual 1% increase would need to be removed which would equate to reductions against today's assumptions of approximately £2.15m per annum (i.e. £6.45m over the three year period 2017/18 to 2019/20).
- The Home Office is currently consulting on a new national funding formula for the allocation of main Home Office grants. This will not be implemented until April 2017 at the earliest. It should be noted that the Home Office's various proposed changes to the funding formula during 2015 (before the process was suddenly halted in November) were all detrimental to Thames Valley. However, on 11th December the Home Affairs Select Committee published their report and findings on the 'Reform of the Police Funding Formula'. They described the previous Home Office process as a 'shambles' and have informed the Home Office that the new formula needs to recognise the full range of drivers on demand for policing, not just crime. At this stage it is too early to predict what the impact of these changes could look like, but a 1% variance in grant funding allocation would equate to approximately £2.15m per annum.
- The current assumption on council tax increases is at 1.99% per annum, which is in-line with the Government's assumption in the 2016/17 police grant settlement but does require PCC

endorsement on an annual basis - in theory this could change following the PCC elections in May – a 1.0% change in council tax equates to approximately £1.3m.

- The MTFP also assumes annual growth in the taxbase of 1.75% and a council tax surplus of £1.75m per annum. The increase in taxbase reflects the higher increase received in 2015/16 and also recognises the fact that house building continues to expand in some parts of the Thames Valley. The actual surplus can fluctuate significantly year on year. However, the estimate of £1.75m represents the average surplus received over the last 5 years. Billing authorities have been contacted to provide an explanation for the significant increase in surplus in recent years and to provide their best estimate of the surplus position in future years.

Mitigation of Risks & Uncertainties

As can be seen from the above, there are significant gaps in information available around key factors that could influence the level of funding available to the PCC as well as the demand for increased capability in future years.

The work that has already started within the Productivity Strategy will continue to be developed and taken forward to ensure the drive to improve the efficiency of our service continues, by reducing the underlying cost of our organisation. Specifically work will continue to:

- Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) – the programme of work under this initiative will continue well into the MTFP period and all areas will continue to come under scrutiny through the panels which are chaired and led by the DCC. Focus will initially be on those areas which only had a 'light touch' in year one. In addition the four Work Groups will continue to identify and deliver changes to working practices to ensure we are operating at an optimal and productive level whilst releasing savings where possible.
- Focus on non-staff costs. Over the last five years we have taken £70m out of the organisation; in excess of 35% (£25m) of these savings were from non-staff budget heads. Given that 80% of our budget relates to staff this is a considerable achievement and has assisted in the maintenance/improvement of our service levels. The work to reduce non-staff costs is continuing with vigour to ensure we maximise savings from our existing Productivity schemes and also to introduce new initiatives. Our recently restructured Procurement department is working to ensure we identify the most cost effective solution and continue to achieve maximum value for money throughout all contracts.

In addition to the above, the MTFP currently contains funding to redeploy a total of 168 FTE police officer posts during the period of the plan. Should the risks to future year's budgets be realised, and

the above savings strategies cannot meet the shortfall, we will review the use of redeployment of officers and reduce the numbers as required to bridge any funding gaps that might arise.

Summary

The MTFP is fully balanced in all four 4 years.

Additional cash savings of £36m are required over the next four years which means that, in the ten year period 2010/11 to 2019/20 over £108m of cash savings have been / will be required simply to balance the budget. This equates to around 28% of the net revenue budget in 2016/17.

The majority of inflationary and growth items are determined by external factors e.g. national pay awards.

8. What are your main cost pressures in 2016/17?

Our main cost pressures are inflation and committed expenditure items

Inflation

We provide for police officer (£1.95m) and police staff (£1.1m) pay increases. Other inflationary increases will cost around £1.5m. Total inflation therefore amounts to £4.592m, which equates to 1.19% of the base budget.

Committed expenditure items

There are a number of items in the budget which the PCC is committed to by means of previous decisions taken, national agreements or statutory payments. In total these amount to £8.4m next year. The three main elements within this are:

- An increase in NI contributions in April 2016 due to the Government removing the lower “contracted out” national insurance contribution bands in for employers and employees increasing the tax charge for TVP by £6.4m in 2016/17
- An increase in pay budgets of £1m to allow for the ‘Bear Scotland’ legal ruling in relation to having to pay regular overtime as part of annual leave pay, for eligible employees, whilst on leave.

- The cost of national IT systems rose from the initial estimates when the final billing notification was received in March last year. This, together with some new charges, is expected to add a further £0.65m to the budget.

9. What do you mean by the demand for policing is changing?

The nature and demand for policing services are changing. The number of property related crimes are reducing, which is good, but these are being replaced more complex and resource intensive crime types.

We therefore need to build and expand our capabilities to counter these new and complex threats. The true scale of complex crimes such as Rape, Child Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence is still being uncovered. For example: The increase in reported Rape in 2014/15 increased by 53% (with an overall increase against the 2012/13 figures of 107%), this increase in the level of reporting is continuing in the current year with the number of reports to the nine months to the end of December 2015 almost equalling the total reports for the previous 12 months. Child protection referrals have increased by 17% over the last 12 months (49% over the last two years) with the increase for all sexual offences standing at 35% for the last 12 months and 77% for the last two years. The budget already increases the resources in our CAIU by 28 posts but with the demand continuing to increase this is not sufficient to continue and improve our investigative response and support to victims.

We also need to address the indiscriminate threat of terrorism. The provisional Police Grant settlement for 2016/17 made specific reference to increasing the number of Armed Responses Vehicles (ARV's) and Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFO's). ARV's are a local resource whereas CTSFO's are a regional resource provided by the CTU. Within the JOU we are reviewing the increase in ARV's we need to better protect our communities and be able to respond quickly and forcefully to help mitigate the risk threat and harm should an attack happen within our area.

We also need to do more to build the trust between the police and public. We are reviewing how we respond to and investigate different crime types to ensure our resources are directed to the priorities of or communities. But we are also investing heavily in technology to make it easier for the public to contact us and receive prompt & local information, as well as delivering longer term efficiencies.

10. Where will the savings come from?

We have already delivered £72m of cash savings in the 5 years 2011/12 to 2015/16 and at least another £36m is required over the next four years, including £15.612m in 2016/17.

We continue to work hard to reduce costs and increase efficiency. During the last year the Chief Constable (CC) instigated a new process called Priority Based Budgeting (PBB). This review process has challenged the majority of the organisation to identify the resources required to deliver our priority services. The review took the form of a series of three panels chaired by the CC/Deputy CC. The first panel considered the baseline of each service level, the second method and service level changes and the third the prioritisation of those services. This review is an ongoing process, not a discrete piece of work. We now have four work groups (Demand, Investigations, Governance & Service Improvement and Business Innovation) who are developing the new operating model for TVP against which savings of £5.86m have been identified over the MTFP period. We also have additional work streams covering more discrete areas that have identified a further £6.46 over the period, giving a total saving of £12.32 within the Productivity strategy.

In addition to PBB we will continue to identify and deliver savings through:

- Collaboration with other forces (our joint ICT init with Hampshire will deliver £1.78m of savings in 2016/17),
- Structure and process reviews e.g. force crime, criminal justice
- Value for money reviews such as contract savings, transport and estates
- Review of the remuneration and conditions of service for police officers and staff

Throughout the productivity strategy savings review process we have closely adhered to our key principles, which are:

- To protect frontline services
- To protect our ability to manage risk
- To maintain our capability in protective services and back office functions through collaboration
- To maintain and improve performance in key areas
- To reduce “discretionary spending”
- To streamline business processes and to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and waste
- All change to be risk assessed

The following table shows how the £15.6m cash saving in 2016/17 will be delivered. Further information can be found in the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2016/17

	£m
Collaboration	- 2.305
Structure and process reviews	- 0.971
Value for Money (VFM) reviews	- 5.491
Priority based budget reviews	- 6.472
Review of remuneration and conditions	- 0.372
Total	- 15.612

11. Are some of these savings being reinvested in service delivery?

We plan to invest at least £6.8m next year improving the service we deliver to our communities. The main elements are set out below.

- Implementing the new 5 year ICT strategy will cost around £4.66m. This is the revenue cost. The separate capital elements are included in the Medium Term Capital Plan
- Police officer redeployment (£0.91m). As a result of the budget savings identified above 87 police officer posts will be redeployed to priority service areas such as counter-terrorism (e.g. more firearms officers) and dealing with the more complex crimes such as rapes, child sexual abuse and domestic abuse.
- Our new contact management programme will go live during 2016/17. The revenue costs of this currently estimated at £0.3m
- Additional resources for the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (£0.85m)

12. How many officers and staff will be employed next year?

The following table shows the planned movement in the police officers, PCSOs and police staff over the next 4 years. All figures are shown as full time equivalent (FTE) establishment figures.

	Police	Police Staff	PCSOs	Total
Base Opening Establishment 2016/17	3,991.00	2,666.00	475.00	7,132.00
Removal of Temporary Growth		(16.00)		(16.00)
CAIU Resourcing	21.00	7.00		28.00
MASH Growth	(2.00)	9.00		7.00
Productivity Plan Savings	(42.00)	(105.24)	(21.00)	(168.24)
PBB Savings	(159.00)	(56.27)	(30.00)	(245.27)
Police Officers Redeployed	87.00			87.00
Net Change to Establishment	(95.00)	(161.51)	(51.00)	(307.51)

Estimated Revised Establishment at March 2017	3,896.00	2,504.49	424.00	6,824.49
2017/18 Changes	(81.00)	(64.00)	(21.00)	(166.00)
Estimated Redeployment	81.00	0.00	0.00	81.00
Estimated Revised Establishment at March 2018	3,896.00	2,440.49	403.00	6,739.49
2018/19 Changes	0.00	(5.00)	0.00	(5.00)
Estimated Revised Establishment at March 2019	3,896.00	2,435.49	403.00	6,734.49
2019/20 Changes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Estimated Revised Establishment at March 2020	3,896.00	2,435.49	403.00	6,734.49
Period Changes	(95.00)	(230.51)	(72.00)	(397.51)
	-2.4%	-8.6%	-15.2%	-5.6%

MASH = Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs
PBB = Priority based budgeting

CAIU = Child abuse investigation unit
PCSO = Police Community Support Officer

At the stage we do not know exactly where the 87 police officers, freed up through budget savings, will be deployed to during 2016/17 but they are likely to be used to counter some of the new and complex threats such as counter terrorism (e.g. additional firearms officers), rape, sexual abuse and domestic abuse.

13. Will the frontline be cut?

We are working hard to protect frontline policing as well as those areas that support delivery of key strategic objectives, or are necessary for the effective management of policing risk.

The extra 87 police officers freed up as a result of budget cuts will be redeployed into priority policing areas – see answer to question 9 above.

14. How do your resources compare with other forces in England and Wales?

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) produce Value for Money (vfm) profiles which seek to draw together benchmarking data from a number of sources and publish them in chart and table form. The aim of these profiles is to bring together a range of published and unpublished statistical information from different sources to present a 'full' picture of a police force's income and expenditure, workforce, performance (e.g. offences and outcomes) and satisfaction.

The VFM profiles are public documents which can be downloaded from the HMIC website at <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/programmes/value-for-money/value-for-money-profiles/>

We have used these VFM profiles extensively over the last few years to help improve our financial and operational performance by focussing on those areas where our unit cost has been higher than average, or performance below average.

Key financial headlines from the latest dataset in October 2015 (based on 2015/16 police estimates) include:

- In terms of net revenue expenditure we spend £163 (excluding national policing) per head of population, below the national average (excluding London) of £176. This places us 14th lowest out of the 43 forces in England and Wales.
- In terms of workforce we employ 3.28 police officers, PCSOs and police staff per 1000 population, which is comparable with the national average
- We employ 1.80 police officers per 1000 population, which is below the national average of 1.88

In 2015/16 our Band D council tax of £163.70 was the 15th lowest out of the 38 police forces in England (excluding the City of London). The national average is £172.17.

15. What is the Capital Programme for 2016/17?

In addition to spending on day to day activities the PCC incurs expenditure on buildings, information technology, vehicles and other major items of plant and equipment which have a longer term life.

In accordance with best practice, the PCC approves a four year capital programme. This recognises and reflects the fact that many capital schemes are expensive, take a long time to plan and, in some cases, takes more than one year to deliver.

A copy of the summarised capital programme for the 4 year period 2016/17 to 2019/20 showing planned spending is set out below.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Property	7.342	9.527	9.695	2.517	29.081
ICT	16.590	2.437	1.387	1.077	21.491
Equipment & Radio	1.445	3.954	0.479	0.150	6.029
Vehicles	3.028	3.097	3.168	3.240	12.533
Totals	28.405	19.015	14.729	6.984	69.133

Planned financing of the capital programme in 2016/17 is shown below:

	2016/17 £m	Total 2016/17 to 2019/20 £m
Capital grant (inc ACPO TAM)	10.724	14.891
Capital receipts	15.415	43.820
Revenue contributions	0.840	6.260
TVP reserves	0.268	1.954
3 rd party contributions	0.708	1.308
Safer roads partnership	0.450	0.900
Total Financing	28.405	69.133

16. Who ensures the Force operates in an efficient and effective manner?

One of the PCC's main responsibilities is to hold the chief constable to account for Force performance. Further information on the PCC's main responsibilities can be found at

<http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/Your-PCC/The-Role-of-the-PCC.aspx>

Operational performance and effectiveness is also subject to regular scrutiny by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

Financial management performance is subject to regular external review by the external auditor Ernst & Young. Recent annual audit letters can be found at:

<http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Spending/Audit-and-Inspection-Reports.aspx>

17. How can I get further information about the budget?

You can read the PCC's budget report at <http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Agenda-to-Print-20-01-15.pdf>

A copy of the detailed **budget book** for 2016/17 will soon be posted on the PCC's website.

If you have a specific query on the PCC's budget proposals, or any other finance related query, please e-mail it to ian.thompson@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to somebody about a finance related query please phone Ian Thompson, PCC Chief Finance Officer, on 01865 846786