



PCC Martin Surl
Gloucestershire Constabulary
Police Headquarters
1 Waterwells Drive
Quegdeley
Gloucester
GL2 2AN

Our Ref: RH-JF 290119 MS
Email: Rod.hansen@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk
Direct 01452 752308
Dial:
Date: 29 January 2019

Dear Martin

Investing in us to deliver a service the people of Gloucestershire deserve: the case for a precept rise of £2 a month

You and I have spoken many times over recent weeks and months about pressures on police funding and how it impacts on our ability to provide a service the people of Gloucestershire need and deserve.

While welcoming news of the added flexibility from the Government to raise the police precept on the Council Tax, we have also been concerned about people's ability to pay it. It is not an easy decision for you and you have made it clear to me that I will need to make a convincing case for you to raise it to the maximum level offered by the Home Office.

In preparation for you setting the budget and financial direction for the Constabulary, I, with the help of a number of colleagues, have prepared what we believe is just that - a sound proposal as you consider your options and ask the people of Gloucestershire for their views. That is not something I have done lightly but it is something that I have considered very carefully. It is based on how we might best prevent crime and keep our communities safe from harm.

In this letter, I have set out a summary of why I am asking you to raise the precept to the maximum, the areas we propose to invest in, what we have done with previous investments and how we plan to deliver a service to people in Gloucestershire of which they and we can be justifiably proud.

The national picture

At £86.43 per head of population, our core grant funding from the Government compares to a national average of £121.02. It makes us the 8th lowest in the country. The highest, excluding London, is £167 per head of population – that's almost double our funding.



As you know, for 2019/20, the Home Office has provided PCCs with more flexibility to increase the police share of the Council tax – up to a maximum of £24 for a band D taxpayer over the next financial year. That's £2 per month.

For reasons which I will explain here, I consider it the right thing to do to raise the police share of the precept to this level. This would allow us to look at local needs to try to give our communities in Gloucestershire more of the service they would value and which we very much want to deliver. I am sure that you will also want us to do that as it's in line with the priorities and commitments of the Police and Crime Plan.

Our position in Gloucestershire

The Constabulary has a strong history of prudent financial management. It was something Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) commended us on during its most recent visit. It means we have been judged as using public money wisely. However, we have had to manage reduced funding from central Government during a challenging period of prolonged austerity.

The police service is under severe pressure. Over the past 10 years, the nature of policing has changed. The scope of our mission has expanded significantly and, as the crimes we are dealing with are more complex, they need more time and more resource.

Front line officers are regularly dealing with crises in mental health on our streets and in homes. As well as highly visible crimes, like burglary and vehicle crime, much more of their time is spent dealing with some of the most vulnerable in our society - victims of child abuse, young people exploited by drugs gangs, young and old alike exploited on-line, modern day slavery, human trafficking. These crimes are more complex so they take more time and resource to deal with effectively and compassionately.

Society, not just the police, has opened its eyes to things that were previously hidden. It's right that we expect our police service to do all of these things, but we need the resources to do them better.

I am concerned that the service in Gloucestershire is missing the opportunity to be one step ahead of the criminal. At times, we struggle to meet the expectations of the public to respond to the here and now, let alone solve problems by getting on the front foot. I want criminals to be looking over their shoulder, scared of being caught in the act. I want the police to work with communities to stop citizens becoming criminals in the first place and I want us to operate in a cyber enabled world with legitimacy with an increasingly technically able society

This, together with the flexibility you have now been given by the Government, puts us at a pivotal point. After several years of cuts, we now have the opportunity to invest – and we



must. If we don't, we will be left weakened at a time when demand and expectations from the public are rising.

I am putting forward a strong case for a sustainable investment in the Constabulary to make a positive difference to local communities and to deliver against the priorities and commitments set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

A good track record – and one we can build on

Last year, the precept increase set by you meant we could invest in four areas:

- Neighbourhood policing to ensure we are visible, proactive and connected to our local communities
- Child protection and combating child sexual exploitation as we work with partners to keep young people safe from harm
- Body Worn Video (BWV) so that we can capture evidence and better protect vulnerable victims and our workforce alike
- Prosecution staff so that we achieve swifter justice and outcomes for victims of crime.

We were able to recruit 30 officers and staff to the Constabulary, helping to stabilise the service we deliver to local communities.

This helped us to establish our new Neighbourhood policing service across the six districts and boroughs in the county, including introducing dedicated rural and environmental crime officers and police officers working in schools as part of our Schoolbeat initiative. Our officers working in these areas have forged good links with many of the projects you support through the Commissioner's Fund. This ensures we are connected with our communities as we work with them and your office to deliver the Police and Crime Plan.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have rated Gloucestershire as 'good' for the way we respond to vulnerability. This followed an earlier inspection that was critical of child protection resources and focus. The increase in child protection officers from the precept increase was an important part of this improvement.

Much work has been done to put the infrastructure in place to equip all front line officers with BWV. The first cameras are now on the streets, and we are on track to have all front line staff set-up by the spring. This is not the only digital improvement to come from the uplift. The introduction of digital charging and dedicated staff to build prosecution files has freed up time for front line officers and helped achieve swifter justice.



My request to you

I have based my business case on the maximum increase of the police precept on the Council Tax, to give us an additional investment of £4.1m. This would give us greater opportunity to keep people in Gloucestershire safe from harm and to realise more fully the ambitions of the Police and Crime Plan and our Corporate Strategy.

For the people of Gloucestershire, that means paying an extra £2 a month, based on an average band D taxpayer over the next financial year.

I am very much aware that I don't just need to convince you of the need to invest in us by asking local communities to pay more. I must and will reassure those communities too. You will expect me to do this and you will be holding me to account for ensuring that actions in my business case will be put in place and communicated.

Investing the public's money to help keep communities safe

I believe my business case evidences the need for a decisive and sustainable investment in the Constabulary to make a positive difference to local communities.

This will deliver:

- An enhanced level of service for people when they contact us, supporting the Police and Crime Plan's priority of 'Accessibility and accountability'
- A more compassionate service for vulnerable adults, supporting the Police and Crime Plan's priority of 'Older but not overlooked'
- A more comprehensive and visible policing service, supporting the Police and Crime Plan's priority of 'Safe and social driving'
- A more co-ordinated public protection service, supporting the Police and Crime Plan's priority of 'Young people becoming adults.'

Why I am asking for an increase in the precept

We are doing a good job in the circumstances but we are not currently providing the service our local communities deserve. I believe a proposed increase of 74 officers and staff will make a real difference in helping us deliver this. Here are the areas in which we are asking for investment:



Safer days and nights – an investment of £2.41 million¹

This will provide increases for:

- the Force Response Unit
- local investigation capacity
- Support Group
- Firearms officers
- Force Crime Operations
- Neighbourhood policing

By investing in these areas, we will make people safer, during the day and night time, and make life harder for criminals.

We want to increase the resources we have for targeting active criminals and getting one step ahead of them, particularly:

- those committing burglaries and robberies
- organised criminals who prey on vulnerable people
- terrorists and criminals who use guns and knives.

We also wish to put more officers on our town and city streets on Friday and Saturday nights so that people can enjoy their evenings out and feel safe. While this is not the job of the police alone, we would like to do more to reassure the public and send a strong message to those that bring violence to the streets that they will be apprehended, particularly those who use knives.

We want to increase our capability to surge specialist uniformed police support into areas where it's needed as an immediate presence to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour, disorder and emerging community problems.

The security threat remains 'severe' and we are increasing our firearms capability to help keep our communities safe.

We recognise that one of the core roles of the police is to investigate crime. As things stand, we are having to make some difficult decisions about which crimes get investigated and which ones don't. We know this causes dismay to victims of crime when they feel they are not getting the service they deserve.

We wish to increase the number of investigators; to provide a better service to victims, to solve more crimes and catch more criminals.

¹ Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) options two and three; option two, number seven; option three, numbers 10,11,12,13,14,15 and 16; option one, number two.



Young people becoming adults – an investment of £293,000 ²

This will provide increases for:

- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) resource uplift

The police have a vital role to play in keeping young people safe from harm or abuse. The horrific trauma that victims of child abuse suffer lasts a lifetime. We continue to see an increase in the number of child protection cases and child sexual exploitation referrals. Enhanced partnership working and a focus on vulnerability has seen demand rise rapidly in recent years. This is evidenced well by the volume of statutory safeguarding planning meetings which are held following referrals of significant concern – from 28 a month in April 2017 to 180 a month by October 2018 – an increase of 543%. The more we look, the more we see.

Another key area of keeping children safe is the partnership response to domestic abuse which increases the chances of a child suffering from physical and emotional harm. During the past 18 months, the volume of domestic abuse referrals has risen from an average of 350 a month to the present demand of 500 – an increase of 43%.

We are looking to increase the number of specialist officers to safeguard children. The number of social workers is also increasing and we are determined to work ever closer with partners to keep children safe.

Safe and social driving – an investment of £299,700³

This will provide increases for:

- Roads policing
- Collision investigation.

One of the main concerns raised by local communities is about safety on the road. Policing of our roads, right across the county, is one of the areas that has been hardest hit by austerity. We have made the decision to bring back our Roads Policing teams from a joint arrangement with our neighbouring forces, Avon and Somerset and Wiltshire, to local Gloucestershire control to be a part of a new offer to the public on how we police our road network.

² Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) options two and three; option two, number five; option three, number one.

³ Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) option one, number one



Over the past three years, there have been 73 fatal road traffic collisions and 2,378 injury collisions on Gloucestershire's roads.

We want to increase the number of Roads policing specialists to help make our roads safer, to target criminals who use the road network and to respond to concerns of anti-social driving that we have heard from local communities.

The additional firearms officers will also support policing of our roads.

Accessibility and accountability – an investment of £534,650 ⁴

This will provide increases for:

- Public contact and customer care
- Training our staff
- Outreach to communities
- Prosecution staff

It may sound obvious, but we know there are two key things the public expect when they really need our help. They need to be able tell us quickly they need help, and they need us to respond.

During 2018, the number of 999 calls the Constabulary received rose by nearly 5,000 compared to 2017, contributing to a total of 81,790 emergency calls. This was on top of a similar increase during 2017.

We will always prioritise 999 calls and we know that, too often, people calling us on 101 about important but not life threatening risks have to wait too long for the phone to be picked up. One of the strengths of the Constabulary is that we have a workforce that cares. We understand that it doesn't always feel that way when people can't get through to us.

We want to invest to improve our service to those that need to contact us, including providing alternative and easier ways to contact us. This includes better use of web-based services and social media.

We are looking to increase the number of police officers whose job it is to respond to emergencies – so that we can be there when people need us. The challenges are particularly acute in rural areas. We have some impressive countryside, but the sheer space makes our policing coverage thin. Part of any increase will help improve our response in rural areas.

⁴ Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) options one and three; option one, number three; option two, numbers 10, 13 and 17



Of course, once we catch criminals, our job is to build a case to prosecute them. The complexity of building cases for court has increased significantly. To ensure a fair trial, we have a legal duty to disclose to the defence certain material; much of this material is found on smart phones and computers, and they now hold massive amounts of data.

Some 83% of adults over the age of 16 had a smartphone in 2018, 58% had a tablet device, 42% a smart television, 28% a desktop computer and 20% wearable technology. All of these devices contain data that could be vitally important to an investigation.

We wish to increase our prosecution capability, to make sure that when we catch criminals they face justice. Crime is now more complex to investigate and time consuming and files take longer to complete. Specialist investigators will enable us to release uniform response officers and neighbourhood officers to spend more time on the streets, keeping people safe.

Older but not overlooked – an investment of £237,500 ⁵

This will provide increases for:

- Adults at risk

The Commissioner's Fund helps support the elderly in our communities. There are 49 live projects across Gloucestershire within our 'Older but not overlooked' priority. All of them either have or are being encouraged to have a good working relationship with our Neighbourhood teams and their local PCSOs as outlined in our Neighbourhood Policing offer.

The Constabulary has formalised the role of Vulnerability Officer (VO) and we have a police officer in post within every Neighbourhood Policing team. Each VO forms a link between their team, the Missing and Mental Health team and the Public Protection Unit. This has contributed to tackling adult vulnerability, such as return interviews of repeat high risk missing people. Officers work with partners to reduce risks around people who place a high demand on our services. This includes working to embed initiatives such as 'Message in a bottle', the 'Herbert Protocol' and 'Dementia friendly'.

Neighbourhood PCSOs have developed links with local OPCC supported projects, such as lunch clubs, and continue to visit sheltered accommodation and work with community groups.

⁵ Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) options two and three; option two, numbers four and five; option three, numbers 9,10,13,14



Neighbourhood teams have held regular partnership safety events or ‘cocooning events’ with Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) and housing sector partners target and support vulnerable communities and individuals.

The Police and Crime Plan is committed to ensuring older people feel and remain an active part of our communities. In doing this, we know that when it comes to keeping the most vulnerable adults safe, the demographic of Gloucestershire means this will continue to be an area of increasing demand for many years.

Unlike the role of safeguarding children, the Constabulary does not have a team dedicated to keeping vulnerable adults safe. We would like to launch one. This team will enable us carry out our statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. Specially trained, expert and dedicated officers to respond to adults at risk will enable us to build consistent relationships with statutory partners. This, in turn, will give us an opportunity for early safeguarding, preventing vulnerable adults becoming victims and bringing more offenders to justice.

Safer cyber – an investment of £65,900 ⁶

This will provide increases for:

- Digital Forensics Unit

The Constabulary has taken an active role in working with businesses and communities to make us all stronger, and more able to protect ourselves from cyber-crime. This type of crime knows no boundaries. The Constabulary has been working to increase reporting to enable us to identify trends and further protect individuals and businesses from cyber-crime. The focus for this work has been predominantly groups that are more vulnerable to cyber-crime; particularly young people and the elderly community.

The proliferation of smart phones and other digital devices makes investigating cyber-crime ever more challenging, simply because of the volume of data. Just 11 years ago, Apple released its first iPhone, the biggest of which had 16GB of internal memory. Today, we are routinely required to seize and interrogate phones with eight times this capacity. Laptops, games consoles, desktops and other digital devices will have even more capacity and the size of the data we extract from them will only grow in years to come.

We would like to increase our capability for forensic examination of digital devices, so we can secure evidence to catch and convict cyber criminals, as well as continuing and furthering our efforts in protecting the public and businesses. This also links with other Police and Crime Plan priorities, such as ‘Older but not overlooked’ and ‘Young people becoming adults’.

⁶ Constabulary Governance Board paper (CGB) options two and three; option two, numbers seven and eight; option three, number 11



Beyond the priorities

Of course, the Police and Crime Plan is more than six priorities. It has commitments to animal welfare through 'A compassionate approach' and our environment through 'A green and pleasant county'. It sets out a duty under the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) that recognises policing challenges go beyond policing boundaries.

The investment we make as a result of a rise in the police precept on the Council Tax will mean we can continue a journey we started with you several years ago to improve our service.

I hope I have convinced you of the need for investment in our police service. The areas set out in this letter outline key areas for investment. There are a number of other smaller areas⁷ but, for the sake of brevity, I have focussed on the most costly ones.

Should you need any more information, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Yours sincerely

Rod Hansen

Rod Hansen MBA, MSc (Hons), Dip Appl Crim
Chief Constable

⁷ See paper for Constabulary Governance Board of 23 January 2019