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| **Consultation on: Police and Crime Plan 2016-21 Budget proposals for 2016/17** |
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**South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner Alun Michael is consulting on his budget plans for 2016/17. He is also seeking views on the Police and Crime Plan, which will set the policing priorities for South Wales from April 2016 through to 2021.**

The consultation ends on **November 21st 2015**

The overall responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner is to set the local policing priorities for South Wales and to maintain an effective and efficient police service. He is required to set the budget and to hold the Chief Constable to account.

His duties include:

Setting the local policing priorities, published in a Police and Crime Reduction Plan

Scrutinise, support and challenge the performance of the force

Set the annual police budget and council tax precept\*

Appoint\* and, if necessary, dismiss the Chief Constable

Publish an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

Attend meetings of the Police and Crime Panel

Investigate complaints against the Chief Constable, and monitor all complaints against officers and staff

Administer an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Consult with and involve the public

Collaborate with other forces and criminal justice agencies

\* subject to veto of the Police and Crime Panel

The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for local police funding. He receives all government grants and council tax precept payments, and allocates the budget in consultation with the Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable is in charge of operational policing in South Wales while the Commissioner is responsible for making sure that the Chief Constable carries out his role effectively, and is accountable to the public.



I was elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales in November 2012, having stood as the Labour and Co-operative Party candidate.

As Commissioner, I work closely with the Chief Constable Peter Vaughan to support the police in providing the best possible service to the communities of South Wales, ensuring that people are safe and that our people get value for money.

**Setting priorities for policing South Wales**

The role of the Commissioner is to ensure the police service in South Wales is effective. To me, that means vigorously pursuing the first priority for the police - to reduce offending and reoffending. This was the top priority set by Sir Robert Peel when he established the first police service in London in 1829. In other words, “success is demonstrated by the lack of crime, not the presence of activity”. After nearly 200 years, I believe that this is still the right principle to pursue, so this a key focus for my Police and Crime Reduction Plan for 2016-2021.

The Police and Crime Reduction Plan 2016-2021 sets clear priorities for policing South Wales and we have been consulting with the public and partners on these throughout the summer. The responses we have received endorse our intention to work even more closely with partners in local government, the NHS and other bodies to ensure that we “shrink together, not shrink apart”, despite the massive cuts imposed on the Police and on other public services by Government decisions. We will also place a new emphasis on **early intervention**, identifying trends and causes of crime, taking action with partners to build and support safe, healthy communities.

Partnership working makes sense when you realise that the same triggers cause demand for the Police, the NHS and the local community. Violence, Substance Misuse, Alcohol, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and many other issues can best be tackled if we work together to tackle problems at their root and if we intervene together at an early stage. Local councils and Welsh Government are our key partners in trying to help make YOUR community healthy and safe. That will be a key theme in the new Plan which I intend to present to the Police and Crime Panel for South Wales on December 15th, along with the Precept for 2016 – 2017.

Details of the draft Police and Crime Reduction Plan 2016-21 can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/1LZPLor>

**Financial outlook**

Since the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010, the UK Government has reversed two decades of investment in policing and crime prevention. These cuts are having a major impact on the Police and our other partners in community safety, such as local authorities and the local NHS. In late November we expect to hear the outcome of the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, but we already know that “unprotected departments” have been asked to model real terms cuts of 25% and 40% through to 2019/20. The Home Office which provides substantial funds to the police is an unprotected department so further deep cuts in the Police Grant seem inevitable, and the only other significant funding comes through the council tax. In developing my spending plans for 2016/17 I seek protect police numbers as far as I can through a modest increase in the Council Tax Precept in order for South Wales Police to have the capacity to fight crime, prevent crime and make our communities safe.

South Wales Police have faced significant cuts since 2010. Grant funding has changed year on year due to various transfers of responsibilities but overall the trend is sharply downwards. The graph below shows just how significantly the overall grant has been reduced since 2009/10.

Difficult decisions have been made to deliver savings of £39m. Police officer numbers account for the largest single part of South Wales Police expenditure and the following graph shows that we have already lost nearly 300 police officers since 2009, although my council tax precept strategy has helped stabilise numbers in the past couple of years.

Last year, with the Chief Constable, I had to take the difficult decision to reduce the number of Community Support Officer by 100 from a high of 500 the previous year. Due to the stability provided by my council tax precept strategy, we were able to recruit many of them as Police Officers to replace officers who had left the service or retired. Even after that reduction we have some 400 Community Support Officers across South Wales, thanks to the decision of Welsh Government to provide the money to employ 205 of them. That support is not available to Forces in England and makes an enormous difference to connecting South Wales Police with the communities of South Wales.

Costs have been cut in many ways, for instance by reducing the number of custody suites into new “Bridewells” in Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend. Telephone contact has been consolidated into a single centre (where the 101 non-emergency number is answered) and it is now being expanded to accommodate the Fire Service.

I am acutely conscious that the grant forecasts are for further cash cuts, possibly until the end of this decade. My revised Police and Crime Reduction Plan will set out my priorities until 2021. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be published soon after we receive the settlement figures from the Home Office and will set out how we will fund the delivery of the Police and Crime Reduction Plan and the savings we will need to make.

The Chief Constable and I are both determined to maintain a strong neighbourhood police presence in South Wales. We will only entertain further reductions in Police Officer and Community Support Officer numbers if made absolutely unavoidable by decisions in Whitehall. We will look to cut costs in procurement, estates and through collaboration as a significant source of savings before cutting jobs.

**In considering the contribution I can reasonably expect from Council Tax, I have to bear in mind that South Wales Police has the lowest charges in Wales, as shown below:**

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|  | 2015/16 Band D Council Tax |
|  | £ |
| North Wales | 235.44 |
| Gwent | 211.62 |
| Dyfed Powys | 200.07 |
| South Wales | 199.86 |

**Council Tax Precept proposal for 2016/17**

Our expenditure plans currently provide for a Council Tax increase at the 5% level, and for a Band D taxpayer, that would lead to an increase of £10.00 per year - less than 20p a week. Each 5% on Council Tax raises the equivalent of 100 police officers (nearly £5m) for South Wales Police. Nobody wants to increase the charge, but people want to live and work in safe communities and that has to weigh heavily with me when making my final budget decisions.

I also need to consider my capital expenditure plans for 2016/17. Again, this is difficult to be precise before the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement. Key areas of capital expenditure are likely to include:

* Completion of the tri-service contact centre in Bridgend, bringing together control rooms for police and two fire services and saving costs;
* Regular replacement of police vehicles
* Refurbishment of our estate, especially the parts that are old and expensive
* Renewal of key ICT infrastructure and systems

**Consultation Questions**

What are your views on the need to maintain an effective police service during a period of austerity - in particular, maintaining a strong neighbourhood presence?

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Are there areas of South Wales Police activity that you would you be happy to see cut?

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What are your views on my council tax precept proposal?

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What are your views on capital expenditure plans for next year?

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Do you think there are areas of the Police service that should be protected from further cuts?

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What are your views on the priorities set out in the draft Police and Crime Plan?

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Please return this consultation by November 21st 2015

By email to: commissioner@south-wales.pnn.police.uk

By post to:

Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

Consultation response

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