

Public Document Pack

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Members are hereby requested to attend the meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel, to be held at **10.30 am** on **Friday, 30 January 2026** at **County Hall, Lewes**.

Lauren McCann

Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

22 January 2026

Webcasting Notice

Please note: This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via East Sussex County Council's website on the internet – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm that the meeting is to be filmed. Generally the public gallery is not filmed. However, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. The webcast will be available via the link below: <https://eastsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

Agenda

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| 10.30 am | 1. | <p>Declarations of Interest (Pages 5 - 6)</p> <p>Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt contact Democratic Services, West Sussex County Council, before the meeting.</p> |
| 10.32 am | 2. | <p>Urgent Matters</p> <p>Items not on the agenda which the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.</p> |
| 10.35 am | 3. | <p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 18)</p> <p>To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting on 3 October 2025.</p> |
| 10.40 am | 4. | <p>Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner (Pages 19 - 22)</p> <p>The Panel is asked to raise any strategic issues or queries concerning crime and policing in Sussex with the Commissioner.</p> <p>Written questions may be submitted by members of the public up to two weeks in advance of a meeting. The Commissioner or the Chairman (as appropriate) will be invited to provide a response by noon of the day before the meeting. Questions,</p> |

together with as many responses as possible, will be published on the Panel's website (www.sussexpcp.gov.uk).

Six questions have been received from four correspondents. The Panel is invited to note the responses and pose any supplementary questions.

11.10 am 5. **Final Report of the Budget and Precept Working Group**
(Pages 23 - 28)

Report by the Chair of the Working Group. The attached report sets out the work of the Budget and Precept Working Group as it worked as a critical friend to the Commissioner in developing the proposed policing precept for 2026/2027.

The Panel is asked to note the work and recommendations of the Group and consider these in conjunction with the Commissioner's policing precept proposal (item 6b).

11.25 am 6. **Proposed Precept 2026/27**

Under Schedule 5 of The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Panel is responsible for reviewing the Commissioner's proposed precept and making reports and recommendations.

(a) **Covering report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel** (Pages 29 - 30)

The report sets out the procedure and options available to the Panel.

(b) **Report by the Police and Crime Commissioner** (Pages 31 - 188)

The Panel is required to consider the Commissioner's precept proposal and appendices 1, 1E, 2, 3, & 4, and make recommendations.

12.40 pm 7. **The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing**
(Pages 189 - 200)

County lines is the name given to drug dealing where organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities into smaller towns and rural areas. Cuckooing is where a vulnerable person's home is used as a base for such operations.

The item has been added to the agenda at the request of the

Panel.

- 1.40 pm 8. **Feedback on Panel Visit to Kingstanding**
- Item for the Members of the Panel who attended the visit to Sussex Police Training Centre at Kingstanding on 15 October 2025 to give their feedback on the visit.
- 1.50 pm 9. **Feedback on Panel Visit to Victim Services Team, OSPCC, November 2025**
- Item for the Members of the Panel who attended the presentation by Victim Services, OSPCC at Sackville House on 12th November 2025 to give their feedback on the visit.
- 2.00 pm 10. **Quarterly Report of Complaints** (Pages 201 - 204)
- Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel.
- The report provides details of the correspondence received and the action taken.
- The Panel is asked to consider the report and raise any issues or concerns.
- 2.10 pm 11. **Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**
- If the February meeting is not required, the next meeting of the Panel will take place on 13 March at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.
- Future meeting dates are set out below:
- 16 February 2026 (Provisional)
13 March 2026
2 July 2026
9 October 2026

To all members of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Table of standing personal interests

30 January 2026

The Panel is asked to agree the table of personal interests below.

Any interests not listed which members of the Panel feel are appropriate for declaration must be declared under agenda Item 1, Declaration of Interests, or at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting.

Table of standing personal interests

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council.
Cllr Bangert	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.
Cllr Sluman	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Adur District Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Safety Partnership. Cabinet Member for Safety, Equalities and Inclusion at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management.

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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 October 2025 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Baynham	Horsham District Council	Cllr Birch	Arun District Council
Cllr Khan	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Hollidge	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Standley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Williams	Wealden District Council	Cllr Ali	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Cooke	Mid-Sussex District Council
Mr Napthine	Independent Co-opted Member	Mrs Scholefield	Independent Co-opted Member
Cllr Asaduzzaman	Brighton and Hove City Council	Cllr Meek	Lewes District Council

Substitutes: Cllr Asaduzzaman for Cllr Czolak, Cllr Meek for Cllr Keene

Apologies were received from Cllr Czolak (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Sluman (Adur District Council), Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Bangert (Chichester District Council), Cllr Keene (Lewes District Council), Cllr Bayliss (Rother District Council) and Cllr Whorlow (Worthing Borough Council)

Also in attendance: Mrs Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Mark Streater, OSPCC, Mr Iain McCulloch, OSPCC, and Mr Mervin Dadd, OSPCC.

Part I

58. Declarations of Interest

58.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members of the Panel declared the personal interests in the table below.

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council.
Cllr Ballard	Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Eastbourne Borough Council.
Cllr Bangert	Cabinet Member for

	Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Cllr Czolak	Cabinet Advisor on Community Safety at Brighton and Hove City Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Safety Partnership. Cabinet Member for Safety, Equalities and Inclusion at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.

59. Urgent Matters

59.1 There were no urgent matters declared.

60. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

60.1 The Panel is asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 3 July 2025 as an accurate record.

60.2 It was clarified for the record that, under Paragraph 53.23 of the previous meeting minutes, funding from the National Driver Retraining Scheme is paid into the police fund and not the Commissioner's budget.

60.3 Resolved – the Committee approved the draft minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

61. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

61.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes).

61.2 As a supplemental to the question received from the public, members raised concerns that complaints and intelligence brought by the public may not being given due weight and that the public may be forming a negative perception as a result.

61.3 The Commissioner encouraged all members of the public to report any crime they witness occurring and stressed that Sussex Police do not have the capacity to go back to every member of the public that reports a crime to inform them of their progress, and that this is not due to lack of effort or interest. The Commissioner stressed that the police have a duty to keep victims of crime informed however, and she further informed the Panel about a new reporting system being trialled which would allow the police to keep involved parties up to date with any progress.

61.4 The Chair invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Question: In light of the recent attack on a synagogue in Manchester, what is Sussex Police doing to protect the Jewish community and the Muslim community, in case of backlash as a result of the attack?

Answer: The Commissioner offered her thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families and that all stand in solidarity with the Jewish community. The Commissioner assured the Panel that the Chief Constable had reassured her that Sussex Police were stepping up their engagement with various communities across Sussex.

2. Question: With only seven months to go until mayoral elections for Sussex, has there been any transition plan agreed and how will this affect the office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the latest information from the government is that the office of Police and Crime Commissioner would be subsumed into the Mayor's office in 2027, not 2026 as previously suggested. Mr Mark Streater, Chief Executive Officer for the OSPCC, further explained to the Panel that an internal transition working group had been appointed and met regularly, alongside regular engagement with the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG).

3. Question: As a supplemental to the above, will arrangements for the Police and Crime Panel continue as they currently are?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that there were no plans for any changes to the arrangements for the Panel until such time as the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner transitions to the new Mayor's authority.

4. Question: How does the national threat level and the requirements of Operation Plato affect Sussex Police?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that Sussex Police would be linked in through the National Police Chief's Council on the national threat level and any preparations involved. There was some confusion over whether the national threat level had been raised and it was verified by the Commissioner's team that the threat level had not been raised.
5. Question: With the Secretary of State for Transport now approving a second runway at Gatwick Airport, will this have an impact on policing and will more officers be recruited as a result?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that Sussex Police has an ongoing agreement with Gatwick Airport Ltd around the policing of the airport and there would be an ongoing negotiation between the two in regard to the second runway and any additional resources needed. The Commissioner added that there was potential for disruption as a result of the second runway and any associated protests could impact Sussex Police.
6. Question: Is the Commissioner expecting government funding to help with the impact of increased passenger numbers at Gatwick Airport as a result of the second runway and associated impact on Sussex Police?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that the current ongoing agreement between Gatwick Airport and Sussex Police would require a commercial conversation around resources and funding between the two organisations.
7. Question: According to a recent article on sexual offences investigations' collapse due to missing evidence in the Argus newspaper, 294 cases passed to the CPS by Sussex Police collapsed due to missing, uncollected, damaged or otherwise contaminated evidence. What are the Commissioner's comments on this and what steps are being taken to improve this statistic?
Answer: The Commissioner cautioned that she could not comment on specific cases but generally, when a case cannot be taken forward by the CPS, and this is recorded as the police being at fault, it would be recorded in CPS data as an E72 in their data, which can potentially cover a lot of different scenarios. She acknowledged the challenges faced by police forces with the closure and outsourcing of forensic services and the effect this had on some cases. She stressed, however, that sexual offence victims are supported throughout the investigation and prosecution process, and that Sussex Police are working closely with CPS to ensure that any evidence in a case is gathered and presented in a timely manner to ensure the best chance for a conviction.
8. In a supplemental question to the above on the possibility of producing a report on this issue, Mr Mark Streater explained that the preservation of property seized in the course of an investigation is the remit of the Chief Constable and her team. He explained that Sussex Police had recently reviewed, and

would continue reviewing, how evidence is retained in their property stores with ongoing oversight from the Joint Audit Committee. The Commissioner further assured the Panel that she would be discussing the results of the review at a future accountability meeting with the Chief Constable and she would be happy to let the Panel know when that would take place after the review has completed.

9. Question: With the Government recently announcing the expansion of live facial recognition technology, with Sussex Police due to receive two vans equipped with the technology, does the Commissioner welcome this despite concerns around the newness of the technology and its accuracy, with associated concerns around racial bias and potential for discrimination?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that the technology was designed to be reliable, proportionate, and fair, with guidelines for its use for the Police in line with legislation and explained how it determines persons of interest against a pre-selected watchlist. She stressed that any footage of persons not on that predetermined list would be instantly deleted and it is the police's responsibility to maintain this technology and deploy it only according to the relevant legislation. She then shared some anecdotes of its successful use to protect the public in Croydon, and assured the Panel of its purpose to inform and protect the public from offenders. Finally, she shared that Sussex Police had shared a list of frequently asked questions about the technology and its use on their website.

10. Question: As a supplemental to the above, is this the first time the technology has been deployed in Sussex or have Sussex Police already used other forms of live facial recognition?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that it was the first time that live facial recognition was being used in Sussex and that the vans were being shared with Surrey Police. She further confirmed that Sussex Police had previously used retrospective facial recognition technology in the past.

11. Question: Have there been any impacts in terms of morale or resources on the police as a result of the asylum hotel protests?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that Sussex Police were highly trained in keeping public order and were committed to facilitating peaceful protest but acknowledged the pressures faced by police forces in providing mutual aid to other forces when needed. She acknowledged the financial impact of providing officers to aid other forces but assured the Panel that those costs could be recouped from the National Police Chief's Council. She further acknowledged the recent challenges to police morale and that while those challenges exist, there are also positive examples of public duty among Sussex Police and the police community more widely.

12. Question: As a supplemental follow up to the above, have there been discussions with the Chief Constable in relation to other

agencies which have supported the police around the issues to do with asylum hotels and the hanging of flags in public places?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that it was her understanding that the issue of flags being hung in public places was the responsibility of the local council in the first instance, with the police becoming involved only if there was criminal behaviour occurring. She assured the Panel that she anticipated that the police would be in close contact with local authorities to support them on these issues.

- 13.Question: In reference to the recent Panorama documentary about the Metropolitan Police, does the Commissioner consider the behaviours and attitudes of police officers exposed by the programme to be a potential factor in the reluctance of victims to come forward and report crime, especially women and ethnic minorities?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she agreed that there was such a possibility and explained the efforts of the Met Police Commissioner to address the issues exposed by the Panorama programme. Further, she explained the independent custody visitor scheme ran by the OSPCC and extended an offer for interested members of the Panel to visit for themselves.

- 14.Question: From a policing perspective, what can be done by the Chief Constable to ensure that frontline police officers are receiving the necessary support in order to deliver the service expected by the public?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that the Chief Constable works alongside all staff organisations as well as frontline officers in order to ensure that morale is high and that they receive the right support in order to do their jobs, including engagement with her officers through outreach. The Commissioner shared her view that Sussex Police were incredibly empathetic as a police force and that victims were well-supported as a result.

- 15.Question: How will community safety policing powers ensure that small local businesses, especially independent retailers, on the high street are protected from crimes such as theft, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour, especially in cities such as Brighton and Hove?

Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged the difficulties of running a small business, especially in Brighton, and the challenges of policing such urban environments effectively. She explained her role as the national lead for business crime among PCCs and her efforts to highlight these issues. The Commissioner further explained to members that Sussex Police had a dedicated business crime team to tackle these issues and they were seeing a greater increase in reporting and solved rates for business crime.

- 16.Question: As a supplemental to the above, under the coming devolution measures announced by the government, how will devolution support a stronger collaboration between police, local

authorities, and small business networks to tackle crime and disorder in local communities?

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that this would be the remit of the incoming Mayor to determine but added that there are already several crime reduction partnerships across the county, with numerous business improvement districts, already collaborating to work with local authorities and the police to reduce business crime and improve economic growth.

17.Question: What does the term 'persistent' mean in relation to shoplifters, how a tagged 'persistent shoplifter' would be monitored, and what actions would be taken if that tagged person entered an area where crime could likely be committed again?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that a prolific offender is defined as someone with more than five crimes on their record. She further explained that the tags work similarly to other types, but with GPS tracking that allows the offender to be tracked and banned from areas where crime is likely to occur. She further added that this initiative was supported by the Chief Constable on an operational level.

18.Question: as a supplementary to the above, members asked who decided which offenders would receive tags?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that there would be a further announcement from her office about the scheme later in the week and she couldn't say more.

62. The Role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for improving the response provided to hate crime

62.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne and presented by Mr Mark Streater, Chief Executive Officer, OSPCC.

62.2 The Chair invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:

62.3 Members raised concerns over underreporting of hate crimes by historically affected groups and asked if there were any community groups which might be able to provide data to the police to more accurately inform their reporting.

62.4 The Commissioner acknowledged the difficulties experienced by some groups when reporting hate crime and explained that Sussex Police employ a number of hate crime coordinators and community engagement advisors across the force to support victims

and affected groups, which have started to yield some improvement. She further pointed out that victims could report anonymously through Crimestoppers, if they did not feel comfortable reporting crime directly to the police.

- 62.5 At the request of the Panel, the phone number for the Crimestoppers Contact Centre was included in the minutes: 0800 555 111.
- 62.6 Members requested that the Commissioner provide some clarity on the necessity of reporting non-hate crime incidents, due to the arguments made across the political spectrum about such being used as a means to curtail freedom of speech and as a waste of police resources.
- 62.7 The Commissioner explained that the recording of non-hate crime incidents was introduced after the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 as an early warning mechanism for police to monitor and gather intelligence across areas and groups, before escalation occurred, as well as tracking trends in prejudice and bias-related incidences, and as community reassurance by police forces.
- 62.8 Members shared concerns from their communities around evidence in hate crime cases and the burden of providing it.
- 62.9 The Commissioner stated she would expect the police to gather evidence from sources where the victim has no authority, such as evidence from cameras that do not belong to the victim, and added that their community engagement officers and victim support services have driven an improvement in the support offered to victims of hate crime.
- 62.10 Members raised questions around hate crime training for staff responding to reports via phone or the internet, and for the police officers deployed to follow up on those reports.
- 62.11 The Commissioner assured the panel that all new recruit cohorts receive training on hate crime, prior to them joining their neighbourhood coaching units. She further added that all current frontline officers are receiving training on hate crime from specialist officers. Finally, she stated that it was her understanding that contact centre staff had recently received refresher training on dealing with hate crime as well.
- 62.12 Members asked if there had been any research conducted, either by Victim Support or by the OSPCC, on the impact of support services on victims of hate crime.
- 62.13 The Commissioner assured the Panel that all support services funded through her office are subject to regular monitoring of their services which covers a wide area of inquiries, such as how victims have recovered and the success of any interventions, gathered on a monthly basis.

- 62.14 Considering the rise in hate crime incidents recorded in the report, the Panel asked for clarification over whether there is any one particular group identified as being disproportionately at risk of hate-related crime.
- 62.15 The Commissioner acknowledged the increase in hate crime incidents outlined in the report and the possible causes, including that Sussex Police has improved in encouraging reporting which has contributed to the increase. She assured the Panel that her office and Victim Services would continue to monitor on this issue and would respond to any massive increases appropriately.
- 62.16 Members raised concerns around the language used to define hate crime and its impact on the right to freedom of speech however stated their opinion that the police do a good job in a delicate situation.
- 62.17 The Commissioner acknowledged the challenges of policing hate crime and the right to freedom of speech in a democracy, and the growing difficulties caused by the increases in tension in society.

63. The Progress made by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner against the Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2025/2036

- 63.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, presented by Mr Iain McCulloch, Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 63.2 A summary of the Panel's questions and answers is as follows:
- 63.3 Members inquired if there had been consideration given in the Strategy to places where the Police estate is not currently located.
- 63.4 The Commissioner assured the Panel that such consideration was undertaken during planning and it was very much dictated by the operational needs of Sussex Police, both current and future, and it was an ongoing piece of work.
- 63.5 Members raised concerns that there was no reference to both previous and current governments' priorities in building large numbers of homes and how these developments would affect the Strategy. Members also noted that there was no reference around commissioning work from small- to medium-sized employers as a part of the Strategy and national targets; and the lack of reference of sustainable building practices.
- 63.6 The Commissioner assured members that procurement processes promote social value, especially when using local providers. Further, the Commissioner explained that the overall goal of the strategy was to move placement of police properties away

from their historical locations, to where they best serve modern policing requirements and that housing growth has an effect on those locations, to best serve those communities and improve police responses. The Commissioner also emphasised the changes brought about by modern policing, including the flexible and mobile nature of police cars which effectively act as mobile police stations.

63.7 Mr McCulloch also assured the Panel that the Strategy is underpinned by the OSPCC's core governance processes and exist within that structure, even if the report does not directly reference them. The Commissioner also reassured the Panel that she sits on a monthly estates board which reviews the Strategy on a regular basis, comprised of senior officers as well as herself and Mr McCulloch.

63.8 Members raised concerns over the perception between the presence of a police station and the subsequent presence of police in an area, and any guarantee that if police stations are closed down, that more mobile police units would be visible to reassure local residents.

63.9 The Commissioner explained that such decisions would be affected by operational need and budget constraints, which she explained Sussex Police receives the eighth lowest in the country and the county has the seventh lowest precept.

63.10 Members noted the references to police hubs in community buildings, noting the improvements to customer service these bring about and the chance for improved cross-working with other agencies, and asked if these would comprise a major part of the Strategy.

63.11 The Commissioner explained that with the devolution proposals moving forward, she was reluctant to allocate resources to council buildings which may no longer be used after devolution. She also reiterated it was an open, ongoing conversation with communities to determine what best serves them and their needs.

63.12 The Panel noted the positive reaction from the public and various agencies to the use of the "pods" on certain high streets.

63.13 The Commissioner acknowledged the enhancements provided by the pods in addition to police stations and custody centres.

63.14 The Panel noted that the strategy did not mention local government reorganisation or its potential impact on the police estate, stating that this might need to be taken into consideration going forward.

63.15 The Commissioner acknowledged the point and assured the Panel that local government reorganisation was being taken into consideration in discussions and could be referenced now proposals had been agreed by local authorities and the government.

64. Quarterly Report of Complaints

64.1 The Panel noted that there have been no complaints received as of 29 September 2025.

65. Working Group Appointments

65.1 The Chair asked for volunteers from the Panel to be appointed to the working group to consider the development of the Commissioner's proposed precept.

65.2 The following Panel members volunteered and were appointed:

- Mrs Susan Scholefield
- Councillor Standley
- Councillor Baynham
- Mr Keith Napthine

65.3 Due to the number of councillors having sent apologies, it was proposed and accepted to ask for further volunteers for the working group outside of the meeting.

66. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

66.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Friday 30 January 2026, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

- Future meeting dates have been proposed as:
 - 16 February (Provisional)
 - 13 March 2026

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

30 January 2026

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

Below is a schedule of the questions received prior to this meeting and where possible responses have been included. Responses will be tabled at the meeting that were not available at the time of despatch. Written questions must be received two weeks before a meeting of the Panel and the Commissioner or Panel Chairman is invited to provide a response by noon of the day before the meeting.

Questions relating to operational matters of Sussex Police are passed to a relevant officer at Sussex Police for a response, with a brief summary of such questions provided below. For the current meeting, six questions have been received from four correspondents for response from the Commissioner.

1. Written questions from a resident of Sussex, name withheld by request.

Question: 'In PCC accountability meetings, the Chief Constable routinely provides assurances about performance, compliance, and improvement. What independent verification mechanisms does the PCC rely on to test whether those assurances are accurate, complete, and supported by reliable data, rather than relying on self-reporting? In circumstances where assurances later prove incomplete, inconsistent with inspection findings, or misaligned with emerging evidence, how does the PCC exercise challenge and escalation, and what mechanisms exist to address and correct this?'

Answer: TBC

2. Question: 'HMICFRS reports have repeatedly raised concerns, nationally and in Sussex, about supervision, recording, data quality, and governance. How does the PCC assure herself that these risks are being addressed in practice, and why have issues around incomplete or delayed recording not been identified earlier through PCC scrutiny and assurance processes?'

Answer: TBC

- 3. Question: 'Given the importance of accurate records to safeguarding, accountability, and public trust, what assurance does the PCC have that key decisions, risks, and actions are consistently recorded, auditable, and capable of independent scrutiny, rather than relying on informal, partial, or retrospective accounts?'**

Answer: TBC

- 4. A written question from Miss Charrington of Newhaven.**

Given her support for one side only in the recent protests around asylum seekers, and given that was an encouragement to the abuse we've seen of already vulnerable people... how are we supposed to have any confidence in Katy Bourne as our representative in policing matters? I certainly feel concerned that if one of the right wing marches became violent she would not necessarily be on the side of our police, who I do feel confident would continue to try and protect the refugees. I do not feel her behaviour has provided any confidence for the community as a whole in Sussex, and is rather more concerned with one, very vocal, grouping. While she is entitled to her opinion, this is not appropriate for her role.

Answer: TBC

- 5. A written question from a resident of Arun, West Sussex**

Given the forecast £8.5m million deficit following the announcement of the provisional police grant settlement 26/27, has the PCC challenged the Chief Constable on the amount of money spent by Sussex Police on the salaries and oncosts of officers and staff who have been suspended due to misconduct allegations, given that Home Office data shows that Sussex Police's suspension rate has more than doubled since 2023? By how much could the deficit be reduced if this cost to the taxpayer could be reduced?

Answer: TBC

6. A written question from TBC

In Crowborough there has been abundant evidence of far-right, hostile, racist activity. Our councillors and members of the public have been experiencing hateful threats and associated crimes which have been reported to the police. Katy has publicly supported the protesters - is she going to acknowledge and condemn the local hostility and reassure the public that we are a welcoming community who support diversity, and that racist rhetoric and fear-mongering around the subject of asylum seekers will not be tolerated?

Answer: TBC

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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

30 January 2026

Budget and Precept Working Group

Report by the Chair of the Working Group

Summary and Recommendations

This report is intended to inform the Panel of the findings of its Working Group, which acted as a critical friend to the Commissioner in the development of the proposed policing precept for 2026/27.

It summarises the issues considered by the Group and sets out its recommendations.

Recommendations

1. That the Working Group supports the proposed precept of £15 on a Band D property for 26/27, by a majority view.
2. That the Commissioner is urged to continue to lobby the policing minister and government, to reform how funding for police forces is determined, requesting a solution is found which is transparent, and is not contingent on local precepts being continually raised by the maximum amount permissible.

1. Background and Methodology

- 1.1 This Working Group was established by Sussex Police and Crime Panel at its meeting of 28 June 2013, to act as critical friend to the development of the Police and Crime Plan and report its findings back to the Panel. At the January 2014 meeting, it was agreed that the Group would meet at the appropriate point during each year's cycle (while always reporting back to the Panel's precept meeting), and that the Group's terms of reference would expand to include consideration of budget and precept development.
- 1.2 During the 26/27 budget development cycle, the Group met twice, on 21 November 2025 and on 13 January 2026. The Group heard evidence from the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, and from Sussex Police staff and officers. At the second meeting the Group learned about the financial landscape in the light of the announcement of the actual funding allocation to the Sussex PCC for 26/27, and the further relaxation of the council tax precept ceiling, from £14 to £15 for a Band D property.

- 1.3 The Panel has a statutory duty to review the proposed precept, and to make reports and recommendations to the Commissioner. The Group's deliberations and recommendations are intended to provide greater assurance for the Panel's statutory scrutiny, to be undertaken at the formal meeting on 30 January 2026.

2. Discussion and Recommendations

- 2.1 The Group was briefed on numerous matters, including those which follow:

The Present Position

- The financial structure
- Revenue, overview of the main funding sources
- Status of the taxbase
- Sussex Police Budget Position (revenue and capital)
- OSPCC budget
- Governance
- Budget pressures and funding gap
- Status of existing savings projects (including transformation projects, joint force change, estate rationalisation, IT modernisation and monitoring)
- Medium term financial strategy
- Reserves
- Process for establishing the proposed policing precept
- Staff and officer recruitment
- Financial risks

The Future

- Strategic financial plan
- Changing demand and Sussex Police's response (including societal, economic and legislative shifts)
- Performance improvements funded through previous precept increases
- Use of data
- Forecast budget pressures
- Status of the transformation projects
- Public consultation on the proposed precept increase (see 2.6a)
- Assumptions underpinning the draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy, including around inflation
- Risk

Precept Consultation and Engagement

- 2.2 The Group was briefed on the proposed precept consultation and the arising feedback. Members acknowledged the reliability of the survey feedback, and the reach of the focus groups, accommodating both rural and urban communities, a good geographical spread across Sussex, and across some of the different groups defined under the Equality Act.

- 2.3 The Group noted that the proportion of consultation respondents opposed to any increase in policing precept had grown from last year. From 30.6% in the 23/24 consultation to 47% in the 24/25 consultation, to 40% in the 25/26 consultation, to 43% in the present 26/27 consultation.

Proposed Precept 2026/27

- 2.4 At its second meeting the Group considered a proposed precept increase of (the maximum allowable under the terms of the settlement without triggering a referendum, henceforth referred to as the "maximum allowable") £15 on a band D property. This would equate to an increase of £1.25 per month for a Band D property, a 5.6% rise. The Band D property charge would therefore become £281.91 per annum for policing.
- 2.5 This level of precept increase would still require savings of £8.5m in 2026/27.
- 2.6 The Group in particular noted that:
- a) Because the consultation was undertaken before the provisional settlement was announced, consultees were questioned around an increase of £14 on a Band D property, and not the £15 maximum which was ultimately announced.
 - b) The Commissioner had consistently raised the precept by the maximum amount allowable, also that alternative 26/27 precept scenarios were not presented to the Group for consideration.
 - c) That previous precept investment had yielded benefits. For example, more crimes were being solved (returning to 2016 performance levels) and the 999 answering time was the best in England and Wales. Police officer numbers had returned to 2016 levels.
 - d) That increasing use was being made of advances in technology to improve efficiency.
 - e) That the £5m savings target for 25/26 had been mostly delivered, for the most part through transformational work.

Discussion

- 2.7 Members raised points, including the following:
- 2.8 The proposed policing precept increase equated to 5.6%. Upper tier local authorities were limited to a 5% increase, and district and borough councils to a 3% increase, making policing an outlier. Since the greatest contributor to Sussex Police's 26/27 forecast increased cost base arose from a 4.2% officer pay award, and non-pay inflation was forecast to be lower than recent years, it was difficult to justify why the precept should increase by 5.6%. It was further observed that the Commissioner had consistently raised the precept by the maximum amount allowable.
- 2.9 The formula used to determine Sussex Police's funding settlement was completely opaque.

- 2.10 The Group remained conscious of the continuing cost-of-living pressures on household budgets.
- 2.11 The 5.6% increase amounted to £1.25 more a month, and that the majority of households would pay less. Even acknowledging the cost-of-living pressures on household budgets, this did not in itself represent a significant additional financial burden.
- 2.12 The Group noted that if a precept increase of £15 were not implemented, various police services would inevitably be adversely affected, in the face of growing forecast economic, legislative/political and societal challenges.

Recommendations:

- 2.13 The majority view of the Group was that a £15 precept proposal be supported, but that the associated messaging made it clear to residents why a 5.6% increase was sought.
- 2.14 Those not in support of the proposal cited concerns that the allowable maximum precept increase continues to be the default proposal in Sussex, and that the proposed increase is a greater percentage increase than that allowed for the other significant precepting authorities, and significantly higher than forecast inflation. Among these members, it was felt that a precept increase of 5% would be more appropriate.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Working Group supports the proposed precept of £15 on a Band D property for 26/27, by a majority view.
- 2. That the Commissioner is urged to continue to lobby the policing minister and government, to reform how funding for police forces is determined, requesting a solution is found which is transparent, and is not contingent on local precepts being continually raised by the maximum amount permissible.

3. Working Group Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 The cost of the Working Group has been met from within the funding received by Sussex Police and Crime Panel from the Home Office.

4. Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 Reviewing the proposed policing precept is a core statutory duty of the Panel. A failure to adequately undertake this duty risks breaching the applicable sections of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 5.1 There are no implications which compromise human rights. The recommendations treat all members of the community equally.

Susan Scholefield

Chair of the Budget and Precept Working Group

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Appendices: None

Working Group Members:

Councillor Mark Baynham

Councillor Paul Keene

Mr Keith Naphine

Mrs Susan Scholefield (Chair)

Councillor Rosey Whorlow

Councillor Bob Standley (attended the first meeting)

Councillor Tracie Bangert (attended the first meeting)

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

30 January 2026

Proposed Precept 2026/2027

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny

- The Panel is invited to review and make recommendations on the proposed precept for 2026/2027, informed by the recommendations of the Budget and Precept Working Group.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner has a duty to notify the Panel of the proposed precept by 1 February of the relevant financial year.
- 1.2 The Panel has a duty to review the Commissioner's proposed precept for the next financial year, and make reports and recommendations, by 8 February.
- 1.3 The Panel has three options in respect of the proposed precept – to support, not support, or to veto. The Panel may wish to include commentary as part of its recommendation, including a recommendation on what it feels the precept should be.
- 1.4 The power of veto is provided under Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and in [Regulations](#). The veto can only be exercised with a two thirds or greater majority - i.e. 14 members or more voting in favour of a veto (the current Panel membership being 20). In the event of a veto, a provisional meeting date of Monday 16 February has been arranged for the Panel to meet to consider a revised precept and make reports to the Commissioner if required. The Panel does not have the power of veto over a revised precept.
- 1.5 Following today's meeting, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, will write to the Commissioner, setting out the Panel's agreed recommendation. The letter will be published on the Panel's website. The Commissioner's response will be also published on the website, and with the papers for the Panel's next meeting.

Lauren McCann

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	Proposed Precept 2026/27.
Date:	30 January 2026.
Recommendations:	That the Sussex Police & Crime Panel: i) review the precept proposal; and ii) report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) to notify the Police & Crime Panel of the proposed precept for the coming financial year.
- 1.2 Financial planning sits at the heart of good public financial management. Alongside budget preparation, performance management and reporting, the ability to look strategically beyond the current budget period is a crucial process to support the PCC's resilience and long-term financial sustainability.
- 1.3 This report presents the PCC's precept proposal for 2026/27, underpinned by the draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2029/30, which sets out the financial context for the revenue budget, capital programme, and reserves.

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

- 2.1 Throughout 2025, the PCC has maintained a comprehensive programme of public engagement to inform the proposed police precept. Building on 13 years of consistent consultation, the office utilised a multi-channel approach to capture the views of residents, businesses, and visitors. This included traditional surveys alongside direct outreach, such as attending 23 diverse community events ranging from rural tool-marking sessions to youth ambassador training. This broad engagement ensures that the financial decisions regarding the precept are embedded in a deep understanding of local safety concerns and policing experiences.
- 2.2 The PCC has prioritised transparency and accessibility as core components of the democratic process. Between April and December 2025, the PCC was featured in over 400 media articles, maintaining a near-daily presence in local news with 94% positive sentiment. Digital outreach further amplified this visibility, with platforms reaching over 760,000 individuals and nearly half a million emails distributed via newsletters. Monthly Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAMs) with the Chief Constable continue to be webcast, allowing the public to witness the direct scrutiny of police performance in real-time by the PCC.
- 2.3 Direct dialogue with local representatives remains a cornerstone of the PCC's consultation strategy. In the past year, the office held 20 formal discussions

with Parish, District, and Borough councillors and clerks. These sessions spanned Sussex from Chichester to Rye, culminating in a recent January 2026 focus group with ward representatives in Brighton and Hove. Furthermore, the 2025 launch of "Your Sussex Your Say"—a thematic polling panel of approximately 900 residents—has provided a new, agile mechanism for gathering granular feedback on specific policing issues.

- 2.4 To ensure statistical rigour to inform the precept decision, the PCC commissioned an independent, demographically representative survey of 2,500 residents via professional polling firm Habit 5. This research achieved 2,469 completed surveys, providing a robust sample across all districts and socio-economic groups. With a confidence interval of 1.97%, the survey exceeds the national average for media polls, offering the scrutiny panel a high degree of certainty. Notably, the data revealed that residents familiar with the PCC's work were 18% more likely to support a precept increase, with support rising to 64% within that cohort.
- 2.5 The findings from this independent research indicate an upward trend in public satisfaction and perceived safety.
 - The mean safety rating for Sussex increased to 6.81.
 - Awareness of victim support services rose by 5%.
 - Crucially, overall satisfaction with Sussex Police saw a significant 8% year-on-year increase, now standing at 54%.
- 2.6 These metrics suggest that previous investments funded by the precept are delivering tangible improvements in public confidence and service delivery.
- 2.7 Regarding the specific proposal for the council tax precept, 54% of taxpayers surveyed expressed clear support for an increase. This level of support has remained consistent over the last three years (averaging between 53% and 57%), demonstrating a sustained public willingness to invest in local policing. Since 2018, Sussex residents have supported precept rises to rebuild neighbourhood policing and increase frontline officer numbers. In light of an inadequate Government grant settlement, this local investment is now deemed essential to protect these gains and help prevent a decline in service.
- 2.8 Further details on the consultation and engagement can be found in Appendix 2 – OPCC 2025 Precept Survey results and Appendix 3 - OPCC Engagement Summary 2025

3.0 Overall Financial Picture and National Context

- 3.1 The provisional police grant settlement for 2026/27 was announced by the Government last month [18 December 2025]. The settlement confirmed that total police grant funding is to be increased to £19.5 billion [which represents a 4.3% cash increase] and that resources worth £442.1 million will be made available to Sussex Police in 2026/27.
- 3.2 This comprises Home Office grant funding worth £253.1 million, which is equivalent to an extra £7.4 million [+3%] compared with 2025/26. The balance of £11.7 million is predicated on the PCC, in her capacity as Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, increasing the annual council tax bill for Band D properties

by £15 [the maximum amount permitted without triggering a referendum] from £266.91 to £281.91. This would represent a 5.6% increase in 2026/27.

- 3.3 If taken in full, the local precept would see the proportion of policing paid by taxpayers in Sussex reach 43%. Ten years ago, the proportion paid for through local taxation was 30%.
- 3.4 In this settlement, the Home Office has also 'rolled up' specific, ring-fenced grants into the core police funding formula, including the Police Uplift Programme, National Insurance and pay increase grant.
- 3.5 While the Government views this as a way to provide "simplicity and flexibility", the consolidation of specific grants into the core funding formula creates a significant "maths gap" for the police forces that recruited during the Police Uplift Programme. The core issue is that the money is no longer following the people; instead, it is following a 30-year-old mathematical model.
- 3.6 For example, Sussex Police successfully recruited 60 additional officers as part of Operation Uplift) in 2025/26, increasing the total officer headcount from a baseline of 3,166 to 3,226. This additional recruitment took up some of the deficit in recruitment that resulted because the Metropolitan Police could not recruit sufficient police officers.
- 3.7 By moving from a "funding per officer" model (which had sustained funding for our Operation Uplift to a 30-year-old formula method, the government has effectively wiped out a significant proportion of the funding for the additional 60 officers that were recruited, resulting in a 'Cliff Edge' .
- 3.8 In total the 2026/27 provisional police funding settlement is £5.3m less than expected for Sussex based on previous planning assumptions because of this change to funding.
- 3.9 Even with the addition of the maximum £15 precept increase, the Sussex Police budget is left with a £4m net deficit resulting from the settlement shortfall. When this is added to the existing £4.5m deficit (carried from previous pressures), our total deficit for the 2026/27 financial year increases to £8.5m.
- 3.10 To bridge this £8.5m gap, the PCC and force will prioritise further budget reductions to bridge the gap, targeting these savings as appropriate. These will be in addition to the Home Office Police Efficiencies and Collaboration Programme target to save £354m from policing over 4 years.
- 3.11 The Government has said that they will publish a Police Reform White Paper in early 2026 which will set out a vision to bring policing into the modern age with the technology, innovation and structures they need to ensure policing can focus on the crimes that matter to the public and to drive out waste and inefficiency.

4.0 Comparison with Peers

- 4.1 Sussex remains a low-cost force.
- 4.2 Sussex had the 7th lowest precept in England and Wales at £266.91 for 2025/26.
- 4.3 Sussex has the 16th lowest NRE per head nationally at £214.57.

5.0 Chief Constable's Requirement and Operational Complexity

- 5.1 The Chief Constable must manage increasingly complex demand. On average, each day in 2025, the force received 1,877 total contacts and 761 emergency 999 calls, created 1,463 incident logs, and recorded 379 new crimes.
- 5.2 The Link Between Officers and Performance: There is clear evidence that the investment in additional officers has driven performance. Despite a 30.3% increase in the volume of investigations since 2016, Sussex Police solved the highest number of crimes for ten years in 2025. This direct correlation proves that maintaining the officer headcount is essential for delivering justice to victims.
- 5.3 Shifting Demand and Complexity: Investigations are becoming significantly more time-consuming:
- Time at Scene: The average time an officer spends at an incident has risen by 36%, from 36 minutes in 2016 to 49 minutes in 2025.
 - Serious Crime: 2025 saw the highest volume of serious crime since 2016, particularly in serious sexual offences and drug trafficking.
 - Digital Evidence: The growth of digitally enabled offending (e.g. online stalking and indecent imagery) has created substantial workloads involving complex virtual activity and specialist forensic skills.
 - Legal Standards: Higher standards required by the CPS for charging decisions mean significantly more work is required for every individual case file.
- 5.4 Investment has also enabled:
- 999 Performance: Sussex is consistently one of the top-performing forces for answering 999 calls within 10 seconds.
 - 101 Performance: Average wait times are at an historical low of 27 seconds (Dec 2025), down from 13 minutes in 2018 (yearly average).
 - Emergency Response: The force attends an average of 223 emergency (Category A) incidents per day.
- 5.5 The infographic attached at Appendix 4 shows the Sussex Police average incidents and crimes per day in 2025.

6.0 Precept Proposal

- 6.1 The government expectation is that local taxpayers contribute more to local policing.
- 6.2 The PCC has considered the financial and other implications of precept funding levels, use of reserves, inflation and other cost pressures against several budget scenarios as part of the financial planning process.
- 6.3 The Government has provided PCCs with the flexibility to increase the Band D precept by up to £15 for 2026/27 which will raise an additional £11.7m. But this still leaves a deficit of £8.5m to bridge for 2026/27.

- 6.4 The PCC has scrutinised the Chief Constable's budget and listened carefully to what the residents of Sussex have been telling her. The PCC and the public, as we know from our survey and consultation results, want to maintain the investment that has been made to date in police officers, staff, PCSOs and systems and capabilities. There is no appetite to go backwards.
- 6.5 Having scrutinised the Chief Constable's requirement and noted the 54% public support, the PCC proposes to increase the Band D precept by £15.
- 6.6 This takes the Band D precept from £266.91 to £281.91 per annum.
- 6.7 For 75% of Sussex households (Bands A-D), the increase is £1.25 per month or less, per household.
- 6.8 A Band D property will pay an additional 29p per week.

7.0 Governance Transition and Sustainability

- 7.1 The role of the Sussex PCC is planned to transition to a directly-elected Mayor for the Mayoral Combined County Authority in May 2028.
- 7.2 Maximising the precept now is strategically imperative to ensure long-term financial resilience and to deliver a stable organisation to the new governance structure.

Mark Streater
Chief Executive, Office of the PCC

Jo Shiner
Chief Constable,
Sussex Police

Iain McCulloch
Chief Finance Officer, Office of the PCC

Peter Appleton
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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/30 (Marked DRAFT – POLICE AND CRIME PANEL PRECEPT SCRUTINY MEETING) and 1[E] Capital Strategy 2026-30
- Appendix 2 – OPCC 2025 Precept Survey results
- Appendix 3 - OPCC Engagement Summary 2025
- Appendix 4 – A Day in the Life of Sussex Police 2025 – Infographic

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DRAFT – POLICE AND CRIME PANEL PRECEPT SCRUTINY MEETING 30.01.2026



Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner



Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-2030

VERSION – 1.0 DRAFT – POLICE
AND CRIME PANEL PRECEPT
SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE of this Document – 16.01.2026

STATUS – DRAFT – This version is for the exclusive use of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel for their scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioners precept proposal at the meeting for 30 January 2026.

Figures are subject to change as they are based on the Home Office **Provisional** Finance Settlement 2026/27 as published in December 2025 and do not include any subsequent changes or any other specific grants from the Home Office that may be included in the **FINAL** Police Finance Settlement 2026/27 due February 2026.

NOTE – Items highlighted in **YELLOW** are currently outstanding and will be updated for the final version that will be approved alongside the precept for 2026/27 in February 2026 by the PCC.

ACCESSIBILITY

The document has been created using Microsoft Word, has been reviewed using the accessibility function and saved as PDF.

DRAFT – POLICE AND CRIME PANEL PRECEPT SCRUTINY MEETING 30.01.2026**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/2027 to 2029/2030****Report by Iain McCulloch, Chief Finance Officer to the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner****Section: Contents**

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1 Foreword from the Police & Crime Commissioner

1.1 I am one of 37 elected Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs) across England and Wales. I was re-elected to serve a fourth term as Sussex PCC in May 2024 to continue to articulate the public's policing priorities and concerns, ensuring that the Chief Constable provides effective and efficient policing across the county.

1.2 Having served as Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner since 2012, I have the experience and proven track record to continue making a difference to policing our county. As your PCC, I have robustly held the police to account on behalf of residents, successfully supported victims of crime and invested heavily in frontline policing.



1.3 As well as holding the Chief Constable and the force to account for local policing issues, one of my key duties is to ensure Sussex Police meets its national strategic policing requirements, including a co-ordinated response to serious and organised crime and terrorism.

1.4 I have a statutory duty to publish a Police & Crime Plan which sets out the strategic direction for policing our county with objectives for how policing will be delivered in Sussex up to May 2028. This plan drives the Chief Constable's Operational Delivery Plan.

1.5 I also work with community safety and criminal justice partners to make sure there is a coherent approach to preventing and reducing crime.

1.6 I am authorised to set the force budget; to allocate discretionary grant funding; to commission services for victims, and to determine the precept - the police element of council tax.

1.7 This Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is one of my key planning tools which help to identify available resources and options for delivering the public's Police and Crime Plan priorities and the force's Strategic Policing requirements.

1.8 The MTFS is part of my robust scheme of financial management and scrutiny, which I review along with the annual budgets on a regular basis during the year to be assured that public money is being appropriately allocated.

1.9 As a publicly available and 'living' document, the MTFS also provides contextual information and the rationale behind our running costs and capital investment, along with any decisions on the level of the precept.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner
DD February 2026

2 The Financial Plan: Chief Finance Officer Narrative Statement

- 2.1 I am responsible for preparing this financial strategy which I construct with the assistance of the Chief Constable's Chief Financial Officer, other staff and officers for presentation to the PCC for approval.
- 2.2 While the statutory policing budget setting and precept process continues to be on an annual basis, a longer-term perspective is essential to demonstrate financial resilience and sustainability. Short-termism runs counter to both sound financial management and sound governance. The time horizon of our financial planning should also not be determined by the time horizon of financial support from central government.
- 2.3 The MTFS is one of the key planning tools of the PCC. The PCC has a statutory duty to set the force budget and must provide the Chief Constable with resources to deliver the priorities in the Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 and meet Strategic Policing requirements within challenging financial boundaries.
- 2.4 Given the greater uncertainty about future central government policy (such as the structure of police forces, police governance, grants and settlements), the MTFS is crucial to demonstrate the PCC entity's long-term financial resilience. The MTFS provides options for delivering a sustainable revenue budget and capital investment.
- 2.5 The MTFS is a publicly available and 'living' document that provides the context and rationale behind running costs, capital investment, and decisions on the level of the precept. It is part of the PCC's robust scheme of financial management and scrutiny.

National Settlement - Structural Funding Deficiencies

- 2.6 The provisional police grant settlement for 2026/27 was announced by the Government last month [18 December 2025]. The settlement confirmed that total police grant funding is to be increased to £19.5 billion [which represents a 4.3% cash increase] and that total resources worth £442.1 million will be made available to Sussex Police in 2026/27.
- 2.7 This comprises Home Office grant funding worth £253.1 million, which is equivalent to an extra £7.4 million [+3%] compared with 2025/26. The balance of £11.7 million is predicated on me, in my capacity as Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, increasing the annual council tax bill for Band D properties by £15 [the maximum amount permitted without triggering a referendum] from £266.91 to £281.91. This would represent a 5.6% increase in 2026/27.
- 2.8 If taken in full, the local precept would see the proportion of policing paid by taxpayers in Sussex reach 43%. Ten years ago, the proportion paid for through taxation was 30%.
- 2.9 In this settlement, the Home Office has also 'rolled up' specific, ring-fenced grants into the core police funding formula, including the Police Uplift Programme, National Insurance, pension and pay increase grant.

- 2.10 While the Government views this as a way to provide "simplicity and flexibility", the consolidation of specific grants into the core funding formula creates a significant "maths gap" for the police forces that recruited during the Police Uplift Programme. The core issue is that the money is no longer following the people; instead, it is following a 30-year-old mathematical model.

The Shifting Funding Mix (National Trend)

- 2.11 The following table illustrates the long-term erosion of central support that informs our local strategy:

Funding Source	2010/11	2025/26	% Change
Central Grant	£9.4bn	£11.5bn	+22%
Local Precept	£3.2bn	£6.0bn	+88%
Total	£12.6bn	£17.5bn	+39%

Implications for Sussex

- 2.12 The previous MTFS was defined by a period of significant volatility, primarily driven by high inflationary pressures on workforce costs and an increasing reliance on local taxation to bridge central funding gaps.
- 2.13 As a personnel-heavy organisation (80% of total expenditure), the Group's financial resilience was tested by successive above-budget pay awards. Between 2022 and 2025, pay increases rose from approximately 4% to a peak of 7%. While the Home Office provided supplementary grants in response—such as the £7.1m allocation in 2023—these consistently fell short of the actual costs for both officers and staff. This trend was further exacerbated in 2025/26 by changes to Employer National Insurance Contributions; despite a £5.5m compensatory grant, the Group was left with a £700k unfunded deficit due to the exclusion of overtime and associated pay costs from the grant calculation.
- 2.14 A recurring theme of the previous period was the misalignment between the Home Office funding formula and the actual cost profile of the force. The grant allocation failed to account for the natural inflation of the pay bill, such as incremental pay progression. This forced a strategic shift, placing the burden of maintaining "going concern" status increasingly upon local council tax resources.
- 2.15 The landscape for the current MTFS has been fundamentally altered by the government's decision to "roll up" several previously specific, ring-fenced grants into the Core Grant for the 2026/27 financial year.
- 2.16 While the consolidation was presented as a move toward administrative simplicity, the provisional settlement reveals a net loss in grant value in real terms. The specific grants that previously funded Op Uplift Officers and helped mitigate the shortfalls in pay awards and NIC changes have been absorbed.
- 2.17 **Increased Local Risk:** By rolling these into the core grant at a lower aggregate level than the previous individual streams, the government has effectively

institutionalised the funding "mismatches" seen in the previous MTFS.

- 2.18 This revised strategy for 2026–2030 now starts the 2026/27 financial year with an £8.5m deficit to which the latest settlement has added a further £4.0m even with a £15 precept increase assumed. We must, therefore, address a starting position of reduced central support, necessitating a more rigorous approach to efficiency, operational capacity and a reassessment of long-term financial resilience.

The Costs of Capital

- 2.19 We also manage the costs of borrowing money for long-term investments, such as buildings or equipment. Interest rates have been fluctuating. While higher rates mean we earn more interest on our savings, they also make new borrowing more expensive.
- 2.20 UK government bond prices (Gilt's) rather than the Bank of England Base Rate play a crucial role in determining the cost of borrowing for local authorities through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). PWLB interest rates are determined by adding a margin to the yield on gilts. Fluctuations in gilt yields directly translate into changes in PWLB interest rates, impacting the cost to the PCC to borrow. The UK's long-term borrowing costs increased to the highest level in more than a quarter of a century on 07 January 2025 after the first of a string of government bond sales due over the coming weeks. The 25 year PWLB interest rate was 6.15 percent on 14 January 2025. The Government plans for near record debt sales could increase the cost of these gilts even further if the market appetite for bonds reduces.
- 2.21 The need to borrow is increasing as our revenue capacity to fund these items outright reduced. Legislation requires that money is set aside to meet the costs of debt even if internal balances are used to fund them in the short term. So, the capital plans are important and a key element of this strategy. Further detail on capital can be found later in this Strategy. In addition, risk is addressed throughout with the detail included in Appendix B.

Local Government Reform and Devolution

- 2.22 Plans for the devolution of power in Sussex accelerated following the government's English Devolution White Paper (December 2024) and the subsequent English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (2025). Under these plans, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council are set to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). The authority will take on powers from central government regarding strategic transport, housing, adult education budgets, and economic development, allowing for regional decision-making across the entire 1.7 million population of the county. In addition, Local Government Reform will see the existing two-tier local government administrative system vest into new Unitary Authorities from 1 April 2028.
- 2.23 The transition to a mayoral model will also fundamentally reshape policing governance in Sussex. Consistent with the government's goal to streamline local leadership, the role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is planned to be abolished, with its functions transferred directly to the new Mayor.

- 2.24 The Government announced on Wednesday 5 February 2025 the following areas agreed to join the programme to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities with a directly elected mayor:
- Cumbria
 - Cheshire & Warrington
 - Norfolk & Suffolk
 - Greater Essex
 - Sussex & Brighton
 - Hampshire & Solent
- 2.25 These six successful areas then embarked on work to create a devolution timetable, with full government backing, consultations and establishment of new mayoral entities.

Key Developments and the Revised Timeline for Sussex

- 2.26 However, following government's announcement in December 2025, the timeline for establishing the new governance model in Sussex was revised to prioritise the completion of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) before the new strategic authority takes office. The process for existing councils to develop plans for the new Unitary Authorities is actively underway. The planned 'vesting day' for the transfer of services, staff, and assets to these new Unitary Authorities remains 1 April 2028.
- 2.27 The formation of the new Mayoral Combined County Authority is proceeding, but its inaugural functions will be delayed. The first mayoral election is now scheduled for May 2028, postponed from the original date of May 2026. This allows the new Unitary Authorities to be fully operational before a Mayor takes office.

The Transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner Functions

- 2.28 The transfer of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions to the new Sussex Mayor will now be aligned with the revised election date. This handover is anticipated to take place in May 2028 (subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent and associated legislation being approved), on the Mayor's inauguration.
- 2.29 This revised timeline provides the PCC and her office with an extended period—now until May 2028—to focus on long-term planning to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities reducing disruption to the vital functions of Sussex Police. While the fundamental goals of the PCC role will remain in place for the next two and a half years, our preparation will now be focused on enabling a new governance structure where a single, directly-elected mayor is responsible for both the strategic direction of the combined authority and the operational oversight of Sussex Police.

Finally

- 2.30 After taking account of the known and anticipated issues, the revenue and capital estimates contained in this MTFS are considered robust and that the level of reserves is considered adequate to cover the financial risks faced by

the PCC for 2026/27. However, this is with the caveat that it is of the utmost importance that management works to find sustainable savings.

- 2.31 Senior leaders are prioritising leadership time to ensure that plans are realistic, the savings are delivered and the budget balanced. If during the year and the MTFS period it looks as though savings targets will be missed, both the PCC's Chief Finance Officer and Chief Constable's Chief Finance Officer will need to consider mitigating actions as set out required by their statutory responsibilities and duties.

3 Purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 3.1 This is the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC). It covers the planning period of four financial years from 2026/27 to 2029/30 plus the anticipated outturn position for the current year (2025/26).
- 3.2 The MTFS provides options for delivering a sustainable revenue budget and capital investment over the medium term. It also sets out how the PCC can provide the Chief Constable with the resources to deliver the priorities in the new Police & Crime Plan 2024/28, support the mission, vision and values of Sussex Police and meet the requirements of the Strategic Policing Requirement within challenging financial boundaries.
- 3.3 The MTFS sets the financial context for the PCC's revenue budget and capital programme and precept decisions.

4 Benefits of the Strategy

- 4.1 While the statutory local authority budget setting process continues to be on an annual basis, a longer-term perspective is essential to demonstrate financial resilience and sustainability. It is therefore essential that the PCC has resilient finances and a sustainable financial plan. The financial statements and MTFS are prepared on the assumption that the legal entity of the PCC and the Chief Constable are both **going concerns**, meaning they will continue in operation for the foreseeable future and will be able to realise assets and discharge liabilities in the normal course of operations.
- 4.2 In July 2024 the incoming Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a multi-year spending review to conclude in spring 2025 (SR2025). She also announced changes to the Charter for Budget Responsibility to require spending reviews to be held every two calendar years, covering a spending period of at least three years, saying that this would ensure there will always be up to date medium-term departmental spending plans. The Chancellor indicated that the decision-making in SR2025 would reflect the government's 'mission-led' approach. She further announced that the government would establish a new Office for Value for Money (OVfM) to help it "put value for money at the heart of decision-making" and to recommend system reforms.
- 4.3 The government has issued a financial settlement for just the 2026/27 financial year.
- 4.4 The greater the uncertainty about future central government policy then the greater the need to demonstrate long-term financial resilience of the PCC entity, given the risks attached to its core funding. We therefore must ensure that while the formal publication of the MTFS may only reflect known government settlements, it is the responsibility of the PCC, Chief Constable and senior management and the Chief Finance Officers to have a long-term financial view acknowledging financial pressures. This assists in:
- Supporting delivery of the Police & Crime Plan 2024/28.
 - Improving financial planning and the financial management of the PCC's resources, both revenue and capital.

- Maximising use of resources available to the PCC and Chief Constable, both internal and external.
- Ensuring that the PCC and Chief Constable demonstrate value for money and continue to drive further productivity and efficiency gains.
- Allowing strategy to be set out in financial terms.
- Reviewing the PCC's policy on the use of reserves, ensuring that the position continues to be sustainable with sufficient resources over the medium term.
- Responding to external pressures, including unexpected and expensive operational costs and the ongoing costs, impacts of inflation and interest rate increases.
- Developing a sustainable budget and financial resilience over the medium term.
- Responding to system reform, as set out below.

5 Principles of the Strategy

5.1 The key principles underlying the PCC's MTFS 2026/27 to 2029/30 are:

- Overall expenditure will be contained within approved estimates each year.
- The PCC will seek to maintain a General Reserve of a minimum of 4% of Net Revenue Expenditure of which 1% is for operational requirements and 3% to cover any major unforeseen expenditure or loss of funding. The PCC will review the cost of maintaining reserves at this level against the benefits of alternative approaches on a regular basis and a flexible approach will be adopted appropriate to circumstances.
- The PCC will maintain earmarked reserves for specific purposes when appropriate, consistent with achieving objectives.
- The PCC will continue to prioritise the achievement of value for money and efficiency in establishing the framework for policing within Sussex and in commissioning and procurement decisions.
- The Chief Finance Officers, and Chief Constable will prepare a rolling programme of four-year budget forecasts to inform the PCC's budget and precept decisions.
- The PCC, supported by the respective Chief Finance Officers, and the Chief Constable, will continue to contribute to national reviews of police funding and make representations on a national basis for the fair and equitable funding of Sussex Police.
- The MTFS includes the resources required by other key strategies including the Estates Strategy, Joint Transport Strategy and the IT Strategy. Those strategies also set out carbon reduction investment plans, targets and cost savings if applicable.

6 Review of the Strategy – Summary

6.1 This 2026/27 to 2029/30 version of the MTFS has been revised to include:

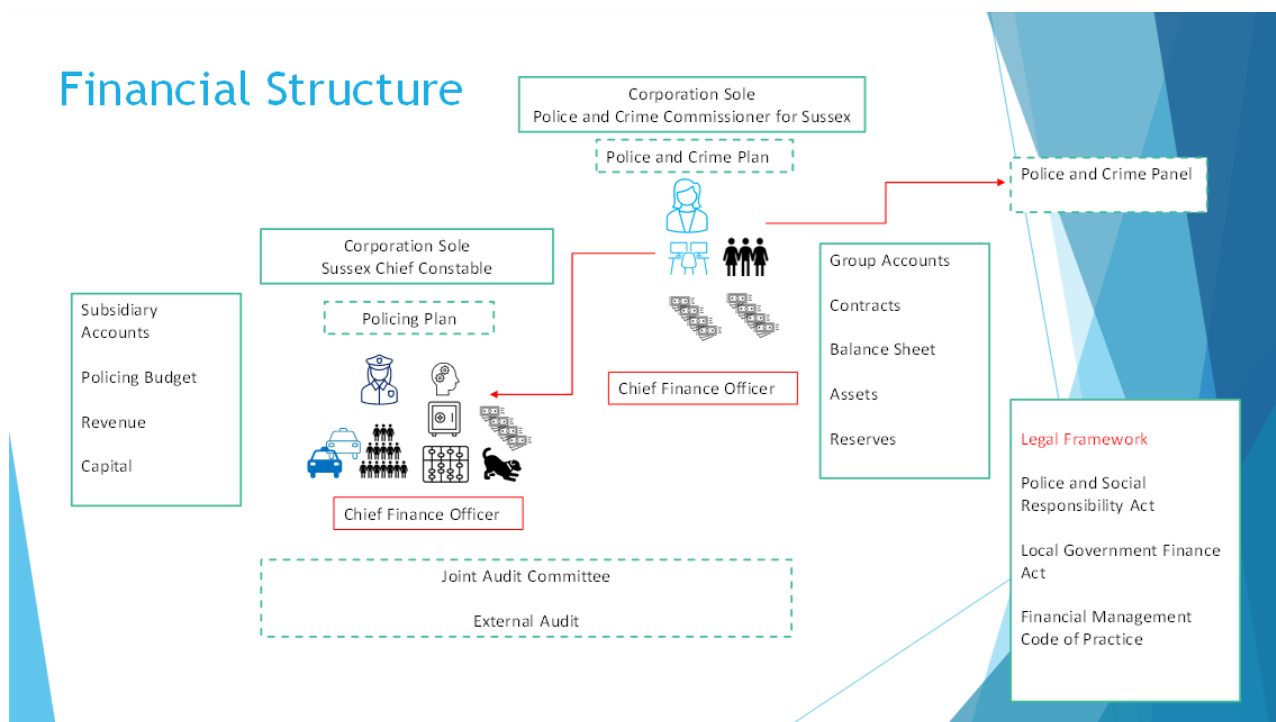
- The addition of a financial year 2029/30.
- The Home Office policing grant settlement for 2026/27.
- The inclusion of a precept increase of £15 for 2026/27 and assumptions of increases in future years.
- Revised revenue and capital budgets including appropriate planning assumptions.
- The inclusion of all savings achieved to date within base budgets and planned forecast savings.
- An updated section on the precept and tax base.
- An updated section on reserves and reserve totals.
- An updated section on financial risks.
- Information and explanation of the assurance framework and sources of third-party validation; and
- Information on the precept consultation and public engagement.

7 Police & Crime Plan 2024/28

- 7.1 The PCC has a statutory duty to set the police and crime objectives for their area through a Police & Crime Plan. The prescribed content of the Plan is set out in Chapter 3 – Section 7(1) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA).
- 7.2 In developing the Police & Crime Plan, the PCC is required to consider the views of the local community and victims of crime. The public priorities were developed following extensive consultation with members of the public and local councils in Sussex to ensure that the Plan reflects accurately the policing, crime and community safety issues that are most important to them.
- 7.3 The PCC will ensure that these issues, ideas and concerns are addressed within the following three priorities:
- Police and Crime Plan Priority 1 – PROTECT: Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses.
 - Police and Crime Plan Priority 2 – CATCH: Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice.
 - Police and Crime Plan Priority 3 – DELIVER: Improve trust in policing and build public confidence.
- 7.4 The Chief Constable works with the PCC to deliver the public's priorities and has set out Sussex Police's three overarching commitments to underpin that work as follows:
- **Protect** our communities.
 - **Catch** criminals.
 - **Deliver** an outstanding service to victims, witnesses and the public.
- 7.5 The Chief Constable has published the Sussex Police policing delivery plan.

8 Managing Resources and Gaining Assurance

- 8.1 The MTFS sets out how revenue, capital and reserves will be spent over the period of the four years from 2026/27 to 2029/30 (reserves figure based on forecast outturn for 2024/25). This section describes how the business is operated and controlled to ensure it remains a going concern.
- 8.2 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 created two separate legal entities, known as corporations sole, The Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex and The Chief Constable of Sussex.
- 8.3 The PCC is responsible for:
 - The finances of the whole Group.
 - Receiving all income and funding.
 - Making all payments for the Group from the overall Police Fund; and
 - Control of all assets, liabilities and reserves.
- 8.4 The Chief Constable of Sussex fulfils functions under the Act within an annual budget set by the Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex in consultation with the Chief Constable.
- 8.5 The following image provides a pictorial representation of the structure.



- 8.6 A [scheme of delegation](#) is in operation between the two bodies determining their respective responsibilities, as well as local arrangements in respect of the use of the PCC's assets and staff.
- 8.7 There are several legislative requirements that require the PCC to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and secure value for money. The Home Office Financial Management Code of

Practice provides details of the financial governance arrangements within policing bodies in England and Wales. [A copy of the July 2018 revised Code can be found here on the.GOV.UK website.](#)

- 8.8 The PCC and Chief Constable have put in place policies, processes, systems and people to meet the requirements, support decisions and ensure money is spent in accordance with legislation. The PCC website sets out the detail above on the [transparency page](#) with key policies included under the [How We Work page](#).
- 8.9 The PCC and the Chief Constable have established a [Joint Audit Committee](#) (JAC), which is a key component of the corporate governance arrangements for both corporations sole. The members of JAC provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards and support the PCC and CC and the other statutory officers in ensuring that effective governance is in place. This is achieved by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting statutory officers' needs and reviewing their reliability and integrity.
- 8.10 The Joint Audit Committee (JAC) provides independent assurance to the PCC and CC and helps to ensure that efficient, effective and adequate assurance arrangements are in place for:
- The risk management framework.
 - The internal control environment.
 - Financial reporting.
 - Annual governance processes; and
 - Internal audit and external audit.
- 8.11 The JAC terms of reference, agendas and minutes can be found on the PCC website here: [Joint Audit Committee](#).
- 8.12 The Statements of Accounts for the [PCC Group](#) and [Chief Constable](#) show how public money has been used and demonstrate its financial management and financial health.
- 8.13 Audit plays a vital role in underpinning trust, transparency and confidence in local government bodies. The external auditor Ernst & Young provide external independent opinion on the financial statements, consistency of other information published with the financial statements and concluding on the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness otherwise known as value for money in their [Annual Audit Letters](#). They also issue an opinion on the [Annual Governance Statements \(AGS\)](#) for both corporations sole.
- 8.14 The Statements of Accounts and Annual Governance Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 were published in draft on 31 May 2025 and can be found on the website at this [link](#). The external auditor advised that due to audit backlogs elsewhere in the public service that they were unable to complete the audit of the PCC Group Statement of Accounts and of the Chief Constable and the Annual Governance Statements by the statutory deadline of 30 September 2024. They are now expected to be approved in February

2026.

- 8.15 The challenges facing the existing framework for local authority audit are well-documented and have been highlighted by auditors, the Redmond Review, the National Audit Office, the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA), the Local Government Association and Parliament. The Government's proposals to reset the system of local authority audit so that auditors able to focus on providing assurance on public bodies' most recent financial statements was entered into legislation in Autumn 2024. The reset is now as follows:
- 8.16 It set a backstop date of 13 December 2024 for financial years (FYs) up to and including 2022/23 and five subsequent backstop dates:

Financial Year	Backstop date
2023/24	28 February 2025
2024/25	27 February 2026
2025/26	31 January 2027
2026/27	30 November 2027
2027/28	30 November 2028

- 8.17 The audited accounts and AGS for 2024/25 were presented to the Joint Audit Committee and recommended for signature on 11 November 2025 and approved for signature. The 2024/25 accounts and AGS are due to be approved by the external auditor by 27 February 2026.

Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy

- 8.18 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire and Rescue (HMICFRS) complete a range of inspections as part of their PEEL assessment (Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy). HMICFRS also publish their annual [Value for Money](#) profiles. They provide a useful tool for comparing a wide range of financial and other information and they help to inform and shape this MTFS.
- 8.19 They provide:
- Comparative data on a wide range of policing activities.
 - Comparison of Sussex performance, and the costs of achieving it, with that of other forces.
 - Highlight what differences exist between individual police force areas, rather than the reasons why they exist; and
 - Aim to help individuals ask the right questions.
- 8.20 The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) provide a further layer of external scrutiny and assurance through their [statutory role](#). The [Sussex PCP](#) provides checks and balances in relation to the performance of the PCC. Its role is to scrutinise the performance of the PCC and ensure transparency.

Force Management Statements

- 8.21 HMICFRS introduced Force Management Statements (FMSs) in 2018/19. They are instruments of self-assessment by forces, covering for each of the following four years the Chief Constable's evaluation and projection of:
- The demand which the force is likely to face.
 - The condition, capacity, capability, serviceability, performance and security of supply of the force's workforce and other assets (such as ICT).
 - The force's plans to improve the efficiency with which the workforce and force assets are used; and
 - The force's financial income.
- 8.22 HMICFRS state that FMSs will simplify, strengthen and streamline the information which forces are asked to provide. They enable HMICFRS to make decisions about where a force's principal risk areas lie, and so design their inspection fieldwork and analysis to focus on them.
- 8.23 FMSs provide local policing bodies – PCCs and their metropolitan equivalents – with information of great value, enabling them to assess the force for which they are responsible and the extent to which the objectives of their police and crime plans will be successfully attained, and at what cost.

9 Sussex Police – Managing Complex Demand: Protect, Catch, Deliver

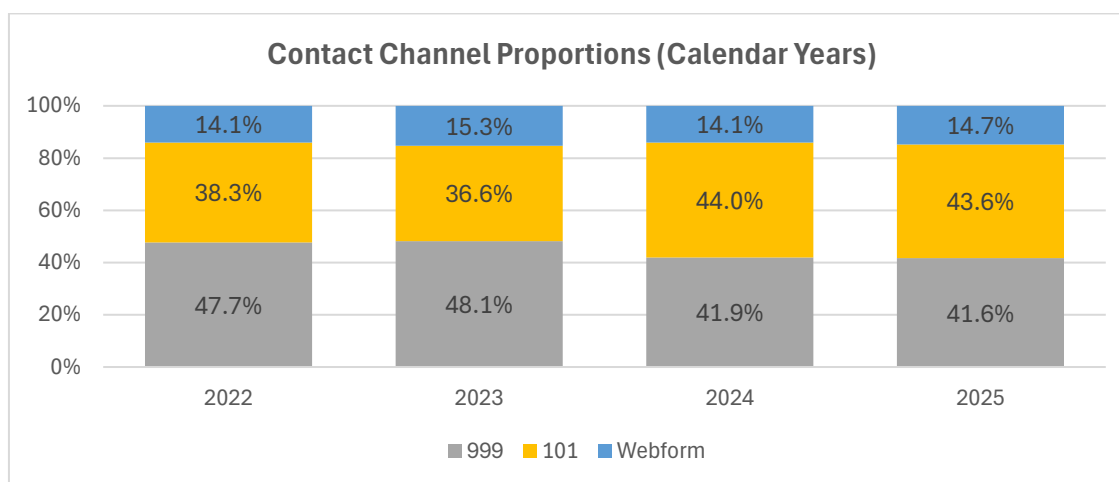
9.1 A Changing Landscape for Policing in Sussex

9.1.1 The successful delivery of policing requires the Chief Constable to manage a complex set of resources, demands and priorities whilst reviewing and revising plans to meet changing needs. Policing is always evolving as it responds to the social, legal, political and economic landscape in which it operates. Although these changes provide challenges and opportunities, the focus for Sussex Police remains constant in protecting the public, catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service.

9.2 Context and Demand

9.2.1 Every day, Sussex Police manages new incoming demand across the organisation alongside active incidents and investigations. On average, each day in 2025, the force has received 1,877 total contacts, including 761 emergency 999 calls. 1,463 incident logs were created each day, with 303 relating to a crime report, 133 relating to a medical incident or concern and 40 reporting a missing person. The force also responds to 26 road traffic collisions on a daily basis. Through investigations and proactive work, the force uncovers additional crimes, so it records 379 new crimes daily. Alongside this 439 risk assessments are completed each day, reflecting the vulnerability of those the force responds to and the safeguarding considerations that have to be made.

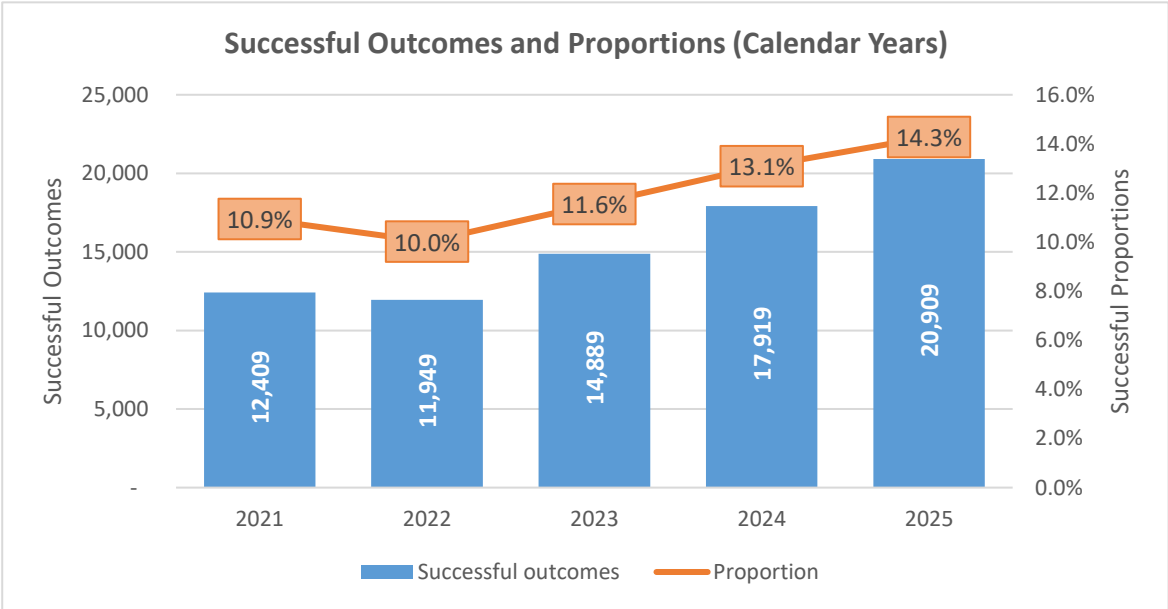
9.2.2 Over the last four years, Sussex Police's public contact demand profile has changed to reflect the changes the organisation has made to improve services and increase efficiency. Increasingly the public are choosing to contact the force through online channels, and performance has improved for those calling the non-emergency 101 line.



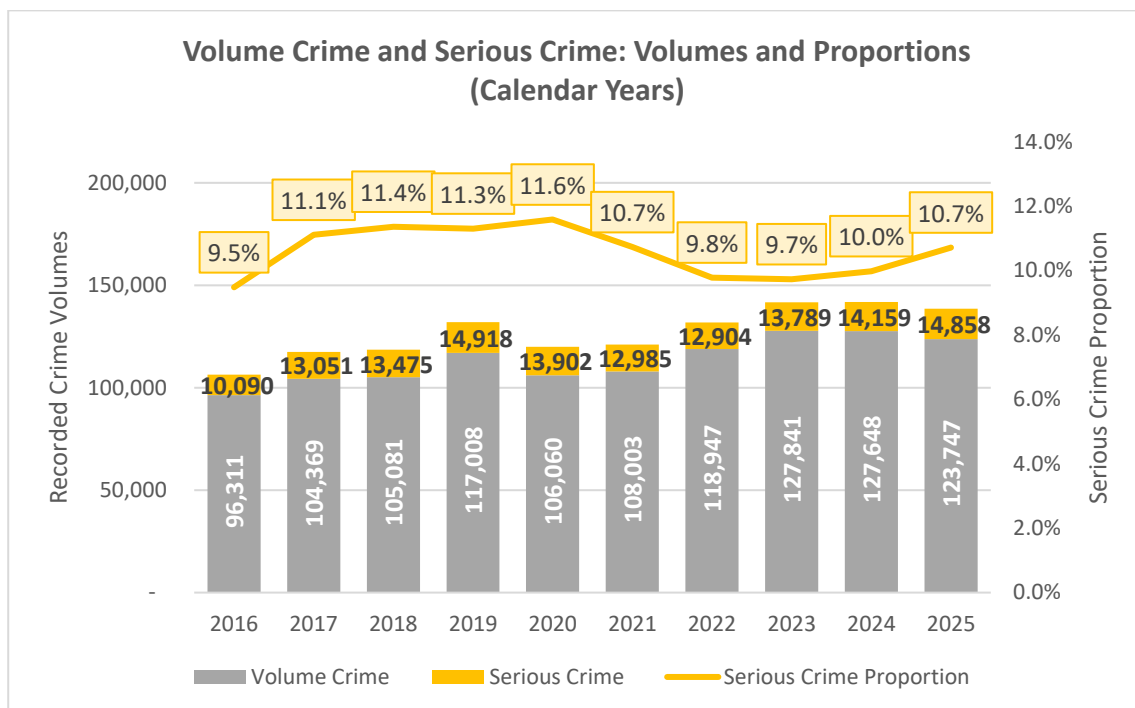
9.2.3 This is seen clearly in the force's call-handling statistics, where the benefits of the investment in new contact management technology and contact officer training continue to be realised. Sussex now consistently ranks amongst the top forces for the percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds (the national metric for 999 performance). In 101 call-handling, the abandonment rate has fallen steadily month on month since June 2025 and is currently at

a historical low of 1.2% (Dec 2025). The average waiting time for 101 callers in the same month was 27 seconds; in 2018, it was almost 13 minutes.

- 9.2.4 Public safety/welfare incidents make up the largest proportion of total incidents that the force attends. There has been a notable rise in mental health related emergency incidents over recent years, which are becoming increasingly complex and time consuming for officers. Efforts with partners continue to ensure the public receive help and support from the most appropriate service in these instances. Under the national Right Care Right Person initiative, Sussex Police has reduced officer attendance by 11,000 hours at calls which would be better responded to by a partner agency.
- 9.2.5 Sussex Police has recorded circa 140,000 new crimes each year since 2023. Despite this continued high pace of crime recording, the force has solved more crimes year on year since 2020 as a direct result of investment through precept, uplift and the changes that the force has made to improve its processes. In the 12 months to end December 2025, Sussex Police solved more crimes than in the 12 months to end December 2016, despite investigating nearly a third (30.3%) more.

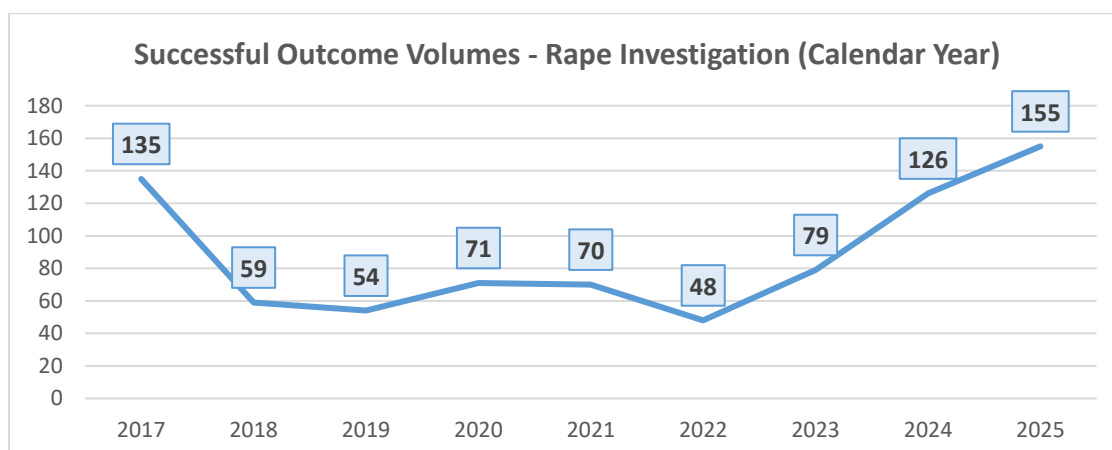


- 9.2.6 In 2025, Sussex Police recorded the highest volume of serious crime since 2016. This increase was driven by growth in recorded serious sexual offences, as well as a growth in recorded drug trafficking offences which have been uncovered through the force’s proactive approach to uncovering and disrupting drug crime.



9.2.7 Sexual offences continue to rise year on year, driven in part by the growth of digitally enabled offending such as circulation of self-generated indecent imagery. This is a nationally growing issue, and demand in this area is anticipated to rise with the increased use of smartphones and time online.

9.2.8 The number of reported rape offences has remained consistently high with the force recording on average six per day. The force has built on the Op Soteria national operating model by conducting its own review of the Public Protection department. As a result, the team structures for investigating rape have been redesigned, increasing capacity and strengthening the force's investigative model. Charged outcomes for rape offences have significantly increased:



9.2.9 In addition to the force's growing investigative demand, Sussex Police continues to service both unplanned protests and pre-planned events. The force manages planned demand well by ensuring event organisers make an appropriate contribution to the resourcing of these occasions. However, large

scale events such as Lewes Bonfire, and Premier League football matches are resource intensive and must be balanced against daily demand.

- 9.2.10 Unplanned demand is a growing risk for the force, highlighted by the mutual aid requirement to support other forces during the rioting in response to the attacks in Southport in the summer of 2024. The number of days donated to other forces for mutual aid had been steadily increasing since COVID, and it is anticipated that donated specialist officer days in 2026 will reach the highest level in eight years, equating to over 20,000 officer hours. These officers are extracted from their regular jobs which can affect the force's ability to meet its day-to-day demand, and impacts on the welfare of those staff. As a consequence, in 2026 the force is increasing its investment into specialist public order training and equipment for officers.

9.3 **Future demand landscape**

- 9.3.1 Against an increasingly challenging economic backdrop, Sussex Police is likely to continue to see growth in crime reporting. Data-driven demand modelling and analysis of recent trends show a shift towards increased complexity and adapting criminal behaviours. Incidents that they are attending are becoming more complex and taking more time. In 2016 the average time an officer spent at an incident was 36 mins. In 2025 the average time at scene was 49 minutes, an increase of 36%.
- 9.3.2 The standards required by CPS for a charging decision have become higher which means more work is involved for each individual case. Building evidence is also taking longer and involves more specialist skills because offending often has an element of virtual/online activity (for instance stalking cases routinely involve criminal activity on social media platforms). This shift is creating substantial workloads for officers related to evidential material, disclosure and file build complexity. Backlogs in the courts are also making it harder to keep victims and witnesses engaged in the criminal justice process.
- 9.3.3 Organised Immigration Crime is an area of concern nationally with law enforcement working more closely than ever with partners to tackle the enablers. This is a risk that the force anticipates increasing as the number of small boats and illegal landings has risen, creating more opportunities for criminal exploitation. Additionally, policing is seeing increased community tension related to immigration.
- 9.3.4 The internet, social media and online services will continue to give rise to new opportunities for criminals which are likely to result in increased reports of fraud, data theft, grooming, and child sexual exploitation. The prevalence of digital platforms in all crime types has grown and in turn that increases the complexity of crime investigation and the workloads for individual investigators. To respond to these challenges Sussex Police must ensure that it has the most effective and efficient model for policing, with the right resources in the right place at the right time.
- 9.3.5 Sussex Police continues to develop sound partnership arrangements with intelligence, detection and enforcement capabilities to deliver against its priorities. It is continuously forging closer relationships with local, regional and national agencies and organisations to share information, and to ensure

specialist resources are brought together to tackle complex emerging threats.

- 9.3.6 Specifically, there is an increased awareness of the importance of sharing information with partner agencies to best protect and safeguard children and vulnerable people. The force is working more closely with local authorities, other agencies and its partner force Surrey Police to share child protection information as safely and efficiently as possible. To support this, Sussex Police has invested in improved data analytics and data science capabilities to enhance its use of information to better safeguard and protect the public.

9.4 **Capability and resourcing – smarter policing**

- 9.4.1 The force achieved its aim under the government's Uplift programme of increasing officer numbers by 429 and having 3,205 (headcount) on 31st March 2023. Subsequently through Additional Uplift, Sussex agreed to increase by 60 officers over 2 years, the maintenance headcount becoming at least 3,226 police officers.

- 9.4.2 The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner has raised the precept in multiple successive years, enabling the force to grow its establishment to meet demand, and deliver a programme of significant service improvements. This has included new contact centre technology, restructuring how we respond to calls, building specialist investigative capabilities, introducing a new model for complex sexual offence investigations and uplifting neighbourhoods policing teams.

9.5 **Use of Investment**

- 9.5.1 The force's activity has been focused on sustaining and improving its operating model to capitalise on the investment. This activity has been targeted at delivering the Police & Crime Plan Priorities:

- **Public Priority 1: Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses**
- **Public Priority 2: Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice**
- **Public Priority 3: Improve trust in policing and build public confidence**

- 9.5.2 The cumulative effect of the force's improvement activity is most clearly seen in the delivery of significantly more criminal justice outcomes for the crimes taking place in Sussex. This year, the force has solved the highest number of crimes for ten years:



9.5.3 These outcomes have been enabled through improvements at every stage of the victim journey. From faster call-handling times to more streamlined and prompt follow-up response options, more robust secondary investigation, technical improvements in investigative processes and the interaction between the force and the criminal justice system.

9.6 Financial planning

9.6.1 In the years ahead, Sussex Police faces a significant challenge. Investigative workloads are continuing to grow, and the processes involved in dealing with crime are becoming more complex. Like other organisations, Sussex Police has been affected by growth in inflation which has impacted both pay and non-pay costs for the force and will continue to do so. This means that, despite substantial savings already made, Sussex Police will need to generate further efficiencies to balance its budget.

9.6.2 The force also needs sufficient money to maintain the resources and protect what has been built up over the past four years against the real pressures of rising prices, tough performance measures and limited grant and precept.

9.6.3 The increased precept in 2026/27 will, therefore, be critical for Sussex Police to maintain the progress that has been achieved to date, sustaining the operational capacity that has been built, enabling the force to make the most of its data and technology to deliver better value for money for the public. It will enable continued modernisation within the improvement of digital forensics and use of new technologies such as facial recognition.

9.6.4 The force also has a comprehensive digital and data strategy which sets out its ambition to move towards more efficient cloud-based services, and to renew its technology and technical skills model to be fit for the future. Sussex Police aspires to be a leading force in using data to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency and to ensure resources are appropriately targeted.

- 9.6.5 Ultimately, a further precept increase will ensure that Sussex Police can retain an effective operating model, keeping new recruits on the frontline attending more calls more swiftly and delivering more positive outcomes for victims.

10 Police Officers and Staff

- 10.1 On 5 September 2019, the then Prime Minister announced the Police Uplift Programme (Operation Uplift), a commitment to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers (headcount) in England and Wales by 31 March 2023. Throughout the associated recruitment campaign, a quarterly statistical bulletin on 'Police officer uplift' was published, which included progress on the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers (headcount) in England and Wales by 31 March 2023.
- 10.2 There were 147,746 full-time equivalent (FTE) officers in post as at 31 March 2024 in the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales this was an increase of 0.2% on March 2023 (up 312 FTE from 147,434 officers). The government stated that was the highest number of police officers since comparable records began (in the year ending March 2003), higher than the previous peak of 147,434 FTE police officers in March 2023. Sussex proportion is approximately 2.15% of the national total. Following Operation Uplift, Sussex Police must maintain a Police Officer baseline of 3,166 Officers (headcount). In addition to this number the force committed to recruit an additional 60 Police Officers in the financial year 2024/2025 leading to an enhanced target of 3,226 Officers. As of 31 March 2012, the police establishment for comparison was 2,959.
- 10.3 The maintenance funding grant is split evenly over the financial year and paid according to Officer headcount, Sussex Police must ensure that the baseline was met on 30 September 2025 and 31 March 2026 in order to be able to claim the full grant amount. The Home Office will withhold £40,000 per officer under the baseline, to a threshold of 30 Officers or 1.5% of the total officer headcount if the target has not been reached on these dates. Sussex Police achieved the officer headcount as of September 2025 and is planned to achieve the same as at the 31 March 2026. The details of the terms of the new maintenance grant 2026/27 are due to be published in January 2026.
- 10.4 The Government is clear that neighbourhood policing sits at the heart of the British policing model. To restore neighbourhood policing, the Government has committed to delivering 13,000 additional police personnel, including police officers, PCSOs and special constables, into neighbourhood policing roles by the end of this parliament as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.
- 10.5 Sussex police were provided access to funding of £4,297,475 in 2025/26 and developed a plan to increase the number of police officers by 43 and Special Constables by 21. The grant is released when there is growth above the baseline in the Neighbourhood Policing function.
- 10.6 To avoid any financial penalties Sussex Police must maintain a healthy pipeline of candidates for the entry routes of becoming an Officer. There are three entry routes for Police Officers: The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), The Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP), and the Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP). Each entry route has its own eligibility criteria that follows national guidelines where candidates have to pass a behavioural style questionnaire and situational judgement test, attend an Online Assessment Centre and an in-person interview before pre-

employment checks can commence. These checks consist of completing the fitness test, medical clearances, biometric vetting, substance misuse testing, vetting and reference checks.

- 10.7 A dedicated Attraction Team have created tailored recruitment campaigns and materials to appeal to suitable candidates with the right skills, behaviours, and experience to perform the role. Utilising, the forces' employer brand of "I am Sussex Police" they attend local colleges, universities and other opportunities such as Career Fairs with external partners to promote the force. The Attraction Team also run Webinars for interested candidates to learn more about the role and offer one-to-one conversations for greater understanding on the role or the recruitment process. Campaigns also incorporate plans to increase representation from the local communities.
- 10.8 Sussex Police has a flexible workforce plan to manage planned intakes throughout the year and adapt to changes in the attrition levels to ensure the force remains on track to reach the baseline at the check points stated above. The force has a variety of measures to aid retention of Officers (and Staff), such as Flexible working options, Flexible Retirement Options and the Retire & Rejoin Scheme. Data from Exit Interviews, and Stay Conversations which have been introduced, help the force to fully understand reasons why Officers and Staff choose to resign, this is analysed with the aim to resolve any recurring issues. On 15 December 2025, there were 3,187 (FTE) Police Officers working within Sussex Police.
- 10.9 On 15 December 2025, there were 2,238 (FTE) members of Police Staff working within Sussex Police, undertaking a variety of roles, such as answering 999 calls, supporting investigations, overseeing the management of the fleet and estate, to support front line policing. Police Staff roles have differing terms and conditions, and recruitment is undertaken when required. The force must maintain a vacancy factor to align to the staffing budget, this is currently set at 10% per department.
- 10.10 Sussex Police is committed to supporting the PCC in providing the role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) across the county. As of 15 December 2025, there were 266 PCSOs in place, out of a budgeted establishment of 295. Attraction to this role has been challenging whilst the force remains open for Police Officer recruitment, as the role is seen as a steppingstone to become an Officer. There are planned recruitment campaigns in place to outline the unique qualities of the role and attract further applications in order to fill the establishment.
- 10.11 The overall budget for 2025/2026 to cover all Police Officer, Police Staff and PCSO Pay is £359,153,416 (as at month 8).

11 Partnership Working

11.1 The Sussex PCC and Chief Constable continue to work with Surrey Police, other forces in the South East region and other public and private entities to meet the financial challenges of the MTFS, increase resilience, modernise systems and improve service delivery.

11.2 'Policing Together' – Collaboration Programme with Surrey Police

11.2.1 Sussex Police embarked on a Service Transformation Programme jointly with Surrey Police in Summer 2022, to identify opportunities for delivering financially efficient policing that will enable both forces to address the funding gap by 2026/27, whilst preserving performance and service to the public. The programme is in the process of identifying a wide range of options for efficiencies, predominantly in enabling functions.

11.2.2 Sussex Police works closely with Surrey Police, delivering a range of services across both force areas including; Operations Command (including Roads Policing, Tactical Firearms, Operations Support and Planning & Resourcing), Specialist Crime Command (including Major Crime, Surveillance, Serious and Organised Crime, Forensics, Economic Crime and the Cyber Crime Unit), Vetting, Finance, Procurement, Insurance, Transport, People Services (including Occupational Health) and Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT).

11.2.3 A single Chief Finance Officer sits across both Sussex and Surrey Police as the section 151 officer to fully collaborate service delivery across the finance and commercial service teams.

11.2.4 The joint Sussex and Surrey Digital Division continue to coordinate service delivery, research, governance and compliance across key policing priorities: Use of Mobile Data, Crime Management Data, Public Facing Digital Services (Sussex Police website), Digital Evidence Management System, Facial Recognition, Body Worn Video, and Digital Emergency Services Network (ESN). These workstreams are critical to the effective delivery of operational policing and public engagement. The Body Worn Video and Digital Evidence Management systems are now fully embedded, meaning that the force has one continual process from capturing footage of an incident through to sharing the evidence directly with criminal justice partners in the CPS and the courts where appropriate. Taking a continuous improvement approach, this system has been rolled out to other parts of the force.

11.2.5 Sussex Police takes its commitment to the environment seriously and continues to look for efficiencies and, where possible, alternatives to petrol/diesel. The Joint (with Surrey Police) Transport Service (JTS) continues to trial hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and the investment in a fleet-wide telematics solution is a prime example of seeking efficiency. This innovative technology captures a wide range of information including vehicle location and activity, driver behaviour and engine diagnostics, enabling the JTS to understand whether the force is making the best use of its fleet and consequently whether Sussex Police is providing the public with services that represent good value for money. This work is informing the 2024-28 JTS Asset Management Plan and may allow for an overall reduction in the size of the fleet, better deployment of electric vehicles and overall improved ability

to meet demand in the most efficient manner.

11.3 Other Partnership Working

- 11.3.1 Serious and organised crime affects more UK citizens than any other national security threat. It leads to more deaths in the UK each year than all other national security threats combined. The South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) is a collaboration between Sussex, Surrey, Thames Valley and Hampshire Police and is aimed at reducing the impact and increasing the disruption of serious and organised crime within the region.
- 11.3.2 The SEROCU also works in conjunction with the UK Border Force, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to combat cross-border organised crime.
- 11.3.3 The SEROCU employs both police officers and police staff in a variety of roles. A proportion of Op Uplift additional officers were allocated to SEROCU by member forces including Sussex. Further details can be found at [South East Regional Organised Crime Unit – Protecting Communities from Serious Organised Crime \(serocu.police.uk\)](https://serocu.police.uk)
- 11.3.4 Collaboration with other Blue Light and public sector partners has resulted in efficiencies and improves the service offered to the public. Examples include:
- 11.3.5 Sussex Police Headquarters is shared with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.
 - Brighton Police Station accommodates key partners under a single roof including: the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH); Brighton & Hove Business Crime Reduction Partnership, and the stalking advocacy service Veritas Justice.
 - Further joint sites include Crawley Police Station (housing the CPS); Eastbourne Grove Road (Police Reception and NPT); Seaford Police Station (shared with the Town Council, South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb), Tourist Information and Citizens Advice Bureau). There are a number of Police Offices accessibly co-located including those based at East Grinstead Arts Centre, Newhaven Fire Station, and Selsey Town Hall.
- 11.3.6 The Estates & Facilities Transformation Programme which commenced in 2021/22 was completed in 2023/24 and has enabled greater collaboration between Surrey Police and Sussex Police Estates and Facilities units to enable a fully integrated and adaptable team whilst improving delivery services to stakeholders in Surrey and Sussex.
- 11.3.7 Mental Health and Policing is a complex area that touches all departments in the organisation. Sussex Police retains a mental health portfolio responsible for improving the force's response to mental health incidents and working with partners to address systemic challenges and pressures that impact on mental health and policing.

11.4 BlueLight Commercial

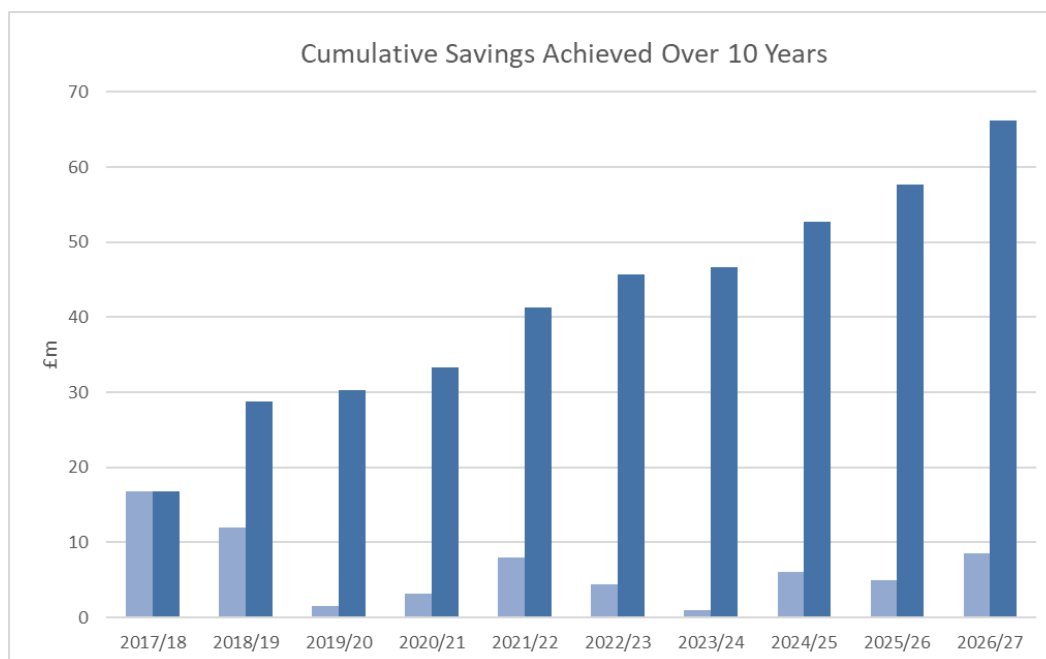
- 11.4.1 BlueLight Commercial was established by the Home Office in 2020 to work in collaboration with blue light sector organisations to help transform commercial services. The company is owned by PCCs, with membership

comprising policing bodies and other blue light services, to deliver efficient and effective commercial services in support of this sector. It is a not for profit, private company limited by guarantee, and under the procurement regulations able to act as a contracting authority to create a single voice to the market with an agile commercial engagement model.

- 11.4.2 The company has a comprehensive workplan and expert workforces and is working on all the categories of supplies and services consumed by police forces including vehicles and air support, property, people and professional services, social value and revenue, suppliers and markets and shared services. Each category is focussed on value for money, generating savings and building resilient supplies. They are also looking at decarbonisation reduction opportunities with energy supplies too.
- 11.4.3 The company has merged with the Police Digital Service into its structure in 2024/25 which will further expand its opportunities to save PCCs and forces buy the right things, at the most appropriate quality and at the right price to save money.
- 11.5 **Community Safety Partnerships** – In 2025/26, the PCC protected community safety funding in Sussex for the 10th year running and allocated £1.215m to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council and each of the 12 District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). The PCC continues to support the CSPs to address crime and anti-social behaviour at a district level, respond dynamically to emerging threats and issues, and implement local activity in line with their strategic objectives as required. Many of the CSPs continued to explore opportunities to work more collaboratively during the year and it is evident that strong relationships exist with wider partnership members and the local communities. The decision to fund the CSP's will be made in February 2026 for the financial year 2026/27.
- 11.5.1 Further detail of the wide range of partnership and other collaborative work can be found in the PCC's Annual Report; the latest edition can be found here [SPCC - Annual Report \(sussex-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://sussex-pcc.gov.uk/annual-report).

12 Financial Context

- 12.1 Reductions in and the freezing of government grant funding between 2012/13 and 2022/23 and other costs have resulted in Sussex making £66m of reductions and efficiencies over the last ten years to head towards balancing its books. In addition, during that time it also had its ability to raise additional tax revenue from the precept restricted by the government capping and excessiveness principles.



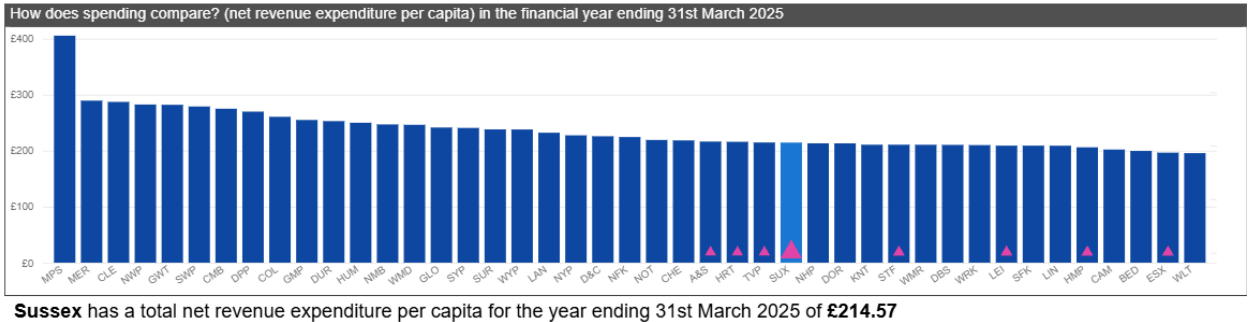
- 12.2 The Government changed its strategic approach to funding policing bodies from the 2016/17 financial year when it promised that funding would be protected in flat cash terms. This would be achieved by offsetting policing grant reductions with rises in the local precept.

Year	Band D Precept Limit
2018/19	£12
2019/20	£24
2020/21	£10
2021/22	£15
2022/23	£10
2023/24	£15
2024/25	£13
2025/26	£14
2026/27	£15

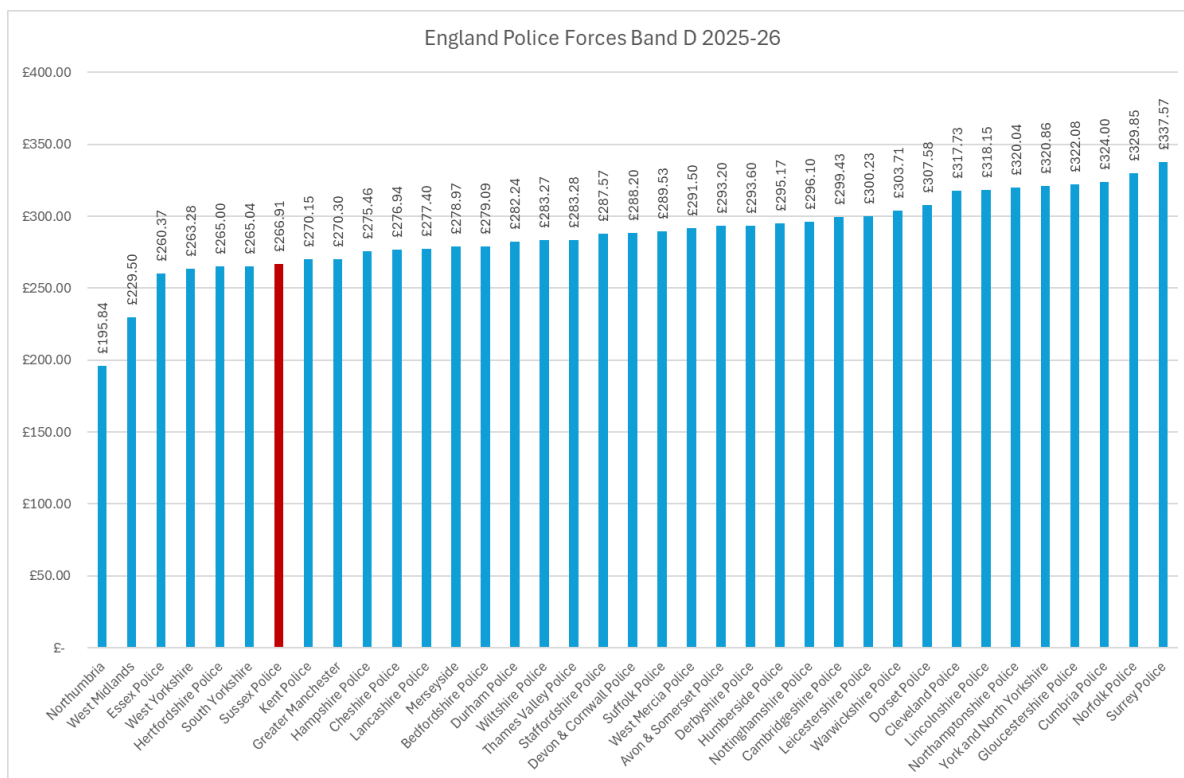
- 12.3 The council tax referendum limit for English Forces in recent years to provide additional flexibility for all PCCs is provided in the table above.
- 12.4 In previous years the Government had invested over £2.7 billion additional funding into government grants to enable the recruitment of 20,000 officers. In March 2023, the Government, in partnership with policing, successfully

delivered on its commitment. Sussex Police went above and beyond by recruiting more officers to make up for other forces recruitment shortfalls.

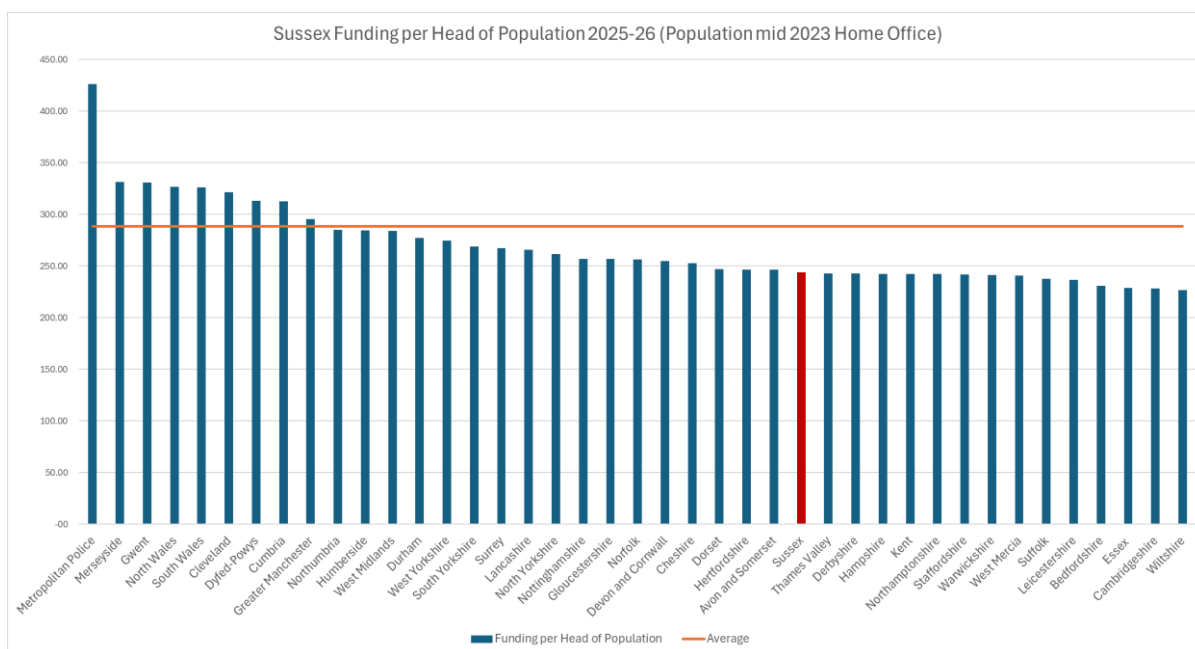
- 12.5 The Government has in the financial settlement moved the Operation Uplift grants that total £376.8m, both the Performance and Additional Recruitment elements into funding formula allocations, moving away from the previous headcount growth it was based upon. This is detrimental to Sussex with a loss of £1m.
- 12.6 Sussex Police predicts that it will have 3,337 officers (headcount) by 31st March 2026 against a headcount target of 3,226. As of 31 March 2012, the police establishment for comparison was 2,959. It has also made a concerted effort to maintain police staff numbers, especially Contact Officers and PCSOs.
- 12.7 Previously the Home Office Police Uplift Programme had a potential financial penalty mechanism if officer numbers were not maintained. There has been no information pertaining to 2026/27, and as the funding has moved to funding formula based it is assumed there are no penalty mechanisms.
- 12.8 In terms of the national funding context, Sussex has:
 - 16th lowest Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) per head of population nationally at £214.57 (excluding national functions and PCC) (Most similar group = £209.77; nationally = £255.79; (Source: p.5 HMICFRS website 2024/25 [HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles](#))



- 7th lowest precept of any PCC in England and Wales at £266.91 per Band D equivalent household 2025/26.



- 15th lowest total funding per head of population at £243.69 (core grants and precept).



Resources - Police Grant Settlement 2026/27

- 12.9 The 2026/27 Provisional Settlement was announced on 18 December 2025 in a written statement by the Minister of State for Policing and Crime, Sarah Jones. The final Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2026/27 will be laid before Parliament early in 2026. The Government noted when the provisional settlement was announced that "We will publish a Police Reform White Paper in early 2026 which will set out a vision to bring policing into the modern age with the technology, innovation and structures they need to ensure policing can focus on the crimes that matter to the public and to drive out waste and

inefficiency. As with previous years, a copy of the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2026-27 will be laid before the House by my rt hon Friend, the Home Secretary, in the New Year.

12.10 **Waiting for announcement** ~~The Final Settlement was published on 30 January 2025. The [Report](#) sets out the Home Secretary's determination for 2026/27 of the aggregate amounts of grants that she proposes to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996.~~

12.11 The key elements of the provisional settlement are:

- Total funding for police forces, including Counter-Terrorism Policing, will be up to £19.5 billion in 2026-27, an increase of up to £798 million compared to the 2025-26 police funding settlement. Total funding to territorial police forces will be up to £18.3 billion, an increase of up to £746 million compared to 2025-26. For Police and Crime Commissioners in England the council tax referendum threshold will be £15 for a Band D property.
- This equates to a 4.2% cash increase and a 2.0% real terms increase for police forces from 2025/26 **assuming** the PCCs agree to the £15 increase in Band D precept.
- Funding for Counter-Terrorism Policing will increase by at least £52 million to £1.2 billion in 2026-27. Police and Crime Commissioners will be notified separately of force-level funding allocations for CT Policing, which will not be made public for security reasons.

12.12 Unknowns and Assumptions at this time:

- The funding settlement at this stage provided limited information, so assumptions have been made and will not become clear until the full settlement becomes available in January 2026.
- It is not known but assumed the funding settlement does not include the officer pay award.
- The Neighbourhood Grant is assumed to continue at the same level as 2025/26. Nationally £200m for the first phase to increase by 13,000 additional officers, PCSOs and Specials into neighbourhood roles.
- It is assumed the settlement continues the £230.3 million to compensate territorial forces for the costs of the change to the employer National Insurance Contributions from 2025/26.
- Also assumed to continue in 2026/27 is the Op Uplift Grant of £270.1m, the allocations are based on the funding formula.
- The grant for the additional recruitment grants that total £106.7m for 2026/27 are also based upon funding formula percentages.
- As previously notified, PCC's will have the flexibility to raise the police precept to £15 for a Band D property in 2026/27.
- No information is available yet, however local allocations of Police Capital Grant had been stopped and previously redistributed as part of wider capital reallocations into Police Aviation and Police Technology Programmes.
- The Home Office are expected to publish a Police Reform White Paper in

early 2026 which will set out a vision to bring policing into the modern age with the technology, innovation and structures they need to ensure policing can focus on the crimes that matter to the public and to drive out waste and inefficiency.

- There is no information on the level of Reallocations (Top Slice) in 2026/27, this is expected to become available in January 2026.
- The Home Office have launched the Commercial Efficiencies and Collaboration Programme in 2025/26 which will initially focus on national buying frameworks and cost recovery which is part of the Home Office expectation that the police raise their ambition on efficiencies and drive forward improvements to productivity while helping to deliver safer streets.

12.13 For Sussex, the Home Office settlement is as follows taking account of their assumptions on the taxbase:

Table – Home Office Core Grant and Precept 2025/26 to 2026/27 – Comparison.

£m	Grant	Precept	Total
2025/26	245.7	177.3	423.0
2026/27	253.1	189.0	442.1
Change £	7.4	11.7	19.1
Change %	3.1%	6.6%	4.5%

Proportion	Grant	Precept	Total
2025/26	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%
2026/27	57.2%	42.8%	100.0%

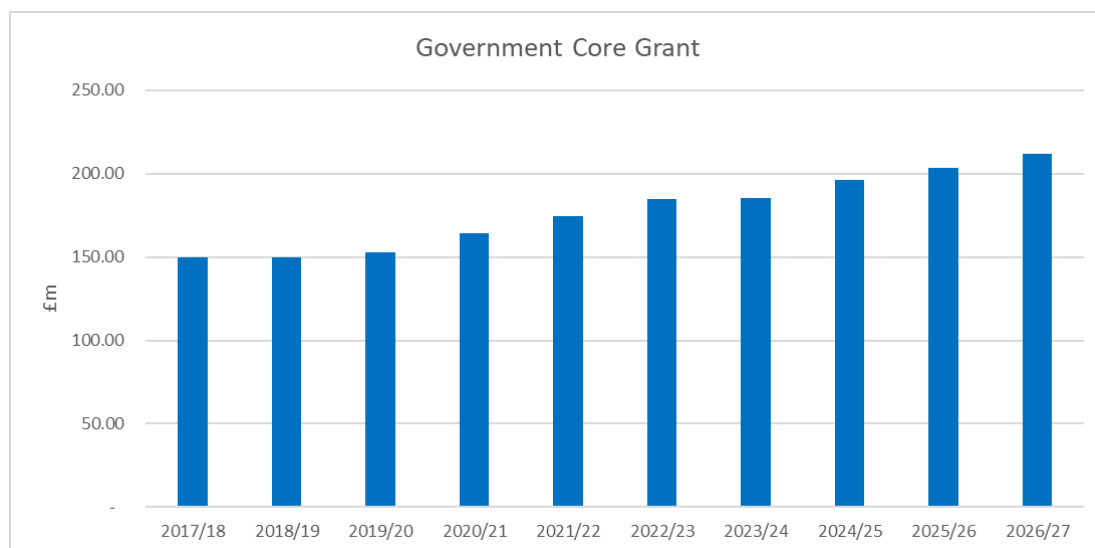
12.14 Considering the Sussex position the summary of the comparable grant is set out in the table below.

Grants	2025/26 £m	Planning assumption '2026/27 £m	2026/27 Provisional Settlement £m	Variation to Plan £m
Core Policing Grant	203.6	203.6	212.0	8.4
Legacy Council Tax Grants	13.2	13.2	13.2	-
Operation Uplift Performance	10.7	10.7	9.7	(1.0)
SR Grant	-	12.7	-	(12.7)
Specific Grants				
Police Officer Pension Grant	8.4	8.4	8.4	-
National Insurance Grant	5.5	5.5	5.5	-
Neighbourhood Policing Grant	4.3	4.3	4.3	-
Total	245.7	258.4	253.1	(5.3)

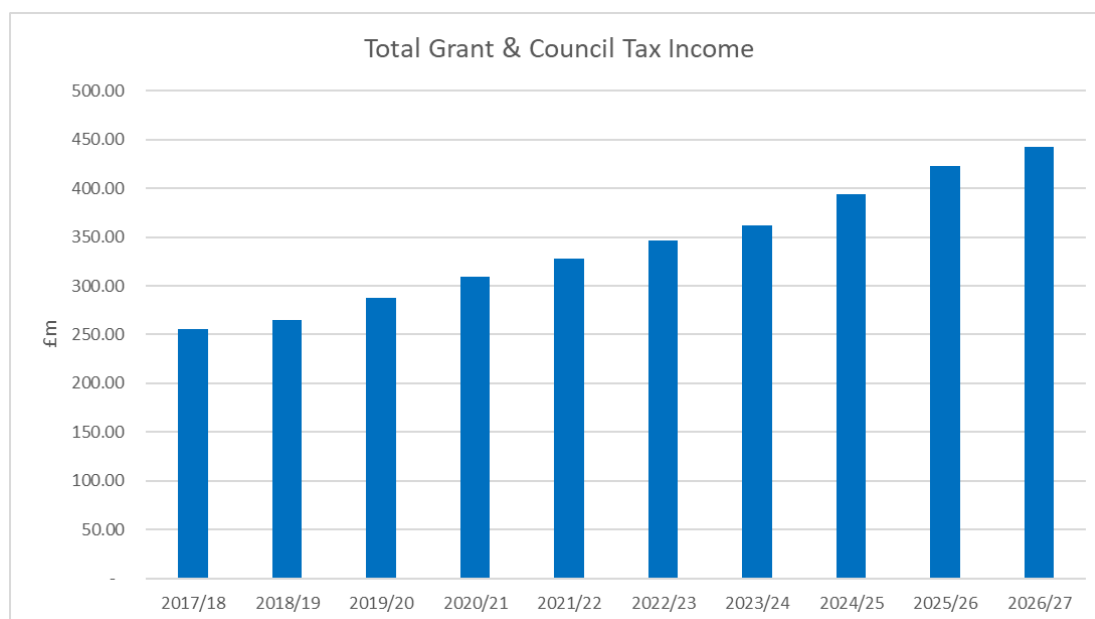
12.15 Notes

- The provisional grant settlement is below the planning assumption based on the Spending Review announcement by £5.3m.
- Total grant funding increase of £7.4m (3.0%).
- The assumption is the police officer pay award has not been incorporated into the Home Office Police Grant.
- Operation Uplift maintenance and the Additional Recruitment is all distributed by the funding formula which has been to the detriment of Sussex police by £1.0m.
- There has been no information on whether there will be a penalty mechanism if the Op Uplift officer maintenance numbers are not maintained for 2026/27.
- Neighbourhood Policing – the grant from 2025/26 has been assumed to continue into 2026/27.
- There has been no information on any further tranches of Neighbourhood Policing increases.
- The national Insurance grant is expected to continue at the same level in 2026/27 to meet the additional cost of the change in national insurance rate from April 2025.
- The legacy council tax grants and police pension grant are expected to be maintained at the same level.
- The savings requirement at this stage (subject to change) of the budget process is £8.5m required in 2026/27. There is work ongoing to develop a plan to bridge the funding gap.
- The council tax collection fund and tax base are estimates until finalised at the end of January 2026.
- There is no information on local Capital grant being provided to police forces, allocations in recent years have been made to nationally led functions.
- PCC precept flexibility to increase Band D council tax precept by up to £15 would yield £10.1m pre council tax collection fund and tax base improvement.
- Funding for counter-terrorism policing will be paid to forces through dedicated counter-terrorism policing grants.

12.16 Core grant sums for Sussex since 2017/18 are shown in the graph below.



12.17 Total core grant and council tax resources combined since 2017/18 are shown in the graph below.



12.18 The previous 2025/26 to 2028/29 MTFS had included the assumption of a future freeze to the grant except for the Operation Uplift and a 2% increase to the Band D precept in 2026/27 followed by a 2% increase to the precept in the final three years of the MTFS period.

12.19 The following table provides a comparison of the figures between the previous and this new MTFS.

Settlement Factor	2026/27 Previous MTFS £m	2026/30 Current MTFS £m	Change Estimation Difference £m	Notes
Core Grant	203.6	212.0	8.4	MTFS estimate flat Grant
Legacy Council Tax Grant	13.2	13.2	0.0	MTFS assumed a grant freeze
Operation Uplift Performance Grant	10.7	9.7	(1.0)	Grant to maintain Op Uplift Headcount allocated by formula
Specific Grant - Pension, NI & Neighbourhood	18.2	18.2	0.0	Funding remained static
Reserves	1.1	2.7	1.6	MTFS assumed no reserve movement
Council Tax Receipts	176.9	189.2	12.3	MTFS assumed 2% Band D increase versus £15 and tax base increase of 1%
Total	423.7	445.0	21.3	Potential Total Resources
% Change			5.0%	

12.20 This MTFS is based on the assumptions as laid out in the settlement with adjustment for actual tax base increases as advised by the billing authorities of Sussex and the precept.

12.1 **Efficiency and Productivity**

12.2 The Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP) is a central pillar of the UK Government's strategy to modernise policing and optimise the use of public funds. The Home Office is targeting £354 million in efficiency savings between the 2025/26 and 2028/29 financial years.

12.3 The central message is that "investment must be earned through efficiency"—specifically that the 13,000 additional neighbourhood officers must be funded by the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP).

12.4 Our financial strategy is underpinned by the requirement to meet our share of the £354 million national savings target set by the Home Office. By aligning local productivity workstreams with the PECP, we aim to mitigate the impact of some inflationary pressures on our core budget.

12.5 To achieve the "cashable" and "non-cashable" savings required, our MTFS focuses on the following four pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Procurement & Shared Services** – By transitioning local contracts to BlueLight Commercial national frameworks by 2027. These include purchases of IT equipment, vehicles and energy for example.
- **Pillar 2: Digital Transformation & Automation** - Deployment of AI-assisted redaction tools and automated Digital Evidence Management Systems (DEMS) to achieve non cashable efficiencies of officer hours saved.
- **Pillar 3: Demand Management (Right Care, Right Person)** Continued use of the RCRP model to ensure mental health and social care calls are diverted to appropriate partner agencies freeing up officer time for other activities.
- **Pillar 4: National Centre of Policing (NCoP) Integration** - Planning for the migration of some functions, if appropriate, to centralised national hubs as they become available.

12.6 We will be closely monitoring the "medium-high risk" status of these national savings to ensure local contingency funds are maintained.

12.7 **Policing Reform**

12.7.1 Awaiting publication of the anticipated White Paper in 2026

12.8 **Funding Formula Review**

12.8.1 Awaiting publication of the anticipated White Paper in 2026

12.8.2 There is a threat to the sum of future core government funding received by the PCC following a proposed change in the police funding formula.

12.8.3 The Police Funding Formula is the method that the Home Office used to allocate money from its budget to PCC's. The model considers several factors including demand in each area. The Home Office and selected advisors have been gathering evidence and modelling data over a number of years to then revise the model. No date of the implementation of any new model has been given.

12.8.4 A previous review of the formula resulted in Sussex facing a reduction in the grant resources allocated. That review was never enacted due to flaws in the data utilised, but the risk remains that grant resources will be less than under the current formula.

12.8.5 Due to the uncertainty and range of possible outcomes, no assumptions regarding a change to the funding formula and the grant allocated to Sussex have been included in this MTFS.

12.8.6 The risk has been included in the OSPCC Strategic Risk Register and the MTFS financial risk analysis in Appendix B.

12.9 **Local Government Reform and Devolution**

12.10 Plans for the devolution of power in Sussex accelerated following the government's English Devolution White Paper (December 2024) and the subsequent English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (2025).

Under these plans, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council are set to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). The authority will take on powers from central government regarding strategic transport, housing, adult education budgets, and economic development, allowing for regional decision-making across the entire 1.7 million population of the county. In addition Local Government Reform will see the existing two tier local government administrative system vest into new Unitary Authorities from 1 April 2028.

- 12.11 The transition to a mayoral model will also fundamentally reshape policing governance in Sussex. Consistent with the government's goal to streamline local leadership, the role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is planned to be abolished, with its functions transferred directly to the new Mayor.
- 12.12 The Government announced on Wednesday 5 February 2025 the following areas agreed to join the programme to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities with a directly elected mayor:
- Cumbria
 - Cheshire & Warrington
 - Norfolk & Suffolk
 - Greater Essex
 - Sussex & Brighton
 - Hampshire & Solent
- 12.13 These six successful areas then embarked on work to create a devolution timetable, with full government backing, consultations and establishment of new mayoral entities.

Key Developments and the Revised Timeline for Sussex

- 12.14 However, following government's announcement in December 2025, the timeline for establishing the new governance model in Sussex was revised to prioritise the completion of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) before the new strategic authority takes office. The process for existing councils to develop plans for the new Unitary Authorities is actively underway. The planned 'vesting day' for the transfer of services, staff, and assets to these new Unitary Authorities remains 1 April 2028.
- 12.15 The formation of the new Mayoral Combined County Authority is proceeding, but its inaugural functions will be delayed. The first mayoral election is now scheduled for May 2028, postponed from the original date of May 2026. This allows the new Unitary Authorities to be fully operational before the Mayor takes office.

The Transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner Functions

- 12.16 The transfer of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions to the new Sussex Mayor will now be aligned with the revised election date. This handover is anticipated to take place in May 2028 (subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent and associated legislation being approved), on the Mayor's inauguration.

12.17 This revised timeline provides the PCC and her office with an extended period—now until May 2028—to focus on long-term planning to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities reducing disruption to the vital functions of Sussex Police. While the fundamental goals of the PCC role will remain in place for the next two and a half years, our preparation will now be focused on enabling a new governance structure where a single, directly-elected mayor is responsible for both the strategic direction of the combined authority and the operational oversight of Sussex Police.

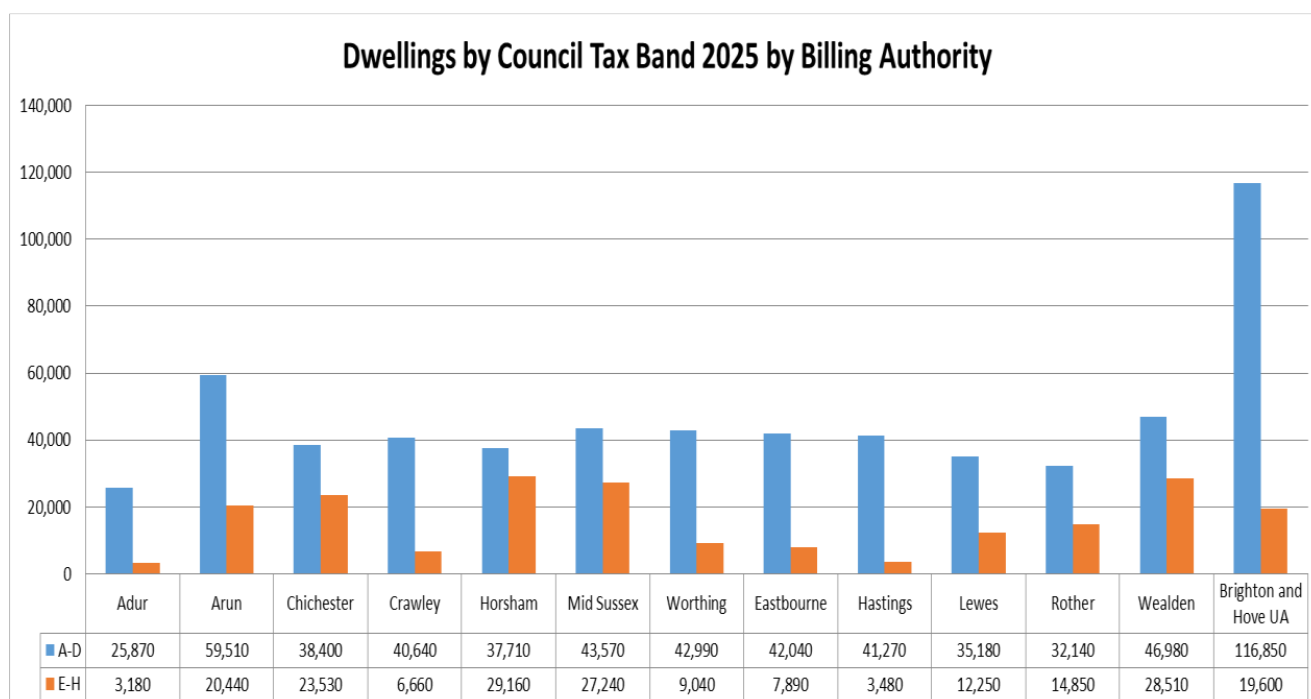
12.18 **Resources – Council Tax Precept**

12.18.1 The PCC raises income from Sussex council taxpayers for policing as a Major Precepting Authority. That sum, which is shown separately on all council tax bills, is known as the precept.

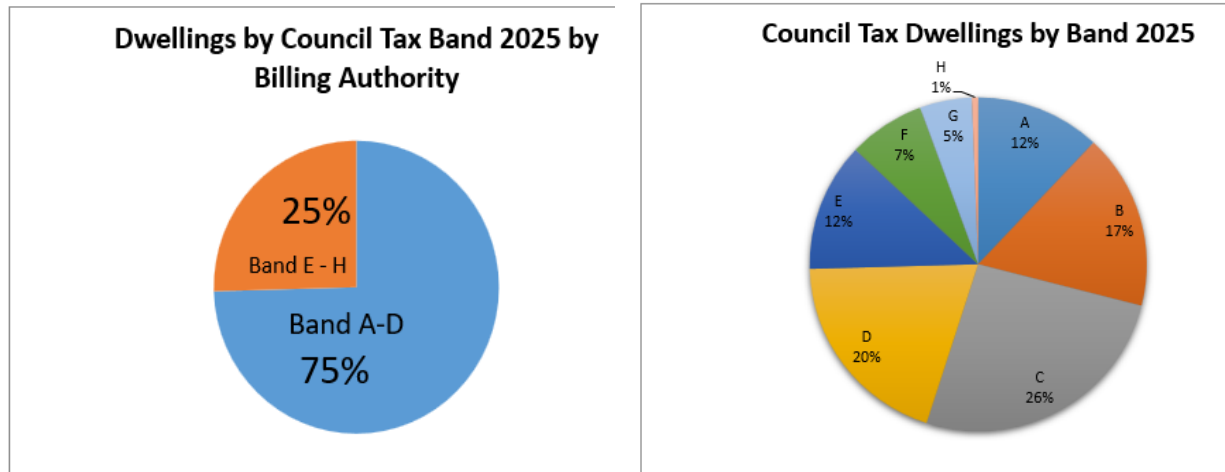
12.18.2 The precept multiplied by the tax base calculates the total receipts that each billing authority will collect from taxpayers and pay to the PCC.

12.18.3 The tax base is calculated by adding up all the properties within Sussex that are subject to council tax.

12.18.4 The following table shows the distribution of properties between valuation band A-D and E-H by billing authority. These totalled 808,940 (804,220 in 2024) dwellings.



12.18.5 In total A-D and E-H of all billing authorities.



12.18.6 The dwellings are then converted to the tax base with adjustments for exemptions, discounts (including single person discount), disregards and local council tax support schemes with a further adjustment for anticipated non-payment and losses. This calculation produces the tax base as the number of Band D equivalent properties.

12.19 Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes – Impact on Precept Income

12.19.1 Billing authorities are required to review their Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) annually and to consult publicly on any proposed changes. The PCC as a precepting authority is a statutory consultee in this process, but the decision to set or change a LCTRS rests solely with each billing authority.

12.19.2 To help people on low income to pay their council tax every local (billing) authority in England has its own Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). In April 2013, the Government abolished the national Council Tax Benefit scheme for working age customers and asked each Council to replace it with a local scheme called Council Tax Support, now called Council Tax Reduction. Each scheme is established based on the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 legislation but there are freedoms to vary some of the conditions of the scheme.

12.19.3 The financial impact of LCTRS is to reduce the council tax base and thus the income derived from council tax. Whilst LCTRSs are administered by billing authorities the cost falls also on the billing authority and its precepting authorities which include the PCC, Fire Authority and County Councils.

12.19.4 Some local authorities use a default scheme set in place by the Government. Under the default scheme, if the income of a person is less than the amount the government says they need to live on (called the applicable amount) they will get maximum CTR of 80%. This applies regardless of whether they are a pensioner or someone of working age. However, many have and will move to 100% schemes because they see the benefits to their poorest council tax payers but also a reduction in their own benefits administration costs and a

reduction in arrears and associated recovery cost.

12.19.5 Central government has protected pensioners from changes in their council tax reductions which means that any proposed changes will only affect working age adults.

12.19.6 This risk to council tax receipts as a result of 100% LCTR is included in the risk assessment in Appendix B.

12.20 **Second Home Premium**

12.20.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent on 2 November 2023. It amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and reduces the minimum period for the implementation of a premium for empty premises from two years to one year.

12.20.2 It also allows billing authorities to introduce a premium in respect of second homes (dwellings that are unoccupied but furnished), of up to 100%. 'Second homes' are properties held by their owners as a home mainly used by family/friends as holiday homes, let to others as a holiday let, or for occupation while working away from home. The first bills including the premium were issued from 1 April 2025. The tax base has benefitted.

12.20.3 The stated policy aim of the premium is to free up housing stock for local need. If the aim is achieved, council tax receipts might reduce especially if occupied by single persons who receive a 25% discount. A prudent assumption about taxbase growth has been included in the assumptions for future financial planning.

12.21 **Tax Base**

12.21.1 The calculation of the tax base, billing, collection and payment is carried out independently by each of the 13 local billing authorities.

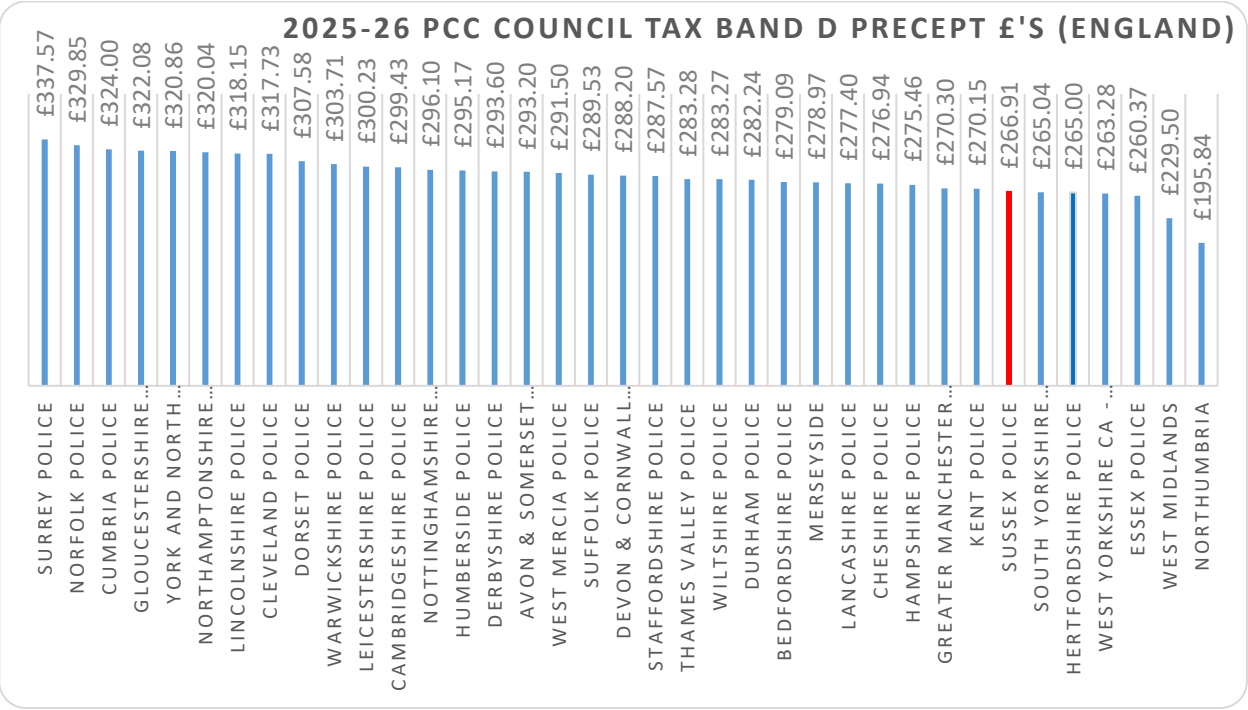
12.21.2 The notified Council Tax base figure for Sussex for 2026/27 is 671,316.8 (2025/26 665,248.5), an increase of 6,068.3 (0.91%) from the previous year.

12.21.3 The tax base is then multiplied by the Band D council tax precept to calculate each individual council tax bill and the total tax receipts.

12.21.4 The PCC works with the billing authorities during the year to prevent and detect fraud to protect tax receipts generated through the council tax system.

12.22 Comparison of the Precept with Other Policing Bodies

12.22.1 The council tax precept for Sussex was one of the lowest - 31 out of 37 – of English policing bodies during 2025/26 at £266.91 per annum for a Band D property. The table shows the range of precepts by policing body in England. The median was £288.20.



12.23 Precept Capping – Limiting Increases

12.23.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to issue principles that define what should be considered excessive Council Tax, including proposed limits. From 2013 onwards, any PCC that wishes to raise Council Tax above the limits that apply to them will have to hold a binding referendum.

12.23.2 The Police Settlement stated that a referendum would be required if the PCC sets an increase of more than £15 in 2026/27. For Sussex, which has one of the lowest precepts in England, the change is shown in the table below.

Year	Band D Council Tax	Change £	Change %
2026/27	£281.91	£15.00	5.6%

12.24 Precept By Council Band

12.24.1 The precept for 2026/27 by Band is set out in the table below (no discounts applied).

			£15		
Band	Proportion	2026/27	26/27 Increase		Per Month Increase
A	Band D *6/9	£187.94	£10.00	5.6%	£0.83
B	Band D *7/9	£219.26	£11.67	5.6%	£0.97
C	Band D *8/9	£250.59	£13.33	5.6%	£1.11
D	Band D	£281.91	£15.00	5.6%	£1.25
E	Band D *11/9	£344.56	£18.33	5.6%	£1.53
F	Band D *13/9	£407.20	£21.67	5.6%	£1.81
G	Band D *15/9	£469.85	£25.00	5.6%	£2.08
H	Band D *18/9	£563.82	£30.00	5.6%	£2.50

12.25 Precept Requirement

12.25.1 The local authorities in Sussex also advised of surpluses or deficits on their council tax collection funds equating to a net £0.366 surplus (to be paid by the billing authorities) for 2026/27 (£1.081m deficit 2025/26) which is not reflected in the MTFS as the deadline for receipt has not been reached.

12.25.2 The increase to the Band D precept by £15 will raise an additional £10.1m for 2026/27. The increase in the tax base at 1% will raise a further £1.7m giving additional receipts of £11.8m.

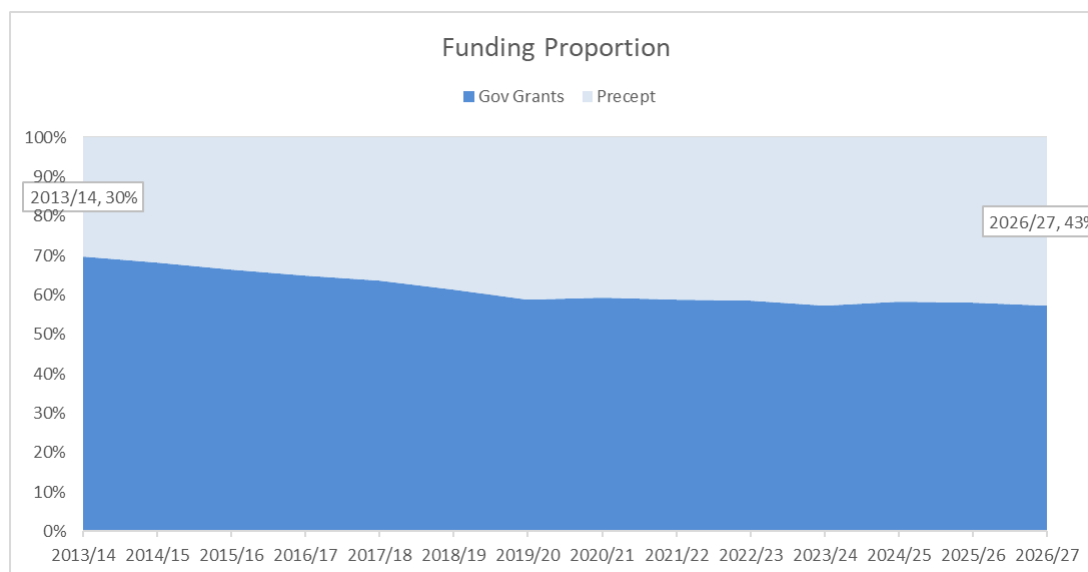
12.25.3 The precept of £281.91 multiplied by the tax base of 671,062 will produce receipts of £189.2m (2025/26 £177.3m) for the Police Fund.

12.25.4 The council tax requirement for 2026/27 is shown in the following table:

2025/26 £m	2025/26 Proportion %		2026/27 £m	2026/27 £m	Proportion %
423.689		Total Revenue Expenditure		444.972	
1.051		Less Appropriations (to) / from Reserves		2.650	
422.639		Net Budget Requirement		442.322	
		Less			
203.597		Main Policing & RS Grant	212.000		
3.062		Council Tax Legacy Freeze Grant	3.062		
10.140		Council Tax Local Support Grant	10.140		
10.682		Operation Uplift Performance Grant	9.700		
8.440		Pensions Grant	8.440		
5.503		National Insurance Grant	5.503		
4.297		Neighbourhood Policing Grant	4.297		
245.721	58%	Total Policing Grant		253.143	57%
176.917		Balance to be raised locally		189.179	
(0.422)		Less net deficit on collection funds		0.000	
177.340	42%	Council Tax Requirement		189.179	43%

12.25.5 In common with other policing bodies this MTFS includes a financial planning assumption that the precept will be maximised each year in accordance with government rules – currently £15 Band D for 2026/27, then a planning assumption of a £14 increase for 2027/28 and 2028/29 then 2% for 2029/30. The actual precept decision will still be determined by the PCC on an annual basis with scrutiny of that decision by the Police & Crime Panel.

12.25.6 The proportion of funding raised from local taxpayers via the council tax precept compared with government grant is 43% for 2026/27. The graph below shows how the proportion has changed between 2013/14 and 2026/27, showing a shift to local funding from 30% to 43% over the period (excluding the use of reserves).



12.26 Other Grant Income

12.26.1 Single purpose grants are notified to the PCC when the settlement is announced by the Home Office. These grants are detailed earlier in the MTFS. Many are time limited to achieve a stated aim and so are only forecast for the known duration of the grant funding.

12.27 Other Income

12.27.1 The PCC will continue to seek additional sources of external funding for policing and to maximise its income, for example through developers' contributions such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 monies, as well as developing a 'trading mind-set' for some of its more commercially aligned services.

12.27.2 The Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex Fees and Charges for the Supply of Goods & Services is produced annually in line with NPCC guidelines for charging of Special Police Services and other chargeable items/services under section 25 of Police Act 1996. It can be found at this link <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/financials/fees-and-charges/>

- 12.27.3 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA) gives a PCC the power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the PCC. This is different from the powers that local authorities have under the Localism Act 2011 which gives them the power to do anything that individuals may do, apart from that which is specifically prohibited. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a functional power to do anything they consider appropriate to the carrying out of those fire functions. This situation restricts opportunities for commercial or income generation particularly in relation to the opportunities relating to the estate.

13 2025/26 Budget and Forecast Outturn

- 13.1 Throughout the year, the Sussex Police Strategic Planning Board meets monthly to provide oversight, monitoring and high-level control of people and financial resource along with demand analysis.
- 13.2 The PCC scrutinises the spending of the precept, delivery of the policing investment and performance. Scrutiny is carried out through a variety of public facing Performance and Accountability meetings, monthly Strategic Planning Board, financial monitoring and other monitoring within the scheme of governance.
- 13.3 The PCC reviews and publishes the overall police fund revenue and capital budget monitoring during the year and approves revisions to those budgets in line with the Financial Regulations. These reviews and decisions are then noted as key decisions on the PCC's website.
- 13.4 The revenue monitoring forecast as of 30th November 2025 was as follows:

Sussex	2025/26 Revenue Budget £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	Variance £m
November 2025	425.3	425.1	(0.2)

- 13.5 The Revenue Monitoring Update 2025/26 for the 8 months to 30th November 2025 shows the Chief Constable's budget is forecasting a £0.2m underspend.
- 13.6 The following table shows that the Operational Delivery Budget is forecasting an underspend of £0.5m offset by an overspend of £0.1m within PCC Community Safety Partnerships which will be met by reserves, resulting in the £0.4m underspend. This is offset by an underachievement in funding of £0.2m relating to Home Office funding for the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee which is less than planned.

Sussex	Total 2025/26 Budget £m	Total 2025/26 Outturn £m	Variance £m
PCC Budget	4.3	4.4	0.1
Financial Provisions & Reserves	11.3	11.3	0.0
Operational Delivery Budget	409.6	409.1	(0.5)
Total 2025/26 Budget	425.3	424.8	(0.4)
Funding	425.3	425.1	0.2
Grand Total	0.0	(0.2)	(0.2)

- 13.7 The above figures include the 4.2% pay increase awarded to police officers and police staff.

- 13.8 Most of the underspend is arising from police officer pay which is due to an average 62 posts under FTE which is higher than the 1% budgeted vacancy factor of 32 officers.
- 13.9 Planned savings of £1.1m have been achieved, taken at budget setting. However, £0.8m of savings from 2025/26 budget setting have not yet been achieved. Joint Force Change, working with Change Delivery, are developing Programme Business Cases to deliver efficiencies and cashable benefits from 2026/27.
- 13.10 To achieve the Operation Uplift Performance Grant, the Force is required to reach its target headcount of 3,226 and the Force achieved this in September 2025 and is forecast to do the same at the end of March 2026 to secure the grant of £7.5m.
- 13.11 For Sussex to achieve the Operation Uplift Performance Grant the Force was required to reach its target headcount in September '25 and March '26.
- 13.12 The Capital Monitoring forecast was as follows:

Sussex	2025/26 Capital Budget £m	2025/256 Capital Forecast £m	Forecast Variance £m
Month 8	21.9	19.0	(2.9)

- 13.13 The Sussex Police Finance Performance Board manages slippage and other timing differences arising during the year within the capital & investment programme.

14 Medium Term Financial Budget Considerations

14.1 When calculating the medium-term budget projections, consideration has been given to several budget pressures including:

- Future levels of grant and precept funding.
- Pay and price increases.
- Revenue implications of the capital and investment programme.
- Efficiencies.
- Other cost pressures.

14.2 Future Levels of Grant and Precept Funding

14.3 Nationally total funding for police forces, including Counter-Terrorism Policing, will be up to £19.5 billion in 2026-27, an increase of up to £798 million compared to the 2025-26 police funding settlement.

14.4 Total funding to territorial police forces will be up to £18.3 billion, an increase of up to £746 million compared to 2025-26. This equates to a 4.2% cash increase and a 2.0% real terms increase for police forces.

14.5 For Police and Crime Commissioners in England the council tax referendum threshold will be £15 for a Band D property.

14.6 The financial settlement has not been as comprehensive in detail as per previous years and many assumptions have been made and therefore the content of the MTFS is subject to change.

14.7 A review of the grant distribution method, known as the 'formula review', has been in planning for several years. Significant work has already been undertaken by PCCs and police to provide the body of evidence that will be required to convince HM Treasury of the financial requirements for policing bodies.

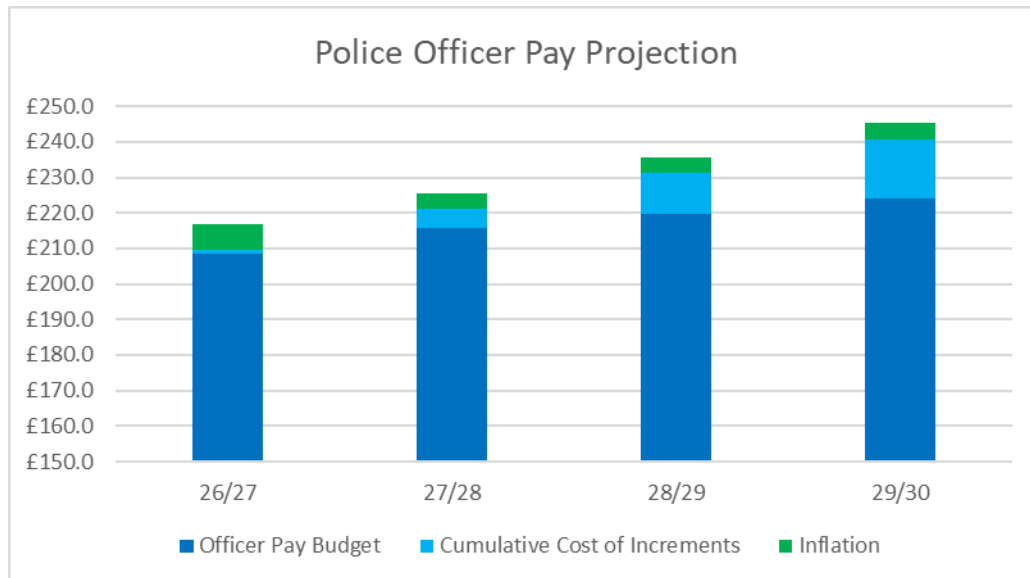
14.8 This MTFS does not assume any change in the proportion of grant funding but will be updated when more information becomes available.

14.9 The financial settlement has resulted in government grants increasing by £7.4m taking account for the reduction of £1.0m for the Additional recruitment grant as part of the Operation Uplift Performance Grant.

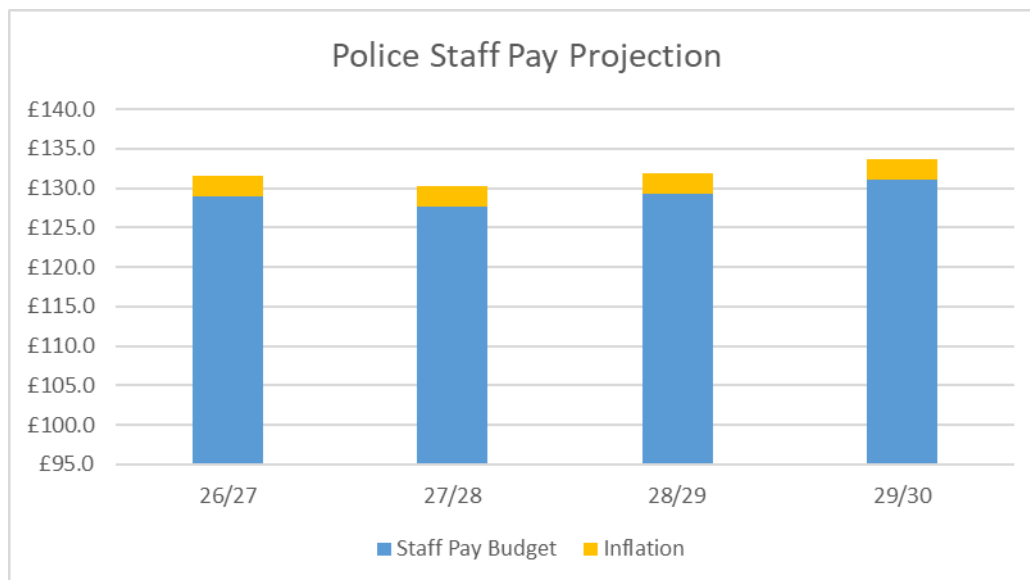
14.10 The additional grant varies from the planning assumption based on information within the Spending Review, the table below sets out the changes to grants and precept.

Grants	2025/26	Planning assumption '2026/27	2026/27 Settlement	Variation to Plan
Core Grant	203.6	203.6	212.0	8.4
Legacy Council Tax Grants	13.2	13.2	13.2	-
Operation Uplift Performance	10.7	10.7	9.7	(1.0)
SR Grant	-	12.7	-	(12.7)
Specific Grants	-	-	-	-
Police Officer Pension Grant	8.4	8.4	8.4	-
National Insurance Grant	5.5	5.5	5.5	-
Neighbourhood Policing Grant	4.3	4.3	4.3	-
Total	245.7	258.4	253.1	(5.3)
Precept - £15 increase on Band D			189.2	0.7
Precept - £14 increase on Band D	177.3	188.5		
Total Funding (Government Grants & Precept)	423.1	446.9	442.3	(4.6)

- 14.11 The provisional financial settlement also provided PCCs with the flexibility to increase their Band D precept level up to £15 for 2026/27 without the need for a Referendum. For planning purposes, a precept increase of £15 has been included in 2026/27 and £14 in 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2% in 2029/30.
- 14.12 The funding settlement is provided to PCCs after some re-allocation of funds to meet Home Office held costs and development projects. The detail of the "Reallocations" is expected to be available in January 2026. In 2025/26 they totalled £914.3m and the MTFS assumption is these remain static in total.
- 14.13 As part of their pledge to increase policing visibility, improve public perceptions of the police, and create safer streets for our communities, the Government provided £200.0m investment for neighbourhood policing in 2025/26, Sussex share was £4.2m and is expected to continue into 2026/27. This funded the recruitment of additional and redeployed neighbourhood police officers, PCSO's and Special Constables in 2025/26 and is part of a multi-year programme. There has been no information on the plan for 2026/27.
- 14.14 **Pay**
- 14.15 The largest proportion of the budget relates to pay for employees. The below charts give the projections of officer pay and staff pay over the next four years along with the inflation proportion each year.
- 14.16 The graph over the page shows the police officer cost projection to 2029/30. It is based on the Home Office Op Uplift headcount maintenance figure. It includes estimated incremental progression throughout the period for all officers, includes turnover and relevant factors and the assumed pay awards.



- 14.17 The staff budget has been adjusted for savings planned for 2026/27 and an assumption of a similar value each year over the next four years.



14.18 **Price Inflation**

- 14.19 Inflation has proved persistent after a sharp rise in prices attributed, variously, to the war in Ukraine, the fallout from the Covid pandemic, and the UK's exit from the European Union.
- 14.20 Rising prices for goods and services and the rate at which they increase is known as inflation. Some goods contribute more to the overall inflation rate than others – if some products see a large increase in prices, while others stay more stable, then inflation would be driven by the changing prices in that spending category. So, how the headline inflation rate affects our budget depends on the categories in which we spend.

- 14.21 Since 2010, the Retail Prices Index (RPI) has risen by 86.1%. This means that goods and services costing £100 in January 2010 would cost roughly £186.10 today, according to this specific measure of inflation. When placed alongside our funding data, it becomes clear that only the local precept has kept pace with inflation, while central government support has fallen dramatically behind in real terms.
- 14.22 Several contractual arrangements and unavoidable costs were identified over and above the level of inflation. These included: increased IT licences and support costs; increased contribution to external police functions such as South East Regional Crime Unit; estate maintenance and insurance premiums.
- 14.23 The increase in police officers because of Operation Uplift was welcome; however, one of the consequences is the incremental pay cost as the police officers move through the pay scale. With such a large intake over the last four years the rate at which the pay bill increases will be more than just the pay inflation each year as shown in the charts from the paragraph above.
- 14.24 **Revenue Implications of the Capital and Investment Programme**
- 14.25 The four-year capital and investment programme is summarised in Capital & Investment Estimates and Financing. The implications of this programme are fully reflected in the MTFS.
- 14.26 Other risks have been considered and are included in the financial risk assessment in Appendix 2.

15 Medium Term Financial Forecast

15.1 The table below illustrates the summary of cost changes. It also includes requirement for future savings to meet the budget requirement to 2029/30.

Sussex Medium Term Financial Forecast					
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
REVENUE COST BASE	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Base budget	396.5	423.7	445.0	460.9	476.4
Inflation	11.4	14.5	12.4	12.0	11.7
Other Cost Changes	16.6	5.3	0.8	2.7	2.8
Total Cost Increases	27.9	22.0	15.3	16.4	15.9
Gross Budget Requirement	424.5	445.7	460.3	477.3	492.3
Savings Plans	(5.0)	(8.5)	(0.1)	-	-
Surplus or (Deficit)	-	-	(1.7)	(1.6)	(10.5)
Gross Budget Requirement	423.7	445.0	460.9	476.4	482.8

Sussex Medium Term Financial Forecast					
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
FUNDING	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Home Office Grant	203.6	212.0	219.2	223.1	223.1
Legacy Council Tax & Pension Grant	13.2	13.2	13.2	13.2	13.2
Operation Uplift					
Performance Grant	7.5	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7
Operation Uplift					
Additional Recruits	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Specific Grant	18.2	18.2	18.2	18.2	18.2
Reserves	1.1	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Precept (including collection fund surplus/deficit)	176.9	189.2	200.6	212.1	218.6
Total	423.7	445.0	460.9	476.4	482.8

16 Savings and Efficiency Plans

16.1 The multi-year change programme continued to deliver complex transformation across Sussex Police during 2024/25. The savings will continue to be required. Savings of £8.5m are required in 2026/27 after the use of reserves to balance the budget and £13.4m in the following three years.

16.2 The table shows the planned efficiency savings for the period of the MTFS, grouped by risk category.

2025/26	Risk	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	4 Year Total
£m		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
(1.4)	Red	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(1.6)	Amber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(1.9)	Green	(8.5)	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	(8.6)
(5.0)	Total	(8.5)	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	(8.6)
(5.0)	MTFS Efficiencies Required	(8.5)	(1.9)	(1.6)	(10.1)	(22.0)
0.0	Net Efficiencies Required over MTFS	0.0	1.7	1.6	10.1	13.4

16.3 Following on from previous years' work to achieve a balanced budget, work is continuing to make further savings.

Service Transformation Programme

16.4 Sussex Police initiated a transformational programme of work in June 2022, in conjunction with Surrey Police, with the aim of addressing a significant forecasted funding gap, at initiation £18.5m for Sussex between 2023/2027. It was clear through early investigation that the force could not close their gap through existing or planned changes, and that a more 'transformational' approach was required if it was to deliver this aim without impacting significantly on service to the public. The programme will conclude in 2026/27.

17 Sustainability

- 17.1 As a public sector organisation, we take our responsibilities to protect the environment seriously. We work in line with UK Government policy and our legal duties, including the UK's legally binding target to reach net zero carbon emissions.
- 17.2 For the public sector, sustainability means using resources responsibly so we can meet today's policing needs while also reducing our environmental impact, saving money, and building a more resilient organisation for the future.
- 17.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) works closely with the Chief Constable to reduce carbon emissions from every aspect of the Sussex Police activities wherever it is operationally and financially appropriate to do so.
- 17.4 To support this work, the Chief Constable employs a dedicated Environmental and Sustainability Manager, whose role is to monitor performance, lead carbon-reduction projects, and encourage environmentally responsible behaviour across our force.

Achievements to Date

- 17.5 Since 2019, we have continued to reduce energy use across the police estate and have now cut the overall carbon emissions by more than a quarter (25.8%).
- 17.6 In 2024, formal reporting of our emissions using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, began. This internationally recognised method for measuring carbon emissions includes not only emissions from our buildings and vehicles, but also our indirect emissions such as those linked to purchases, waste disposal and travel to work (known as Scope 3 emissions).
- 17.7 Electricity consumption reduced by 1.21% in 2024, this may be small but it follows two years of 5% reductions, largely driven by investment in LED lighting across the estate. This programme has now been completed with 95% of our estate now LED, and the associated savings have been achieved. We are now focusing on expanding solar panels across our estate and increasing our reliance on solar energy.
- 17.8 Gas consumption has also reduced by 5.2%, because of better energy management which includes improved control of heating systems and the replacement of older gas boilers with more efficient models.
- 17.9 Cleaner police vehicles. A significant reduction in overall carbon emissions has been achieved by transitioning to petrol, hybrid, and other lower-emission alternatives, which produce less carbon.
- 17.10 This shift reflects national requirements and will continue as we move towards an ULEV (Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle) fleet and prepare for wider use of electric vehicles and hybrids across the public sector. While this transition requires investment, it is essential for long-term carbon reduction and to meet mandated targets.

Looking ahead: future projects

Solar power and battery storage

- 17.11 A total of 21 solar arrays are in operation across the estate. Further generating and storage capacity is being added including a sophisticated 289 photovoltaic (PV) solar panel system at Bognor Police Station, with our first large-scale battery storage capability. This allows excess generated solar electricity and cheaper off peak electricity to be stored for use. This will help to reduce both costs and emissions.
- 17.12 With the addition of the solar arrays at Bognor, we estimate that approximately 9% of our electricity will be generated from renewable sources in 2026, excluding any further planned installations next year
- 17.13 There are plans to install further solar generating capability across the estate in 2026/27.

Water

- 17.14 Water is often overlooked in Net Zero planning and reductions. In large organisations, it's easy to focus on energy and transport, but every drop of water comes with a hidden carbon cost from pumping and treatment to heating and wastewater processing. It is often seen as a victim of climate change when the water sector is responsible for approximately 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. Cutting water use doesn't just save bills; it slashes emissions, boosts climate resilience, and shows real environmental leadership to what is a precious resource.
- 17.15 We have taken steps to use water more efficiently including installing Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) to help detect leaks and unusually high usage. From 2026, further projects to reduce water consumption and improve sustainability such as waterless urinals and water recycling systems will be initiated.

Governance and oversight

- 17.16 Sustainability governance is overseen through the Chief Constable's Environmental Governance Board, with delivery led by our in-house Environmental and Sustainability Manager. This board is linked to the strategic Board for Transport, Estates and ICT. This ensures clear accountability, strong leadership, and continued progress in reducing our environmental impact.

18 Capital Programme – Estimates, Financing and Control

- 18.1 Capital expenditure involves acquiring or enhancing fixed assets with a long-term value such as land, buildings, and major items of plant, equipment or vehicles. Capital assets shape the way services are delivered in the long term and may create financial commitments in the form of financing costs and revenue running costs.
- 18.2 [The Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy](#) set out how the PCC and Chief Finance Officer will manage all borrowing and investment in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance, CIPFA Treasury Management Code and Local Government Act.
- 18.3 The PCC operates a balanced revenue budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties. The priority is to provide adequate security and liquidity before considering optimising investment return.
- 18.4 The second main function of the treasury management activities is the funding of the PCC's capital programme. The capital programme creates in part a borrowing need of the PCC over a longer-term cash flow period. The management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet the PCC risk or cost objectives.
- 18.5 As part of the main Treasury Management function, the Sussex PCC approves the funding envelope taking into consideration affordability and sustainability of the programme as the required costs of the assets have been increased.
- 18.6 The performance of the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy including the Prudential Indicators are monitored by the Joint Audit Committee each quarter.
- 18.7 The Sussex PCC retains treasury advisors to assist with treasury management decisions and support the CFO. They provide strategic advice and forecasts that assist in medium term planning for the financial impacts of the capital programme. With the requirement to borrow to fund longer term assets their advice is valuable and ensures that the type of financing method is appropriate and affordable.
- 18.8 The following describes the key aspects of the capital and investment programme.

Capital & Investment Programme Spending Plans

18.9 The following table summarises the five-year capital and investment programme:

2025/26	Sussex Capital & Investment Programme	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
£m		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
3.80	DDaT - new	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.60	DDaT - existing	2.7	1.8	1.4	1.2	7.2
7.80	Joint Transport Services	7.6	7.7	8.3	8.2	31.8
0.70	Operational Command	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	5.4
1.90	Cost of Change	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
3.50	Estates & Facilities BAU	3.7	2.1	2.0	0.0	7.8
9.70	Sussex Estates Strategy	10.7	22.9	33.0	26.8	93.3
28.00	Total	28.8	35.9	46.0	37.4	148.1

18.10 Note that spending funded by Developer Contributions is not included in the forecast programme but will be brought into the plan when the terms of the contributions are met.

Capital Spending Areas

18.11 Key areas to note in the programme are:

- DDaT (Hardware and Infrastructure Refresh)** - Information and digital technology plays a critical role in the delivery of services to local communities. Investment is required for the replacement and renewal of hardware and other essential IT equipment to maintain operational resilience and service continuity. The Investment is also required to support projects and programmes at national, regional, and local levels. These include initiatives such as the transition to Microsoft Office 365; the development of online self-service platforms enabling the public to access information and non-emergency services at a time and location convenient to them; the migration to cloud-based IT solutions; upgrades to data centre telephony and exchange systems; replacement of mobile data technology; and the implementation of digital evidence management systems. Ongoing investment will also support the continued rollout of devices to frontline staff.
- Joint Transport Services (Vehicles and Equipment)** – The provision of an efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable fleet is essential to the delivery of policing services across the county. The planned vehicle replacement programme, as set out in the Joint Transport Strategy, will continue

throughout the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period in line with the Fleet Strategy. This programme will support the PCC's carbon reduction objectives and deliver efficiencies and savings through changes in service configuration and the increased use of telematics.

- **Operational Commands** – This area covers a range of operational investments. Within the Operations Department, funding includes Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), investment to support strategic roads infrastructure, and other specialist operational equipment, including drones. Further investment within Communications includes enhancements to Command and Control systems, CCTV, and wider communications technology.
- **Estates & Facilities BAU** – This area provides ongoing business-as-usual support for the maintenance, operation, and compliance of the existing Estates and Facilities portfolio, ensuring that buildings remain safe, functional, and fit for purpose. In addition to routine support, capital resources have been allocated for the planned replacement of Mechanical and Electrical assets to maintain asset integrity, reduce the risk of failure, and improve energy efficiency. Funding has also been set aside for custody suite refurbishment to enhance operational resilience, safety, and detainee welfare, as well as for improvements to vehicle infrastructure, including facilities that support fleet efficiency and the transition to lower-emission vehicles.
- **Estates Strategy** – The Estates Strategy aims to provide a modern, efficient, and sustainable estate that supports and enhances the effective delivery of policing services, while ensuring affordability and value for money. The strategy focuses on optimising the use of existing assets, improving the condition and functionality of buildings, and aligning the estate with current and future operational requirements. [The Estates Strategy 2026–2030](#), sets out a clear and prioritised programme of works, including planned maintenance, refurbishment, rationalisation, and investment in key facilities. The strategy will also consider opportunities to improve energy efficiency, reduce running costs, and support environmental sustainability objectives, ensuring the estate remains fit for purpose over the medium term.

Financing the Capital & Investment Programme

- 18.12 The Sussex PCC can undertake capital investment providing the spending plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Capital plans are prepared in accordance with CIPFA's Prudential Code. The PCC expects to require £148.1m to finance the current capital investment plans over the next four years. This will be financed as set out in the table below, noting that plans will be kept under regular review.

2025/26	Capital Funding Summary	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
£m		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
0.0	Government & Other Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.6	Reserve DDaT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1.9	Reserve Cost of Change	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
0.3	Reserve SSRP	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	1.7
3.0	Reserve SES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.3	Revenue Contribution TMS Receipts	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.5
6.9	Revenue Contribution	7.9	8.9	9.9	10.9	37.6
8.9	Capital Receipts	7.0	0.7	3.8	0.0	11.5
2.8	Borrowing Short Term Assets (DDaT, JTS, Ops Command)	1.5	0.1	0.7	-0.8	1.6
1.3	Borrowing for Estates & Facilities BAU	3.7	2.1	2.0	0.0	7.8
0.0	Borrowing Sussex Estates Strategy	3.7	22.1	29.2	26.8	81.8
28.0	Total	28.8	35.9	46.0	37.4	148.1

Government Grant

- 18.13 The Government ceased providing a specific annual grant to support the capital and investment programme in 2022/23.

Capital Receipts

- 18.14 Income from the sale of surplus buildings and land can only be used to fund capital transactions. The anticipated receipts are estimated at £11.5m but are ringfenced for Estates Strategy which means the funding can only be

applied to Estates Strategy projects. As highlighted in the risk assessment these are at risk of not being achieved either in quantum or timing. These risks are mitigated by regular review of all major projects and sales of relevant assets through regular monitoring reports to the PCC.

Borrowing

- 18.15 During 2024/25, the PCC funded the majority of capital investment from internal cash balances. While this approach has been highly cost-effective in reducing external interest costs, it is no longer sustainable over the short to medium term. In December 2021, the PCC prudently secured additional borrowing of £14.3m at a rate of 1.54% to support the Estates Strategy, reflecting a strategic approach to managing long-term capital requirements. Further borrowing will be considered in 2025/26 where necessary, guided by advice from treasury advisers and aligned with the PCC's financial strategy.
- 18.16 Over the next four years, the PCC anticipates a total capital financing requirement of £148.1m, of which £91.2m is expected to be met through external borrowing. This level of investment reflects the strategic priorities for maintaining and modernising the estate, fleet, and operational infrastructure to support effective service delivery.
- 18.17 Given the current elevated interest rate environment (4.48% for 5-year, 5.29% for 20-year, and 5.65% for 30-year PWLB loans as of January 2025), the PCC will consider utilising internal borrowing as a cost-effective and flexible funding option where the refinancing risk and opportunity cost of foregone investment income are favourable. This approach allows the PCC to optimise capital financing, balancing affordability, risk, and long-term financial sustainability. Strategic decisions on borrowing will continue to be informed by the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy, ensuring that all capital investment is financed in a way that supports the PCC's operational priorities and financial resilience. Further details can be found in [The Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy](#).
- 18.18 The estimated costs of borrowing including those that must be set aside as determined by legislation are included in the MTFS.

Revenue

- 18.19 The purchase of shorter life assets will be financed with contributions from the revenue budget.
- 18.20 The Sussex PCC is utilising interest receipts from temporary deposits to fund short term assets that are capitalised. This year is expected to receipt £2.6m in interest from those deposits. (latest forecast produced for the Treasury Management report QTR2 2024).
- 18.21 The financial plan also sets aside an additional £1.0m of the revenue budget each year to meet the cost of short-term assets and minimise the borrowing required.

Reserves

- 18.22 Earmarked reserves set aside for capital purposes will be used to contribute to the capital programme over the term of the MTFS. These one-off funds have been set aside from previous years budgets to reduce the need to borrow and fund capital from revenue.

Developer Contributions

- 18.23 On behalf of the Sussex PCC, the Estates Team has continued working with various Boroughs and District councils across Sussex to secure funding towards new or improved policing infrastructure.
- 18.24 As of December 2025, the PCC had secured £2.7m of agreements; £1.1m pending/undetermined and received £0.387m paid by developers or reimbursed to the PCC via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- 18.25 In the previous year, the PCC was successful in securing CIL funding from the South Downs National Park CIL fund. This project has been fully funded through grants and partner contributions and the works to future-proof the building used by the Coastguard, the Chaplaincy and Sussex Police are now completed.
- 18.26 These contributions are not listed in the financing or expenditure table and will be brought into the capital and investment programme when received.
- 18.27 The UK Infrastructure Bill is currently proceeding through parliament, and its specific proposals regarding developer contributions to blue light services are not yet finalised. However, the bill is expected to focus on several key areas, including:
- Modernising infrastructure planning: The bill aims to streamline the planning process for infrastructure projects, making it easier to obtain necessary approvals and reduce delays.
 - Increasing investment in infrastructure: The government plans to increase investment in infrastructure projects across the UK, including roads, railways, broadband, and energy.
 - Ensuring developers contribute to infrastructure costs: The bill is likely to include provisions that require developers to contribute to the cost of infrastructure projects that are necessary to support their developments. This could include contributions to blue light services, such as fire stations and police stations.

Changes to Planning – White Paper

- 18.28 The White Paper was published in November 2025 and it could have the following impacts:
- Pushes compliant schemes through quickly releasing larger land for development.
 - Fuels recovery quicker from housing led demand.
 - Increases housing supply at pace.

- Will increase the supply of affordable housing (without major change in public grant injection)
- Will encourage some developers to go for complaint schemes then re-submit subsequent applications based on consent already in place – perhaps reducing affordable housing (Berkeley Homes model).
- Will mean the smaller and challenging sites of size will all go to committee (as they are unlikely to be able to offer the full affordable housing provision).
- Potentially removes the politics of local planning committees on many schemes – which are often rejected, despite being policy compliant on minor grounds which can be overcome.
- Will place a major pressure on local authorities being able to process and consent compliant application at pace – when a national shortage of planning officers is evident.
- Will potentially lessen political planning agenda's impacts on a regional and local levels.

18.29 For the PCC and the transformation plans the following are worthy of note:

- Will increase land value as part of wider recovery.
- We have already agreed via the Summer Estate Board to seek 'policy compliant' offers from bidders – plus non-compliant.
- We need to ensure our 'disposal sites' are clearly defined in the local plans. We have been pushing this already, having done this across Shoreham; Centenary and Chichester sites with the local authorities.
- Consider on the smaller sites affordable housing providers being the preferred bidders.

Monitoring of the Capital Programme – Prudential Indicators

18.30 The CIPFA Prudential Code is a professional code of practice to support local authorities in taking decisions relating to capital investment in fixed assets. Local authorities, including police and crime commissioners and fire authorities, are required to have regard to the Code under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. The basic principle of the system is that local authorities will be free to invest so long as their capital spending plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent.

18.31 To demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the Code, authorities must produce a range of key Prudential Indicators. The Code does not suggest indicative limits or ratios for these indicators, which are designed to support and record local decision making and are not intended to be used for comparative purposes.

18.32 These key indicators can be split into two broad categories, affordability indicators and prudence indicators. Affordability indicators concentrate upon the level of capital investment over the period 2025/26 to 2028/29. Prudential indicators concentrate on the level and composition of external debt and are therefore very closely linked to the PCC's Treasury Management Strategy.

- 18.33 The Prudential Code introduced in 2018/19 no longer specifies prudential indicators or thresholds. The PCC for Sussex has continued to apply prudential indicators as a best practice approach.
- 18.34 The PCC's proposed Prudential Indicators are shown at Appendix C to this report and the Capital Strategy will be published in March with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).
- 18.35 The PCC and the Chief Constable monitor monthly the capital spend and its funding throughout the financial year. In addition, the CFO reports quarterly on the Treasury Management Reports and Prudential Indicators to the JAC (Joint Audit Committee) which scrutinises the affordability and sustainability of the capital programme.

Minimum Revenue Provision

- 18.36 Regulations came into effect from March 2008 regarding preparing an Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement. MRP is the amount that needs to be set aside to reflect the depreciation of capital assets. There are no proposed changes to the method used to calculate MRP and the Annual MRP statement for 2026/27 is attached at Appendix D.

19 Reserves

19.1 Background Information on Reserves

- 19.1.1 Strategic Importance. Revenue and capital reserves are vital for both immediate stability and long-term financial health. Although these are non-recurring funds, they act as a "financial safety net." In line with industry best practices, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) determines appropriate reserve levels based on local requirements and the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO) expert advice.
- 19.1.2 Statutory Requirements. Maintaining reserves is a legal mandate. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, authorities must ensure they hold sufficient funds to cover estimated future costs when setting budgets. To comply, the CFO must provide a formal statement confirming that the proposed reserve levels are adequate.
- 19.1.3 Home Office Compliance. [The Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice](#) requires PCCs to:
- Establish a clear policy on how reserves will be managed and used.
 - Provide detailed transparency on how these policies operate locally.
 - Include a realistic "operational contingency" in the annual budget, allowing the Chief Constable to address immediate priorities without seeking further approval.
 - Maintain a mechanism for carrying budget balances forward between financial years.
- 19.1.4 The Four Purposes of Reserves. We maintain resource-backed reserves for four primary reasons:
- Working Balances: To manage cash flow fluctuations and avoid the costs of temporary borrowing (General Reserves).
 - Emergency Funding: To provide a cushion against unexpected events or crises (General Reserves).
 - Risk Management: To cover specific liabilities, such as insurance claims.
 - Earmarked Funds: To save for known future projects or predicted requirements; these are tracked separately but remain part of the legal reserve.
- 19.1.5 The CFO has a duty to local taxpayers to ensure public funds are managed responsibly. Within the legal framework, the CFO must advise on the necessary level of reserves and establish clear protocols for their use. Reserves must always have a defined, transparent purpose.
- 19.1.6 A well-managed PCC ensures that reserves are not just "adequate" to cover risks but are also "necessary." Funds should not be held if there is no justifiable reason for doing so.
- 19.1.7 While there is often pressure to compare reserve levels nationally, the appropriate amount can only be determined by assessing local risks, pressures, and circumstances.

- 19.1.8 Robust risk management can reduce the need for high reserve levels. By successfully mitigating or removing risks, the PCC may be able to lower the required balance. The budget process should aim to find the right balance between maintaining high reserves and investing those funds into risk-reduction measures.

19.2 **Review of Reserves**

- 19.2.1 Frequency and Visibility In line with CIPFA guidance (LAAP Bulletin No. 99) and statutory codes, reserves are reviewed twice a year. Regular reviews ensure that reserve levels remain transparent and that their strategic use remains a central part of the decision-making process.

- 19.2.2 Review Schedule To maintain high standards of financial governance, the adequacy of reserves is assessed at two key points in the year:

- Spring (April/May): During the preparation of the annual Statement of Accounts.
- Autumn (November/December): During the development of the annual budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

- 19.2.3 **Riot Compensation.** Last year a review of the potential implications of claims under the Riot Compensation Act 2016 was completed and concluded that the General Fund reserves are sufficient to cover the costs of a single riot event. Should a significant event occur, the PCC will re-evaluate the risk and the need for future external insurance. There is no change to this risk assessment in this iteration of the MTFS.

19.3 **Sussex Reserves**

- 19.3.1 The PCC must retain adequate reserves so that unexpected budget pressures can be met without having a detrimental impact on normal day to day operational activities. The PCC's policy on reserves is based on a thorough understanding of the organisation's needs and risks. Part of this process is to give a clear explanation of the existing and proposed use of reserves. The detailed reserves policy can be found in Appendix A and summarised over the page.

19.3.2 The PCC plans to maintain the general reserve at the 4% of net budget requirement in line with the Reserves Strategy. Specific reserves are only employed for expected risks, for example the Insurance Reserve to meet actuary-assessed claims against Sussex Police.

Table – Summary of Reserves

*estimated	2026/27	2027/28	2027/28	2027/28
	£m*	£m*	£m*	£m*
General Reserve	17.7	18.4	19.1	19.3
Earmarked Reserves				
Insurance Reserve	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Capital & Investment Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asset Seizures Reserve	-	-	-	-
Delegated Budget Holder Reserve	12.8	9.7	8.1	8.0
Sussex Safer Roads Reserve	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Change Management Reserve	8.7	6.7	4.7	4.0
ICT Reserve	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Earmarked Reserves	26.8	21.8	18.2	17.3
TOTAL RESERVES	44.5	40.2	37.2	36.6

19.4 Movement in Reserve Balances

19.4.1 The following tables provide the expected movement and balances on each reserve categorised across the statutory headings set by the Home Office and a summary table.

Reserves	2026/27 Forecast £m	2027/28 Forecast £m	2028/29 Forecast £m	2029/30 Forecast £m
Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current MTFS:				
Delegated Budget Holder Reserve brought forward	17.5	12.8	9.7	8.1
to Revenue Budget	(4.8)	(3.0)	(1.7)	(0.1)
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	12.8	9.7	8.1	8.0
Capital & Investment Reserve brought forward	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
to Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Change Management Reserve brought forward	10.6	8.7	6.7	4.7
to Revenue Budget	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(0.7)
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	8.7	6.7	4.7	4.0

Reserves	2026/27 Forecast £m	2027/28 Forecast £m	2028/29 Forecast £m	2029/30 Forecast £m
Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current MTFS planning period:				
Asset Seizure Reserve brought forward	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
to Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ICT Reserve brought forward	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
to Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Sussex Safer Roads Reserve brought forward	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
to Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
from Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance carry forward	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

Reserves	2026/27 Forecast £m	2027/28 Forecast £m	2028/29 Forecast £m	2028/29 Forecast £m
General contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial				
Insurance Reserve brought forward	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
to Revenue Budget (to settle claims)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)
from Revenue budget to meet future liabilities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Balance carry forward	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
General Reserve brought forward	16.9	17.7	18.4	19.1
to Revenue Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
from Revenue Budget	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.3
Balance carry forward	17.7	18.4	19.1	19.3
General Reserves percentage of Net Budget Requirement	4%	4%	4%	4%

Total Opening Balance of Reserves	50.5	44.5	40.2	37.2
Total Planned Use of Reserves	-7.2	-5.5	-4.1	-1.3
Total Additions to Reserves	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.8
Total Closing Balance of Reserves	44.5	40.2	37.2	36.6

19.5 Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current MTFS:

19.5.1 The Capital and Investments Reserve is used to support planned one-off and non-recurring expenditure of a capital or revenue nature in line with investment and replacement plans included within the MTFS. This is dependent on the financing requirements of the capital plans included within the relevant asset strategies e.g. the future IT Strategy, the Estates Strategy and the Joint Transport Vehicles Strategy.

19.5.2 The Capital Receipts Reserve contains receipts from the sale of assets which can be used to finance future capital expenditure. The Capital Receipts received in-year will be applied to fund capital expenditure in year. The balance is zero at this time and so the reserve is not shown.

19.5.3 The Delegated Budget Holder Reserve (DBHR) holds a proportion of balances that have arisen from underspend on the annual revenue budget or a surplus from the collection fund. Underspend transfers to the reserve are agreed annually with the PCC as part of the final outturn and movements in year are agreed by exception. This reserve is then available to support planned expenditure in the following financial year.

19.5.4 Change Management Reserve has been created to meet the expenditure

required for change projects that replace obsolete technical and digital platforms and systems that are essential to policing.

19.5.5 The Delegated Budget Holder Reserve and the Change Management Reserve are being deployed throughout the term of the MTFS to fund expected financial demands, some of which are outlined as follows:

- An Estate Strategy Review has been completed and a new [Estates Strategy was published in 2025](#). This includes rationalisation and modernisation of the estate. The estate maintenance work focuses on essential and statutory works only due to budgetary restraints. The cost to maintain old and obsolete buildings will continue to rise and not be efficient. It is also a recruitment and retention factor for our employees to be able to operate in a suitable working environment.
- The Estates Strategy will include a costed plan that will require investment, without recourse to the operational revenue or capital budgets, we have the Delegated Budget Holder Reserve which will play a part in meeting that investment.
- The IT infrastructure requires modernisation, it is costing more each year to service and maintain the aged systems, many systems have reached obsolescence and therefore must be replaced. The modernisation work is in progress however some developments are in the formulation stage and when finalised will be included in the costed IT Strategy, with the expectation that significant investment will be needed.

19.6 Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current MTFS planning period:

19.6.1 The Asset Seizure Reserve holds the balance of income received from the Home Office in respect of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). These monies are to be used during the year following receipt in accordance with Home Office guidance subject to the pre-agreed contingency balance to cover 12 months of costs of the agreed number of financial investigators. The reserve is reviewed on an annual basis and any balance not applied in year is carried forward in this reserve.

19.6.2 ICT Reserve holds a small balance received grant monies from the Home Office for support to charges for licence costs.

19.6.3 The Sussex Safer Roads Reserve is where the PCC holds the balance of any resources on behalf of the Sussex Police Safer Roads activities.

19.7 General contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management:

19.7.1 The Insurance Reserve is maintained for potential liabilities and costs which fall onto the PCC where no external insurance cover is arranged by or available to the PCC. Potential liabilities include storm damage, business interruption and claims that would fall within the PCC's policy excess limits.

19.7.2 It is a requirement that an annual audit of all liabilities relating to the Fund is

carried out by an external actuary / firm of actuaries. The last review for Sussex Police was completed on data to 31 March 2025.

- 19.7.3 The review concluded that the balance of the reserve of £2.3m along with a separate provision on the balance sheet is adequate.
- 19.7.4 The General Reserves reserve is set aside for unexpected events or emergencies and provides a working cash balance to help with the impact of uneven cash flows and to avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
- 19.7.5 The General Reserve on 1 April 2026 is estimated to be £17.7m. This meets one of the key principles of the MTFS: to seek to maintain the general reserve at a minimum of 4% of the net revenue budget. This includes 1% available to the Chief Constable for operational priorities without the need for additional approval. Due to the increase in the size of the budget the reserve level has been established at 4% of the estimated budget in 2027/28. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the minimum of 4% of net revenue budget is maintained. The closing general reserve in March 2030 is estimated to be £19.3m which is 4% of the projected net revenue budget.

20 Indicative Budget Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

- 20.1 All the known budget pressures, budget savings, funding assumptions and proposed use of reserves outlined earlier in this Strategy are summarised below, to show an overall position for the Group representing the combined budget forecasts for the PCC and Chief Constable. Having considered the savings proposals and the availability of reserves to support the medium term plan an important consideration is the precept proposal for 2026/27.
- 20.2 In common with other policing bodies the MTFS includes a financial planning assumption that an increase in the precept will be included in each year of the MTFS. PCCs were given the opportunity to increase the Band D precept by £15 in 2023/24, £13 in 24/25, £14 in 2025/26 and a limit has been set for 2026/27, the proposal includes a Band D precept increase of £15 and has been included in the table below. The final years (2027/28 and 2028/29 include an increase on Band D of £14 with 2029/30 at a 2% increase). The actual precept decision can still only be determined by the PCC on an annual basis considering all the factors.
- 20.3 The key medium term financial forecast planning assumptions are summarised in the following table:

Assumption		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Capital Grant	£m	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Home Office Grants		7.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Uplift Performance Grant	£m	£7.5	£9.7	£9.7	£9.7	£9.7
Neighbourhood Policing Grant	£m	£4.3	£4.3	£4.3	£4.3	£4.3
SR Grant	£m	£0.0		£7.2	£3.9	£0.0
Precept	%	5.5%	5.6%	5.0%	4.7%	2.0%
Precept	£	£14	£15	£14	£14	£6.20
Band D		£266.91	£281.91	£295.91	£309.91	£316.11
Tax base increase		1.88%	1.00%	*	*	1.00%
Collection Surplus/(Deficit) Net	£m	(0.4)	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Police Staff Pension Employer Contribution rate		18.0%	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Police Officer Pension Employer Contribution rate 2		35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%
Police Officer pay inflation 1		5%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Police Officer pay contingency		0.8%				
Police Staff pay inflation 1		5%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Assumption		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Police Officer pay contingency		0.8%				
South East Allowance		£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000
General Price inflation		2.2%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Income - Fees & Charges 3			Increased in accordance with NPCC and other indices each year			
Income – Specific Grants 4			Based on grants awarded			
General Reserve		4% NBR minimum	4% NBR minimum	4% NBR minimum	4% NBR minimum	4% NBR minimum
Vacancy Rates - Police Officer		1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Vacancy Rates - Police Staff		10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Vacancy Rates - PCSO		5%	5%	5%	5%	5%

*1 – for the pay award period September – March

*2 – The Police Pension Scheme rate was increased from 2024/25 to 35.3% which was funded by the Home Office.

*3 – Income from fees & charges includes a wide range of income sources including income from the criminal records bureau, local partnerships, alarms and CCTV maintenance, sports events including football, vehicle sales, mutual aid, boarding up services, accident reports, certificate charges, training income, firearms income, court costs awarded and rental income. Due to the variable nature of these sources of income the budget where some sources will increase and others will reduce, a prudent assumption has been taken to maintain the income levels over the MTFS period. Sussex Police will however seek to maximise income generation opportunities through its commercial focus.

*4 – Income from specific grants includes the government grants for PFI and dedicated security posts.

20.4 The Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) for the total Police Fund budget position is set out below.

	Group Budget Forecast				
2025/26		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
£m	REVENUE COST BASE	£m	£m	£m	£m
396.525	Base budget	424.523	444.972	460.919	476.403
11.380	Inflation	14.497	12.424	12.034	11.686
20.771	Growth Pressures	12.199	3.244	3.335	3.757
0.000	New Investment	2.252	2.135	1.672	1.436
(4.986)	Savings Plans	(8.500)	(0.130)	0.000	0.000
0.000	Savings Requirement	0.000	(1.726)	(1.557)	(10.483)
27.165	Total Budget Changes	20.449	15.946	15.484	6.396
423.689	Total Budget	444.972	460.919	476.403	482.799

2025/26		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
£m	FUNDING	£m	£m	£m	£m
203.597	Main Policing & RS Grant	212.000	219.200	223.100	223.100
	Council Tax Grant				
10.140	Support Grant	10.140	10.140	10.140	10.140
	Legacy Council Tax				
3.062	Freeze Grant	3.062	3.062	3.062	3.062
	Police Officer Pension				
8.440	Grant	8.440	8.440	8.440	8.440
5.503	National Insurance Grant	5.503	5.503	5.503	5.503
4.297	Neighbourhoods Grant	4.297	4.297	4.297	4.297
	Operation Uplift				
7.521	Performance Grant	9.700	9.700	9.700	9.700
	Operation Uplift				
3.161	Additional Recruits	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
177.340	Precept	189.179	200.560	212.149	218.556
	Collection Fund Surplus /				
(0.422)	Deficit	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
422.639	Net Budget Requirement	442.322	460.903	476.392	482.799
	Reserves				
0.000	General Reserves	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
1.394	Cost of Change Reserve	2.650	0.016	0.011	0.000
	Other Earmarked				
(0.343)	Reserves	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
423.689	Total Funding	444.972	460.919	476.403	482.799

20.5 The Group budget forecast set out above shows how, after the planned use of reserves, savings and the precept, there is a funding gap for the period of the MTFS 2026/27 to 2029/30, which will require further savings of £13.8m to meet the key principle of the PCC's Strategy in that overall expenditure will be delivered within a sustainable budget over the medium term.

20.6 The budget includes resources made available from the proposed 2026/27 precept increase of £15 per annum per Band D. This will be used to mitigate the cost pressures outlined in section 14 and to maintain the significant previous investments to deliver a quality service to Sussex residents.

20.7 The MTFF budget forecast for the police fund is set out below:

2025-26 £m	Chief Constable	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	2028-29 £m	2029-30 £m
236.605	Police Officer Pay	247.690	254.972	261.940	268.370
114.417	Police Staff Pay	115.595	118.649	121.923	124.871
13.164	PCSO Pay	13.712	14.171	14.612	15.064
8.255	Other Employee Costs	8.255	8.255	8.255	8.255
372.441	Total Pay Costs	385.253	396.047	406.730	416.561
15.611	Buildings & Premises	17.274	18.105	19.105	20.105
5.953	Transport Costs	5.983	5.983	5.983	5.983
57.327	Supplies & Services	64.695	67.045	71.046	69.903
78.891	Total Non-Pay Costs	87.952	91.133	96.134	101.323
(44.348)	Income & Grants	(44.348)	(44.348)	(44.348)	101.323
406.983	Base Operational Delivery Budget	428.856	442.832	458.515	473.535
	Investment Proposed	4.500	6.000	6.000	6.000
	Savings Plans	(8.500)	(8.630)	(8.630)	(8.630)
	Savings Requirement	0.000	(1.726)	(3.283)	(13.372)
406.983	Operational Delivery Budget	424.856	438.476	452.602	457.533

2025-26 £m	Office of the PCC	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	2028-29 £m	2029-30 £m
0.126	Police & Crime Commissioner	0.126	0.129	0.133	0.136
1.906	Office of the PCC	2.026	2.081	2.133	2.186
1.693	Community Safety	1.732	1.736	1.740	1.745
6.865	Victims & Restorative Justice	5.972	5.972	5.972	5.972
0.197	Immediate Justice	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
4.262	OPCC Projects	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
(6.460)	Grant Income (Victims)	(5.564)	(5.564)	(5.564)	(5.564)
(4.262)	Grant Income (Projects)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
4.327	Total Income & Expenditure	4.292	4.354	4.414	4.475
12.379	Financial Provisions	15.824	18.088	19.387	20.791
0.000	Treasury Management Interest	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
12.379	Total Provisions	15.824	18.088	19.387	20.791
16.706	Total OPCC Budget	20.116	22.443	23.800	25.266
423.689	Gross Budget before Reserves	444.972	460.919	476.403	482.799
0.000	Transfer to / (from) General Reserves	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
0.000	Transfer to / (from) Other Earmarked Reserves	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
(1.539)	Transfer to / (from) Cost of Change Reserve	(2.650)	(0.016)	0.000	0.000
(1.539)	Total Reserves	(2.650)	(0.016)	0.000	0.000
15.167	Total PCC Controlled Budgets after Reserves	17.465	22.427	23.800	25.266

422.151	TOTAL POLICE FUND AFTER RESERVES	442.322	460.903	476.403	482.799
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- 20.8 The PCC budget includes the direct costs of PCC remuneration, travel and subsistence.
- 20.9 The 'Office of the PCC' includes salary and associated costs of the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and any other staff employed to support the PCC as well as office-running costs. It also includes other statutory local policing body costs such as internal and external audit, banking and treasury management, the costs of the Joint Audit Committee and misconduct tribunals for example.
- 20.10 Further details of the work that the team carries out to support the PCC and the corporation sole can be found on the [Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's website at this link](#). In addition the Annual Report provides a detailed summary of the work of the Office and the activities completed.
- 20.11 **Community Safety**
- 20.12 The PCC continues to support Community Safety initiatives and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across Sussex through the dedicated Community Safety Budget. It is planned that the current total allocation will remain over the period of the MTFS.
- 20.13 The budget also includes the Safer in Sussex Community Fund (SISCF) which provides financial support to local community groups, voluntary and third-sector organisations which are working to reduce crime, improve community safety and help people recover from the impact of crime. The PCC will continue to develop and grow this market to provide services which meet the needs of communities and help to keep Sussex safe.
- 20.14 **Victim Services Budget Strategy 2026/27**
- 20.15 In 2024/25, our support services received nearly 50,000 referrals. With demand rising across all areas this year, we anticipate further growth throughout 2026/27.
- 20.16 For the financial year 2026/27 the Victim Services team are requesting a total budget allocation of £5,972,901.31
- Victims of Crime
- 20.17 This funding ensures we meet contractual obligations with the specialist providers Victim Support (multi-crime), Survivors' Network (sexual violence), Veritas Justice (stalking), and Sussex Pathways (restorative justice).
- 20.18 Aligned with the Police and Crime Plan, the Government's VAWG strategy and local needs assessment, commission a range of specialist support services such as:
- 20.19 Advocacy & Casework: IDVAs (including stalking specialists), ISVAs (including children's specialists), specialist caseworkers, and support for those impacted by child-to-parent abuse.
- 20.20 Recovery & Wellbeing: Peer support groups, counselling, and therapeutic services.

- 20.21 Legal Support: Pro bono legal advice for domestic abuse victims
- 20.22 Manage the Safe Space Sussex Scheme, a county-wide scheme, maintaining a network of nearly 300 secure locations for those feeling unsafe in public.

High Harm Perpetrator Programme

- 20.23 We will continue funding interventions for high-risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking. This programme addresses persistent, complex behaviours through tailored Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions and Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions (COBI).

Value for Money

- 20.24 Manage the Safe Space Funding Network, a preferred supplier list of providers who have passed rigorous due diligence. To ensure long-term sustainability and quality, the team provides:
- 20.25 Regular Engagement: Weekly updates to all network members.
- 20.26 Capacity Building: Two annual training and networking events to share best practices and enhance management skills.

Provisions, Treasury and Reserves

- 20.27 Financial provisions include the revenue and financing costs of the capital programme, interest receivable on cash balances and the pay and price contingency. They have been updated to include the costs of financing the proposed capital and investment plans.
- 20.28 Investment and borrowing are managed via the [PCC's Treasury Management Strategy](#) which is approved annually in March following a review by the Joint Audit Committee.
- 20.29 The PCC is responsible for the management of all reserves and the reserves strategy has been explained elsewhere in this MTFS.

21 Risk Assessment

- 21.1 The MTFS contains the most up to date information at the time of drafting but the PCC's financial position is dynamic. A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital and investment budget-setting process to ensure all risks and uncertainties affecting the PCC's financial position are identified.
- 21.2 The PCC faces several significant financial pressures that will affect the position over the medium term. An assessment of the likelihood and impact of potential risks has been undertaken and the management controls in place are detailed in Appendix B.
- 21.3 Strategic risks are monitored and managed throughout the year on the risk register with oversight by the Joint Audit Committee.

Risk Assessment and Adequacy of Reserves

- 21.4 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to undertake an assessment of the robustness of the annual budget and the adequacy of reserves. That assessment and a statement will be included in the key decision annual budget and precept report 2025/26.
- 21.5 The CFO has applied the same principles used to undertake the assessment of the 2026/27 budget to the following three years of the MTFS.
- 21.6 In assessing the robustness of the budgets and forecasts, the CFO will consider the following issues:
- The general financial standing of the PCC.
 - The underlying budget assumptions, including an assessment of the major estimates including pay and price increases.
 - The future budget pressures identified including changes to pension scheme contributions.
 - A risk assessment of expenditure and income estimates including adequacy of budget monitoring and financial reporting arrangements (See Appendix B).
 - The impact of the police grant settlement and of subsequent anticipated future settlements including any change to the grant allocation method.
 - The precept and planned increases.
 - The adequacy of the budget monitoring and financial reporting arrangements.
 - The adequacy of the PCC's governance arrangements and internal control system including the risk management system.
 - The adequacy of general reserves to cover any potential financial risks faced by the PCC.
 - Compliance with the MRP rules and with the Prudential Code.

22 Public Engagement and Consultation

- 22.1 In 2025 the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner carried out a range of surveys and public engagement activities, including attendance at events around the county and online and face to face discussions with Parish and District councillors and clerks.
- 22.2 As we have for the past 13 years, we have used every available channel and platform to listen to residents, business and visitors to hear about their experiences and concerns about crime and community safety, as well as their interactions with Sussex Police.
- 22.3 We have conducted our regular Safer in Sussex survey using the same question set from previous years for comparison and we received 3,144 responses.
- 22.4 During the year, the PCC maintained her commitment to maximum accessibility and transparency through regular media interviews, through articles and press notices and continued to webcast monthly Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAMs) with the Chief Constable and her senior team.
- 22.5 From April 2025 through to December 2025, the work of the Sussex PCC and her office was featured in over 400 articles in all media, averaging one piece every day of the year or seven each week. The audience for this measured 760,000 and the coverage was 94% positive.
- 22.6 During the same period our digital platforms achieved a reach of 769,735. We communicated to the public through 454,770 emails sent via our newsletter system. Our correspondence team received 2,208 letters or emails, averaging 42 a week.
- 22.7 Our office and the PCC attended or hosted 23 events ranging from tool marking events for traders and farmers to fresher's fairs, Veterans Groups, Youth Ambassador training and several Pubwatch schemes.
- 22.8 As in previous years, our office also held 20 discussions with parish, district and borough councillors and clerks from Chichester, to Rye, with our most recent focus group in January hearing from ward representatives and councillors across Brighton and Hove.
- 22.9 A new development for 2025 was communication with a people's panel of around 900 residents who have started to respond to our "Your Sussex Your Say" thematic polls.
- 22.10 A key component of our annual survey approach is a demographically representative survey of Sussex residents on their experience of crime, their perceptions of community safety and satisfaction with Sussex Police. We commissioned an independent survey of 2500 Sussex residents by professional polling company Habit 5 and included questions which asked if residents and eligible taxpayers would be prepared to pay any more in their council tax.
- 22.11 54% of council taxpayers supported a rise in the police precept. This

compares with 53% two years ago and 57% last year.

- 22.12 There were 2,469 fully completed surveys delivering a robust sample of residents across all districts, age groups, gender and Socio-economic status.
- 22.13 A confidence interval of plus or minus 1.97 meant that had we been able to survey every Sussex resident, the answer to a given question would fall within plus or minus 1.97% of the actual research result on 95 occasions out of 100. This compares with confidence intervals of plus or minus 3.00-4.00 which is the national average for polls regularly used by national UK media.
- 22.14 Council taxpayers who stated awareness of Katy Bourne as the current Sussex PCC are 18% more likely to support an increase in the precept with 64% expressing support.
- 22.15 This independent survey provided some key metrics as follows:
- Survey completion rate is up 11% from last year.
 - The mean safety rating for Sussex had increased from 6.70 to 6.81.
 - Awareness of support services for victims of crime has increased by 5% on last year from 22% to 27%
 - The percentage of Sussex residents satisfied or very satisfied with Sussex Police has increased by 8% on last year from 46% to 54%.
- 22.16 Since 2018, Sussex residents have supported increases in the precept to deliver additional frontline officers and to rebuild neighbourhood policing and solve more crime. The inadequate Government grant settlement for Sussex Police this year threatens to undermine this progress.

Mark Streater
Chief Executive, Office of the PCC

Jo Shiner
Chief Constable

Iain McCulloch
Chief Finance Officer, Office of the PCC

Peter Appleton
Chief Finance Officer,
Sussex Police

Contact: Iain McCulloch, Chief Finance Officer
Email: Iain.McCulloch@sussex-pcc.gov

APPENDIX A - RESERVES POLICY

Reserve		Level or Target
Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current MTFS:		
Capital and Investment Reserve	To support planned one-off and non-recurring investments of a capital and revenue nature. Change management initiatives providing support for implementing cost-saving initiatives. Financing asset replacement plans and commitments.	In line with investment and replacement plans included within MTFF and dependent on financing requirements of the Capital Strategy. Funded from: approved in year revenue budget surplus; transfers from other reserves; specific approved contributions.
Delegated Budget Holder Reserve	Under and overspendings on the PCC's and Chief Constable's revenue budgets are managed via this reserve in accordance with the PCC's carry-forward policy.	Agreed annually by the PCC as part of the final outturn.
Capital Receipts Reserve	This reserve holds the proceeds from the sale of assets and can only be used for financing capital expenditure in accordance with regulations.	Receipts from the sale of assets are taken to this reserve.
Change Reserve	Has been created to meet the expenditure required for change projects that improve the service / improve efficiency.	Specific reserve set up during 2022/23 to be released over the MTFS period.
Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current MTFS planning period:		
Asset Seizure Reserve	Balance of Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) income received but not spent during the year to be used in accordance with Home Office guidance.	Target level of 12 months costs of financial investigators.
ICT Reserve	Holds the Sussex allocation of the £20m funding provided to meet the additional ICT licensing costs transferred from the Home Office to England and Wales PCC's.	Based on sum allocated.
Sussex Safer Roads Reserve	Balance of funding for the Sussex Safer Roads reserve. The reserve is the balance of cumulative financial year surpluses and deficits. This reserve can be used to finance capital or revenue expenditure for road safety. The level of this reserve may fluctuate year on year as under-spends are transferred in.	Variable based on workplan.

APPENDIX A (continued)

General contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management:		
General Reserve	Provides a working balance to cover day to day cash flow requirements and to cover exceptional unforeseen financial and operational risks. The target level of the reserve is reviewed as part of the annual budget setting process. 1% is available to the Chief Constable for operational priorities without the need for additional approval, subject to financial regulations.	4% of Net Revenue Expenditure Budget as of 31 March each year.
Insurance Reserve	Provides for the self-funding of certain uninsurable risks, such as payments of compensation or damages and claims up to the excess level. This Reserve is funded from revenue or transfers from other reserves and adjusted annually, following an independent actuarial review, to reflect inflation and up to date risk management information. To improve consistency in funding claims, there is a need to split claims between a provision on the balance sheet for the cost of claims received and outstanding; and funds held in the reserve to cover claims incurred but not received or quantified. Claims that have been reported and assessed as more likely to be settled are carried as a financial provision whilst known incidents where no claim has yet been made, are covered by the insurance reserve. The revenue account is used to meet any in-year liabilities if they arise. Any year-end variance in the revenue claims budget will not normally be met from or transferred to the general budget but transferred to/from the insurance Reserve. The level of the reserve is reviewed annually.	Assessed as part of the annual insurance actuarial review.

APPENDIX B - FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER



Joint Risks 2025-26
Master for Appendix E

Updated and published when the final settlement is confirmed.

APPENDIX C – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

The Police and Crime Commissioner sets the following prudential indicators as best practice before the beginning of each financial year:

- 1) an operational limit for borrowing to reflect the likely level of borrowing required.
- 2) an authorised limit for borrowing based on an assessment of realistic risk.
- 3) the maximum to be borrowed at fixed rates.
- 4) the maximum to be borrowed at variable rates; and
- 5) the maximum to be invested for a year or longer.

It is recommended that the operational limit be set at £38.6m for 2025/26, based on the current position regarding debt outstanding and the spending and financing plans included in the draft capital programme.

It is possible that the Police and Crime Commissioner may also need to borrow temporarily for cash flow management purposes, pending receipt of income, or to meet a large expenditure flow, or to avoid withdrawing short term investments, where interest rate effects would be detrimental. Longer term borrowing is also planning to support the capital programme. It is recommended therefore that an authorised limit for borrowing of £61.7m should be approved for 2026/27, to encompass the above operational limit and an additional £15m for temporary borrowing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has long-term debt and would normally expect to borrow at fixed rates and therefore it is recommended that the limit on fixed rate debt be set to match the authorised borrowing limit. Because of market circumstances it may be advantageous to defer long-term borrowing at fixed rates for a period. The alternative would be to borrow at variable rates in the short-term and therefore it is recommended that a 25% limit should be set for 2026/27.

The Chief Finance Officer will continue to deposit surplus cash funds in accordance with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

The Local Government Act 2003 also requires the setting of prudential ratios and limits in accordance with the requirements of the "CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities". The Code, which is based largely on self-regulation, sets out the indicators that it expects authorities to use, and the factors that they must consider, to demonstrate that their plans are prudent, sustainable, and affordable. It does not, however, include suggested, indicative limits or ratios. These are to be set by each individual Police and Crime Commissioner. Details of the recommended ratios and limits, required by the Code are summarised in the following table:

APPENDIX: Prudential Code Indicators for TMSS 2026-27

	Budget 2025/26	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29	Estimate 2029/30
Impact of Capital Plans on Council Tax						
Impact on Council Tax (Band D Equivalent)	266.91	266.91	281.91	295.91	309.91	316.11
Taxbase Increase	5.54%	5.54%	5.62%	4.97%	4.73%	2.00%

Financial	Budget 2025/26 £000	Estimate 2025/26 £000	Estimate 2026/27 £000	Estimate 2027/28 £000	Estimate 2028/29 £000	Estimate 2029/30 £000
Capital Expenditure (excluding leasing and PFI)	28,038	19,001	28,781	35,927	46,020	37,392
Capital Financing Requirement (Inc PFI & Leases) at 31 March	33,566	37,432	40,454	57,780	82,041	100,415
Authorised Borrowing Limit (Actual Debt/Op' borrow limit + £15m)	53,601	58,046	61,523	81,447	109,347	130,477
Operational Boundary (total l/t borrowing + 15%)	38,601	43,046	46,523	66,447	94,347	115,477
Net Borrowing	1,995	(4,403)	2,631	24,270	52,191	74,074
Financing costs	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Net revenue Stream (Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income)	(449,911)	(449,911)	(455,297)	(467,689)	(471,313)	(471,313)
Financing costs/Net revenue Stream	1.33%	1.33%	1.32%	1.28%	1.27%	1.27%

Borrowing -MRP	Budget 2025/26 £000	Estimate 2025/26 £000	Estimate 2026/27 £000	Estimate 2027/28 £000	Estimate 2028/29 £000	Estimate 2029/30 £000
Long Term Borrowing - Fixed Rate (PWL B Loan £4.5m)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Long Term PFI Liability - PFI	8,529	17,901	15,490	12,142	8,724	5,346
Long Term Finance Lease Liability - Brighton East	396	396	354	310	262	211
IFRS 16 - Leases impact	926	1,818	861	541	377	330
Long Term External Borrowing (PWL B)	21,995	15,597	22,631	44,270	72,191	94,074
Long Term Internal Borrowing	1,720	1,720	1,119	518	486	454
Total Long Term Debt	33,566	37,432	40,454	57,780	82,041	100,415
15% x External Debt (Total Long term borrowing)	5,035	5,615	6,068	8,667	12,306	15,062
Operational borrowing limit	38,601	43,046	46,523	66,447	94,347	115,477
£15m additional	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Authorised borrowing limit	53,601	58,046	61,523	81,447	109,347	130,477
Investments	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)
Maximum investment level allowed longer than 1 year	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Maximum % investment longer than 1 year	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Borrowing (actual external borrowing)	21,995	15,597	22,631	44,270	72,191	94,074
Investments	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)

Treasury Management	Budget 2025/26	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29	Estimate 2029/30
Compliance with CIPFA Code of Practice	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
15-20 Years	90%	100%	38%	36%	36%	35%
10-15 Years	0%	0%	13%	9%	7%	6%
1-5 Years	10%	0%	25%	27%	29%	29%
Maximum % Borrowing allowable at Fixed Rates	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Maximum % Borrowing allowable at Variable Rates	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Maximum % Investments allowable at Fixed Rates	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Maximum % Investments allowable at Variable Rates	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Maximum Allowable Principal Invested > 365 days	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Maximum Actual Principal Invested > 365 days						

APPENDIX D - MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) STATEMENT 2026/27

The Police and Crime Commissioner is required to pay off an element of the accumulated capital spend each year (the CFR) through a revenue charge (the MRP). Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is therefore an annual charge made to the revenue account which reflects the minimum amount set aside to pay off capital expenditure.

All local authorities (including PCCs) are required to make a prudent amount of MRP provision in addition to any interest payable on outstanding loans in line with Regulations 27 and 28 in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 [SI3146, as amended]. In addition, local authorities (including PCC's) can make additional voluntary payments, known as Voluntary Revenue Provision or VRP. The PCC for Sussex has not made any VRP payments to date.

In guidance issued under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003, the Secretary of State recommends that before the start of each financial year a local authority prepares a statement of its policy on making MRP in respect of that financial year and submits it to the full council or equivalent level.

This statutory guidance (first released in 2008/09 and revised in 2012) also gave Authorities the flexibility of using one of four options, to calculate a prudent level of MRP.

The four MRP options available are:

- Option 1: Regulatory Method (also known as the Existing practice method)
- Option 2: CFR Method
- Option 3: Asset Life Method
- Option 4: Depreciation Method

Options 1 and 2 were intended only for Government-supported borrowing and these options provide for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.

Options 3 and 4 were meant to be used for all self-financed borrowing.

The Asset Life method has been adopted by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex.

Under option 3, the Police and Crime Commissioner fully expenses to the General Fund the cost of the asset initially financed through borrowing over a period equal to the useful life of that asset.

The Police and Crime Commissioner approves an MRP Statement in advance of each year.

The annual MRP statement indicates how the Police and Crime Commissioner intends to discharge their duty to make a prudent amount of MRP in the forthcoming financial year. A prudent provision is to ensure that debt is

repaid over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The PCC approves the following MRP Statement:

For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP policy will be:

- **Based on CFR** – MRP will be based on the CFR (option 2)

This option provides for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.

From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing (including PFI and finance leases) the MRP policy will be:

- **Asset life method** – MRP based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the regulations (this option must be applied for any expenditure capitalised under a Capitalisation Direction) (option 3).

This option provides for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life.

Repayments included in annual PFI or finance leases are applied as MRP.

MRP Statement:

	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
External Borrowing (estimate)	19,537	27,854	29,709	27,298	24,885
PWLB Original Loan	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Debt Outstanding at 31 March	19,537	27,854	29,709	27,298	24,885
MRP - Debt Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0
MRP - PFI	2,021	2,411	3,348	3,419	3,379
MRP - IFRS 16 Leases	934	957	320	163	47
MRP - Finance Lease	39	42	45	48	51
MRP - PWLB Loan 2	714	714	714	714	714
MRP - External Borrowing (estimate)	569	1,184	2,053	3,273	4,165
MRP - Internal Borrowing 1	568	568	568	568	568
MRP - Internal Borrowing 2	32	32	32	32	32
Total MRP	4,877	5,908	7,080	8,217	8,956

APPENDIX E - CAPITAL STRATEGY



Capital Strategy
2026_30 version DRA

**APPENDIX F - LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PCP
CONFIRMING PRECEPT DECISION**

WHEN PUBLISHED

END OF DOCUMENT



APPENDIX 1E to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-30

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex



2026/27 – 2029/30

CAPITAL STRATEGY [Subject to approval]

7 January 2026

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Capital Strategy outlines how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Sussex will manage capital expenditure and investment decisions for the period 2026-2030. It is a key document demonstrating how these decisions align with desired outcomes, stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The strategy is integral to the PCC's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing, and treasury management contribute to the delivery of policing and public safety services. The document also addresses how associated risks are managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Key objectives of this strategy include:

- Ensuring all new capital investment meets the PCC's vision, aims and priorities.
- Establishing a stringent appraisal mechanism for capital requirements and proposals.
- Determining an affordable and sustainable funding policy framework, while minimising revenue implications.
- Identifying available resources for capital investment over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) planning period.
- Ensuring a balanced risk approach across investments.
- Establishing effective management of capital expenditure, including project outcomes, budget profiling and value for money.
- Delivering projects that provide long-term benefits to policing in Sussex.

The Capital Programme focuses on three main areas: **Fleet, ICT [Technology], and the Estate**. The strategy details the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure, including the roles of the Portfolio Strategic Board (PSB), the CFO Board, and the Deputy Chief Constables Strategic Planning Board (SPB). The PCC is responsible for approving the overall Capital Budget.

Funding for the capital programme will come from various sources, including **capital receipts, revenue funding, prudential borrowing, reserves, third-party contributions and leasing**. The government grant for capital investment ceased in 2022/23. The strategy prioritises maximising capital receipts while underpinning the revenue budget.

Risk management for capital projects is a critical aspect of this strategy, addressing areas such as funding capacity, credit, liquidity, interest rates, exchange rates, inflation, legal and regulatory compliance and fraud. The PCC aims to maintain a low level of risk for capital projects while capitalising on opportunities for improvement.

This strategy is linked to other corporate strategies and plans, such as the Police and Crime Plan, the Force Management Statement, and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The operation of these is underpinned by the Scheme of Governance, which includes the Sussex Code of Corporate Governance and Financial Regulations.

This Capital Strategy aims to provide a clear framework for capital investment, ensuring that resources are used effectively to support policing in Sussex, whilst remaining financially sustainable. It recognises the importance of collaboration with other forces and organisations to improve service delivery.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires local authorities to produce a capital strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability, and affordability.

The Capital Strategy is a key document for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Sussex Police and forms part of the integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

The Capital Programme is developed through a set governance route of approval at the Change Board, CFO Approval Board and Chief Officers. There are three main areas which feature within the Capital Programme; Fleet, ICT and the Estate strategy, all have independent strategies in place which demonstrate the requirements from each individual area.

Throughout this document the term Sussex is used to refer to the activities of both the PCC and Sussex Police.

3 OBJECTIVES

The CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes (2021 edition) require that for 2026/27, all PCC's will produce a Capital Strategy Report, which will provide the following:

- a high-level long-term overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services.
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed.
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

The aim of this capital strategy is to ensure that the PCC fully understands the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Key elements of the Capital Strategy are to:

- provide a clear set of objectives and a framework within statutory legislation that proposes new capital expenditure to be evaluated to ensure that all new capital investment is targeted at meeting the pledges and the PCC's Vision, Aims and Priorities;
- set out how the PCC identifies, programmes and prioritises capital requirements and proposals arising from business plans submitted through a stringent gateway appraisal mechanism comprising of Business cases;
- consider options available for funding capital expenditure and how resources may be maximised to generate investment in the area and to determine an affordable and sustainable funding policy framework, whilst minimising the ongoing revenue implications of any such investment;

- identify the resources available for capital investment over the MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) planning period;
- ensure the strategy has an overall balance of risk on a range of investments over timespan, type of investment and rate of return;
- establish effective arrangements for the management of capital expenditure including the assessment of project outcomes, budget profiling, deliverability, value for money and security of investment, and,
- deliver projects that focus on delivering the long term benefits to policing in Sussex.

4 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - DEFINITION

Capital expenditure is incurred on the acquisition/creation of assets or expenditure that enhances/adds to the life or value of an existing fixed asset. Fixed assets are tangible or intangible assets that yield benefits to Sussex generally for a period of more than one year, e.g. land and buildings, ICT, business change programmes, equipment and vehicles. This contrasts with revenue expenditure which is spending on the day to day running costs of services such as employee costs and supplies and services.

The capital programme is Sussex's plan of capital works for future years, including details on the funding of the schemes.

5 CAPITAL VERSUS TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENTS

Treasury Management investment activity covers those investments which arise from the organisation's cash flows and debt management activity, and ultimately represent balances which need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

For Treasury Management investments the security and liquidity of funds are placed ahead of the investment return. The management of associated risk is set out in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code recognises that some local authorities are entitled to make investments for policy reasons outside of normal treasury management activity. These may include service and commercial investments. However, like all policing bodies in England and Wales, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and Sussex Police do not have a General Power of Competence, which gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation, but a functional power of competence.

6 GOVERNANCE OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

6.1 Governance Process

Governance processes are in place along with the [Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations](#) to ensure that available resources are allocated optimally and deliver value for money, and that capital programme planning is determined in parallel with the service and revenue budget planning process within the framework of the [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#). These include:

- The PCC is responsible for approving the overall Capital Budget which is included with the annual budget and precept decision report.
- The Portfolio Strategic Board (PSB) reviews and approves planned recurring capital projects such as IT replacement programmes, vehicle replacement programme and operational equipment programme. In addition to approving the planned recurring capital spend, PSB approves adhoc capital proposals that have been ensored by the Strategic Performance Board (SPB). (PSB Board replaces “Strategic Change Board”)
- The Strategic Change Board agree final business cases for all Sussex/Sussex collaborated change where funding has been identified or is already included in the revenue and capital budgets.
- The CFO Board oversee, scrutinise and approve or recommend for approval business cases for capital investment and one off or on-going revenue investment that is considered business as usual
- The Deputy Chief Constables Strategic Planning Board (SPB) will have business cases referred where they require Chief Officers or PCC oversight is required due to value or operational impact.
- The Joint Chief Officer Meeting will be consulted when Collaborated Sussex/Sussex business cases require Chief Officers or PCC oversight due to value or operational impact.
- The PCC Estates Board enables the PCC to develop strategies for estates and facilities management, to monitor progress and ensure that it is delivering value for money and effectively supporting an estate provision, for the delivery of local policing, (also regional policing and national eg ROCU and CT etc) in accordance with the approved governance framework. Also work in partnership with other public sector and blue light as per legislation. It also enables the monitoring of the MOU Estates which states - The provision of services by individuals within the Estates Department to enable the Commissioner to effectively and efficiently manage the land and premises and other fixed assets remaining in the PCC’s ownership/control, including office services, asset and facilities management, estate management (including identifying savings, environmental issues, maintenance and improvements); project management (including the delivery of capital and revenue funded works) and the management of any contractual arrangements associated with these activities.

The new Estates Strategy is assessed on a regular basis, so there is continous working plan in process to work out levels of affordability.

7 LINKS TO OTHER CORPORATE STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The PCC produces a Police and Crime Plan, the current version covers the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

[SPCC - Police & Crime Plan \(sussex-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://sussex-pcc.gov.uk)

To support these overarching documents a number of interrelated strategies and plans are in place, such as the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Vehicle Replacement Programme, Estates Strategy, Capital and Investment Programme and Treasury Management Strategy.

The operation of all these strategies and plans is underpinned by the Scheme of Governance which shows how the PCC and the Chief Constable comply with the principles of 'good governance' and sets out the arrangement in place for effective governance and financial management. The Scheme of Governance comprises:

- *Sussex Code of Corporate Governance: This describes how the PCC and Chief Constable achieve the core principles of 'good governance'.*
- *Framework of Decision-Making and Accountability: This describes how the PCC will make/publish key decisions and fulfil his/her responsibilities to hold the Chief Constable to account. It also sets out the role of the Audit Committee.*
- *Sussex-Sussex PCC Scheme of Delegation: This sets out the key roles of the PCC/Chief Constable and those functions they delegate to others.*
- *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The MOU describes how the PCC and Chief Constable will work together and ensure sufficient support in areas such as estates management, procurement, finance, HR, communications and corporate development.*
- *Financial Regulations: These set out the framework for managing the PCC's financial affairs.*
- *Contract Standing Orders: These describe the rules for the procurement of goods, works and services. Contracts are issued in the name of the PCC and the Chief Constable operates within the parameters of Contract Standing Orders.*

8 THE CAPITAL BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

8.1 Introduction

Sussex PCC is committed to rolling medium term revenue & capital plans that extend for 4 years setting out the anticipated level of expenditure and the associated funding. The plans are drawn up, reassessed and extended annually and, if required, re-prioritised to enable Sussex to achieve the aims and objectives established in the [Police and Crime Plan](#) along with the Force Commitment to support national drivers like the National Policing Vision for 2027.

The PCC Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-30 [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) provides for the Sussex infrastructure and major assets through capital investment,

enabling Sussex Police to strengthen and streamline core assets and systems, and provides the framework for delivering innovative policing with a lower resource profile.

Key focuses of the Capital Programme:

- To ensure the property estate remains fit for purpose, identifying opportunities to streamline assets and develop the estate infrastructure; maintaining core sites and progressing the Asset Management Plan.
- To ensure provision is made for ICT & Business Change Technology to maintain and develop the existing infrastructure and invest in the core technologies required to provide innovative digital policing services as per the ICT strategy.
- To ensure provision is made for transport within the Joint Transport service across Sussex and Sussex as per the Joint Transport Services Asset Management Plan.
- The maintenance and replacement of other core assets where necessary, e.g. communication infrastructure.

The plans acknowledge the financial position of Sussex and maximise both the available financial resources and the capacity that Sussex has to manage change projects.

8.2 Force Collaboration & Wider Sector Engagement

Although Sussex PCC has its own Capital Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan the natural drivers that encourage local and regional forces to collaborate, such as cost and resource sharing, along with structured collaborations and national plans, can have a significant influence on local decision making.

One of the focal points therefore of the Sussex Capital Strategy is to acknowledge regional and national partnership working, both with other forces and in the wider context of engagement with Local Authorities & Councils, and other Emergency Services, to improve overall service to the public.

8.3 Identifying capital expenditure / investment requirements

The capital programme is developed through the set governance route of approval at the Strategic Change Boards, CFO Approval Board and Chief Officer Group. The programme is supported by the respective strategies for the Estate, Fleet, ICT and business led requirements. The revenue impact of any such proposals are also included in the medium term financial planning model where the revenue account, if necessary, is charged with corresponding interest payable and “minimum revenue provision” costs when borrowing is required.

8.4 Affordability and financial planning

The overall financial position of Sussex PCC and hence the scope for future capital expenditure, must take into consideration the combination of the revenue budget, capital programme as well as the position on reserves. The revenue and capital budget positions are intertwined as achieving the Sussex priorities may require revenue expenditure or investment in capital items, depending on what is needed, and one impacts the other.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) identifies the potential financial position for Sussex for the next four years and will include forecasts on

DRAFT – POLICE AND CRIME PANEL PRECEPT SCRUTINY MEETING 30.01.2026

inflation, committed growth requirements, forecast productivity and efficiency savings, assumptions around grant and council tax funding and any other information introduced during the budget process.

The revenue position influences the capital position in terms of potential affordability of support for Direct Revenue Financing (DRF) of Capital Expenditure or debt charges (for external borrowing) whereas the capital bid process influences the revenue position in terms of both revenue consequences of capital programmes and also the requirement to financially support capital investment, either through DRF or external borrowing.

The extent to which the annual revenue budget, through the 4 year forecast, is expected to be able to support the capital programme and service financing costs is a key factor to overall financial planning and is becoming more so as other sources of funding cease to be available. The Government ceased providing an annual grant to support the capital and investment programme from 2022/23.

8.5 Capital sustainability

For many years Sussex PCC has benefitted from substantial capital reserves, supported by capital receipts from the sale of operational buildings and assets or from revenue reserves assigned to capital investment. Most of these resources have now been utilised and as we move forward through the next 4 years and beyond, there is the necessity to fund through either Direct Revenue Funding (DRF) and external borrowing for specific projects.

The capital financing approach remains to maximise the use of Capital Receipts to support the capital programme whilst maximising the overall benefit in underpinning the Revenue budget.

The strategy is focused around the type of asset that needs to be financed, with the aim that short life assets such as vehicles and IT will be financed from DRF whereas long life assets such as buildings, where necessary, are financed by borrowing.

The Sussex PCC strategy is therefore to invest in core infrastructure now that will not only offer overall service improvements to the public, but also maximise revenue savings into the future through more efficient and mobile use of police personnel, enabled by improved Information and Communication Technology systems and other core infrastructure, for example, a connected vehicle fleet and building assets

The Sussex investment strategy will also be influenced by and take account of national visions for policing, regional and local priorities.

9 MONITORING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital monitoring reports are submitted to both the PCC and the Deputy Chief Constables Strategic Planning Board on a regular basis throughout the year. The PCC scrutinises and publishes the forecast outturn for each quarter as a key decision on the website. These reports are based on the most recently available financial information, showing spending to date and comparing projected expenditure with the approved capital budget.

For proposed in-year amendments to the annual capital budget, for new schemes not already included in the PCC Medium Term Financial Strategy, the business area will prepare a business case and authority is sought from the PCC through a key decision notice including details on how the new scheme is to be funded.

Key Decision documents presented to the PCC are published on the website at this link.

[SPCC - PCC Decisions](#)

10 FUNDING STRATEGY AND CAPITAL POLICIES

This section sets out Sussex policies and priorities in relation to funding capital expenditure and investment.

10.1 Government Grant

The Government stopped providing an annual grant to support the capital and investment programme from 2022/23.

However, specific capital grants may be issued for specific capital investment, for example, the Emergency Services Network.

10.2 Capital Receipts

A capital receipt is an amount of money which is received from the sale of an item on the fixed asset register most commonly land and buildings. The receipts cannot be spent on revenue items and are used to help finance the capital programme. As the pool of assets available for sale declines the financial support from these receipts will diminish (see 7.5 Capital Sustainability).

10.3 Revenue Funding

Recognising that the pool of assets available for sale is declining revenue contribution funding is seen as a funding alternative. An appropriate provision for this is included in both the annual revenue budget and the medium term financial strategy. As Sussex moves forward this is understood to become the limiting factor for capital investment as it balances annual revenue funding priorities with long term capital investment strategies.

10.4 Prudential Borrowing

Local Authorities, including the PCC, can set their own borrowing levels based on their capital needs and their ability to pay for the borrowing. The levels will be set by using the indicators and factors set out in the Prudential Code. The borrowing costs are not supported by the Government so Sussex Police needs to ensure it can fund the repayment costs. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement sets out a prudent approach to the amount set aside for the repayment of debt. Borrowing is to be used to cover long life assets only.

10.5 Reserves and Balances

Unspent capital grant and capital receipt monies can be carried forward in the Balance Sheet until they are required to fund the capital programme.

Sussex PCC has also set aside earmarked revenue reserves to help fund capital expenditure, most notably the Capital and Investment Reserve.

The Capital and Investments Reserve is used to support planned one-off and non-recurring expenditure of a capital or revenue nature in line with investment and replacement plans included within the PCC Medium Term Financial Strategy. This is dependent on the financing requirements of the capital plans included within the relevant asset strategies e.g. the future ICT Strategy, the Estates Strategy and the Joint Transport Services Asset Strategy.

The Capital Receipts Reserve contains receipts from the sale of assets which can be used to finance future capital expenditure. The Capital Receipts received in-year will be applied to fund capital expenditure in year.

The Capital Grants & Contributions Reserve is used to hold unused elements of grant and external funding in line with accounting regulations.

HM Treasury guidance on capital projects recognises that there is a potential for project costs to exceed the initial assessment. This is called Optimism Bias and relates to any project type, although it can have a particularly high impact when relating to the development of complex ICT or business change programmes. Sussex PCC does not currently have an Optimism Bias Reserve as it mitigates costs overruns by including sufficient contingency in capital investment business case approved budgets.

10.6 Third Party Capital Contributions

On occasion Sussex will receive income from a third party (usually a local authority) who have agreed to contribute towards an asset (e.g. ANPR cameras) that Sussex will own. Monies may also be provided through develop contributions known as Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Sussex PCC is proactive in applying for these agreements.

10.7 Leasing

Sussex may enter into finance leasing agreements to fund capital expenditure. However, a full option appraisal and comparison of other funding sources must be made and the Director of Commercial and Financial Services and the Chief Finance Officer must both be satisfied that leasing provides the best value for money method of funding the scheme before a recommendation is made to the PCC.

Under the Prudential Code finance leasing agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing.

10.8 IFRS 16 Leases

The major change is that under IFRS 16 there will no longer be any distinction between operating and finance leases in the financial statements of lessees.

Currently, local authorities account for an item as an operating lease if most of the risks and rewards have not transferred to them. In this case, they simply record a rental expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term, with no long-term asset or liability recorded. This accounting treatment will cease to exist, except in the case of low-value items, or for short-term leases (under 12 months).

This means that local authorities will be required to include a right-of-use asset and an equivalent liability, at the present value of lease payments. The current calculation of the right to use for the Sussex PCC is £6.406m (includes 4 sites that were revaluated and had been recognised in the Balance Sheet before IFRS 16 implementation) and a lease liability of £2.752m as of 31 March 2025. The figures have been audited as part of the 2024/25 Audit.

For many local authorities, this will mean that a significant amount of assets and liabilities that were previously not recorded and shown only in the lease commitments disclosure note will now be included in the statement of financial position.

The standard has no impact on the actual cash flows of the Sussex PCC. However the standard required the capitalisation of £3.294m, and subsequent depreciation of costs is circa £0.950m for 2026/27 (that are currently expenses as paid which impacts disclosures of cash flows within the cash flow statement). The amounts currently expensed as operating cash outflows which will instead be capitalised are presented as financing cash outflows.

The introduction of the IFRS 16 lease accounting standard in April increased the level of assets (£3.294m) and liabilities (£3.662m), therefore increases were required for the capital finance requirement, the operational boundary, the authorised limit and the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

The re-measurement of lease liabilities for changes in inflation and the expected term will count as capital expenditure in the near future. The capital programme budget was not adjusted for the estimated cost of this expenditure in 2026/27 as the current budgets for Leases will be transferred to the MRP Budget for 2026/27.

10.9 Procurement and Value for Money

Procurement is the purchase of goods and services. Sussex has a Procurement Team that ensures that all contracts, including those of a capital nature, are legally compliant and best value for money.

It is essential that all procurement activities comply with prevailing regulations and best practice as set out in the Scheme of Governance, which includes Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Guidance on this can be sought from the Procurement team.

The main aim is to hold 'value for money' as a key goal in all procurement activity to optimise the combination of cost and quality.

11 PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Wherever possible and subject to the usual risk assessment process Sussex PCC will explore the possibility and feasibility of working with other partners. In support of this:

- Sussex has a joint ICT Department with Surrey Police and a number of ICT and business change programmes are being delivered collaboratively.
- Other capital schemes, most notably new technology programmes, such as the Emergency Services Network replacement communications system.

Although Sussex procures capital items on behalf of other consortium partners only Sussex related expenditure which will be included in the fixed asset register will be included in the medium term financial Strategy and the annual capital budget.

12 MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The PCC for Sussex owns all assets, including short life assets, such as ICT, equipment and vehicles.

The PCC owns all land and buildings, on a day to day basis, the Service Director, Estates & Facilities manages the estate under a memorandum of understanding.

The Chief Constable's CFO (Executive Director of Commercial and Finance Services) manages the medium term capital plan and the annual capital budget and provides regular updates to the Finance Planning and Performance Board who, collectively, maintain oversight of planned expenditure.

The PCC's CFO is responsible for developing and then implementing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, including the Annual Investment Strategy.

Having approved the medium term capital plan and the annual capital budget in February each year the PCC formally holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery of capital projects.

13 RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

The PCC's Treasury Strategy and investment policy has regard to the following to manage risk:

- MHCLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance")
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2017 ("the Code")
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2018

The PCC's investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second, then yield (return).

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect Sussex's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and to execute its strategies successfully.

Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of managing them and/or

responding to them. It is both a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the organisation caused by undesired events and of ensuring that staff understand and appreciate the element of risk in all their activities.

The aim is to reduce the frequency of adverse risk events occurring (where possible), minimise the severity of their consequences if they do occur, or to consider whether risk can be transferred to other parties. The corporate risk register sets out the key risks to the successful delivery of Sussex's corporate aims and priorities and outlines the key controls and actions to mitigate and reduce risks or maximise opportunities.

To manage risk effectively, the risks associated with each capital project need to be systematically identified, analysed, influenced and monitored.

It is important to identify the appetite for risk by each scheme and for the capital programme as a whole, especially when investing in complex and costly business change programmes.

The Sussex PCC accepts there will be a certain amount of risk inherent in delivering the desired outcomes of The Police and Crime Plan and will seek to keep the risk of capital projects to a low level whilst making the most of opportunities for improvement. Where greater risks are identified as necessary to achieve desired outcomes, Sussex will seek to mitigate or manage those risks to a tolerable level. All key risks identified as part of the capital planning process are considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register.

The Chief Constable's CFO and the PCC's CFO will report on the deliverability, affordability and risk associated with this Capital Strategy and the associated capital programme. Where appropriate they will have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions.

13.1 Funding Capacity Risk

This is the risk that identified project costs are either understated or escalate during the project lifecycle, for example if project scope changes. This risk is mitigated as far as possible through inclusion of optimism bias contingency included in project plans and by close scrutiny and monitoring.

13.2 Credit Risk

This is the risk that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the PCC. Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the PCC's customers.

This risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria, in accordance with the Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poors Credit Ratings Services. The Annual Investment Strategy also considers maximum amounts and time limits in respect of each financial institution. Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria outlined above. Details of the Investment Strategy can be found on the website for the PCC within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).

13.3 Liquidity Risk

This is the risk that the PCC might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make contracted payments on time or that the timing of any cash inflows from a project will be delayed, for example if other organisations do not make their contributions when agreed.

This is also the risk that the cash inflows will be less than expected, for example due to the effects of inflation, interest rates or exchange rates.

The PCC manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the Treasury and Investment Strategy reports), as well through a comprehensive cash flow management system, as required by the Code of Practice. This seeks to ensure that cash is available when it is needed.

The PCC has ready access to borrowings from the Money Markets to cover any day to day cash flow need. Whilst the Public Works Loan Board provides access to longer term funds, it also acts as a lender of last resort to authorities (although it will not provide funding to an Authority or PCC whose actions are unlawful). The PCC is also required to provide a balanced budget through the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which ensures sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

13.4 Interest Rate Risk

The PCC is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the PCC, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods.

The Treasury Management Strategy aims to mitigate these risks by setting an upper limit of 25% on external debt that can be subject to variable interest rates. Investments are also subject to movements in interest rates and the Treasury Management Strategy aims to mitigate these risks by setting an upper limit of external investments that can be subject to variable interest rates.

The PCC has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together the PCC's prudential indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this strategy a prudential indicator is set which provides maximum and minimum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The Treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns.

13.5 Exchange Rate Risk

This is the risk that exchange rates will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. The PCC has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies. It therefore has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

13.6 Inflation Risk

This is the risk that rates of inflation will move in a way that has an adverse effect on the value of capital expenditure or the expected financial returns from a project. Rates of inflation will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring arrangements to identify such adverse effects. As far as possible our exposure to this risk will be mitigated via robust contract terms and when necessary, contract re-negotiations however, suitable financial

contingency sums will need to be set aside to meet cost increases that cannot be absorbed by suppliers.

13.7 Legal and Regulatory Risk

This is the risk that changes in laws or regulation make a capital project more expensive or time consuming to complete, make it no longer cost effective or make it illegal or not advisable to complete. Forthcoming changes to relevant laws and regulations will be kept under review and factored into any capital bidding and programme monitoring processes.

13.8 Fraud, Error and Corruption

This is the risk that financial losses will occur due to errors or fraudulent or corrupt activities. Officers involved in any of the processes of capital expenditure or funding are required to follow the agreed Code of Corporate Governance. Sussex PCC and Sussex Police has a strong ethical culture which is evidenced through our values, principles and appropriate behaviour. This is supported by the national Code of Ethics and detailed policies such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Declaration of Interests.

14 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Capital Schemes must comply with legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), building regulations etc.

15 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The economic context can be found in Section 5.2 of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27 ***[When published in March 2026]***.

16 GLOSSARY

Capital Expenditure: Spending on the acquisition or creation of assets, or expenditure that enhances the value or extends the life of an existing fixed asset. These are assets that will benefit Sussex for more than one year. Examples include land, buildings, ICT, equipment, and vehicles.

Revenue Expenditure: Spending on the day-to-day running costs of services, such as employee costs and supplies.

Capital Programme: Sussex's plan of capital works for future years, including details on the funding of the schemes.

Treasury Management Investments: Investments arising from the organisation's cash flows and debt management activity. These are balances which are invested until the cash is needed for business purposes. The security and liquidity of these funds take priority over the investment return.

General Power of Competence: The power given to some local authorities to do anything an individual can do, unless it is prohibited by other legislation. **Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and Sussex Police do not have this power, but a functional power of competence.**

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS): A financial plan that sets out the potential financial position for Sussex for the next four years. This includes forecasts on inflation, growth requirements, efficiency savings, and funding assumptions.

Direct Revenue Funding (DRF): Using revenue budget funds to finance capital expenditure.

Capital Receipts: Monies received from the sale of fixed assets, most commonly land and buildings. These receipts can only be used to finance the capital programme and not revenue items.

Prudential Borrowing: The ability for local authorities, including the PCC, to set their own borrowing levels based on their capital needs and their ability to repay the debt, as set out in the Prudential Code.

Minimum Revenue Provision Statement: Sets out a prudent approach to the amount set aside for the repayment of debt.

Capital and Investment Reserve: An earmarked revenue reserve used to support planned one-off and non-recurring expenditure of a capital or revenue nature, in line with investment and replacement plans within the PCC Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Receipts Reserve: A reserve containing receipts from the sale of assets which can be used to finance future capital expenditure.

Capital Grants & Contributions Reserve: A reserve used to hold unused elements of grant and external funding in line with accounting regulations.

Optimism Bias: The potential for project costs to exceed the initial assessment. Sussex PCC mitigates this by including sufficient contingency in capital investment business case approved budgets.

Section 106 agreements: Agreements between a local authority and a developer, where the developer contributes towards local infrastructure and community benefits³⁵.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy that local authorities can charge on new developments to fund infrastructure improvements.

Finance Leasing: An agreement to fund capital expenditure where the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to the lessee. These agreements are counted against the overall borrowing levels when looking at the prudence of the authority's borrowing.

IFRS 16 Leases: An accounting standard that requires local authorities to include a right-of-use asset and an equivalent liability, at the present value of lease payments. This means that a significant amount of assets and liabilities that were previously not recorded will now be included in the statement of financial position.

Procurement: The purchase of goods and services.

CIPFA: The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

PCC: Police and Crime Commissioner.

SPB: Strategic Performance Board.

PSB: Portfolio Strategic Board.

[ENDS]

Appendix 2

Precept Research Survey 2025

Prepared for: Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner
12/12/2025
v1.0

Precept question extract



Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner

Sample | Nearly 2,500 residents of Sussex aged 18+ participated in the survey in 2025

Project: **OSPCC Survey 2025**
Job Number: **100204**
Date: **09/12/25**

Dimension	ONS Population Estimate mid-2024	Estimated distribution of the Population of Sussex (From ONS data)	Volume of actual completes surveys achieved	Confidence Interval achieved	% of overall Actual Sample
County					
Sussex	1,446,452	100.00%	2,469	±1.97	100.00%
Age Band					
18-34	354,930	24.54%	768	±3.54	31.11%
35-49	327,067	22.61%	612	±3.96	24.79%
50-64	361,619	25.00%	604	±3.99	24.46%
65+	402,836	27.85%	485	±4.45	19.64%
Gender					
Male	681,701	47.13%	1,058	±3.01	42.85%
Female	764,751	52.87%	1,381	±2.64	55.93%
Local Authority and District					
Eastbourne	85,649	5.92%	235	±6.39	9.52%
Hastings	74,224	5.13%	168	±6.39	6.80%
Lewes	84,522	5.84%	129	±7.56	5.22%
Rother	80,967	5.60%	94	±8.63	3.81%
Wealden	137,323	9.49%	146	±10.11	5.91%
Adur and Worthing	146,511	10.13%	219	±8.11	8.87%
Arun	142,485	9.85%	182	±6.62	7.37%
Chichester	107,553	7.44%	132	±7.26	5.35%
Crawley	96,045	6.64%	190	±8.53	7.70%
Horsham	122,482	8.47%	180	±7.11	7.29%
Mid Sussex	128,326	8.87%	222	±7.3	8.99%
Brighton and Hove	240,365	16.62%	572	±6.58	23.17%
Social Grade Census 2021 16-64					
ABC1	773,883	53.50%	1,562	±2.48	63.26%
C2DE	499,509	34.53%	858	±3.35	34.75%

2,469 fully completed surveys were achieved delivering an extremely robust total sample Confidence Interval of ±1.97.
To put this in context, most nationwide surveys reported in the national media operate off wider Confidence Intervals of ±3.00 to ±4.00.

Confidence Interval & Confidence Level

A Confidence Interval of ±1.97 means that had we been able to survey **every** resident of Sussex, the answer to a given question would fall within ±1.97 percentage points of our actual research result (in either direction) on 95 occasions out of 100 (the Confidence Level).

The survey fieldwork was conducted online between Monday 10th November and Sunday 7th December 2025.

Precept question | How public opinion was gathered

HABIT5

3

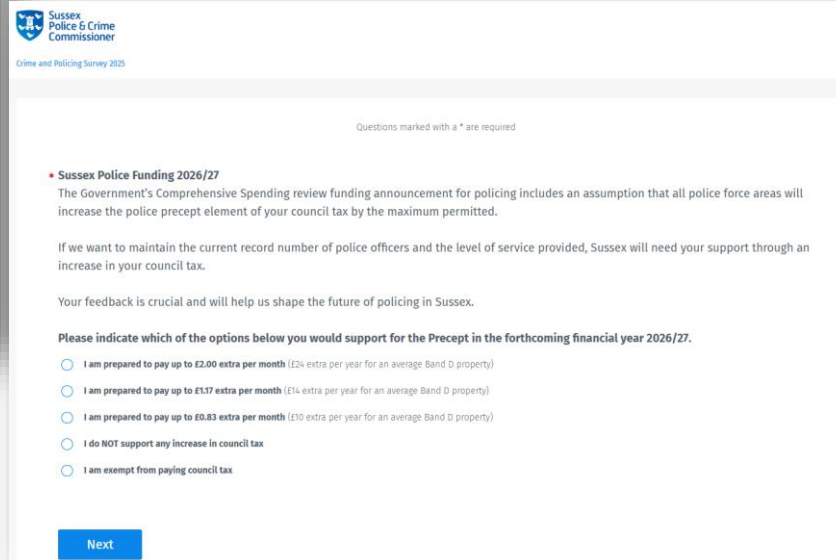
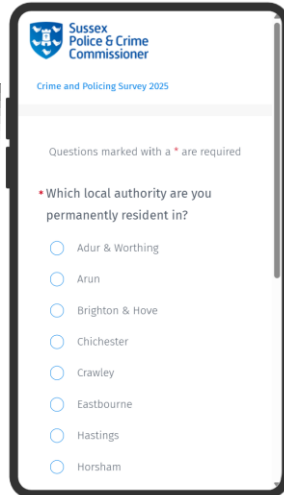
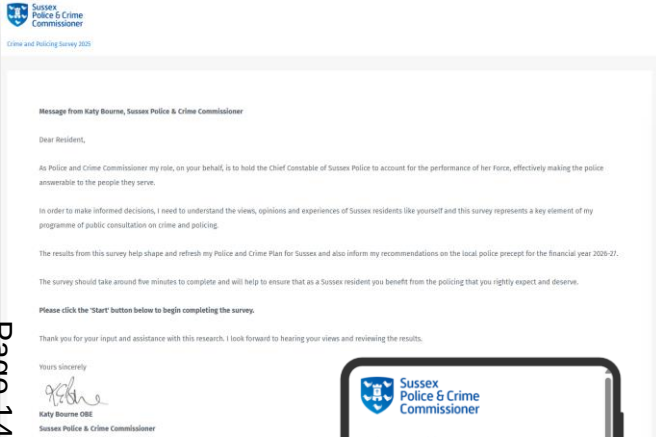
The survey was entitled 'Crime and Policing Survey 2025' and was assigned to the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, whilst being independently conducted by Habit5.

The Precept question was contextualised and worded as represented in the righthand image on this slide.

Appendix 2
Agreed item 6b

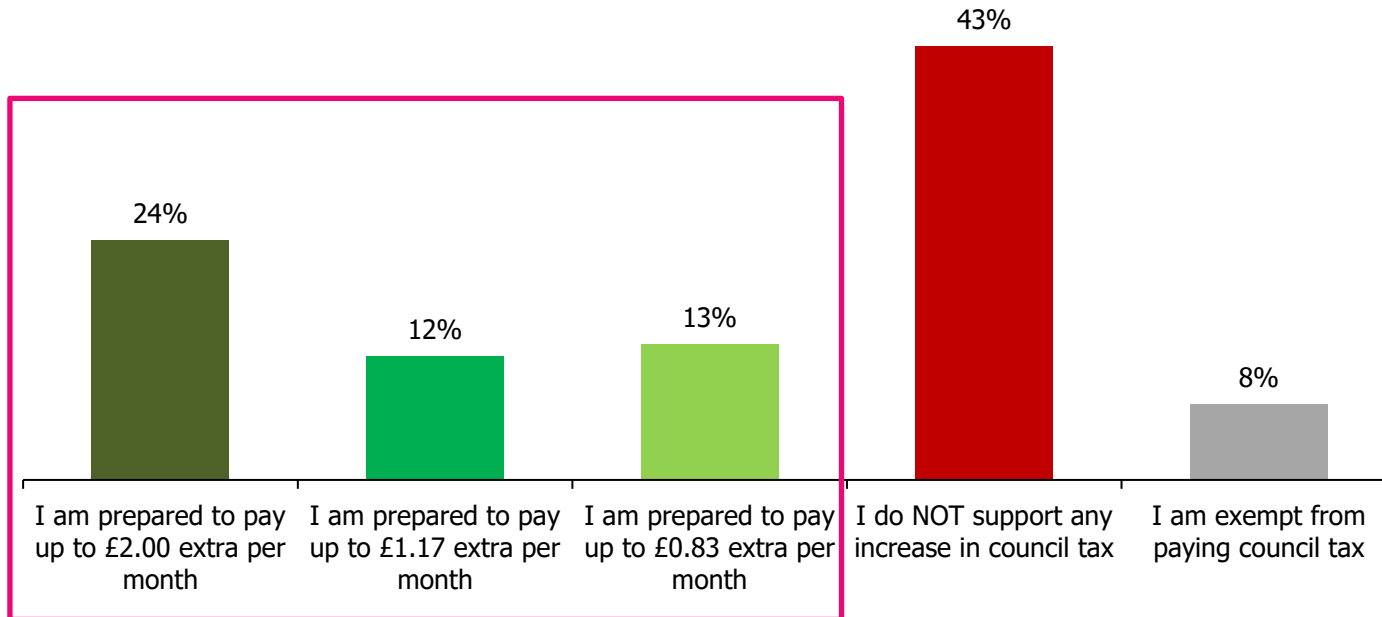
OUTSTANDING
UNDERSTANDING™

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Precept question | 49% of all residents participating in the survey support some level of increase (-4% YoY). 43% oppose any increase (+3% YoY) and 8% are exempt from paying council tax (+1% YoY).

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the Precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. Exempt included



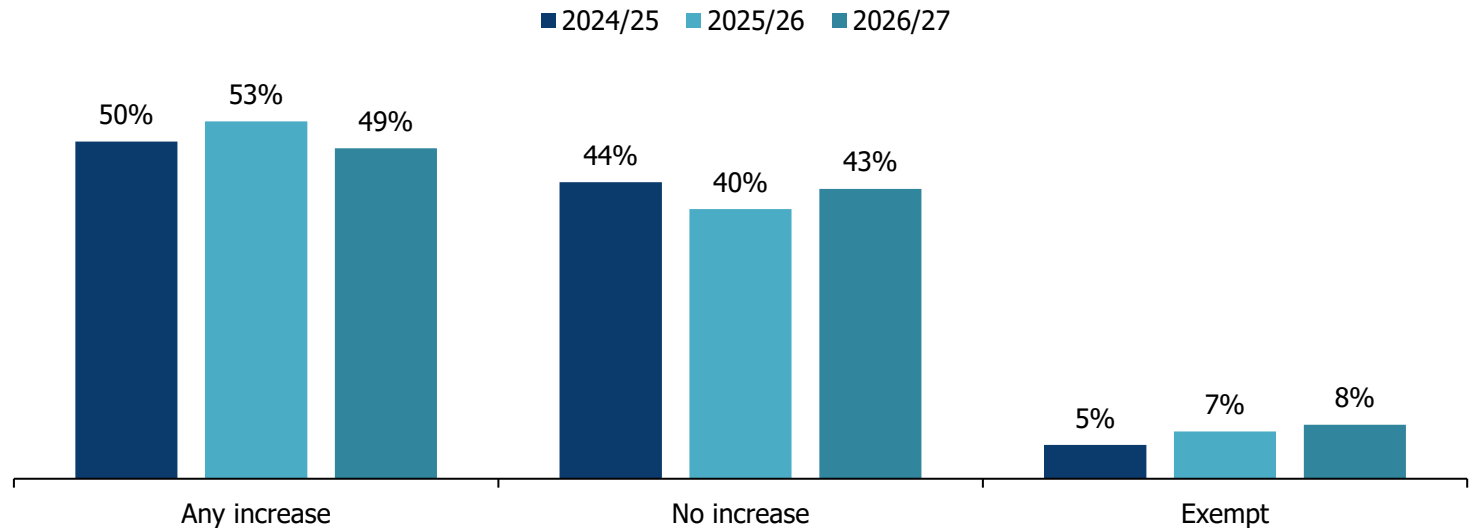
Base: I am prepared to pay up to £2.00 extra per month (n=587), I am prepared to pay up to £1.17 extra per month (n=303), I am prepared to pay up to £0.83 extra per month (n=332), I do NOT support any increase in council tax (n=1,061), I am exempt from paying council tax (n=186), Sample Size = 2,469

Just under a quarter (24%) of 25th residents participating in the survey, indicated a preparedness to pay the highest level of proposed increase – up to £2.00 extra per month – this is the same as the previous year despite the 25p increase.

The drop has come from those willing to pay extra but a smaller amount (-4% YoY).

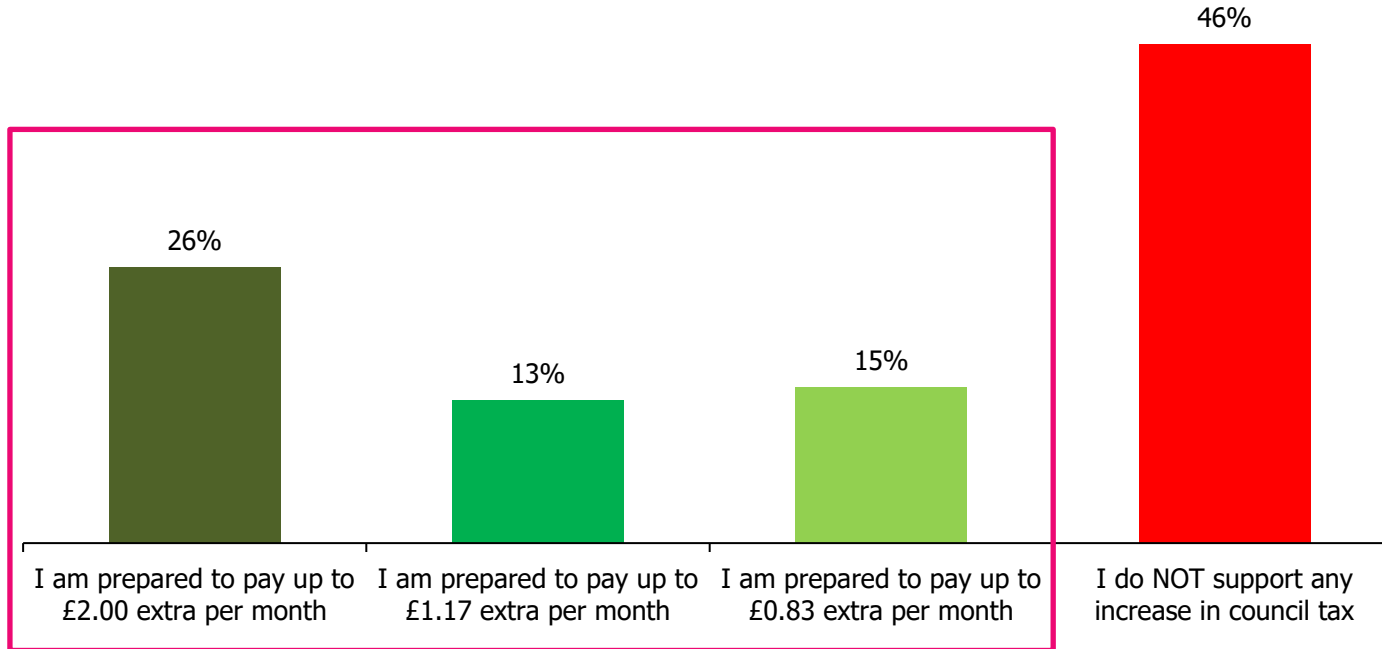
Precept question | The proportion of residents indicating a preparedness to pay an increased amount, has dropped by - 4% year-on-year, from 53% last year to 49% this year.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the Precept in the forthcoming financial year | By Survey Year – Exempt included



Precept | 54% of council taxpayers (e.g. Exempt excluded) support an increase, with 46% opposing such a move.

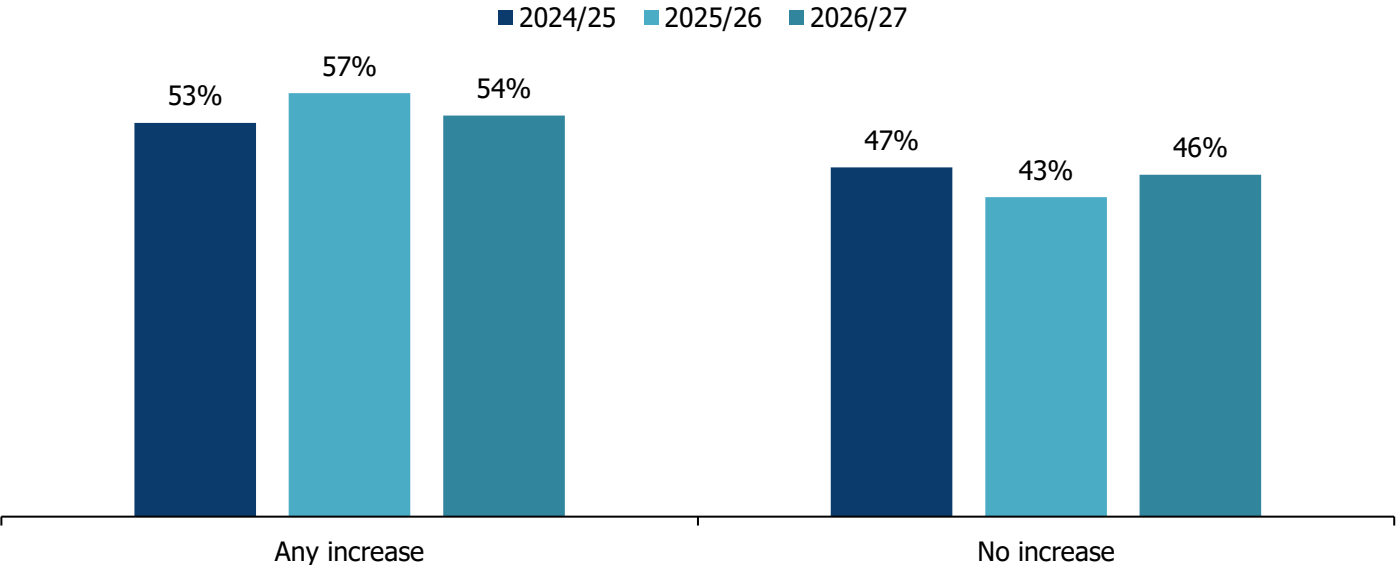
Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the Precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. Exempt excluded



Base: I am prepared to pay up to £2.00 extra per month (n=587), I am prepared to pay up to £1.17 extra per month (n=303), I am prepared to pay up to £0.83 extra per month (n=332), I do NOT support any increase in council tax (n=1,061), Sample Size = 2,283

Precept question | The proportion of council taxpayers supporting some level of increase has fallen by -3% year-on-year, with those opposing such an increase increasing by the same amount.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the Precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | Exempt excluded



Precept question | As was the case in both previous years, a markedly higher proportion (+6%) of males select the largest increase presented, with comparatively more (+4%) of the female participants selecting the lowest level of increase presented or not supporting an increase at all (+5%).

NB **Bold** text for data is used to denote a significantly higher level than for other segments and/or an increase year-on-year.
A box around data is used to denote a significantly lower level than for other segments and/or a decrease year-on-year.

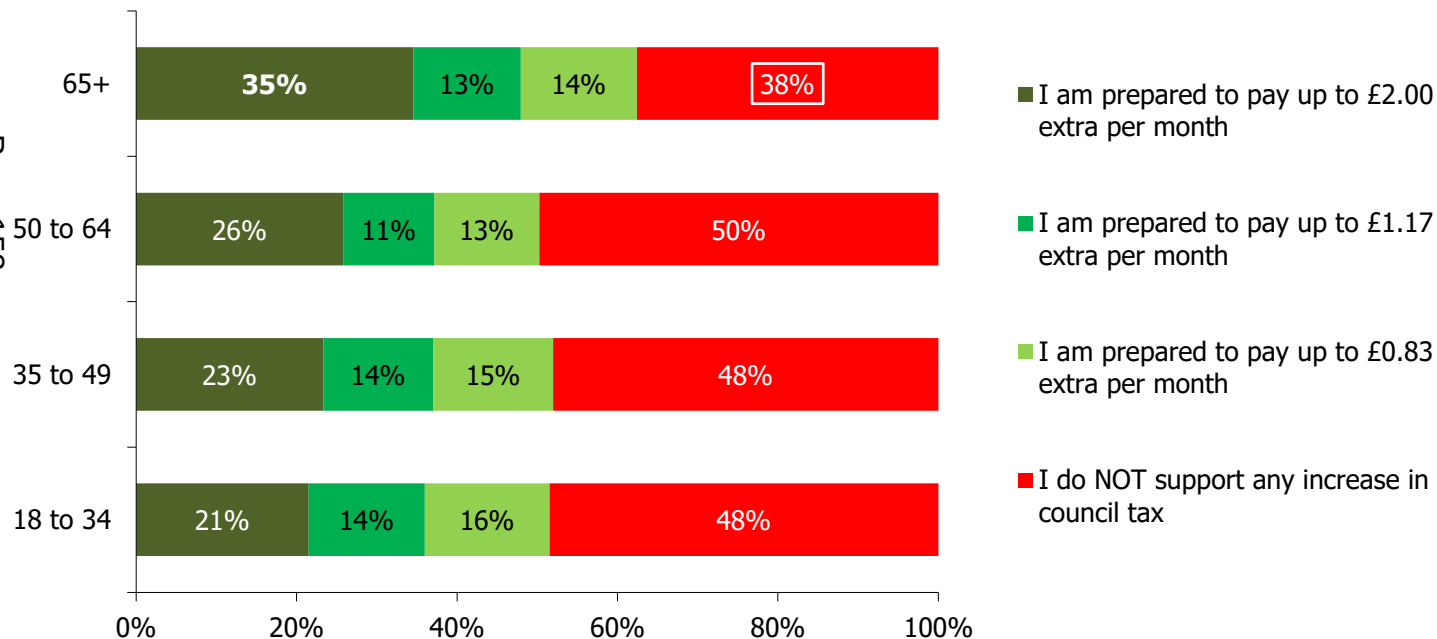
NB We only chart results for participant segments greater than 40 individuals, to avoid statistical instability.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By sex excluding exempt



Precept question | As was the case in both previous years, propensity to pay the highest incremental amount, increases with the age of participant, peaking at 35% among the 65+ cohort (+7% YoY).

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By age excluding exempt



Base: 18 to 34 (n=656), 35 to 49 (n=583), 50 to 64 (n=581), 65+ (n=463), Sample Size = 2,283

Opposition to supporting any increase has increased year-on-year for all age groups, except among those aged over 65 where it has decreased slightly.

65+
(-3%)

50 – 64
(+2%)

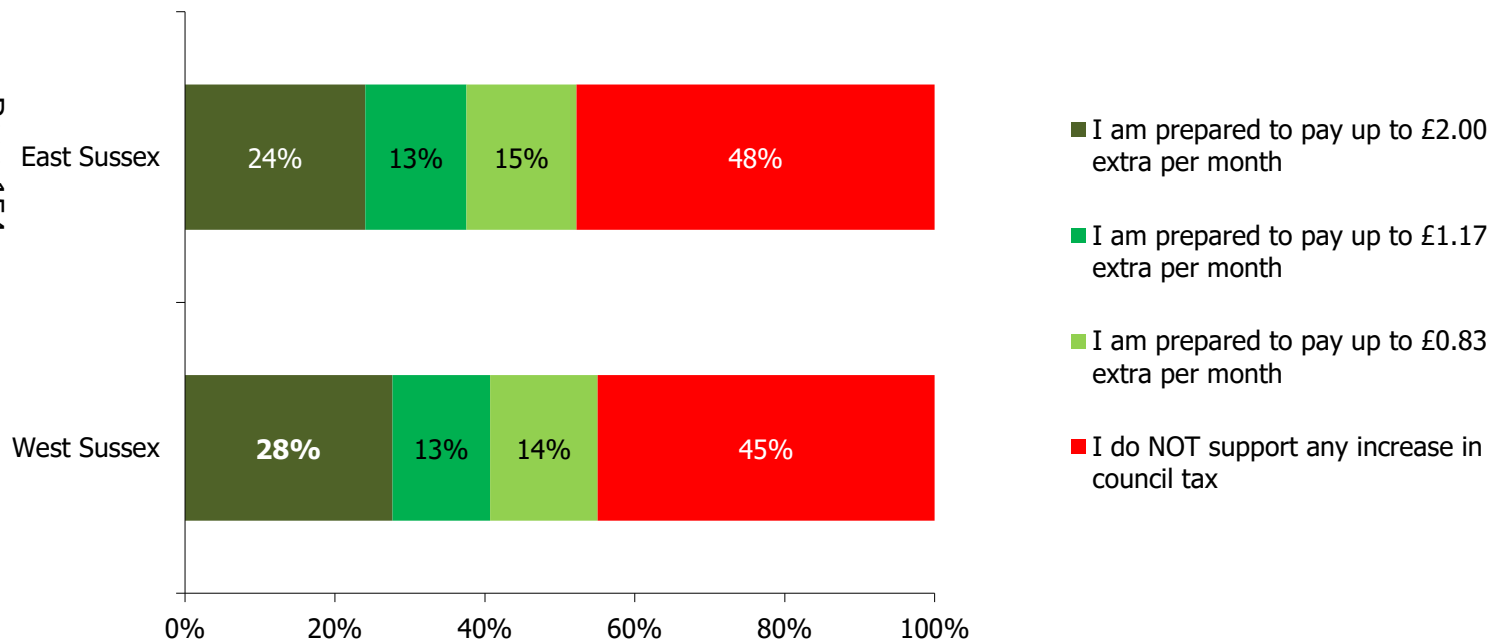
35 – 49
(+5%)

18 – 34
(+7%)

Agenda Item 6b
Appendix 2

Precept question | Residents of West Sussex continue to be more prepared to pay extra (+3%) and more likely to choose the highest increase (+4%), than their peers in East Sussex.

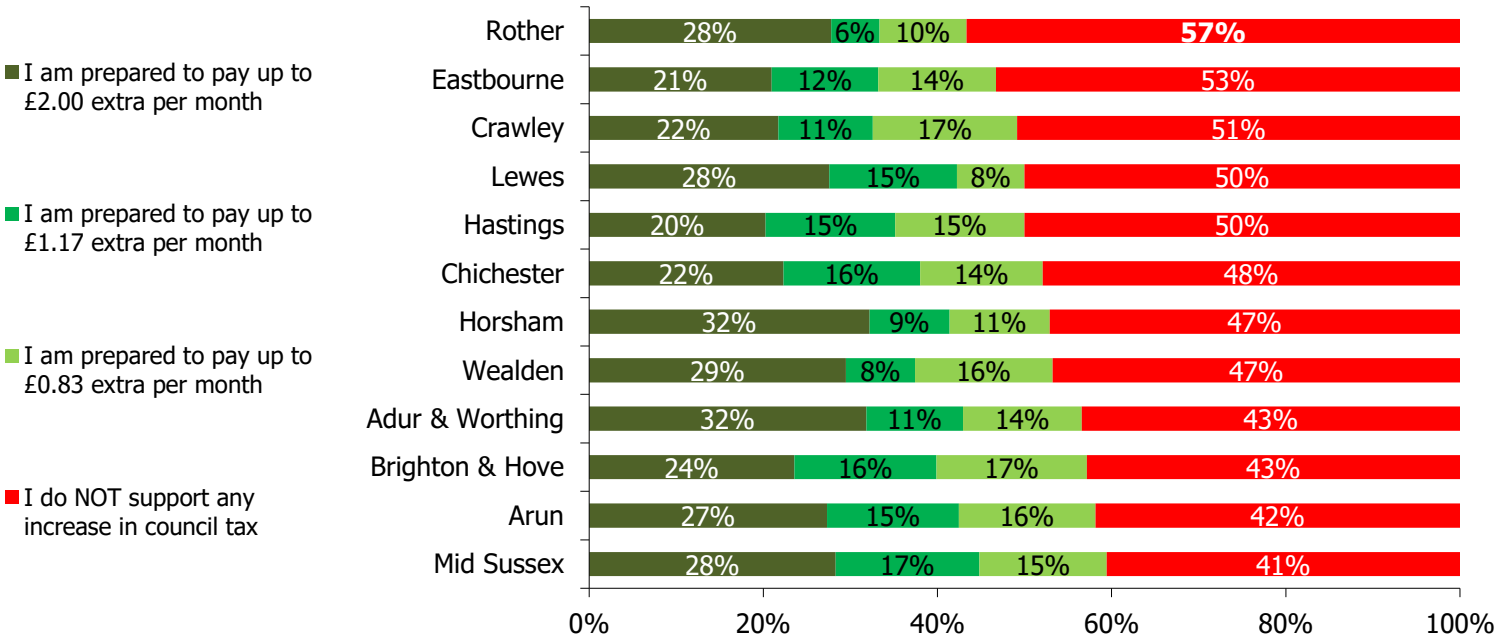
Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By County excluding exempt



Base: West Sussex (n=1,052), East Sussex (n=1,231), Sample Size = 2,283

Precept question | 50%+ of council taxpayers participating in the survey who are resident in: Rother (57%), Eastbourne (53%), Crawley (51%), Lewes (50%) and Hastings (50%), do **not** support any increase in council tax.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By Local Authority excluding exempt



Conversely, 59% of the residents of Mid Sussex are prepared to pay more but this does represent a decrease of 10% YoY.

Chichester has seen an 8% increase in opposition to an increase in the precept.

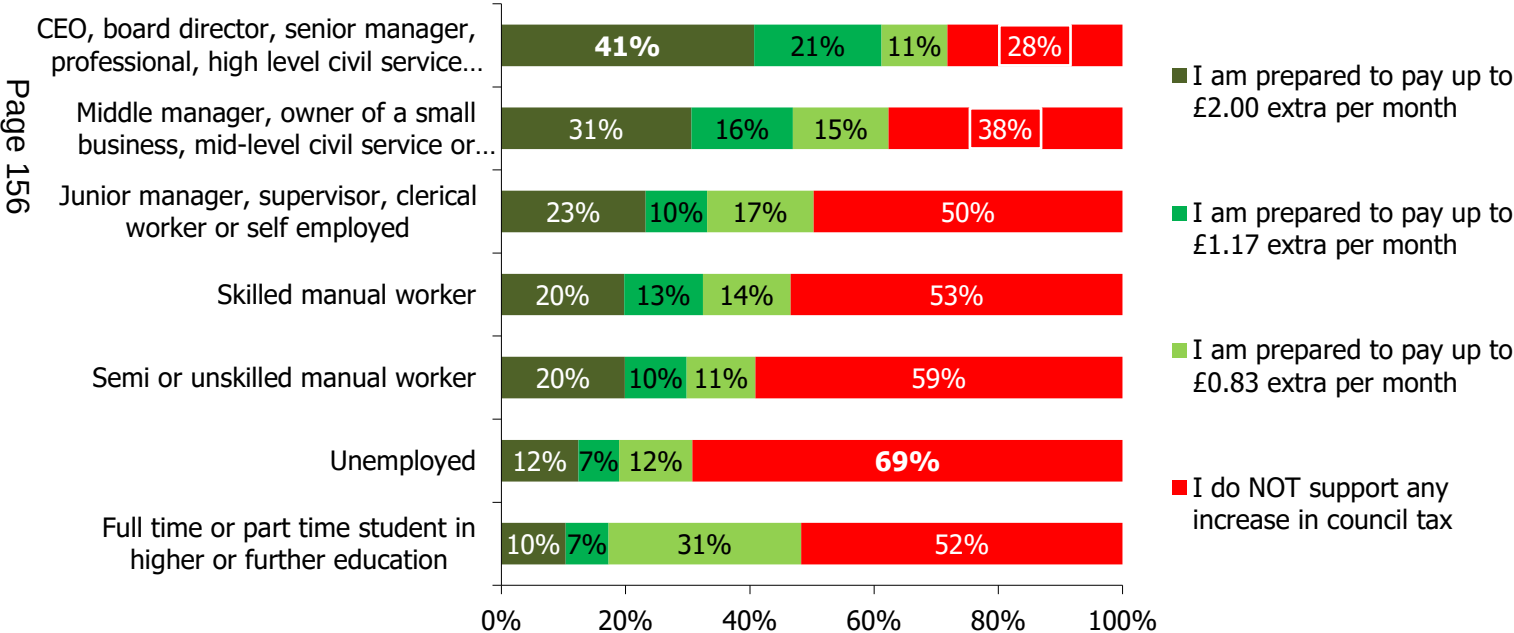
Chichester and Mid Sussex have seen the biggest increases in opposition YoY

Adur & Worthing has seen the biggest increase in support of increasing the precept by the highest amount (+8%).

Agenda Item 6
Appendix 2

Precept question | Opposition to paying anything extra per month has increased sharply among the Unemployed segment (+9% YoY to 69%).

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By Socio Economic Group (SEG) excluding exempt



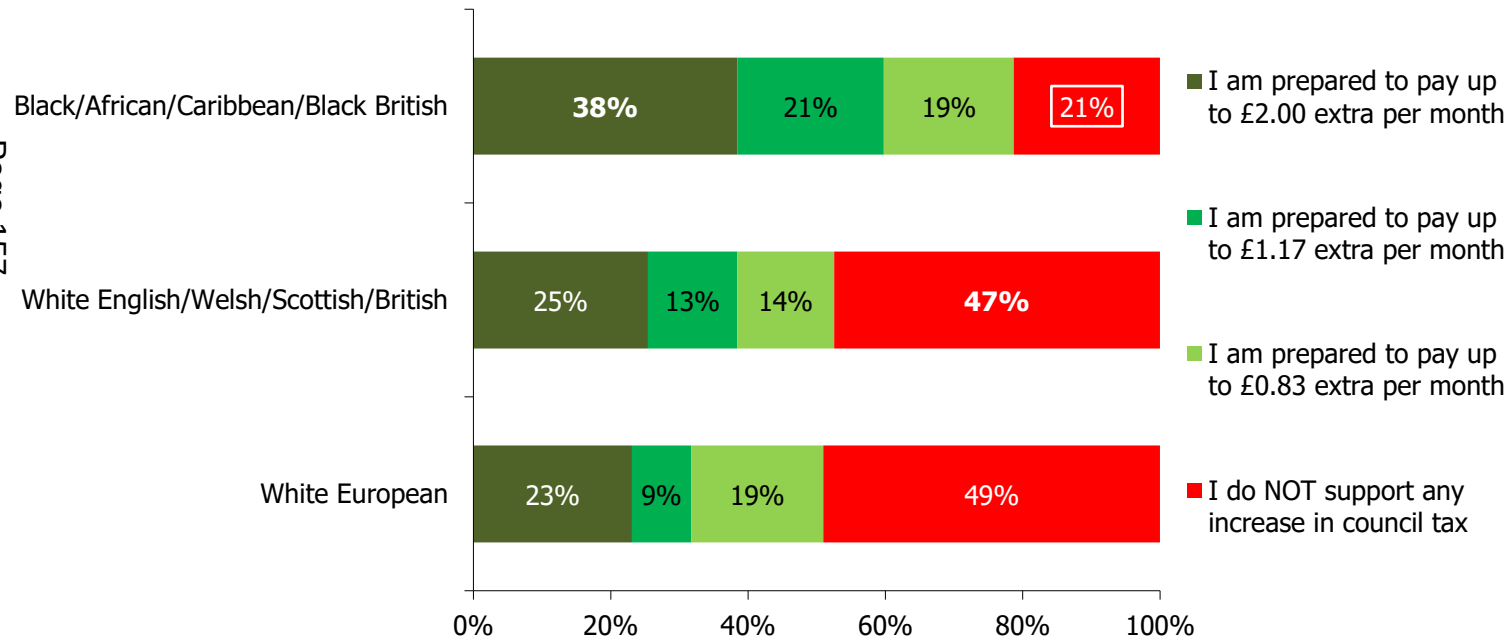
Base: CEO, board director, senior manager, professional, high level civil service or public sector manager (n=312), Middle manager, owner of a small business, mid-level civil service or public sector manager (n=605), Junior manager, supervisor, clerical worker or self employed (n=577), Skilled manual worker (n=410), Semi or unskilled manual worker (n=181), Unemployed (n=169), Full time or part time student in higher or further education (n=29), Sample Size = 2,283

Support for an increase has improved amongst CEO, directors etc. falling within SEG A by +7%.

Opposition to an increase has risen in all other segments. The largest increase is among Semi or unskilled manual workers in SEG D (+10% YoY).

Precept question | As previously, those of Black ethnicity remain more likely to support an increase to the precept. The strength of this support has widened further with 38% of this group now supporting the highest increase, compared to 25% last year.

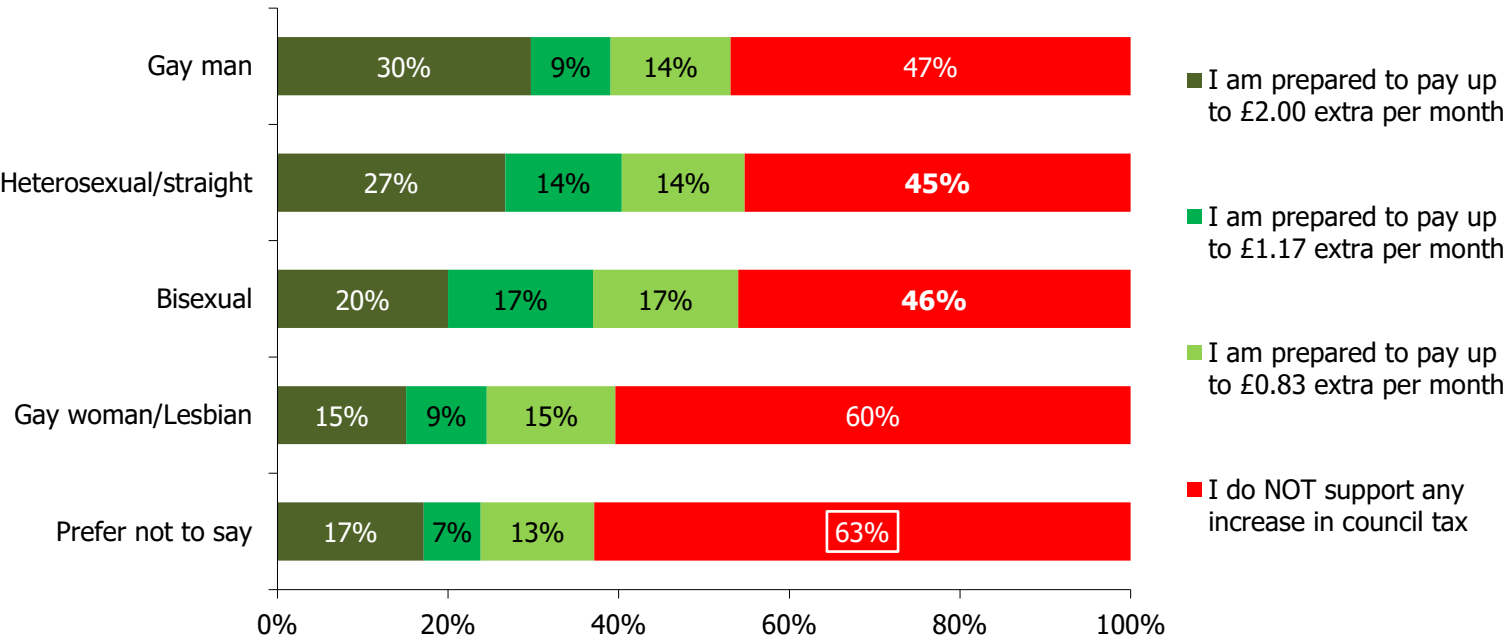
Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By ethnicity excluding exempt



Those who identify as White – both White English/Welsh/Scottish/British and White European, are now slightly more widely inclined to oppose an increase (+5% and +1% respectively).

Precept question | Opposition to an increase in the precept has risen amongst all declared sexual orientations. However, those willing to pay the highest amount has increased across all sexual orientations, meaning the middle-ground support for smaller nominal increases is shrinking.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By Sexual Orientation excluding exempt

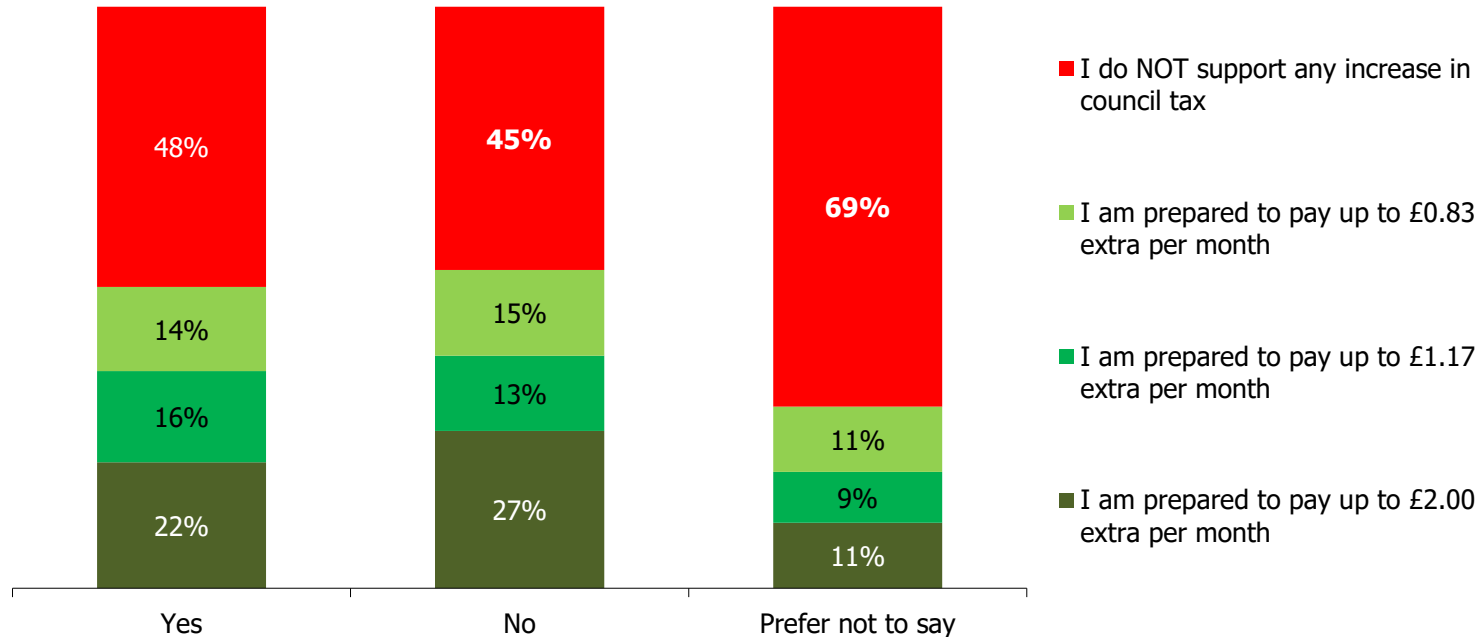


Base: Bisexual (n=100), Heterosexual/straight (n=1,941), Gay man (n=64), Gay woman/Lesbian (n=53), Prefer not to say (n=105), Other (n=16), Sample Size = 2,279

There has been a shift to the extreme's year-on-year, does this mean small increases are no longer the safe compromise?

Precept question | At 48%, opposition to any increase in council tax has increased by +1% year-on-year among council taxpayers with a disability compared with a rise of +4% among those without a disability to 45%.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By presence of disability excluding exempt



Base: Yes (n=332), No (n=1,867), Prefer not to say (n=80), Sample Size = 2,279

Opposition to any increase continues to rise, this year by +3% to 69% among the sizeable minority who 'prefer not to say' whether they have a disability or not.

Agenda Item 6b
Appendix 2

Precept question | Opposition to any form of increase has increased among participants living in each of the main places of residence.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By place of residence excluding exempt



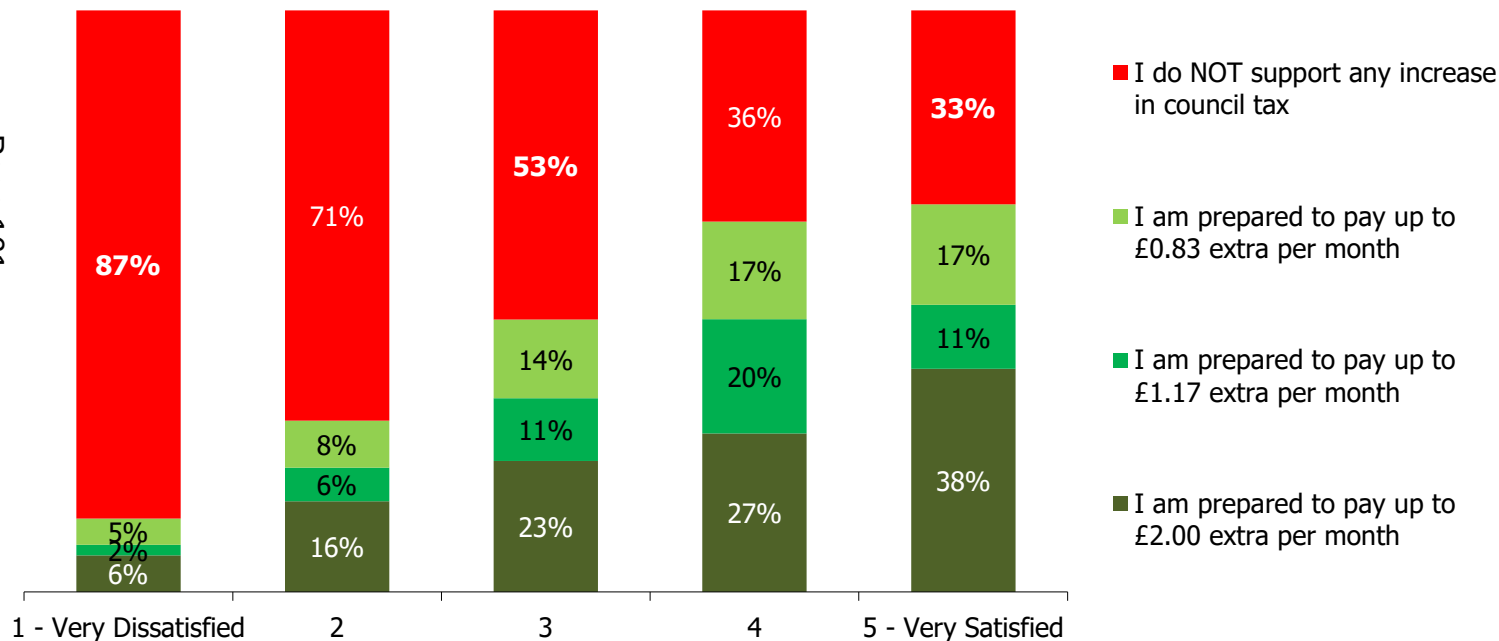
Base: A city (n=525), A town (n=1,316), A village or hamlet (n=412), An isolated dwelling (n=23), Other (n=7), Sample Size = 2,283

City dwellers continue to be the council taxpayers most widely inclined to be prepared to pay extra.

Last year those who lived in a town where most likely to oppose an increase, whereas this year at 50% (+7% YoY), it is individuals living in a village or hamlet.

Precept question | There has been a +7% rise YoY in opposition to any increase, among residents who are 'Very Dissatisfied' with Sussex Police (87% opposed) AND also more surprisingly among those 'Very Satisfied' with the force too (33% opposed).

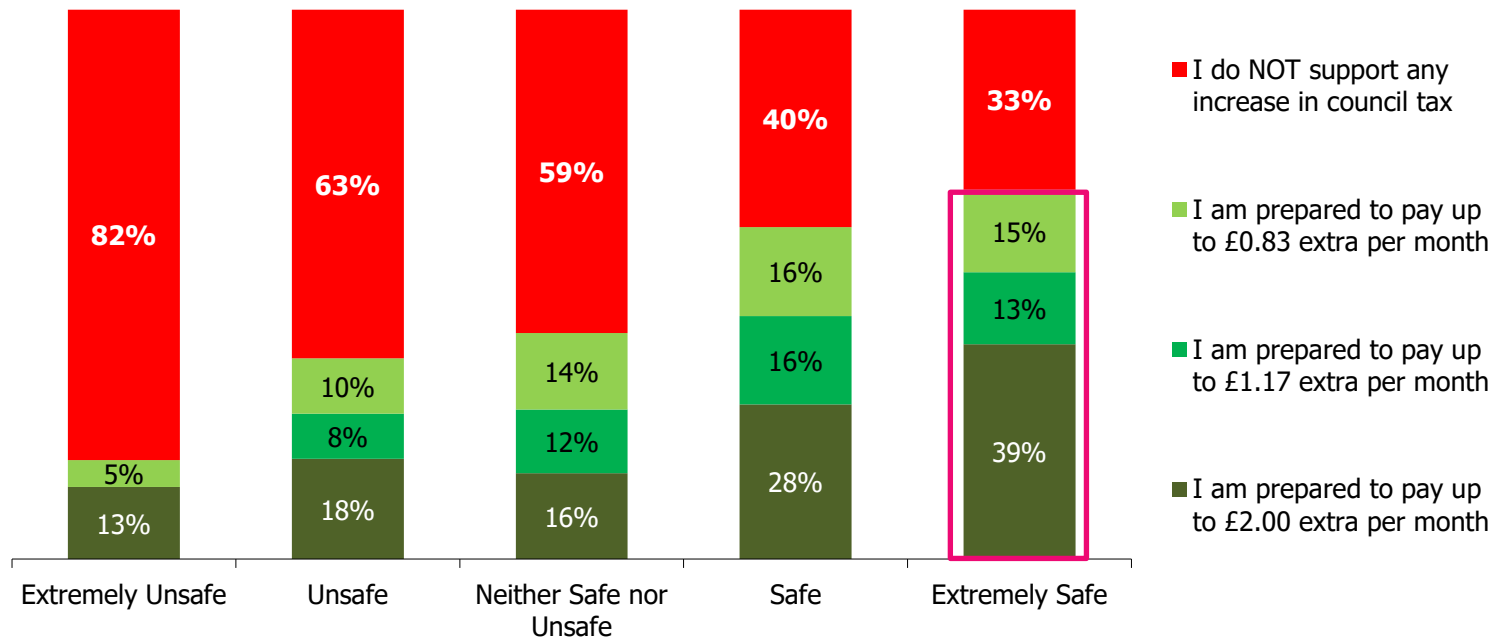
Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By satisfaction with Sussex Police excluding exempt



Base: 1 (n=111), 2 (n=173), 3 (n=760), 4 (n=840), 5 (n=399), Sample Size = 2,283

Precept question | 82% of the council taxpayers participating, who generally feel 'Extremely Unsafe' in Sussex oppose any increase (+4% YoY). Opposition to any increase has risen significantly YoY for each safety rating segment.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By safety rating in Sussex excluding exempt



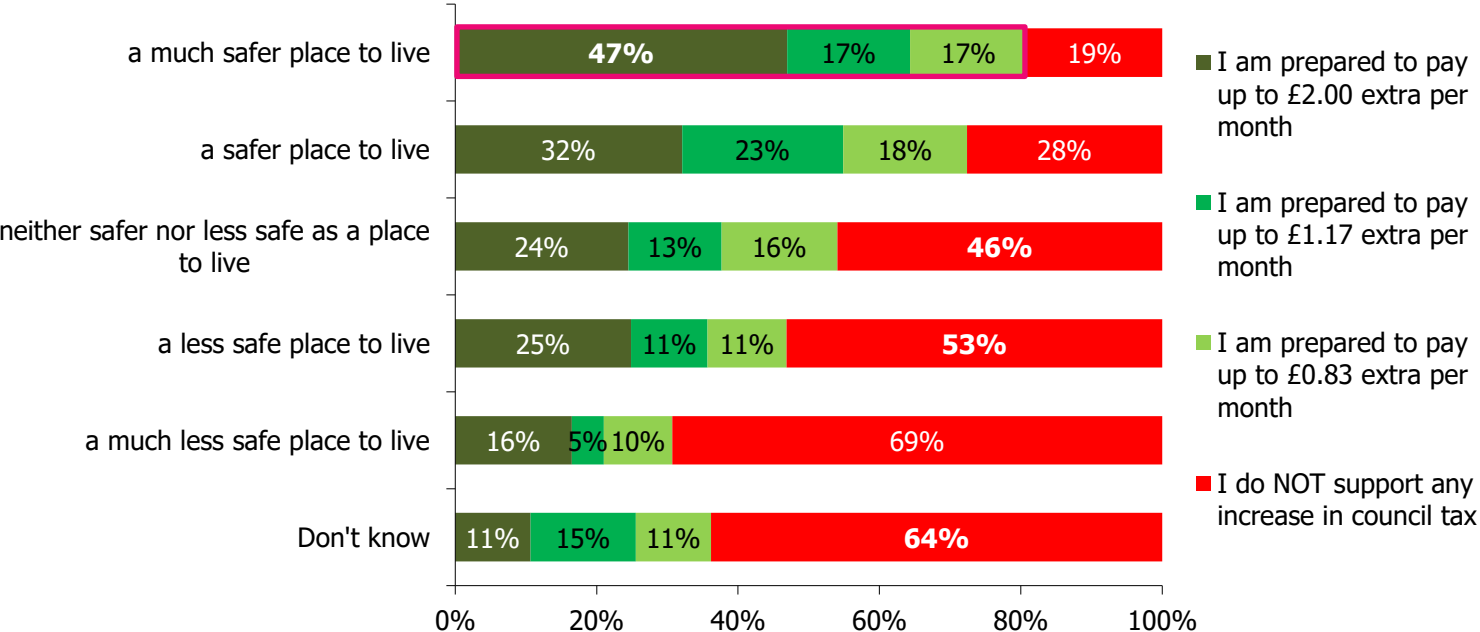
Base: Extremely Unsafe (n=61), Unsafe (n=208), Neither Safe nor Unsafe (n=569), Safe (n=1,033), Extremely Safe (n=412), Sample Size = 2,283

NB This chart equates the safety ratings to the question 'How safe or unsafe do you generally feel in Sussex, on a scale from 1 to 10, where a rating of 1 is extremely unsafe and a rating of 10 is extremely safe?' as detailed below:
 1-2 = Extremely Unsafe
 3-4 = Unsafe
 5-6 = Neither Safe Nor Unsafe
 7-8 = Safe
 9-10 = Extremely Safe.

Precept question | Support or opposition to an increase in the precept correlates with whether a council taxpayer feels that their local community has become safer (wider support) or less safe (wider opposition) over the last 12 months. This is the same trend as the previous year.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27. | By 'Over the last 12 months, would you say that your local community has become...' excluding exempt

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81% of the council taxpayers who feel that their local community has become 'a much safer place to live' over the last 12 months, support an increase. The proportion of them who are prepared to pay the highest amount has increased by +11% YoY.

Whereas 69% of the participants who feel that their local community has become 'a much less safe place to live' in that time, oppose any increase. However, this opposition has decreased by -1% YoY.

Opposition to an increase is up by +8% YoY in the very sizeable 'Neither' cohort.

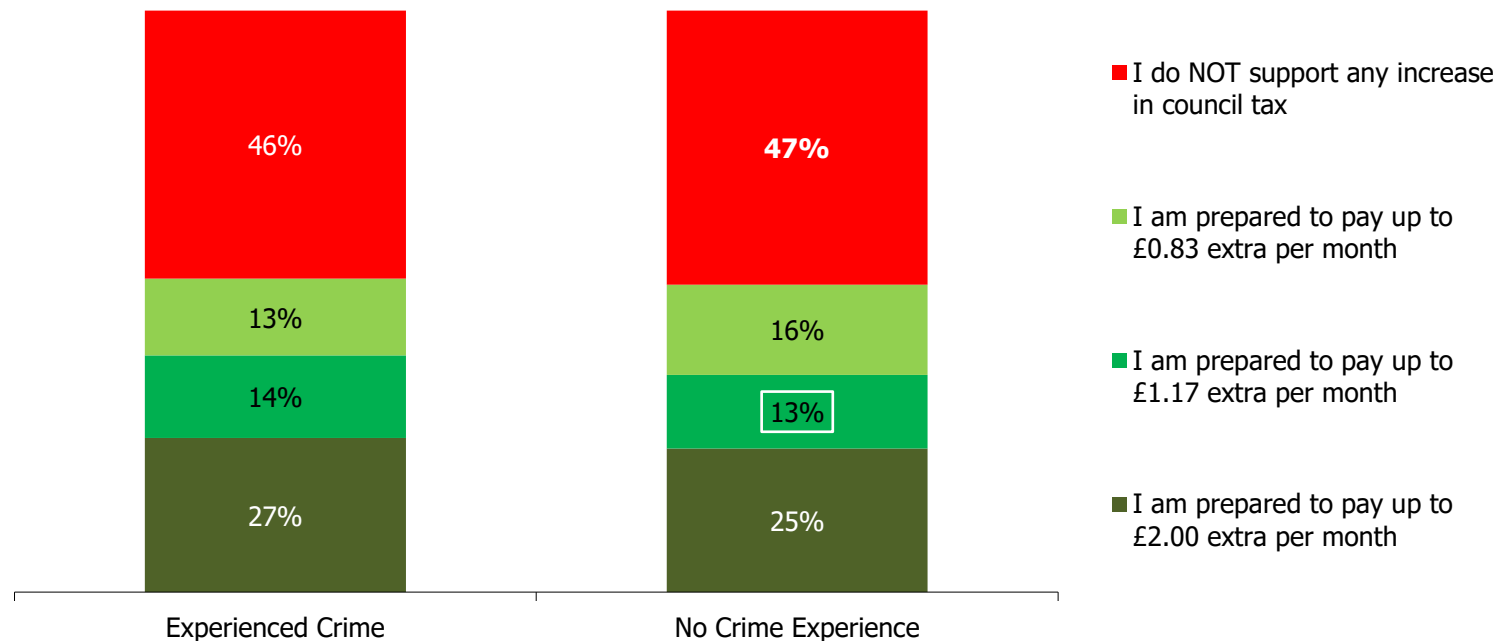
Agenda Item 10b
Appendix 2

Base: a much less safe place to live (n=176), a less safe place to live (n=591), neither safer nor less safe as a place to live (n=1,086), a safer place to live (n=268), a much safer place to live (n=115), Don't know (n=47), Sample Size = 2,283

Precept question | Experiencing at least one researched crime within the last 12 months, had little impact on the support for an increase in the precept (54% vs 53%) but opposing any increase is now +8% higher YoY at 47% among those who have NOT experienced a crime.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27.

By personal experience of a researched crime within the last 12 months excluding exempt



Base: Experienced Crime (n=1,059), No Crime Experience (n=1,178), Sample Size = 2,237

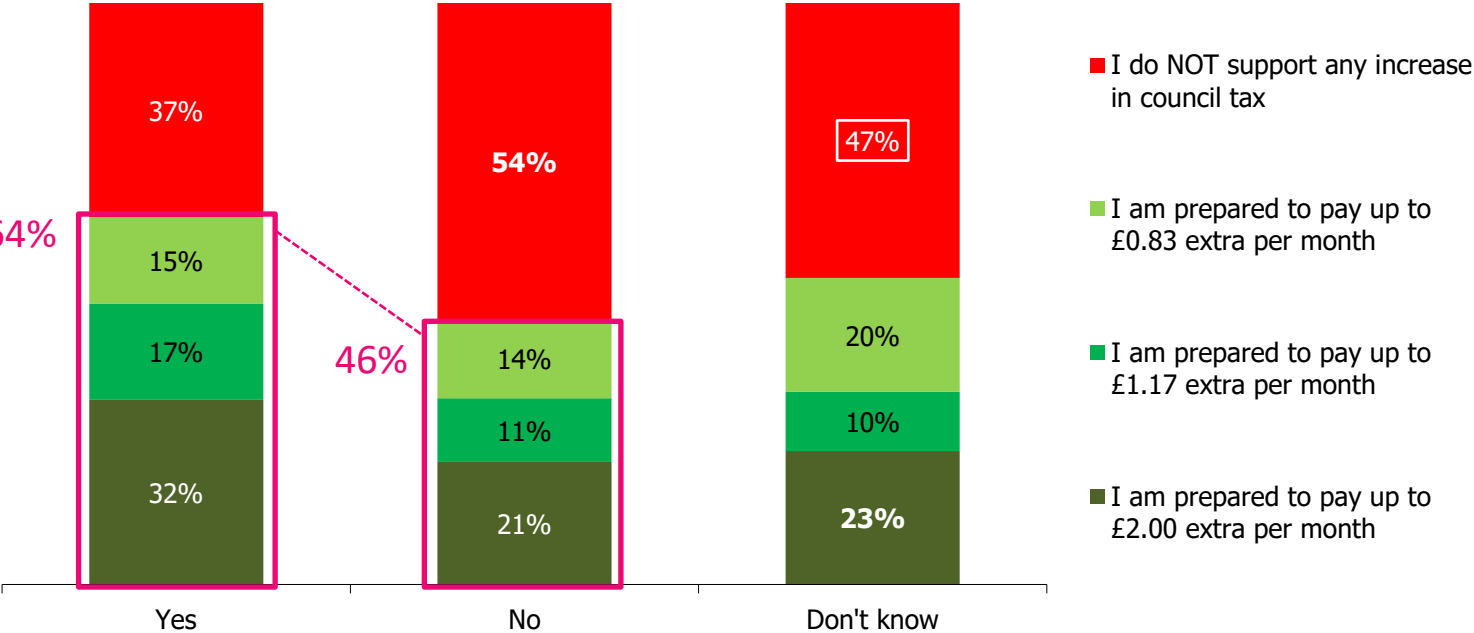
Support for the highest level of increase in the precept up to £2.00, continues to run at around a quarter of council taxpayers, regardless of whether they have personally experienced a crime within the last 12 months or not.

Precept question | Council taxpayers who claim to be aware of Katy Bourne as the current Sussex PCC on a prompted basis, are +18% more likely to support an increase in the precept (64% support) than individuals who are not aware (46% support), with the latter's opposition to any increase up +7% YoY.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27

By awareness of Katy Bourne as the current Sussex PCC excluding exempt

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Base: Yes (n=967), No (n=1,168), Don't know (n=148), Sample Size = 2,283

The size of the gap in support for an increase based upon awareness of Katy Bourne as Sussex PCC has doubled from +9% to +18% YoY.

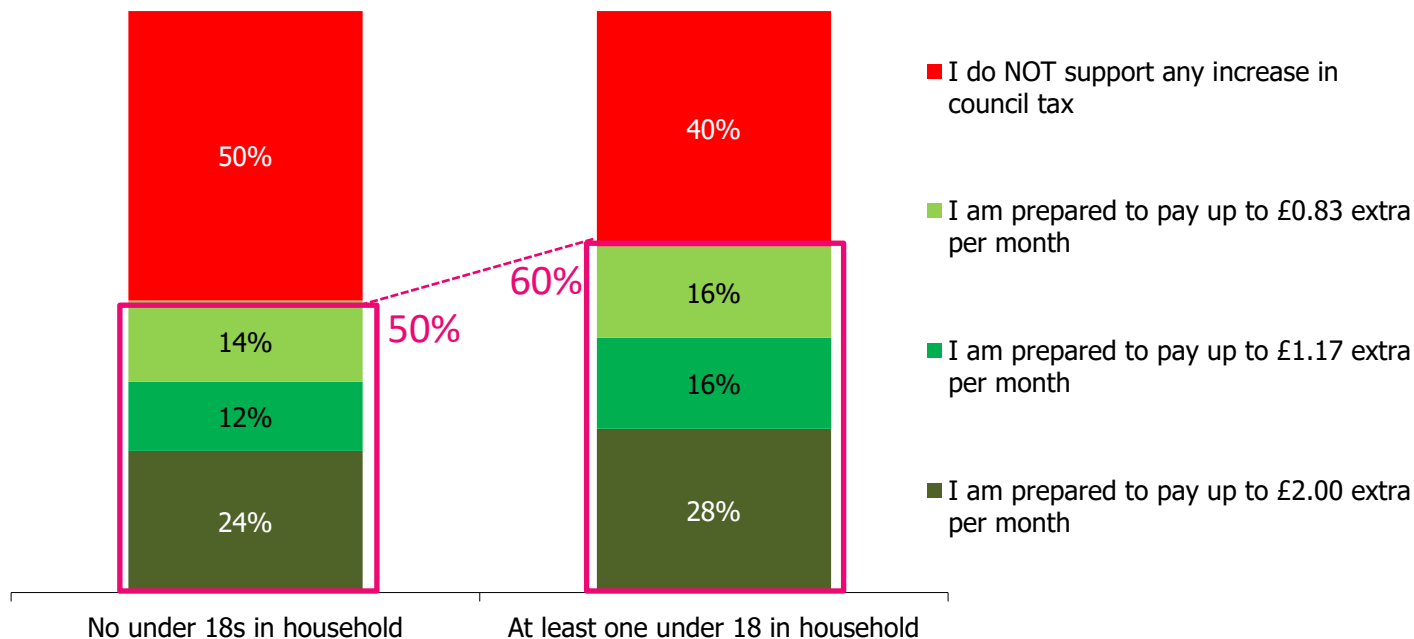
Successfully broadening awareness of Katy Bourne and the work done by Sussex PCC, could continue to improve receptiveness to an increasing precept

Agenda Item 6b
Appendix 2

Precept question | 60% of council taxpayers with at least one under 18 in their household, support an increase in the precept, compared with 50% where there are no under 18s in the household, representing a small +1% widening in this continuing dynamic YoY.

Please indicate which of the options below you would support for the precept in the forthcoming financial year 2026/27.

By presence of under 18s in household excluding exempt



Base: No under 18s in household (n=1,470), At least one under 18 in household (n=810), Sample Size = 2,280

Thank you.

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Appendix 3 : Engagement, survey, media reach and correspondence summary

3,144 responses to our #SaferInSussex survey
2,469 responses to our independent, external consultation,
14,000+ emails sent and received across over 2,500 casework for residents
769,735 reached via digital platforms
454,770 emails sent via newsletter
815 emails sent via Your Sussex Your Say
400 articles in media

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	3,144	94% of respondents have experienced a crime or community issue in the past 12 months. Of the 3,144 respondents, over 7,500 offences or community issues were experienced. - The most common were ASB (66%), Road Safety (10%) and Environmental Issues/Fly Tipping (6%). Other notable offences declared were Fraud/Scams (346 people), Drug Crime (162), Burglary/Robbery (91), Domestic Violence (83) and Hate Crime (45). - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered with Visible Policing (41%), Tougher Sentencing (21%), Early Intervention (15%) and More CCTV (11%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	14,000+ emails sent and received across over 2,500 casework for residents	- The top correspondence category was National Correspondence (21%) followed by Feedback (11%). - Other common contact reasons included: Review Request (218), Enquiries (210) and Complaints (159). - For policing priorities, the most common categories were Road Safety (108), ASB (101) and Business Crime (36). 46% of cases had an unknown location and 12% were from outside of Sussex
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	November 25 – January 26	66 Town and Parish Clerks	Community feedback groups were organised across the county via Microsoft Teams. Participants expressed thanks and understanding to Sussex Police relating to demand and visibility. Key issues raised were related to ASB, road safety and shoplifting.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	2,469	2,469 fully completed surveys were achieved by Sussex residents, delivering an extremely robust total sample Confidence Interval of ± 1.97. 54% of council tax payers support an increase for the policing precept for 2026/27, with 24% of those respondents being happy to pay the maximum of an additional £2 a month for a Band D household. 56% males are prepared to pay an increase in their precept whilst 51% of females are prepared to pay an increase. 62% of +65 year olds, 50% of 50-64 year olds, 52% of 35-39 year olds and 51% of 18-34 year olds support an increase in the precept. 81% of the council taxpayers who feel that their local community has become 'a much safer place to live' over the last 12 months, support an increase. Perceptions of safety have improved +3%pts vs the previous year - Council taxpayers who are familiar with the current PCC and the work undertaken are +18% more likely to support a precept increase 47% of respondents had experienced an offence over the past 12 months - Perceptions on lack of safety in the community were attributed to "increase of crime", "immigration issues" and "lack of visible policing" - Those living in cities are generally more satisfied with policing than those in more rural communities

Engagement, survey, media reach and correspondence summary

3,144 responses to our #SaferInSussex survey
2,469 responses to our independent, external consultation,
14,000+ emails sent and received across over 2,500 casework for residents
769,735 reached via digital platforms
454,770 emails sent via newsletter
815 emails sent via Your Sussex Your Say
400 articles in media

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10-01/12	98	Respondents were asked about awareness and views about Live Facial Recognition Vans: • 59% of respondents were aware of the vans launching in Sussex • 65% of respondents feel safer knowing that the vans are catching criminals in Sussex • 76% of respondents would like the vans to be expanded to scan for other crime types • The survey had a 67% open rate
Digital Media	1/01 – 31/12	769,735	Digital Engagement: Reached 769,735 individuals Received 45,147 engagements Above benchmarks for average Engagement Rate across 2 priority channels (Facebook & LinkedIn)

Wider engagements 2025

Event	Date	Location	Area/District	Demographic	Theme/main topics
Pan Sussex DA Conference	21st January	Amex, Pan Sussex wide	Pan Sussex	DA professionals	Domestic abuse
Esteem Visit	18th February	Shoreham-by-Sea	West, Adut and Worthing	Youths	Youth work
Tool Marking for Farms	21st February	Bolney	Mid, Horsham	Rural Community, farmers	Tool/machine theft
Hailsham Highways Depot	11th March	Hailsham	East, Wealden	Road Workers/key workers	Road worker abuse
Farmer FCCCD Visit	27th March	Lewes, HQ	East, Lewes	Farmers/rural community	Rural crime reporting
Hastings Town Centre Visit	7th April	Hastings Town Centre	East, Hastings	Hastings residents	ASB, hotspots, business crime
Cadets Awards Ceremony	11th April	Uckfield	East, Wealden	Cadets	General engagement
Youth Ambassador BHASVIC	22nd April	Brighton	B&H	BHASVIC A1 students	Online grooming
Tool Marking for Tradees, Wickes	13th May	Hove	B&H	Tradees	Tool theft
Pub Watch/businesses, Crawley	23rd May	Crawley	Mid, Crawley	business owners	Retail and business crime
Camber Sands summer safety	11th June	Camber Sands	East, Rother	Families	Safety at beach
Youth Ambassador Training	26th June	SVH	East, Lewes	Children 13-17	Internet safety and public speaking
Operation Limelight	8th July	Gatwick Airport	Gatwick	Women and girls	Safety from harmful practices
Youth Ambassador Launch Event	16th July	BHASVIC	B&H	children/parents	Internet safety
Waste Crime Event	16th September	Handcross	Mid, Horsham	Roads/drivers/EA	Illegal waste carrying
Worthing crime rates	24th September	Worthing town	West, Adur and Worthing	public and businesses	Shoplifting and ASB
Young Citizens Event	25th September	Crawley	Mid, Crawley	youths (year 6)	Safety initiatives
BIMM Wellbeing Fair	26th September	Brighton	B&H	Students	Safety/experiences of crime
Funding Network Event	4th Nov	SVH	East, Lewes	Service providers	Devolution/internet security
SALC AGM	4th Nov	The Amex	Pan Sussex	Local councils	PCC speech, tagging presentation
Horsham Pub Watch	6th Nov	Horsham	West, Horsham	business owners	Business/retail crime
Rural Crime Roundtable	6th Nov	Chichester	West, Chichester	Rural Community, farmers	Rural Crime/police response to rural crime
Grandads House Visit	12th Nov	Bognor Regis	West, Arun	SISCF recipient	Safety in the area

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	109	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (70%), Fraud (9%) and Road Safety Issues/Speeding (9%). - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (38%), Tougher Sentencing (20%), Early Intervention (16%) and More CCTV (16%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	73	- The top categories were Enquiries (12%), PSD complaints (11%) and Crime Reports (10%). - Other notable crime types include ASB, Business Crime, ASB and Hate Crime/Discrimination.
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)		OSPCC received low take-up on an invitation so a group did not go ahead
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	219	57% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 32% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month Residents feel less safe than other areas, with 73% rating safety less then 8 out of 10 48% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 43% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	10	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: Adur: 3 responses 2/3 aware of vans 100% feel safe with the vans on the streets 100% agree that the vans should be widened and used for other crime types - Other suggested crime types: fly tipping, vandalism, shoplifting, traffic violations - All strongly disagree that they feel ‘watched’ by the vans Worthing: 7 responses 42% aware of the vans 71% feel safe with the vans on the streets 85% think that the vans should be widened to other crime types Other rime types include: drug runners, prolific shoplifters, ASB, breaching court orders 85% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	619	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (69%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (9%) and Fraud (5%) and fly tipping/environmental issues (5%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (42%), Tougher Sentencing (22%, Early Intervention (15%) and More CCTV (10%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	73	- The top categories were ASB (11%) and Request for Review (11%). - Other notable crime types include Road Safety, Business Crime and Unauthorised Encampments.
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	7 town and parish councillors and clerks	Group discussed that ASB was a key issue, raising E-scooters as a disturbance to communities. Shoplifting was raised as a prevalent concern in areas along with knife crime due to incidents happening in West Sussex this year. The group also highlighted wanting to better visibility of the police in their communities and understanding current gaps within the NPTs in their area.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	182	58% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 27% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 50% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 48% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	3	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 63% aware of vans 81% feel safe with the vans on the streets 81% agree that the vans should be widened and used for other crime types - Other suggested crime types: electric scooters, motor offences, all criminality, county lines, shoplifting 81% strongly disagree that they feel ‘watched’ by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	282	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (71%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (5%) Drugs (5%) fly tipping/environmental issues (5%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (37%), Early Intervention (19%) and Tougher Sentencing (15%) and More CCTV (11%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	170	- The top categories were Complaints (12%), Feedback (11%) and ASB (9%). - Other notable crime types include Road Safety, E-Bikes/Scooters and Firearms.
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	9	The group discussed a number of crime and community safety concerns across the city, primarily ASB, Shoplifting, and drug dealing/taking. There was tremendous support for partnership working, - and more of it - acknowledging that the police cannot tackle these issues alone. Two-way engagement between the police and residents/businesses, particularly following reports of crime, would help to highlight where action has been taking – improving trust and confidence and reducing the fear of crime.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	572	57% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 24% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 23% of respondents stated that their local area had become a safer place to live in the past 12 months 45% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months The area most satisfied with policing (62% satisfied)
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	8	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 0% aware of vans 50% feel safe with the vans on the streets 20% think the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other suggested crime types: shoplifting and street crime 38% strongly disagree that they feel ‘watched’ by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	144	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (72%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (9%) fly tipping/environmental issues (4%) Drugs (2%) and Burglary (2%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Tougher Sentencing (36%), Early Intervention (24%), More CCTV (16%) and Visible Policing (9%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	95	- The top categories were Road Safety (13%) and Review Request (11%) - Other notable crime types include ASB, Business Crime, Firearms and Unauthorised Encampments
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	9 Town and Parish Clerks	The group expressed concern over anti-social behaviour in rural areas of the district. This includes noisy quad bikes, trespassing, littering (Nitrous Oxide cans). Some issues with travelling community but not anything big. Hare Coursing also an issue. Group were encouraged to report and collaborate more closely with the Rural Crime Team.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	132	52% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 22% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 25% of residents rated safety 8 out of 10 or higher 44% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 54% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	10	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 70% aware of the vans 80% feel safe with the vans on the streets 90% think the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crime types include: burglary, stalking, driving whilst using a phone, all crime 70% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	77	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (75%), fly tipping/environmental issues (9%) , Road Safety/Issues (6%) and Drugs (2%). - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Tougher Sentencing (41%), More CCTV (18%) and Early Intervention (18%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	61	- The top categories were Feedback (13%) and Request for Review (13%) - Other notable crime types include ASB, Road Safety, Stalking and Drugs
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)		OSPCC received low take-up on an invitation so a group did not go ahead
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	190	50% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 22% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 21% of respondents stated that their local area had become a safer place to live in the past 12 months 45% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 59% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	8	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 30% aware of the vans 80% feel safe with the vans on the streets 80% think the vans should be widened to other crime types Other crime types include: all crime, accidents, fly tipping 80% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	109	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (73%), Drugs (5%), Environmental Issues/Fly Tipping (4%), Road Safety/Issues (4%) and Domestic Violence (4%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Tougher Sentencing (33%), Early Intervention (21%) and More CCTV (17%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	87	- The top categories were Feedback (14%) and Request for Review (14%) - Other notable crime types include ASB, Business Crime, Hate Crime/Discrimination and Road Safety
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)		OSPCC received low take-up on an invitation so a group did not go ahead
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	235	47% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 21% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 47% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 52% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	6	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 20% aware of the vans 20% feel safe with the vans on the streets 90% think that the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crimes include: anti-social behaviour, vehicles and poor parking, theft - There is a 50/50 split between strongly agree and strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	178	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (74%), Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (7%), Road Safety/Issues (5%) and Domestic Violence (3%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Tougher Sentencing (31%), More CCTV (21%) and Earlier Intervention (20%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	62	- The top categories were Feedback (21%), Request for Review (13%) and Enquiries (11%) - Other notable crime types include Asb, Road Safety and Drugs
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)		OSPCC received low take-up on an invitation so a group did not go ahead
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	168	50% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 20% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 19% of respondents stated that their local area had become a safer place to live in the past 12 months 48% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 51% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	7	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 55% aware of the vans 40% feel safe with the vans on the streets 80% think the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crime types include: knife crime, drug trafficking, ASB 55% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	473	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (59%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (14%) Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (9%) and Fraud/Scams (5%). - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (40%), Tougher Sentencing (21%) Early Intervention (14%) and More CCTV (10%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	62	- The top categories were Enquiries (11%), Feedback (11%) and Road Safety (10%). - Other notable crime types include ASB and Neighbour Disputes
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	9 Town and Parish Clerks	Top concerns raised were dangerous driving and ASB, particularly public drug use and drinking. Group mentioned they would like to see more visible patrols in their areas but were aware of who their local police contacts were. Shop theft was also raised as an issue in the area with supermarkets experiencing crime.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	180	52% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 32% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 47% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 53% are satisfied with policing in their area, an increase of +18%pts vs 2024
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	12	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 0% aware of the vans 60% feel safe with the vans on the streets 80% think the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crimes types include: drug dealers, county lines, shoplifting, wanted persons, ASB 70% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	59	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (58%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (19%), Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (6%) and Fraud (5%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Tougher Sentencing (32%), Early Intervention (21%) and More CCTV (16%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	133	- The top categories were National Correspondence (35%) and Feedback (10%) - Other notable crime types include Road Safety, ASB, Neighbourhood Disputes, Domestic Abuse and Fraud
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	8 town and parish councillors and clerks	Main issues facing the Lewes district are dangerous driving and speeding which affects numerous towns and villages. The group highlighted that they convene regular meetings to tackle road-related issues but they persist. The group expressed a desire to have more interaction and better visibility from their local Neighbourhood Policing Team to deter crimes such as ASB, drug-use, graffiti and other issues affecting smaller communities. When asked if shoplifting is an issue, the group agreed that they don't see this as an issue in their area.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	129	51% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 28% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 47% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 52% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	2	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 1 aware/1 not aware of the vans - Both unsure how they feel in terms of safety with the vans on the streets - Both don't think the vans should be widened to other crime types 1 strongly agree / 1 strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	424	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (68%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (10%) Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (7%) and Fraud (4%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (42%), Tougher Sentencing (22%), Early Intervention (13%) and More CCTV (12%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	79	- The top categories were Road Safety (20%), ASB (11%) and Complaints (10%) - Other notable crime types include Firearms, Theft and Business Crime
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	6 Town and Parish Clerks	The group expressed sincere thanks for how visible and proactive their local NPT is. The group mentioned that ASB is a top concern for residents including vandalism, noise, congregating in car parks etc. Other issues include speeding and dangerous driving on rural/smaller roads. Shoplifting was also an issue in the towns particularly in Coop stores.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	222	60% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 28% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month Residents in Mid-Sussex feel the safest in the county, with 55% of those surveyed rating safety 8 out of 10 or higher 50% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 60% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	13	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 61% aware of the vans 92% feel safe with the vans on the streets 76% think the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crime types include: ASB, shoplifting, theft, street robbery 76% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	230	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (62%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (8%) Fraud (7%) Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (6%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (39%), Tougher Sentencing (18%), Early Intervention (15%) and More CCTV (14%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	59	- The top categories were Feedback (19%) and Request fir Review (19%) - Other notable crime types include ASB, Road Safety, Business Crime, Rural Crime and Stalking
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	10 Councillors/Clerks	In general crime in Rother areas was low, with ASB and road safety being key issues. Bexhill expressed concern with vandalism of public toilets in the town causing significant cost to the town council. Battle has been experiencing shoplifting in the high-street and expressed disappointment with the police response. The group agreed however that they all have good relationships with their local NPT and PCSOs
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	94	44% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 28% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 54% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 42% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	3	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 100% aware of the vans 100% feel safe with the vans on the streets 100% think that the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crime types include: outstanding investigations, outstanding warrants 100% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Item	Dates	People engaged	Main findings
Safer In Sussex Survey	16/05 – 30/10	438	- Over the past 12 months, the respondents have experienced ASB (51%), Road Safety Issues/Speeding (18%) Fly Tipping/Environmental Issues (8%) and Fraud (6%) - When asked what would make them feel safer, respondents answered Visible Policing (42%), Tougher Sentencing (19%), Early Intervention (14%) and More CCTV (9%).
Correspondence	1/01 – 31/12	153	- The top categories were Feedback (29%) and National Correspondence (22%) - Other notable crime types include Road Safety, Rural Crime, Business Crime and Stalking
Focus Group/Feedback Discussion	1/11 – 10/01 (26)	8 Town and Parish Clerks	The group expressed concern regarding anti-social parking which in most instances is not a police issue. However where required, the police are intervening. Anti-social behaviour is also an issue in the Wealden district including low-level vandalism, trail bikes and e-scooters. The district is also very rural and so some landowners and farm owners are experiencing rural crime.
Independent consultation including precept survey	01/11- 01/12	146	53% of respondents would support a rise in their local precept payment. 29% of respondents would support the maximum rise of £2 per month 39% had experienced a crime over the past 12 months 50% are satisfied with policing in their area
Your Sussex Your Say	01/10- 01/12	8	Asked about awareness and views on Live Facial Recognition Vans: 80% aware of the vans 50% feel safe with the vans on the streets 80% think that the vans should be widened to other crime types - Other crime types include: shoplifters, sexual crimes, speeding, known knife carriers, dangerous and anti-social driving 50% strongly disagree that they feel watched by the vans

Media Evaluation

	Q4 – Jan – March 25	Q1 – April – June 25	Q2 July – Sept 25	Q3 – October – December 25	Q4 to date (Jan 2026)	Total/Average to date
Number of articles		91	118	65	26	300
Total reach	486,120,666	15,738,563	18,467,809	10,924,391	6,632,384	537,883,813
% Positive or very positive	95.00%	96%	97%	91%	96%	95%
% Negative or very negative	5.00%	4%	3%	1.5%	4%	3.5%
% Priority or Key Target Media	85%	98%	100%	94%	96%	94.5%

PCC Priorities

Improve trust in policing and build public confidence	40%	41%	24%	19%	50%	34.8%
Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice	40%	44%	53%	35%	42%	42.8%
Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses	17%	13%	23%	46%	7%	21.2%
None	3%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1.2%

Article size

Full page	62%	37%	74%	87%	57%	63.4%
½ page	3%	8%	4%	13%	23%	10.2%
1/4 page	19%	25%	14%	0%	11%	13.8%
1/8 Page	16%	30%	8%	0%	9%	12.5%
% PCC led	47%	62%	77%	91%	92%	73.8%

LinkedIn	Impressions	Engagements	Av Engagement Rate
Total	35,776	1,009	3%

X (Twitter)	Impressions	Engagements	Av Engagement Rate
Total	518,776	1,144	0.2%

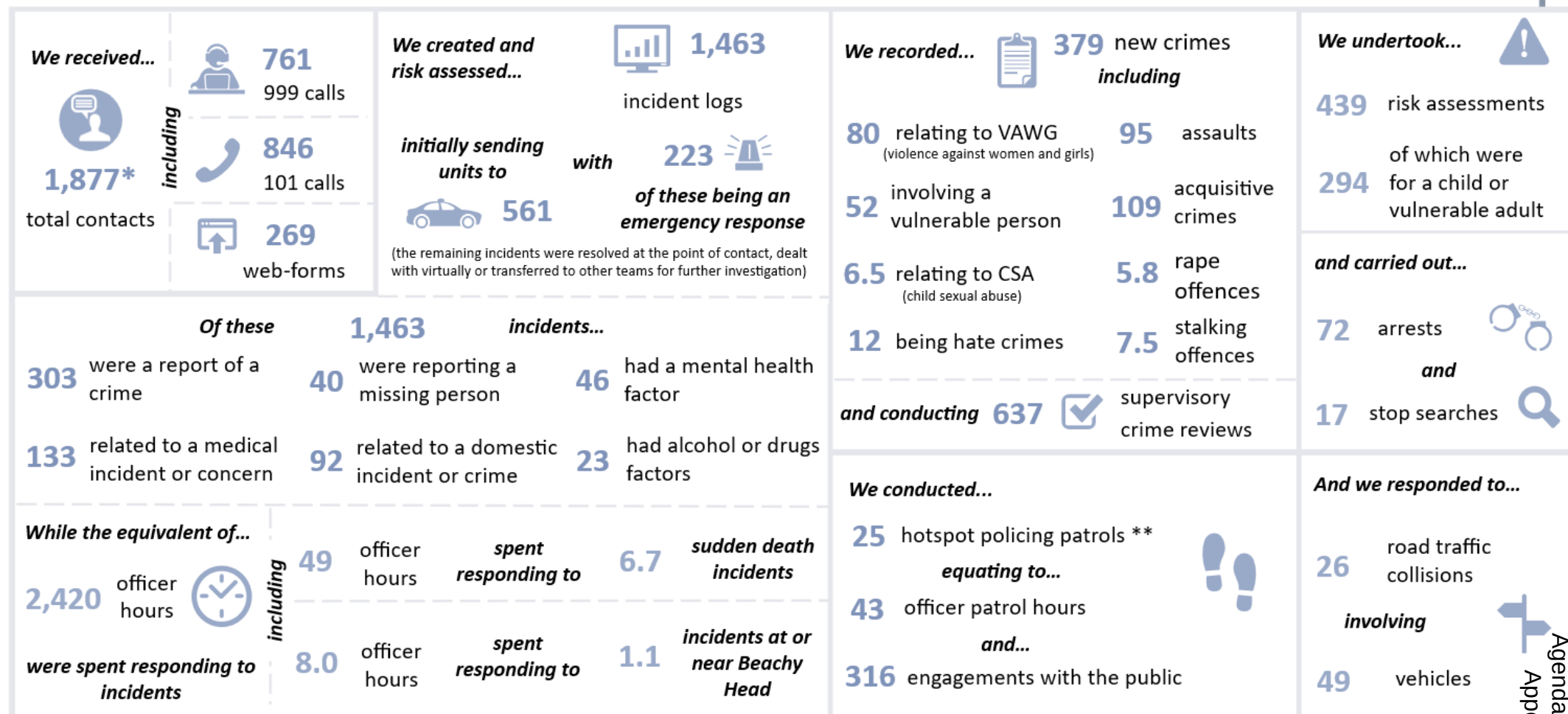
Facebook	Impressions	Engagements	Av Engagement Rate
Total	188,183	5,573	3%
Website	Users	Events	Av Engagement Rate
Total	27,000	37,421	25%
Newsletter	Subscribers	Emails Sent	Av Open Rate
9,283 subscribers	2% increase	425,330	50%

Benchmarks	
Facebook ER	0.2%
X ER	2%
Linkedin ER	3%
Website	30%

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A Day in the Life...

On an average day between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025:



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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

30 January 2026

The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny:

The Panel is asked to scrutinise the Commissioner's work in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing.

1. Background

- 1.1 The item has been added to the agenda at the request of the Panel.
- 1.2 The matter was last considered by the Panel at its meeting in February 2019.
Reports for the meeting can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/32x99fxd>

Lauren McCann

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices

Appendix A - The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing

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To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing.
Date:	30 January 2026.
Recommendation:	That the Sussex Police & Crime Panel note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response provided to county lines and cuckooing.
- 1.2 The report also provides an outline of what county lines and cuckooing are, the police powers and tactical options available to tackle them, the Sussex Police response to county lines and cuckooing, and the role of the Sussex PCC in this process in terms of holding the Chief Constable to account for performance in this area.

2.0 What are county lines and cuckooing?

- 2.1 The Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) define a county line as:

"a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the United Kingdom], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence [including sexual violence] and weapons."

- 2.2 The NPCC county lines business model comprises four dedicated areas, as follows:

Communications – the use of dedicated phone lines and technology

Movement – of people, drugs, weapons and money

Violence – increase in violent methods and a reliance on its deterrent effect

Vulnerability – predatory exploitation of the most vulnerable in our society

- 2.3 It is more commonly perceived that county lines feature an urban to rural drug supply model, involving drugs supply from major cities to smaller towns and villages. Whilst this is partly true, it is also now understood that county lines include local drugs supply, with lines that start and end in the same town and/or police force areas. In 2024, an assessment undertaken by the Force highlighted the rapid localisation of the business model in Sussex with the urban to rural drug supply now recognised to have slowed significantly.

- 2.4 The types of marketed drug lines [also known as 'deal lines'] referred to above can be categorised as follows:
- ✓ External lines – lines supplying drugs across county borders [i.e. the traditional county lines model of urban to rural drugs supply]
 - ✓ Internal lines – lines operating exclusively within one county [i.e. local drugs supply within the police force area]
 - ✓ Social media lines – online accounts advertising drugs for sale [i.e. this can comprise both urban to rural and local drugs supply]
- 2.5 Sussex Police estimate that there are currently circa. 48 active county lines operating in Sussex, comprising external, internal and social media lines [January 2026]. Due to the unconfirmed status of other lines and the constant fluctuations in the available data it is not possible to provide a definitive breakdown of the distinct types of drug lines.
- 2.6 It is also recognised that county lines and organised criminal networks can evolve quickly, which heightens the importance of corroborating and developing any intelligence received about new deal lines and taking robust action against any active lines identified.
- 2.7 The National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) defines cuckooing as *"the occupation and/or control of an individual's home, in order to commit and/or facilitate criminal offences or associated crimes."*
- 2.8 These criminal offences and associated crimes can include the following:
- Using the property to deal, store or take drugs [most common]
 - Using the property for sex work
 - Taking over the property as a place for them to live
 - Taking over the property to financially abuse the tenant
 - Taking over the property to store, prepare and deal drugs
- 2.9 It is acknowledged that policing reports of cuckooing effectively should contribute towards a tangible reduction in the reports of anti-social behaviour received from neighbouring properties which are negatively impacted by this offending activity.
- 2.10 The number of referrals made to the National Referral Mechanism – a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support – is also expected to increase meaning that modern slavery offences should be correctly identified and managed accordingly. The management of reports of cuckooing forms part of a separate review around this area [see section 5.1 of the report for more information].

3.0 Police powers and tactical options to tackle county lines and cuckooing

- 3.1 There are a range of legal powers and tactical options available to Sussex Police to tackle county lines and cuckooing. These include:
- Modern Slavery Act 2015 [consolidating the existing offences of modern slavery and human trafficking]
 - Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 [including Criminal Behaviour Orders, Community Protection Notices and Closure Orders]
 - Policing and Crime Act 2009 [including Gang Injunctions]
 - Serious Crime Act 2015 [including Serious Crime Prevention Orders]
 - Child Abduction Act 1984 and Children Act 1949 [including offences around the abduction of children by persons not connected with a child and abduction of children in care which can be used where vulnerable children are coerced into county lines activity].
- 3.2 Technological advances using Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders (DDTROs) Regulations 2017 have provided police force areas with another power to tackle county lines.
- 3.3 A DDTRO requires the mobile network operator to close specific phone lines, which prevents drug dealers from contacting their client base. This law enforcement tactic can be anticipated by the operators of some county lines who have been known to record client contact details elsewhere, which limits the impact of the orders. As such, the police service often uses the DDTROs in conjunction with other powers and tactical options to tackle county lines.
- 3.4 Sussex Police were the first police force in England and Wales to successfully use this legislation to tackle organised crime networks operating drug lines throughout the county. It is recognised that the number of challenges that can exist to achieve a successful outcome makes investigating this type of criminal activity difficult for all police force areas nationally.
- 3.5 The Force also uses Operation Pester to disrupt county lines' activity locally. This tactic is used by the police and partners to send messages from the dedicated phone number associated with the county line to make contacts aware that the line has been taken down and deter individuals from continuing to operate the line, alongside the provision of proactive messaging around drug safety and substance misuse.
- 3.6 Historically, county lines were [predominantly] run in Sussex by several London-based gangs. As highlighted in section 2.3 of the report, the county lines model has changed and now includes local drugs supply, with lines that start and end in the same town and/or police force area. As such, there are shared characteristics of their 'modus operandi' which can make them more difficult to target than local organised crime groups.

3.7 These different modes of operating can include the following:

- Out of county offenders – Offenders operate incognito until intelligence and/or arrests lead to their identification by the police.
- Cuckooing – Criminals take control of the homes of vulnerable individuals and exploit them through intimidation, violence and/or the supply of free drugs. These properties can be used for a variety of different reasons, but tend to be used for storing, cooking and dealing drugs within a county lines context. A county line may also use multiple properties that have been cuckooed at the same time.
- Use of hotels and short-term lets – It can be harder to identify county lines when offenders utilise the hospitality sector, although initiatives including Operation Makesafe are providing training to those who work in hotels to raise awareness and encourage the reporting of any offences identified. The use of hotels and short-term lets for county lines activity is recognised to have been exacerbated by the successes the police service has had in terms of identifying and tackling cuckooed properties.
- Use of taxis, hire vehicles and public transport – As highlighted above, the effective surveillance and proactive targeting of vehicles can be more difficult to deliver when taxis, hire vehicles and public transport are used to facilitate these offences.
- Child criminal exploitation – Individuals and/or groups take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive children and young people [under the age of 18] into undertaking criminal activity. The use of grooming and exploitation is used to encourage children to participate in activities which support the county line drug dealing. Children may also be exploited through participation in organised acquisitive crime and robberies, alongside committing violence on behalf of the exploiters. The previous increase recorded in the number of local children being exploited in Sussex [which corresponded with the greater localisation of the county lines business model] is now recognised to have been reduced following an increased focus on children involved in county lines by Sussex Police.
- Child sexual exploitation – Although rarer than criminal exploitation, the sexual exploitation of children [and high-risk missing children] may be used by individuals and/or organised networks within county lines. Child sexual exploitation is more commonly used as a profit-making aspect of the business model, a method of exerting control over exploited children and for the sexual gratification of the exploiters.

4.0 Sussex Police response to county lines

- 4.1 The Sussex Police response to county lines is led by a chief inspector, as the tactical lead for the Force, with additional support provided by the Force Exploitation Team.
- 4.2 This work is overseen by a bi-monthly Forcewide Drug-Related Harm Working Group and a quarterly Forcewide County Lines Working Group which both report into an Exploitation Development Board. The working groups have developed strategic action plans to ensure that all stakeholders participate in collaborative efforts to improve the policing response provided to county lines, maximise the disruption of existing lines and to share any best practice identified across the Force to provide a better policing service for members of the public in Sussex.

- 4.3 Sussex Police use the national policy strategy to support them with the policing response to county lines. This is delivered through the County Lines 4P Plan which aims to:
- ✓ **Prevent** people engaging in county lines, and the associated violence and exploitation
 - ✓ **Protect** and safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm
 - ✓ **Prepare** better communities by building resilience against the harms of county lines
 - ✓ **Pursue** offenders relentlessly, including organised criminal groups, urban street gangs and individuals running county lines
- 4.4 Sussex Police also have a dedicated officer at inspector rank responsible for leading on the tactical response provided to cuckooing on behalf of the Force who chairs a bi-monthly meeting to discuss this area of policing. This approach is recognised to have been instrumental in terms of progressing the recent Force Cuckoo Review which has directly contributed to the implementation of a new, consistent and standardised process which is now used across each of the three policing divisions [Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex].
- 4.5 Sussex Police has also developed a comprehensive County Lines Action Plan for each of the five strands contained within: prevention; child safeguarding and education; intelligence; investigations and communication.
- 4.6 Within the next three months, the Force aims to have a dedicated County Lines Coordination Manager in post [subject to a successful recruitment process]. Once appointed, this individual will be responsible for overseeing the Forcewide County Lines Working Group and ensuring ongoing delivery of the action plan.

5.0 Local, regional and national collaboration

5.1 Local response to cuckooing

- 5.1.1 Following the Force Cuckoo Review, the Force Exploitation Team implemented new processes in July 2025 to ensure that a more consistent and standardised response is provided to victims of cuckooing throughout Sussex. This approach has ensured that standard risk ratings, recording practices and responses have been introduced, with a post implementation review set to be conducted during 2026 to understand better how effective these changes have been.
- 5.1.2 Each of the three policing divisions in Sussex has clear processes in place for dealing with reports of cuckooing. This includes assessing the potential risk, regular police visits and strong safeguarding links with partners. For example, multi-agency visits are routinely undertaken by the police, mental health workers, substance misuse workers, housing service providers and the fire and rescue service to support any victims of cuckooing, where appropriate.

5.1.3 The Crime and Policing Bill, currently progressing through the committee stage of the House of Lords, will provide new offences to assist the police service to tackle county lines and cuckooing. This is expected to include an offence of 'coerced internal concealment' to combat the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults by gangs to traffic controlled drugs, alongside criminalising the act of exercising control over another person's dwelling without their consent for the purpose of enabling the dwelling to be used in connection with the commission of specified criminal activity [cuckooing].

5.1.4 With Royal Assent set to be granted in 2026, the Force is currently preparing for the implementation of the Act, including understanding better where amendments to internal processes and operational procedures will be required.

5.2 Local response to serious organised crime groups

5.2.1 Following a rapid review into the exploitation of high-risk children in Sussex, the Force introduced Operation Swordfish in 2024 to improve the oversight and coordination of investigative responses where children assessed to be at high-risk of exploitation are subject to two or more investigations.

5.2.2 This initiative was established after recognising that a more coordinated and holistic approach could be adopted across this complex area of policing to maximise the effectiveness of partnership working, ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are established and generate further opportunities to disrupt this criminal behaviour and identify the perpetrators of this exploitation. A post-implementation review has recently been completed to evaluate the impact of Operation Swordfish and determine the next steps.

5.2.3 This approach is complemented by child exploitation intelligence meetings held on each of the three policing divisions, and a collective multi-agency meeting which focuses on children at risk of exploitation.

5.2.4 Alongside this, Sussex Police are using Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups (TTCGs) to work with partners to protect vulnerable individuals, safeguard those most at risk, share information and maximise opportunities to prevent, protect, prepare and pursue offenders.

5.2.5 The Force is also continuing to raise awareness of county lines and cuckooing, both internally and externally. This includes:

- Provision of training materials to police officers, staff and external partners by the Force Exploitation Team
- Working with partner agencies, including Crimestoppers, to deliver awareness campaigns and encourage the proactive reporting of any offences identified
- Delivery of educational inputs to schools, colleges and other educational establishments to raise awareness of these offences
- Introduction of a new online partnership intelligence process, accessible via the Sussex Police website, to highlight better what good intelligence looks like to try and improve the quality of the intelligence submitted

5.3 Regional

- 5.3.1 The South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) has a responsibility to protect communities in the South East from serious organised crime. The aim of the unit is to create a cohesive regional response to serious organised, enhanced interoperability and heightened resilience to support the four police forces in the region: Sussex Police, Surrey Police, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and Thames Valley Police.
- 5.3.2 The county lines recognised to present the greatest threat, risk and harm to the region are routinely discussed at these SEROCU meetings. This forum enables individual police forces to request additional support, assistance and capabilities to assist them in the disruption and dismantling of specific county lines.
- 5.3.3 The SEROCU County Lines Coordination Manager is also responsible for the collation and distribution of any best practice identified through the other eight regional organised crime units in England and Wales. Sussex Police has been recognised for its innovative approach to tackling serious and organised crime previously, both in terms of the use of legislation and the targeting of wider organised crime groups.

5.4 National response

- 5.4.1 The Force has established effective working relationships with the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC). The NCLCC continues to provide surge funding to the Force which has been used to undertake proactive policing operations and deliver activities which support the national county lines intensification weeks held twice a year. Sussex Police secured an additional £100,000 in 2025/26 to deliver this policing activity.
- 5.4.2 The Force attends a monthly National Orders Working Group, facilitated by the NCLCC, which disseminates national guidance and any best practice identified around the use of DDTRs, with a specific focus on county lines.
- 5.4.3 Sussex Police and Surrey Police continue to use Operation Centurion – a small team of dedicated police officers within Specialist Crime Command – to identify and target organised crime groups and disrupt and dismantle county drug lines operating in both force areas using evidence and intelligence received.
- 5.4.4 The Operation Centurion team has delivered the following successful outcomes in Sussex across 2023, 2024 and 2025:

	2023	2024	2025	Total
County drug lines disrupted	84	51	68	203
Arrests made	173	101	147	421
Custodial sentences awarded	62	19	15	96
Children safeguarded	26	21	25	72

- 5.4.5 The officers working within Operation Centurian have also become experts in assisting the three policing divisions to recover high-risk missing individuals, including children who are suspected of being involved in county drug lines [either willingly or unwillingly], alongside the routine provision of support to wider missing person investigations.
- 5.4.6 The Force continues to collaborate with the County Lines Taskforce in the Metropolitan Police Service – through Operation Orochi – to proactively target drug lines operating across multiple police force areas.
- 5.4.7 The Specialist Crime Command for both forces also has a dedicated resource – Operation Domino – responsible for targeting county lines drug supply networks which operate online. This resource supported 93 policing operations and generated 548 intelligence logs across 2025.

6.0 Performance information relating to county lines

- 6.1 Sussex Police has recorded 4,734 disruptions to serious and organised crime in Sussex since April 2018. This activity has resulted in 2,094 arrests, 2,393kg of Class A and B drugs seized and 887 children and adults safeguarded.
- 6.2 This disruption activity has taken place across each of the three policing divisions, as follows:
- **Brighton & Hove:** 1,493 disruptions recorded and 675 arrests were made. A considerable number of mobile phones, substantial amounts of cash, controlled drugs [both 'Class A' and 'Class B'] and a firearm were seized.
 - **East Sussex:** 733 disruptions recorded and 382 arrests were made. Again, copious quantities of controlled drugs, cash and mobile phones were recovered. A sword, machete and another bladed article were seized too.
 - **West Sussex:** 978 disruptions recorded and 617 arrests were made. Significant amounts of cash, 'Class A' drugs [including ½ a kilo of cocaine] and mobile phones were seized.
- 6.3 A further 1,170 disruptions were recorded by policing teams in Sussex [outside of the three divisions] across the same period, including 420 arrests made, 208kg of controlled drugs seized [both 'Class A' and 'Class B'] and 76 children and adults safeguarded. These successes are predominantly attributed to Specialist Crime Command, which includes Operation Centurian [see section 5.4.3 of the report for more information].

7.0 Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

- 7.1 The Sussex PCC recognises that tackling county lines effectively remains fundamentally important to disrupting and preventing this business model for drug supply and criminality. This should include removing illegal drugs, eliminating the associated violence and exploitation of vulnerable adults and children and ensuring that more offenders are brought to justice for their actions.

- 7.2 Mrs Bourne has sought to make additional funding and resources available to the Chief Constable to increase the capacity and capability of Sussex Police to tackle county lines and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the response provided by the Force.
- 7.3 Now that this investment has been realised through increases in the police precept in recent years, the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of an enhanced policing response. This will include an expectation that Sussex Police continue to tackle and disrupt the organised crime groups behind county lines drug gang activity, recognise the exploitation of children and young people in this offending behaviour and identify and safeguard those most at risk.
- 7.4 It is a statutory responsibility for the PCC to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering efficient and effective policing in Sussex that is responsive to the needs of the public. The PCC has continued to use these monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise and challenge the Chief Constable about the Sussex Police response to county lines on behalf of members of the public.
- 7.5 The Force's response to county lines was raised at the most recent PAM on 15 January 2026. This area was also discussed at the PAMs on 20 May 2022 [Tackling County Lines], 21 June 2019 [County Lines – Drug Gangs and Organised Criminal Networks] and 19 October 2018 [County Lines – Drug Gangs]. Each of these sessions is archived and, together with the summary notes, can be viewed on the PCC's website through the following link:
<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/>

Mark Streater
Chief Executive
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Quarterly Report of Complaints

30 January 2026

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny

That the Panel considers any complaints against the Commissioner, and any action that the Panel might take in respect of these.

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2011, Sussex Police & Crime Panel (PCP) is responsible for the initial handling of complaints against the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 1.2 At its meeting of 26 November 2012, the Panel decided to delegate its initial handling duties to the Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel, and to consider a report of the complaints received, quarterly.
- 1.3 Complaints deemed to be serious (those alleging criminal conduct) are referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). However, IOPC guidance recommends that a Panel makes an initial assessment of the complaint (before making a referral to the IOPC) to decide whether or not it meets the definition of a "serious complaint".
- 1.4 Regarding non-serious complaints, a sub-committee can meet to consider any of these which in the Panel's view require informal resolution.

2 Correspondence Received from 24 September 2025 to 19 January 2026

2.1 During the subject period, six people contacted the Panel to raise matters (either directly, referred via the IOPC, or referred by the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC)) in respect of the actions and decisions of the Commissioner following the Home Office announcement in October of plans to temporarily house male asylum seekers at a former army training camp in Crowborough. The Clerk to the Panel considered these, and found them to non-serious complaints, within the Panel's remit.

2.2 A further two people contacted the Panel to raise other matters. Of these one was considered to be beyond the remit of the Panel, and the other is still under determination.

3 Complaints

Correspondence Recorded, but not Considered by the Clerk to be a Complaint within the Panel's Remit:

3.1.1 Of the complaints set out in 2.2, one concerned matters beyond the remit of the Panel. The complainant has been informed of this outcome. The other is still under consideration.

Correspondence Recorded, and Considered by the Clerk to be a Non-Serious Complaint within the Panel's Remit:

3.1.2 The six complainants raised issues surrounding the PCC's attendance at a protest march, social media posts, and the launching of a petition, all in respect of the Crowborough proposals. None alleged the commission of a criminal offence and were thus deemed non-serious.

3.1.3 The Clerk considered that:

- The PCC role is political, and that politicians are entitled to express political views, for which they will ultimately be judged by the electorate, at the ballot box.
- Part of the PCC's role is to "provide the local link between the police and communities, working to translate the legitimate desires and aspirations of the public into action" (see section 17, para i of the [Policing Protocol](#)). PCCs are elected to provide a voice for local people on policing and crime matters and are expected to listen to and represent the interests and concerns of residents in their area. The Commissioner's attendance at a protest is in keeping with this duty.
- The social media posts brought to the Panel's attention were made from the PCC's private accounts, and not the official accounts of her office

3.1.4 Accordingly, no basis could be found for the complaints. The complainants were informed of this determination.

Serious Complaints (allegations of criminal conduct)

3.1.5 None received.

Updates from Matters Previously Reported.

3.1.6 None

4 Resource Implications and Value for Money

4.1 The cost of handling complaints is met from the funds provided by the Home

Office for the operation and administration of Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

5 Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 It is important that residents can have confidence in the integrity of the system for handling complaints against the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and their Deputy (where one has been appointed).

6 Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 6.1 Not applicable

Lauren McCann

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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