

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE POLICE COMMISSIONER FOR MERSEYSIDE

***For immediate release***

**PCC asks public’s views on police funding & plans to recruit 40 new officers**

Merseyside’s Police Commissioner is asking local people if they would be willing to pay a little extra through the police precept, which is collected alongside the council tax, to help protect 100 police officer jobs and recruit 40 new officers.

The public consultation launched today by Jane Kennedy follows the budget announcement in December where the Government said local council precept payers must pay more to avoid further cuts in police jobs. The increase equates to approximately 31p a week or £16 a year for a Band A household, the lowest Council Tax category but the majority of council tax payers on Merseyside.

The 2019/2020 financial settlement provides an additional £8.4m in government grant for Merseyside Police but this will be entirely consumed by the pension shortfall announced by the Government in September 2018. The settlement provides no new money for the day-to-day running of Merseyside Police, the cost of which increases every year due to pay and price inflation. Without a rise in the council precept the Force will face further damaging cuts.

Since 2010 Merseyside Police have already been required to make cuts of £110m, with an estimated £14.5m still to make by 2022/23. In that time, the size of the organisation has reduced by a quarter, with 1,110 fewer police officers now patrolling the region’s streets. This increase in the precept would enable the Chief Constable to avoid the planned cut of 100 police posts and instead, increase the number of police officer posts by 40.

If local people do not agree then Merseyside Police may be forced to make further cuts as it struggles with both increasing costs and calls for assistance from the public.

Jane said: “The responsibility for providing the appropriate level of funding for a large urban police force like Merseyside lies with central government which is why 83% of the Merseyside Police budget is met by general taxation. However, the Government are shifting the burden of paying for the police on to the shoulders of local council tax payers. This is good news for wealthy counties like Surrey but bad news for urban forces with less wealthy communities. It is a regressive form of taxation. I have little choice but to ask for the increase in the council precept to prevent further cuts. I know the public of Merseyside want more not fewer police officers.

“While I am reluctant to ask local people, who are already heavily burdened, to contribute more toward policing, if they are willing to do so it enables me to stabilise the Force’s budget, prevent the loss of 100 more officers and even to replace 40 of the officer posts that we have lost.

“Over the last eight years, the police budget has been cut by £110m. This increase would give the Chief Constable an additional £9.8m with which to police Merseyside. It does not compare to what we have lost, but it is essential if the Chief Constable is to keep up with the increasing demands he faces.”

The Commissioner is now holding a consultation asking people if they would be willing to contribute the extra funding expected by the Government and help her to halt the impact of ongoing cuts.

Jane added: “I appreciate that by asking the public for more money, they will quite rightly expect something in return which is why I am promising that if local people are willing to support these proposals the Chief Constable will prevent the loss of 100 police jobs next year and bring back 40 police officer posts.

“I am asking people on Merseyside if they would be willing to contribute that extra 31p a week for the majority of householders to help protect vital frontline police services. This would increase the police precept from £118.65 to £134.65 a year for those properties. The government have stepped away from supporting our police service, I hope local people will not do the same.”

People are invited to have their say through a short online survey at [**www.merseysidepcc.info**](http://www.merseysidepcc.info) **by Sunday 3rd February.**

A series of community consultation roadshows are also being held across the region to ask people for their views.  Anyone who wants to receive a paper copy of the survey can telephone 0151 777 5155 and one will be posted out.

Details of the Knowsley roadshow are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **County** | **Supermarket and Address** | **Time** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 22/01/2019 | Knowsley | ASDA Huyton Huyton Lane,  Huyton, L36 7TX | 2pm until 4pm |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |