



**Consultation on:
Police and Crime Plan 2016-21
Budget proposals for 2018/19**

The Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, Alun Michael, is consulting on his budget plans for 2018/19.

The consultation ends on **28th December 2017**.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is required by law to set the local policing priorities for South Wales and to maintain an effective and efficient police service. He is required to set the budget as well as holding the Chief Constable to account and seeking to cut crime and promote Community Safety.

The Commissioner's specific duties include:

- Setting the local policing priorities, in a Police and Crime Reduction Plan
- Scrutinising, supporting and challenging the local police service
- Setting the annual police budget and council tax precept*
- Appointing* and, if necessary, dismissing the Chief Constable
- Publishing an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
- Attending meetings of the Police and Crime Panel
- Investigating complaints against the Chief Constable, and monitoring the system for all complaints against officers and staff
- Running an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme
- Consulting the public on policing issues
- Collaborating with other police forces, local government, and other local agencies and the criminal justice agencies on their work locally

* subject to the Police and Crime Panel

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

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



I was re-elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales in May 2016, having stood as the Labour and Co-operative Party candidate. This is my second term following my initial election in November 2012. Five years on, a real impact has been made by me and my team, working closely with the Chief Constable and everyone within the South Wales Police Service.

This December will mark the retirement of our present Chief Constable, Peter Vaughan QPM, after eight successful years at the helm. He has been a great leader, surviving severe cuts in the Police Grant and putting South Wales Police in the top echelon for victim satisfaction. I am confident that Matt Jukes, who I have appointed to take over in January, will build effectively on Peter's foundations and has the same passionate commitment to our communities, to preventing crime and to protecting vulnerable people.

Setting priorities for policing South Wales

We are vigorously pursuing the first priority for the police - to prevent and reduce offending and reoffending. This was the top priority for Sir Robert Peel when he set up the first police service in London in 1829. So our success is "demonstrated by the lack of crime, not the presence of activity". After nearly 200 years, it's still the right principle and is the key focus for my Police and Crime Plan for 2018-2023.

The Plan sets clear priorities for policing South Wales which are now being refreshed in consultation with the public and partners. The responses encourage us to work ever more closely with partners, particularly local government, the NHS – especially Public Health Wales - the Voluntary Sector and Welsh Government to ensure that we “shrink together, not shrink apart” following the massive cuts imposed on the Police and on other public services by UK Government decisions. We place a heavy emphasis on **early intervention and prompt positive action**, on identifying trends and causes of crime, and on taking action with partners to build and support safe, confident, sustainable communities.

Co-operation makes good sense when you realise that the same causes trigger demand for the Police, the NHS and the Council. Violence, Substance Misuse, Alcohol, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and many other issues can only be tackled if we work together to tackle problems at their root and intervene early

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

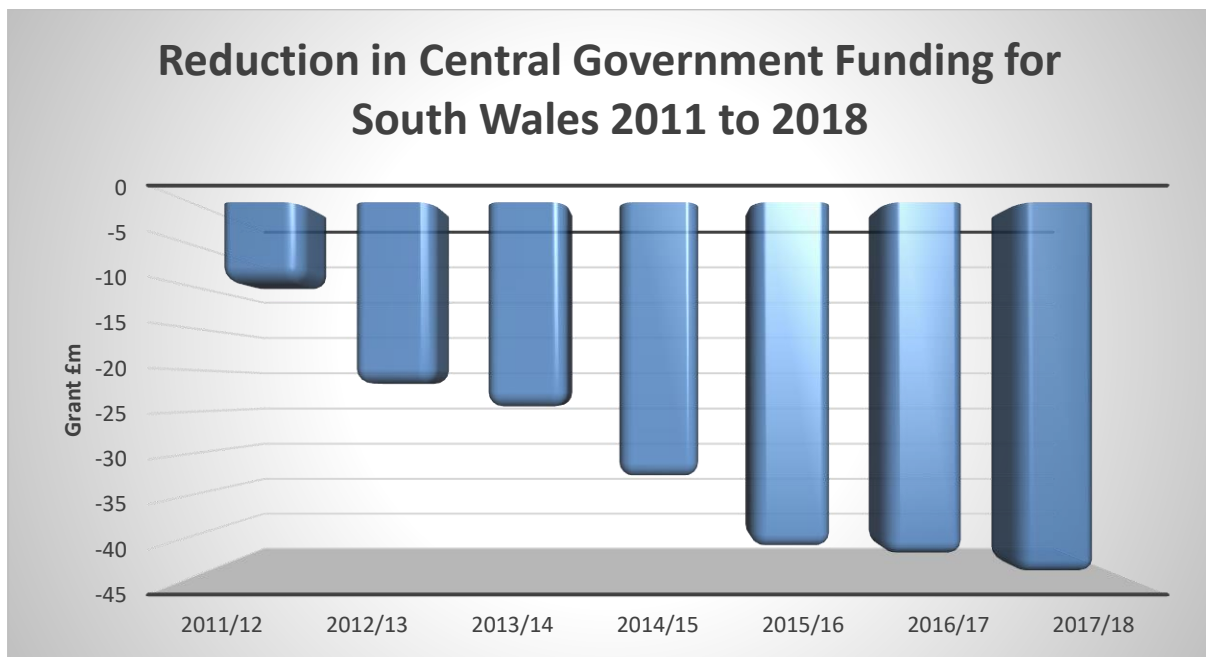
[Police and Crime Reduction Plan 2016 2021](#)

Financial outlook

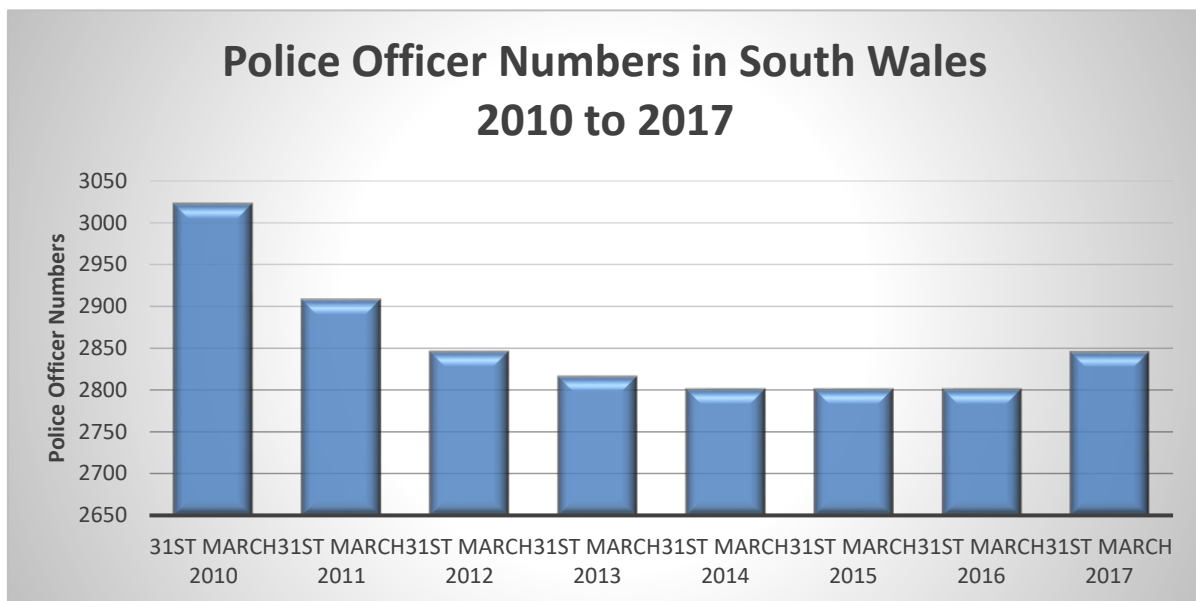
Since the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010, the UK Government has reversed the two previous decades of investment in policing and crime prevention. These cuts are having a major impact on the Police and our other partners in community safety, such as local authorities and the local NHS. The police financial settlement for 2017/18 brought a further 1.4% cash cut in grant which was compounded by the impact of unfunded pay awards and inflation. We will not receive our provisional grant figures for next year until just before Christmas but we anticipate a further cash cut again in grant which will translate into a larger real terms cut, particularly as inflation now seems to be gathering pace. The year on year cash cut in grant funding for South Wales Police is now £45m below the 2010/11 level.

In developing my spending plans for 2018/19 I will continue to protect police numbers and, if possible, provide some growth towards the Chief Constable’s recommended establishment of 3,000 officers and prioritise investment in protecting the most vulnerable and defenceless members of our communities particularly in the areas of domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, serious sexual offences, internet enabled crime, vulnerable adults and managing violence offenders and sex offenders. That will involve a modest increase in the Council Tax Precept in order for South Wales Police to have the capacity to fight crime, prevent crime and make our communities safe.

South Wales Police have faced significant cuts since 2011. Grant funding has reduced year on year due to various transfers of responsibilities but overall the trend is sharply downwards. The graph below shows just how significantly the overall grant has been reduced since a baseline of 2010/11.



Difficult decisions have been made to deliver savings of £48m. Police officer numbers account for the largest single part of South Wales Police expenditure and the following graph shows that we have already lost nearly 444 police officers since 2009, although my council tax precept strategy has helped stabilise numbers in the past couple of years.



When the role of PCSO was introduced the cost was met by a ring-fenced grant from the Home Office, enabling South Wales Police to recruit 300 PCSOs. Welsh Government then provided the money to employ 205 additional PCSOs and we increased our total to 505. However, the UK Government then rolled its money into the main Police Grant, but cut that grant drastically at the same time. Two years ago, I had to take the hard choice to reduce the number of PCSOs by 100 rather than further reduce the number of police officers – a decision that was understood and accepted by Welsh Government Ministers. Thanks to the stability provided by my council tax precept strategy, we were able to recruit many of them as Police Officers to replace officers who had left the service or retired. Even after that reduction we have 406 Community Support Officers in South Wales, enabling us to have a community-based policing approach and work with devolved bodies to make our communities safe. This is at a time when some Forces in England are getting rid of the role and moving away from community policing. Neither I nor the Chief Constable are prepared to follow them down that road. It's no accident that South Wales Police has been praised by the HM Inspectorate for being outstanding at engaging with our communities.

We have found ways of doing more with less – for example by replacing a number of custody suites with new, efficient “Bridewells” in Merthyr and Bridgend. Telephone responses are given by a single centre (where the 101 non-emergency number is answered) and we’ve been joined there by the Fire Service and a small Health presence. The efficiency of the response to callers has increased dramatically, as has victim satisfaction.

There are other challenges to meet – for instance the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy now costs us about £1million a year whereas the introduction of new qualification requirements for police officers will provide another additional burden. Some estimates suggest that this could add another £4million to our costs unless a way forward can be found. We are continuing to explore the options.

It is also worrying that further cash cuts are predicted until the end of this decade. My revised Police and Crime Reduction Plan sets out my priorities until 2021. Just before Christmas we will hear how much the Home Office will give us for the coming year and I will then publish my Medium Term Financial Strategy. It will set out how we will fund the delivery of the Police and Crime Reduction Plan and the savings we will need to make.

With the Chief Constable, I will seek to cut costs through procurement, estates and collaboration, while looking for other ways of saving money, rather than cutting officers and staff.

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

	<u>2017/18 Police Precept on Band D Council Tax</u>
	£
North Wales	249.21
Gwent	228.84
South Wales	218.24
Dyfed Powys	213.87

Council Tax Precept proposal for 2018/19

Our expenditure plans currently provide for a Council Tax increase at the 5% level, and for a Band D taxpayer, that would lead to an increase of £10.91 per year or 3p per day. Nobody wants to increase the charge, but people want to live and work in safe communities and that has to weigh heavily with me when making my final budget decisions. For South Wales Police, each 1% on Council Tax raises the equivalent of 20 police officers (that is, nearly £1m). The final figure will depend on the implications once we know the outcome of the grant settlement by the UK Government.

I also need to consider my capital expenditure plans for 2018/19. Again, this is difficult to be precise before the funding announcement from the Home Office. My current projection is for a capital programme of £26m next year. Key areas of capital expenditure will include:

- Significant investment in information technology to keep South Wales Police at the leading edge of capabilities for our officers and staff
- Regular replacement of police vehicles
- Refurbishment of old and expensive parts of the police estate

Consultation Questions

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

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

What would you consider the right level for the police precept for South Wales for 2018-19?

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

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

Please return this consultation by 28 December 2017

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This form and the consultation are available on our website.