

Thank You Chair

Panel members, I thank you for your time today to consider and judge my request for an increase in the policing precept element of Dorset Council Tax by £1 a month for Band D properties, £12 a year, or in other words 6.17%.

I also welcome the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables to the room and thank them for their time.

Chair, your Panel questions this year are such that the intention is to touch on them as we go through my budget speech, the statement from the Chief Constable and my Chief Finance Officer. We can then go into more detail at the end of our presentations.

Before I outline the financial case for such a proposed precept rise, I think it useful to consider two issues.

- **The first is the state of policing in England and Wales, including Dorset.**
- **The second is the difficult position that the Government has again put me in.**

### **The state of policing in England and Wales**

This Panel works closely with me, and the introduction of Pillar Leads means that you understand the police business better than most. And you understand my role in being the eyes and ears of the public, and the face of scrutiny of policing in Dorset.

You will therefore understand the increasingly difficult job policing faces. I have been involved in policing for 39 years, and I have never seen such a change in funding, demand, complexity or capacity in such a short period of time – and I am talking 5 years.

I will touch on each of these briefly, to set the scene, and the operational leaders in the room will expand on them all later.

In relation to **funding**, money goes down slightly as demand and expectations in policing rocket.

**This makes this is a political and operational nightmare.**

In relation to **demand**, this can be broken down into 4 areas:

1. As predicted by police professionals and PCCs, including me to this Panel, crime is rising. Strip policing to the bone and it was always going to happen. This isn't rocket science we are dealing with.
2. My second point relates to other agencies. The amount of service delivery now expected of policing, because other public sectors are shrinking and cannot deliver is reaching monumental proportions.

Local Authorities are no longer the “guardians of societal issues” as they were a decade ago. The pressures to deal only with statutory obligations are immense. [UPDATED LINE] I feel for most of you in the room... the difference, the impact you can make as Councillors is arguably significantly different compared to 10 years ago. And that removal of so many layers of Local Authority intervention, and other agency reductions, heaps demand on policing.

Whether this is dealing with people with mental health problems, running people to hospital because there are no ambulances, noisy neighbours, dealing with ASB in schools, the homeless or the increasing youth issue caused by closures of youth centres, the hits keep coming. As do the phone calls to 101.

3. The changing face of crime is my third point. The amount of online offences now is becoming a tsunami... whether it is paedophilia, fraud, blackmail, online stalking or hate crime, the demand is huge, and getting bigger. The expectation of the police to “do a good job online” yet still be on every street corner is a dichotomy for us all, and has been discussed in the Panel many times.
  
4. The recent disclosure revelations in relation to rape trials is a logistical monster coming down the track. In the recent rape acquittal in London, the complainant’s phone had 57,000 digital entries on it. The police missed several key social media interactions, leading to a flawed prosecution against Mr Allen.

Are policing geared up to examine between 50 to 200 odd thousand digital entries to brief CPS on each case? In a murder case yes, you haven’t seen any of them face scandal or intrigue.

But in relation to rape, serious sexual offences, slavery, stalking, domestic abuse or harassment – no – nowhere near. The volume and complexity is staggering. 4 or 5 murders doesn’t even start to compare to the hundreds if not thousands of cases that now need scrutiny and full disclosure.

Indeed, I can now see the need for policing in Dorset to create a unit of 5 or 6 staff, purely to screen digital disclosure in these cases, plus an urgent training course for 500 front line staff. No funding, no resource, at a time policing is on its knees.

The legislation (the CPIA) here was created in the 90’s before the digital revolution and is now hopelessly out of step with modern policing and modern justice.

Every year policing sees a new trend, a new challenge. This year the police face two – terrorism and a huge increase in knife crime.....both require totally different police responses, and take us nicely into the debate about capability and capacity which the Chief Constable will elaborate on.

**The second issue is the difficult position that the Government has again put me in.**

In many ways, the Policing Minister and the Government make my job easy. I don't have flexibility or discretion. Policing numbers nationally are now the lowest ever recorded. Demand is the highest it has ever been. And I need more money to try and bridge the ever increasing gap.

Now there were two options here to round this circle...

The first, obviously, would be for the Government to increase funding to policing UK.

This is something that Chief Constables, PCCs and numerous MPs asked for. The Government were made very aware of the £700 odd million short fall policing UK needs just to stand still. Never forget - at a time when our homeless numbers rocket, terrorism lands on our shores, our social infrastructure buckles, and youth turns again to angrily walking the streets - this Government still gives more money in foreign aid than it does to policing and protecting its citizens.

I will leave that there.

Do I want to sit here today asking for more tax increases for my constituents? Of course I don't ... and neither do other PCCs, but we have all been forced to do so because of the Government's decision to tell us to raise police funding from the local taxpayer.

And that was the second option - the one the Government opted for – telling me as PCC to raise local precept. Whichever way you look at it – it’s a clever move, I carry the political risk, and the Government distances itself from yet another extra cost to its people.

So Panel Members, lets drill down into that, I will now read you the relevant bits of the Policing Minister’s settlement.

**“We need to recognise that there have been material changes in the demands on policing since the 2015 Spending Review. Demand on the police from crimes reported to them has grown and shifted to more complex and resource intensive work such as investigating child sexual exploitation and modern slavery. At the same time the terrorist threat has changed.**

**The Government has listened to the police and recognised the demands they face. In this settlement, we propose to increase total investment in the police system by up to £450m year on year in 2018/19.**

**In 2018/19, we will provide each PCC with the same amount of core Government grant funding as in 2017/18. Protecting police grant means PCCs retain the full benefit from any additional local Council Tax income. Alongside this, we are providing further flexibility to PCCs in England to increase their Band D precept by up to £12 in 2018/19 without the need to call a local referendum. This is equivalent to up to £1 per month for a typical Band D household.**

**These changes to referendum principles give PCCs the flexibility to make the right choices for their local area, and will enable an increase in funding to PCCs of up to around £270m next year. It means that each PCC who uses this flexibility will be able to increase their direct resource funding by at least an estimated 1.6% (which maintains funding in real terms).”**

Those are the words of the Policing Minister, and that is why I am here today asking for £1 per month for a Band D property.

The issue for me is that this last statement is inherently incorrect. The Government awarded public sector pay awards this year, which were unexpected, and unfinanced. Additionally, the settlement doesn't account for inflation of 3%.

So even if I raise the precept, as the Minister states, it still doesn't meet all my needs financially, indeed the panel will know I faced a huge shortfall before this settlement, as indeed did all Forces.

Even if the Panel approves my request, **I have a gap of over a million pounds this year. And this gap exists, despite the savings and efficiencies we have driven out, and the strategic alliance which now covers 20% of policing in Dorset.**

### **So, onto the financial case**

I think the easiest way to deal with this, over and above the papers you have already seen, is to answer the Minister's directive for policing.

The Minister states that in return for allowing me to raise the precept, he expects the following to happen:

**A serious commitment from PCCs and Chief Constables to improve productivity and efficiency to deliver a more transparent service to the public in 3 ways:**

1. His first is a call to improve savings in relation to procurement, fleet and construction.

The Panel will be aware that this Force procures through the award-winning South West Procurement Team, and that our fleet services are an Alliance based asset that has only last week received national accreditation and recognition.

2. The Minister's second request is that policing becomes more digital, freeing up officer time.

The Panel will know that Dorset has embarked on a huge digitalisation strategy, and that the proposed merger with our Alliance partner will align not just IT but HR processes as well. The Chief Constable will also speak about the PRISM programme focusing on digital transformation.

3. His third point is reserves.

He quotes the 1.6billion held in reserves nationally and asks why so much is earmarked, and why this huge money mountain isn't being used to help fund change. Whilst that is a fair point nationally, the Panel knows my reserves are tiny compared to other Forces, we have no earmarked reserves as such, and following his directive, I am using some reserves this year to balance the books.

So, as I start to close, and hand over to the Chief Constable, I need to stress to you 3 things:

**Firstly, this Force is a good Force in what it does. Never forget that:**

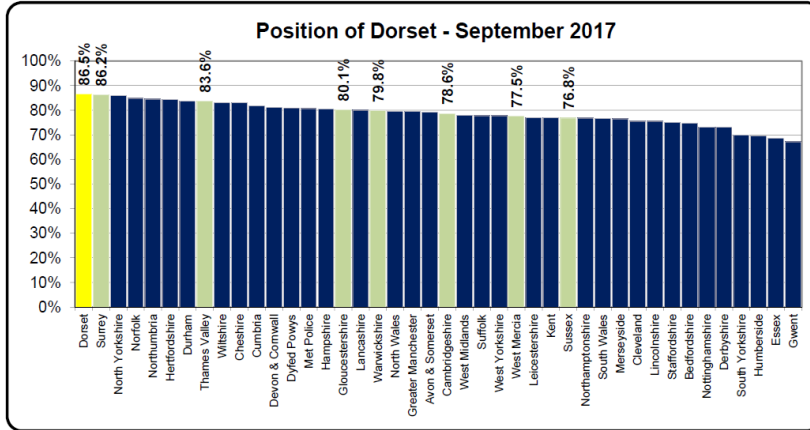
If you look at Her Majesty's Inspectorate – this Force is classed at Good across the piece; there are very few forces that enjoy this.

The Force enjoys the highest levels of confidence nationally, indeed, if you look at the national question people are asked "Taking everything into account, I have confidence in the police in this area", Dorset has the highest response nationally.

**CSEW - Percentage of respondents answering 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' when asked Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area'.**

Figures are from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and reflect the performance for the 12 mths ending the date shown

**Latest National Comparison**



KEY: Dorset's Position (Yellow), Other 'Most Similar' Forces (Light Green)

MSG Position 1st - National Position 1st

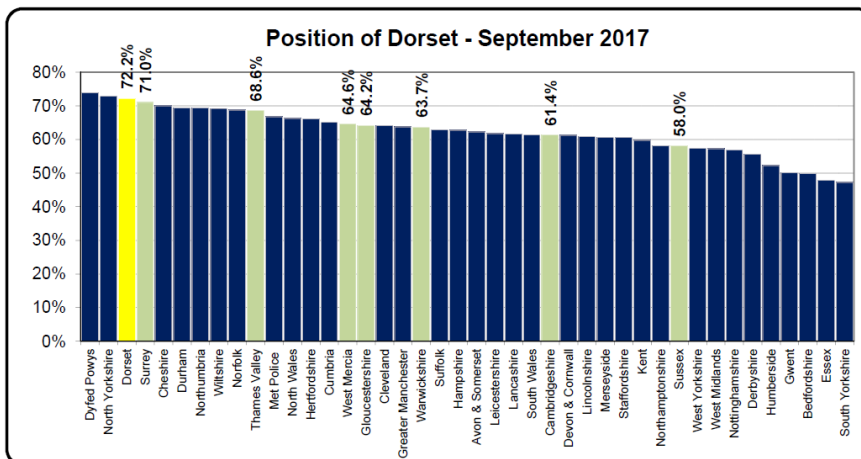
[CHART INSERTED]

And the third highest in response to the question “Do you think your police force do a good or excellent job”.

**CSEW - Percentage of respondents who think their local police do a good or excellent job.**

Figures are from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and reflect the performance for the 12 mths ending the date shown

**Latest National Comparison**



KEY: Dorset's Position (Yellow), Other 'Most Similar' Forces (Light Green)

MSG Position 1st - National Position 3rd

[CHART INSERTED]

The Force performs well in recording and investigating crime, and represents good value for money under the VFM profiles.



Those same VFM profiles show Dorset spends more on frontline staff than most, and spend less on back office functions. The profile also shows the Force costs the tax payer less per officer than the national average.

**Secondly, we mustn't get consumed into the debate on police officer numbers** – with the change in demand and crime type, the issue is now about Dorset Police Workforce numbers, not how many warranted officers there are. The Chief Constable will elaborate here, but I have already explained that a warranted officer is not always the most appropriate person to manage a particular situation.

**And thirdly, this proposed precept increase isn't new money.**

It just reduces the debt, it just means the Force and the Alliance has to save less, not spend more.

And this panel knows that we have shaved millions off the police budget in the last 5 years but, as the Councillors in the room know, you can only do **more for less** for so long. Eventually, as we have seen in Local Authorities across this beautiful county, something has to give, a service you used to provide, a library a youth centre or whatever, has to go.

And policing is no different.

I don't want to end on a negative, but if the Panel is minded to not support this request, you need to know that to meet the shortfall, this Force will have to make ends meet in 3 ways:

1. Cut the size of Departments, and this will obviously impact on Neighbourhood Policing
2. Reduce the workforce size

3. Reduce the service delivery to the public, something I am strongly opposed to, but will have to explore with the Chief Constable – In other words, as other areas have already done, if this precept request is vetoed, something won't get done, be that low level shoplifting, low level criminal damage or whatever.

### **Chair/Members of the Panel,**

Thank you for listening to my submission, a submission that is longer than normal, mainly because I find myself in the extraordinary position of arguing for money to keep policing afloat, not open a new police station or buy a new vehicle fleet.

You will hopefully agree, I have touched on Questions 1–4 in this speech, and am happy to go into further detail later; and to deal with Question 8 quickly, I have not decided whether to go down the same route next year yet, that whole decision rests on whether the proposed merge moves forward this year, although you will note that another steep rise in precept is the Government proposal ... and accordingly, is now in my MTFS. I have not yet made that decision, a year is a long time, and we have pending merger work being undertaken.

So, I now hand over to the operational lead Debbie Simpson to expand on some of the areas I have outlined. She will then hand to my CFO Alexis to explore the financial issues in more detail, and between them, they will answer Questions 5-7.

**I have deliberately left public consultation until my brief close, and will brief you on that then.**

Debbie...

## **CLOSE / SUMMARY**

Chair,

The three of us today have outlined why I sit here today asking for more money. We have shown that policing needs help. We have shown policing is under extraordinary pressure: the most I have ever seen since the terrorism and riots of the early 1980's.

I ask you to support this request, partly because it is crucial to keeping our neighbourhoods and beautiful county safe, partly because policing needs investment to face extraordinary challenges, and partly because, quite frankly, it is the right thing to do. Please remember the Chief Constable's words – 40% increase in welfare referrals by staff. Policing needs our help.

I leave you with our public consultation...

[INFOGRAPHIC ATTACHED]

The figures are clear: more responses, and similar views from last year. The public you represent get it, the Government get it, and have told me to do this, I end hoping that you also get it.

**Please support my request.**

Thank you