*Cover sheet*

**South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner Alun Michael is consulting on his budget plans for 2017/18.**

The consultation ends on **December 2nd 2016**

The Police and Crime Commissioner is required 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 promote Community Safety.

The Commissioner’s duties include:

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

Scrutinise, support and challenge the performance of the local police service

Set the annual police budget and council tax precept\*

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

Publish an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

Attend meetings of the Police and Crime Panel

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

Administer an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Consult with and involve the public

Collaborate with other forces, local government and other agencies and criminal justice agencies

\* 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.

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.

*Picture of Alun*

I was re-elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales in May 2015, having stood as the Labour and Co-operative Party candidate. This is my second term following my initial election in November 2012.

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

**Setting priorities for policing South Wales**

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

The Police and Crime Reduction Plan 2016-2021 sets clear priorities for policing South Wales and underwent extensive consultation with the public and partners. The responses we have received endorse our intention to work even more closely with partners, particularly local government, the NHS and the Voluntary Sector to ensure that we “shrink together, not shrink apart”, despite 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**, identifying trends and causes of crime, taking action with partners to build and support safe, healthy communities.

Partnership working makes sense when you realise that the same triggers cause demand and problems for the Police, the NHS and the local community : Violence, Substance Misuse, Alcohol, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and many other issues can best be tackled if we work together to tackle problems at their root and if we intervene together and intervene early. Local councils and Welsh Government are our key partners in trying to help make YOUR community healthy and safe.

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

*INSERT WELSH AND ENGLISH LINKS HERE*

**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 2016/17 – while it was not as bad as we had feared - brought a further 0.6% cash cut in grant which was further compounded by the impact of pay awards and inflation. We will not receive our provisional grant figures for next year until just before Christmas but we anticipate a further small cash cut in grant which will translate into a larger real terms cut, particularly as inflation now seems to be gathering pace.

In developing my spending plans for 2017/18 I will continue to protect police numbers and, if possible, provide some growth towards the Chief Constable’s recommended establishment of 3,000 officers. 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 2010. Grant funding has changed year on year due to various transfers of responsibilities but overall the trend is sharply downwards. The graph below shows just how significantly the overall grant has been reduced since 2009/10.

Difficult decisions have been made to deliver savings of £45m. Police officer numbers account for the largest single part of South Wales Police expenditure and the following graph shows that we have already lost nearly 300 police officers since 2009, although my council tax precept strategy has helped stabilise numbers in the past couple of years.

Two years ago, I had to take the hard decision to reduce the number of Community Support Officer by 100 from a high of 500 the previous year. 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 some 400 Community Support Officers across South Wales, thanks to the decision of Welsh Government to provide the money to employ 206 of them. That support is not available to Forces in England and makes an enormous difference to connecting South Wales Police with the communities of South Wales.

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

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

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

**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:**

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| --- | --- |
|  | 2016/17 Band D Council Tax |
|  | £ |
| North Wales | 240.12 |
| Gwent | 220.06 |
| South Wales | 207.85 |
| Dyfed Powys | 200.07 |

**Table 1**

**Council Tax Precept proposal for 2017/18**

Our expenditure plans currently provide for a Council Tax increase at the 4% level, and for a Band D taxpayer, that would lead to an increase of £8.31 per year - less than 16p a week. Depending on the outcome of the grant settlement, I would not rule out a higher increase, perhaps by 5%, which is the maximum the Welsh Government will usually permit. Each 1% on Council Tax raises the equivalent of 20 police officers (nearly £1m) for South Wales Police. Nobody wants to increase the charge, but people want to live and work in safe communities and that has to weigh heavily with me when making my final budget decisions.

I also need to consider my capital expenditure plans for 2017/18. Again, this is difficult to be precise before the funding announcement from the Home Office. My current projection is for a capital programme of £12.4m next year. Key areas of capital expenditure will include:

Significant investment in information technology to ensure that South Wales Police remains at the leading edge of capabilities for our officers and staff;

Regular replacement of police vehicles

Refurbishment of our estate, especially the parts that are old and expensive

**Consultation Questions**

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

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

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What are your views on my council tax precept proposal?

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

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

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Please return this consultation by 2nd December, 2016

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

By post to:

Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

Consultation response

Tŷ Morgannwg

Police Headquarters

Bridgend

CF31 3SU

This form and the consultation are available on our website at [link] and in accessible versions on request by calling 01656 869 366 or e-mailing commissioner@south-wales.pnn.police.uk