



12th January 2026

Dear Home Secretary and Policing Minister,

RE: 2026-27 Funding Settlement

I am writing to you to express my severe concerns about the partial funding settlement that was announced for policing on 18th December 2025 as a fait accompli. In previous years this has been a consultation, but this year's announcement, with no explicit detail and with a vague promise of additional information being received in January has placed my staff teams under unnecessary pressure to try and second guess your thinking.

The government seem to have failed to understand how the governance processes work for setting a police precept with Police and Crime Panels and the deadlines which must be met. I have and will continue to provide as much transparency to this Panel as possible. The Panel meeting date is set for 30th January 2026 and with no certainty on when or if all the missing information will be provided by your teams, I fear that I will not be in a position to provide the level of certainty that they require.

Your settlement means that even if I raise the council tax precept to the maximum level of £15 it will leave Devon and Cornwall Police with a budget gap of circa £3Million next year and is one of the lowest settlement figures in the country. This is despite us being one of the most financially stable forces in the country and having taken the previous freedoms and flexibilities offered to us by the government. We already have programmes in place to make efficiencies of more than £6Million in the coming year, so this additional pressure will further hamper how the Chief Constable will provide policing services to the public we serve.

Our area has supported the government's position on increasing the number of police officers over many years and with a combination of local taxation and government funding we have increased the police officer numbers to their highest levels ever at 3610. However, your settlement figures appear to now be penalising us for doing so, with you removing the base funding for these officers. Maintaining these police officer levels, which is what our communities deserve, will be a challenge and a difficult commitment to make.

Once again, the government seems determined that council taxpayers of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly should shoulder the financial burden of policing services. The average increase in grant funding is 3.3% yet Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are due to receive 2.3%, a full 1% lower. Our council taxpayers are already paying 43% of the costs of policing for a geographically challenging area, yet policing is supposed to be a universal service! Yet again the Home Office is failing to understand the complexities of policing and has still not fixed the issues with the police funding formula. Rurality and sparsity are very real challenges as is the summer surge of tourists into our two counties and islands, which I have continually raised with you and your predecessors over my ten-year tenure as Police and Crime Commissioner.

I do not feel that it is appropriate for me to seek additional flexibilities to the council tax precept that the government has offered. To do so would be disingenuous to our communities who are already struggling under financial pressures.

I urge you to get the missing information to us as quickly as possible and to review the funding formula so that this inequity in funding is resolved before services decline even further.

Yours Sincerely

Alison Hernandez

Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly