



**PCC**  
Office of the Police  
and Crime Commissioner  
Devon and Cornwall

# **Police and Crime Commissioner Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly**

**Proposals for consulting the public in  
respect of a potential increase in the  
precept**



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- The statutory process for any referendum proposal
- The preliminary ‘informal ‘ consultation to inform PCC’s decision about whether to commence the statutory process
- PCC seeking advice and guidance from the Police and Crime Panel to inform key questions, messages and process for preliminary ‘informal’ consultation.



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## The Statutory Process

- PCC required to present a precept increase to Police and Crime Panel
- If PCC proposes an “excessive council tax increase” that breaches the principles set by the Secretary of State (DCLG) then a referendum is triggered
- Last year the Secretary of State capped levels at 1.99%



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## The Statutory Process

- If the PCC proposes an “excessive” increase then two budgets must be presented to PCP
  - The “excessive” increase
  - An increase that meets the principles
- Budget will be presented to Panel on 5 Feb 2016
- If vetoed by the panel then PCC must present a revised increase for 19 Feb 2016. This increase cannot be vetoed.



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## The Statutory Process

**Format of ballot question is prescribed by statute**

*“For the financial year beginning on 1st April the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has decided to increase the amount it charges by x%.*

*Do you agree with the Police & Crime Commissioner’s proposal?”*



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## The Statutory Process

- A Referendum would be held 5 May 2016 alongside PCC elections and any other local elections
- OPCC would bear cost of up to 50% of the total election process
- Total D&C election costs for 5 May 2016 (all elections) is estimated at £2.7m
- Council tax payers will have been billed by this date so defeat will necessitate either:
  - Full rebilling
  - Refund process on application with adjustment in 2017 for those people that did not apply for refund
  - Estimated rebilling costs are up to £0.6m
- Some other statutory costs (publication of official notices etc)

*Total estimated cost could be £2 million*



## Informing the PCC's decision about whether to commence statutory process

### Preliminary Consultation

- Significant period of consultation
- Will run over November/December (before any decision)
- The PCC intends to recommend that the public support his proposition to increase council tax to offset the unfair budget reductions being imposed on Devon and Cornwall
- Purpose of preliminary consultation is to seek views on that proposition



# Informing the PCC's decision about whether to commence statutory process

## Public Consultation

- PCC will communicate to and with the public through a variety of different mediums
  - Broadcast media e.g. TV and radio interviews, phone-ins etc.
  - Written media. Placed pieces, press releases
  - Public meetings
  - Social media and web engagement
- Public will be able to express view by post, through web and social media and in person at events or through media





## Informing the PCC's decision about whether to commence statutory process

### Wider Support

- Letter from PCC and “Chief Constable” to movers and shakers
- PCC restricted by ‘pre-election period’ restrictions but no one outside the precepting authority (OPCC) is subject to the same restrictions
- Will be looking for others to provide support proactively and to counter those that might oppose the increase



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## **Informing the PCC's decision about whether to commence statutory process**

### **Independently run insight and polling**

- The PCC is currently holding focus groups to help him explore people's likely views on a proposed increase and its size
- In December the OPCC will commission a professional market research company to assess how the public might be likely to vote in any referendum



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## Informing the PCC's decision about whether to commence statutory process

### Final Decision Making

- The Commissioner will make his decision on the budget proposals based on the following factors
  - Confirmed scale of budget reduction once Comprehensive Spending Review outcome known
  - Feedback from public and private consultation
  - Feedback from other sources
  - Feedback from the Police and Crime Panel
  - Continuing force assessment of likely impact of reductions



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## Key Messages

- *Devon & Cornwall are being additionally penalised by funding formula changes that are unfair*
- *Pay a little more and protect your policing*
  - *10% could offset up to 220 police officer reductions*
  - *15% could offset up to 350 police officer reductions*
  - *20% could offset up to 480 police officer reductions*
  - *25% could offset up to 620 police officer reductions*
- *Deployment of police officers would be a matter for Chief Constable*