



Changes to how Gloucestershire Constabulary is funded and 2021 precept consultation.

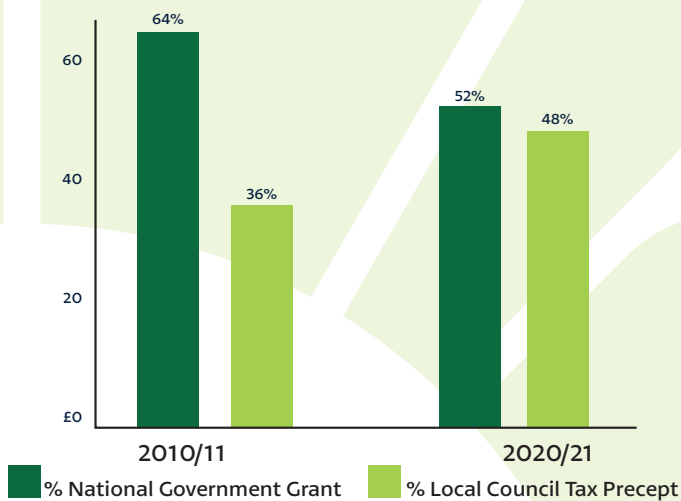
Dear resident

Providing sufficient resources for Gloucestershire Constabulary is an important part of my job, so may I take a few moments of your time to explain how it is funded and to seek your views on the extent of any increase in 2021.

Gloucestershire Constabulary has been rated by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as a good Force that provides good services to its residents; a Force that has managed its finances well through years of cuts and a Force that is well led. That said, improvements still need to be made and maintained, so on your behalf I have set the Constabulary a challenge to demonstrate that 'Every crime matters, every contact counts.' That means, it will strive to understand and meet your reasonable expectations and put victims at the heart of its response.

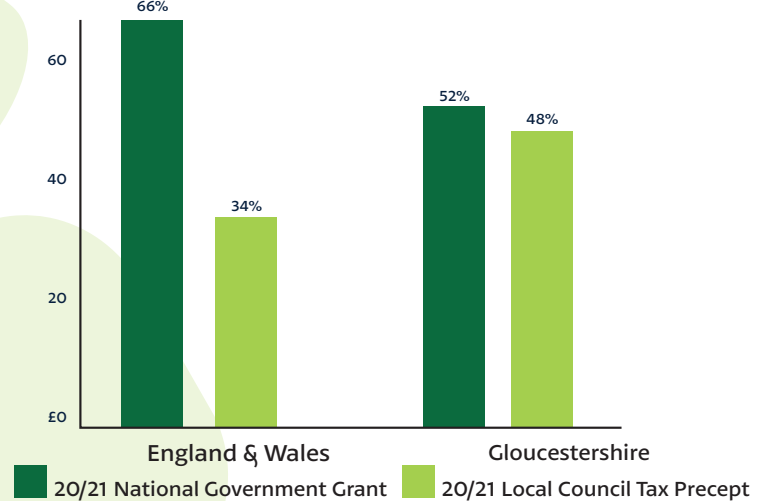
The way in which Gloucestershire Constabulary is funded is changing though, with a shift away from central Government funding in favour of the local council tax. Over the past 10 years, the proportion of funding for policing in Gloucestershire from central Government has fallen from 64% in 2010 to just 52% today.

Gloucestershire Constabulary funding: National Government grant and Local Council Tax Precept split



Source: Gloucestershire Constabulary

Gloucestershire Constabulary funding compared to England & Wales (2020/21)



Source: Gloucestershire Constabulary & the Home Office

Gloucestershire receives a low level of core grant funding from the Home Office. For next year, our grant per head of population will be only 68% of the national average and nearly half of some forces in England and Wales. The Government has been clear there are no immediate plans to change that. Since 2018, the Government has allowed Police and Crime Commissioners more flexibility to begin to make up the shortfall by increasing local council tax by rates above that of inflation. The decision to do this has always been difficult; I try hard to balance public expectations of the Constabulary and your ability to pay with the needs outlined by the Chief Constable to be able to deliver quality service. The Home Office has announced a maximum £6.6 million cash increase for policing in Gloucestershire next year. It's correct to say that it will provide £3.2 million funding to help recruit an additional 45 Gloucestershire police officers, (46 last year) to put back some of the 249 officers that were lost

during the period of austerity. That's good news and, of course, it's very welcomed. In parallel though, the Home Office has frozen our core grant with an expectation that I will increase the police element of your council tax by 5.8% (£15 per year for a Band D property) to make up a £3.4 million shortfall. That means, any additional funding for Gloucestershire Constabulary can only come from local taxation.

To help me make that decision I would really appreciate your views on the extent to which I should exercise my responsibility to increase the police element of your council tax and bridge that gap. You can do so via the online survey on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) website – www.gloucestershire-pcc.gov.uk or writing to me at the above address or via email pcc@gloucestershire-pcc.gov.uk. However, I must be open with you – a freeze in the police element of council tax is unlikely. I'm aware that during the years of austerity, the police did not have the resources they needed to provide the services you should reasonably expect, and we cannot return to that.

The strength and effectiveness of a police service is often spoken of in terms of the number of officers it has, but in the same way as the cost of a hospital bed isn't the full cost of the health service, a police constable doesn't represent the full cost of the many services the police provide.

It's clear to me that as well as recruiting the new officers, the Force now must upgrade critical IT, infrastructure and communication systems, some which are mandated by the Government, if it is to meet the challenge of 'Every crime matters, every contact counts.'

I am immensely proud to represent you, the people of Gloucestershire, as your Police and Crime Commissioner. I am also extremely proud of the Constabulary, not just in 'weathering the storm' of austerity but also in continually striving to improve service, even during a pandemic. I have seen first hand the pressures officers and staff have been under over the past year in responding to demands placed on the service, particularly those on the front line who have put the health of others before their own.

I hope this letter provides a clear picture of how your police are funded, helps you to understand the decisions I have to take in relation to local taxation and lets you know how you can give me your views.

Yours faithfully



Martin Surl
Police and Crime Commissioner

