



Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office

Decision Record Form

Request: Setting the Precept for County Durham and Darlington 2026/27

Title: - Police Precept 2026/27

Decision Summary:

This Decision Notice provides formal notice of the proposed police precept for the financial year 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

In accordance with the Police and Crime Panels (Precept and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is required to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the proposed precept by no later than the 1st of February 2026.

The Panel must review the proposal and make a report to the PCC. The PCC must have regard to the Panel's report and determine the final precept by no later than 1st March 2026.

Background:

In December each year, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is informed by the Home Secretary of the provisional police funding settlement for the next financial year. This enables the PCC to formulate plans for the level of precept required to support the delivery of policing across County Durham and Darlington in line with the Police, Crime and Justice Plan.

The Government sets the council tax referendum principles each year. For 2026/27 the standard police precept referendum threshold has been set at £15 for a Band D property. However, where financial sustainability issues are demonstrated, additional flexibility has been granted to specific areas. Further flexibility of £3.50 has been granted to Durham and Darlington, increasing the Band D referendum threshold to £18.50.

Financial Context:

Government grant announced in the provisional settlement will increase from £126m to £131m, an increase of £5m. Whilst this increase is welcomed, it is insufficient to cover the many cost pressures faced to deliver an effective police service to the residents of County Durham and Darlington. Continued high levels of inflation, no capital grant, and the impact of pay increases and related costs mean that greater reliance must be placed upon maximising income from the police precept. This

position is further compounded by the area’s relatively low council tax base and below-average Band D precept level, which results in a comparatively low precept yield.

Public Consultation:

A public consultation was undertaken to gather views on the level of additional funds residents would be willing to contribute through the police precept. The majority of respondents indicated support for an increase, with the most commonly supported option being £20. Almost half of respondents were in favour of an increase of £20 or more.

Recommendations:

In making this recommendation to the Panel, the PCC has considered the overall financial position and the results from the public consultation and is proposing to increase the policing element of council tax by 6.6%, equivalent to £18.50 per year for a Band D property. Many householders will pay less than this due to a higher proportion of Band A properties within the force area.

The table below outlines the increase for each property band:

Tax Band	Police Precept 2025/26	Police Precept 2026/27	Annual Increase	Increase Per Week
	£	£	£	£
Band A	188.16	200.49	12.33	0.24
Band B	219.52	233.91	14.39	0.28
Band C	250.88	267.32	16.44	0.32
Band D	282.24	300.74	18.50	0.36
Band E	344.96	367.57	22.61	0.43
Band F	407.68	434.40	26.72	0.51
Band G	470.40	501.23	30.83	0.59
Band H	564.48	601.48	37.00	0.71

NB. The cost of the £3.50 Band D additional precept flexibility is 7p per week (4p per week for Band A householders).

Even with the proposed £18.50 increase, the medium-term financial plan indicates that a funding shortfall remains. As a result, continued delivery of savings plans and the use of reserves will be required, and the financial position will continue to be closely monitored.

Decision: The PCC presented the proposed precept for 2026/27 to the Police and Crime Panel. The Panel recommended that the PCC consider a £15 increase rather than £18.50 and that the Panel and PCC jointly write to local MPs and central government to request additional funding for 2026/27 (see Appendix 1).

Having considered the Panel’s recommendations, and taking into account the evidence presented, the overall financial position and the results from the public consultation, the PCC determined that the police precept for 2026/27 will be increased by £18.50 for a Band D property (see Appendix 2).

OPCC Lead Officer: Mrs Andrea Petty			
Contractor Details (if applicable): Not applicable			
Implications:			
Has consideration been taken of the following?	Yes	No	
Financial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Equality & Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(If yes please provide further details below)			

Decision Required – Supporting Information

Financial Implications: (Must include comments of the PCC’s CFO where the decision has financial implications)

The PCC’s Chief Finance Officer has advised that the financial implications of this Decision are set out in the Executive Summary and the report produced that went to the Police and Crime Panel. The decision ensures that the PCC meets their legislative requirements in relation to the Police element of the precept and will also ensure that there is sufficient funding available in 2026/27 to balance the financial plans of both corporations’ sole. The decision being requested is in line with the statutory requirements of the PCC and is the first step in enabling the PCC to meet her statutory obligation in relation the Precept and Budget setting.

Legal Implications: (Must include comments of the Monitoring Officer where the decision has legal implication)

Having read this form and having considered such information as has been provided at the time of being asked to express this view, the Monitoring Officer approver is satisfied that this form does not ask the PCC to make a decision which would (or would be likely to) give rise to a contravention of the law.

Equality and Diversity Implications

No specific equality and diversity implications.

Human Rights Implications

No specific human rights implications.

Sustainability Implications

This report is part of the process required to ensure that the process for proposing a precept to the Police and Crime Panel is open and transparent. It recommends an option that the PCC can consider before proposing a precept to the PCP and is part of the process of establishing sustainable annual and medium-term financial plans and maintaining prudent financial management within the organisation.

Risk Management Implications

The requirements on the PCC to propose and consult with the PCP on their proposals for Precept are set out in legislation. Failure to start the consultation process with the PCP before the end of January 2025 and to conclude this process, including setting a precept before 1st March 2025, would result in an illegal budget.

Consultations

No specific consultation undertaken.

Police and Crime Commissioner:

The above request has my approval.



Signed: _____

Date: 12/02/2026

Police and Crime Commissioner (Durham)

Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer:

I have been consulted about the decision and confirm that financial, legal, and equalities advice has considered. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Commissioner.

Signed: _____

Date: 12/02/2026



Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer

Appendix A

Contact: Helen Bradley
Main Tel: 03000 260000
email: helen.bradley@durham.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref:



Ms Joy Allen
Durham Police Crime Commissioner
Durham Constabulary Headquarters
DURHAM
DH1 5TT

04 February 2026

Dear Joy

Response to Police and Crime Commissioner Precept Consultation 2026/27

On behalf of the Durham Police and Crime Panel, I would like to thank you for attending the Panel's meeting on 3 February 2026 together with the Chief Constable and Chief Finance Officer to present your report and respond to questions from Panel members.

Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Police and Crime Panel to provide a report to its Police and Crime Commissioner following consideration of the proposed precept for 2024/25.

The Panel considered the continuing significant financial pressures that face Durham Constabulary, the financial settlement that had been received and the impact of these challenges on police officer numbers. The Panel noted the operational achievements delivered in 2025/26.

The Panel commented on the government's funding formula and suggested the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel could lobby local MPs and central government to secure additional funding.

Members recognised there was a difficult balance to be found between an increase in the precept and the revenue funding this would achieve. They acknowledged the challenge that the low council tax base made to the level of settlement and the more flexible freedoms that devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have in terms of precept increases to Police Commissioners in England.

The Panel reviewed the precept you presented and the exceptional precept flexibility which you had requested from the Home Office. The proposal for an increase of £18.50 (£15 plus additional £3.50 exceptional flexibility) for a Band D property was considered carefully by the Panel.

Resources

Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UF
Main Telephone (03000) 26 00000

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The Panel considered it was unfair to ask the communities of County Durham and Darlington to bear the cost of the government's flawed funding formula and the burden of the increase in National Insurance contributions made in 2025.

The Panel expressed concern about the impact of the proposed policing precept on top of increasing financial difficulties faced by many in County Durham and Darlington. The Panel noted the outcomes of your consultations on the proposed precept options.

In conclusion, the Panel recommended that:

- a) The PCC limit the increase to the policing precept to £15 for Band D property representing the maximum increase permitted under the government cap for 2026/27
- b) The Police and Crime Panel, together with the PCC write to local MPs and central government setting out the points discussed at the meeting and to request additional funding for 2026/27.



Yours sincerely
Councillor Robert Potts,
Chair of the Durham Police and Crime Panel

Cc:

Cllr Tim Robson, Vice Chair of the Durham Police and Crime Panel
Andrea Petty, Chief of Staff, Office of the Durham PCC
Rachel Allsop, Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Sweety Sahani, Head of Business Services, Office of the Durham PCC
Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources, Durham County Council
Helen Bradley, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Durham County Council
Amy Wennington, Assistant Director Law and Governance



TO: Councillor Robert Potts
Chair of the Durham/Darlington Police and Crime Panel

6th February 2026
Our ref: JA/AP

Dear Councillor Potts,

Re: Police and Crime Panel Response to Precept Proposal 2026/27

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 2026 following the Police and Crime Panel's consideration of my proposed policing precept for 2026/27.

I note the two recommendations arising from the Panel meeting held on 3 February:

Recommendation (a)

I must state unequivocally that I reject the Panel's recommendation that the policing precept be limited to £15 for a Band D property.

That recommendation is founded on a fundamental error of fact. The Government has formally approved exceptional precept flexibility for County Durham and Darlington, raising the referendum limit to £18.50, in explicit recognition of the force's financial position. £15 is therefore not the maximum permissible increase, and to present it as such is incorrect.

More significantly, the recommendation disregards both the financial evidence presented to the Panel and the operational case presented by the Chief Constable.

It was made clear that a £15 increase would not meet unavoidable cost pressures arising from police pay awards, inflation and contractual commitments, and would result in a real-terms reduction in policing capability.

The Panel's recommendation would therefore knowingly:

- Increase reliance on reserves;
- Erode neighbourhood policing and visibility;
- Place PCSO, police staff and frontline capacity at risk.

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It is also important to set the impact on households in proper perspective. Around 80% of properties across County Durham and Darlington are in Council Tax Bands A or B. For the majority of residents, the proposed £18.50 increase equates to approximately 24 pence or 28 pence per week.

For a Band D property, the difference between a £15 increase and the approved £18.50 increase is £3.50 per year — around 6 to 7 pence per week. The Panel's recommendation would therefore sacrifice policing capability and public protection for the sake of a few pence per week.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Chief Constable advised the Panel that the operational proposals presented, including:

- The establishment of a dedicated Criminal Exploitation Team;
- Dedicated resources to tackle Anti Social Behaviour linked to child exploitation and those who go missing from home; and
- An increased specialist investigative capacity to support the future development of a dedicated Rape and Serious Sexual Offences investigation capability.

were not deliverable without the additional £3.50 exceptional precept flexibility.

These proposals were presented transparently and unambiguously as contingent on the full £18.50 precept.

The Panel was therefore fully sighted on the operational and public protection implications and nevertheless chose to reject the funding mechanism required to deliver them.

The Panel acknowledged the outcomes of public consultation. Those consultations demonstrate clear and consistent public support for higher precept increases where investment is linked to protecting frontline policing and community safety.

The recommendation to limit the precept to £15 therefore runs directly contrary to expressed public opinion.

For these reasons, I have decided to proceed with a policing precept of £18.50 for a Band D property, as lawfully permitted by Government and required to protect policing capability in County Durham and Darlington.

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Recommendation (b)

I support the Panel's recommendation that we jointly write to local MPs and central government to press for reform of the police funding formula.

To conclude, scrutiny is a vital function of the Police and Crime Panel. However, I cannot accept a recommendation that is factually flawed, contradicts professional advice, overrides public consultation, and would knowingly deliver a material blow to policing and public protection for a negligible saving to households.

My statutory duty is to secure an efficient and effective police service for the people of County Durham and Darlington. Setting the precept at £18.50 is necessary, proportionate and firmly in the public interest.

Yours sincerely,

Joy Allen
Police and Crime Commissioner
County Durham and Darlington

