

Notes - Police and Crime Panel meeting February 2026

The primary focus of this meeting was for the panel to decide if we agreed with the Commissioner's proposal to increase the Gloucestershire Police Council Tax Precept for 2026/2027 up to £18.50 based on a Band D property. That equates to £340.58 for Band D Council Tax, an increase of 5.74%.

The maximum increase permitted by government is normally capped at £15. Therefore, approval had to been granted by government to increase the precept above that figure, without needing to conduct a referendum. Originally the Commissioner proposed a £25 increase to the Band D precept to bridge the £2.3m shortfall, which was not permitted by Government.

As the government did not agree to increase the precept by such an unprecedented amount, it has left the Constabulary in a situation of greater financial pressure, although it has saved Gloucestershire residents with the additional council tax burden.

It was explained that the increase to £18.50 reduced the net shortfall to £1.4m in 2026/27 but to balance the budget there would still have to be further reductions to services and an increased use of reserves.

The Panel had the choice to either agree with the proposed precept of £18.50 or recommend a precept higher or lower for consideration.

As government had already capped the increase to £18.50, the panel were only left with two options to either agree or propose a lower precept.

The panel did not consider lowering the precept below £18.50 due to the very tight financial case presented and therefore agreed to accept the proposed precept of £18.50 for a Band D property. Agreement was however only made with recommendations for additional risk monitoring measures.

As savings to cover the remaining financial gap can only be achieved through three efficiency workstreams focusing on; ICT, Estates Strategy and the new Force Operating Model Review. I felt it imperative for the panel to have greater assurance throughout the year to monitor progress across the three efficiency workstreams with full updates in July 2026 and January 2027.

The Commissioner verified he was focused on making savings to stop Gloucestershire Constabulary and the OPCC having to issue a Section 114 notice in the coming years.

Another member also requested further information about the preventative work being undertaken in Gloucestershire.

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Therefore, the Panel agreed to support the proposed precept with the following recommendations:

- 1) To recommend that regular efficiency workstream updates on ICT, Estates and the new Operating Model are received by the Police and Crime Panel at its July and January meetings.
- 2) To request more information be brought to the Panel about the preventative work being undertaken in Gloucestershire by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Constabulary to tackle inequity (such as stop-and-search, arrests, charging decisions and use of force) through genuine community engagement to improve trust in policing, building on the Police and Crime Prevention Plan.

The Commissioner acknowledged the challenge that the agreed increase could have on residents but stated that his focus was on strengthening the Constabulary to make sure that it was best equipped to solve crime and make charges.

The Chief Finance Officer highlighted that each of the workstreams were regularly monitored and had a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) who was held accountable for progress. To provide further assurance, the Deputy Commissioner stated that each month, the Commissioner and himself attended a governance meeting which included an item on financial delivery and workstream actions.

Some of the savings' programmes highlighted during the meeting included vacancy management, contract savings and a reduction in police officer overtime. The Temporary Chief Constable verified that these savings were influencing operational policing, and it was unrealistic to expect the same level of service with significant reductions.

You can read the full [panel meeting notes here](#)

Cllr Victoria Atherstone, Cheltenham's representative on Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel.