

**Katy Bourne**  
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Brooks Close, Lewes  
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**Sussex  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner**

Mr Trevor Leggo  
Chief Executive  
Sussex & Surrey Association of Local Councils  
(via email)

6 September 2018

Dear Trevor

Further to our recent email correspondence, you will be aware that neighbourhood policing capacity in Sussex has been called into question recently after a Sunday newspaper article quoted official workforce figures which appeared to show Sussex Police had the lowest number of neighbourhood police officers per head of population in the country.

Unfortunately this was not accurate and is, we understand, based on a number of neighbourhood officers not being included in the Home Office data. The Home Office itself recognises that definitions of what constitutes local or neighbourhood policing vary from force to force, making direct comparisons almost impossible.

Whilst the figures are complicated and confusing, the facts are simple. There are currently 227 Police Officers and 196 PCSOs (423 in total) carrying out neighbourhood policing, which means Sussex is placed 28 out of 42 forces in England and Wales, not the lowest as claimed. This equates to 13.5 neighbourhood police officers per 100k population.

It is completely understandable that people's confidence in Sussex Police may have been undermined by this article and subsequent media reports and I would therefore be grateful if you could share this letter with your Town and Parish Councils.

Firstly, I recognise that the police funding position is not unique and that other public sector organisations are having to make fundamental changes to the way services are delivered and make better use of resources. However, by focusing on improvements, efficiencies and working collaboratively, Sussex remains a safe place and is in a good position to maximise the opportunities arising from the precept uplift and release of reserves.

Investing in local policing remains a key priority for me.

Currently, the main funding grant we receive from Government makes up 61% of our overall police force budget. As a result of the funding formula that is then applied, Sussex Police receives the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest total funding per head of population, which equates to a deficit of £36.2million compared to other police forces in England and Wales, equivalent to around 800 police officers on the beat.

The remainder of our funding comes from local households through the 'police precept' Element of their council tax. Despite the recent increases in precept, Sussex taxpayers still pay the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest amount in their local council tax for policing in England and Wales at £165.91 (Band D). In Sussex, 75% of council taxpayers are in Band D or below.

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I have therefore been lobbying hard to secure the best possible funding arrangements for policing our county. The public want to see investment in more visible, local policing focusing on crimes like burglary and anti-social behaviour and they rightly want to feel safe on the roads, in public spaces and at night-time. They also want to see improvements in the Force's approach to public contact and more support to the 101 service. Furthermore, my consultations, correspondence and meetings with the public, show that a majority of Sussex residents are prepared to support their police service through increased precept contributions.

My Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out our plan for significant investment in policing over the next four years: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/media/2808/medium-term-financial-strategy-2017-21-revision-september-2017.pdf>

Our changed financial position (achieved through the precept increases forecast in the MTFS plus the release of £17m in reserves) provides the resources for the Chief Constable to recruit more officers. As a result, by 2022, the force will have 200 more police officers than it currently employs and they will be focused in local policing. You can read more about the Chief Constable's plans here: [https://www.sussex.police.uk/media/8394/sussex-police-transformation-strategy\\_7-rev-web.pdf](https://www.sussex.police.uk/media/8394/sussex-police-transformation-strategy_7-rev-web.pdf)

PCCs and Chief Constables across England and Wales are also now fully engaged in the government's next spending review.

I hope that this letter helps provide some context to the funding position for Sussex Police and I am always happy to discuss further.

Yours sincerely



Katy Bourne  
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