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## PCC rejects call to raise cash from council tax payers

Sue Mountstevens insists she will freeze Avon and Somerset police funding from council tax precept for another year

By Christopher Brown  
Thursday February 7, 2013

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Sue Mountstevens

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sue Mountstevens has rejected calls to raise more cash from council tax payers to pay for the Avon and Somerset police force.

During a police and crime panel meeting yesterday, five members backed the budget set out by the PCC – which included a freeze in council tax contributions, made up for by government grants equating to a 1% council tax rise.

Eleven members of the panel voted against the proposal though – a vote short from vetoing the plan.

Ms Mountstevens said: "I have listened carefully to what the Police & Crime Panel has said today and I agree with them that freezing the council tax is not a long-term solution.

"During the election campaign the view of residents was clear to me, many households are experiencing hard times and an increase in the policing part of the council tax would be felt.

"I took account of these views in my budget planning and bearing in mind that we are treated unfairly by government funding I felt that I could not turn away a government grant equivalent to a 1% council tax increase.

"I will freeze the policing part of the council tax this year but I plan to have a full consultation with residents next year."

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The PCC must publish a five-year Police and Crime Plan by the end of March 2013 which sets out vision, aims and objectives for her term in office.

For 2013-14, the Avon and Somerset force is to receive £179m in government grants. In order for the police to have a balanced budget for 2013-14, £7million of savings must be made.

However, projections have shown the force could be in deficit by up to £35m by 2016.



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