

Commissioner's plan for PCSOs to become PCs

By [Charlotte Talbot](#)

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THE number of PCSOs in the county is due to be reviewed in the hope they will change roles to become constables, according to the Surrey police and crime commissioner.

The idea was mooted last week as plans to increase Surrey Police's share of council tax were approved.

During a meeting of Surrey's police and crime panel last Wednesday, members unanimously approved the increase of the force's share of council tax by 1.99% for 2013/14.

This will mean that the sum paid by a Surrey Band D household for policing for the year will rise from £203.49 to £207.55, representing a weekly increase of approximately eight pence.

A 1% gap in this funding would mean losing five police officers, Police and Crime Commissioner Kevin Hurley said.

During the meeting he said Surrey currently received about 53% of its budget from central government and brought in 47% from the council tax budget – the lowest recipients of government funding in the country.

Mr Hurley said he had asked Minister of State for Police and Criminal Justice Damien Green why Surrey did not receive a greater amount of funding from the government and was asked, in turn, to compile a report.

He said the government was cutting its proportion by 23% during the next couple of years.

Mr Hurley added he would be reviewing the number of PCSOs in Surrey in the 'hope' that those PCSOs would become constables in the same area.

Currently PCSOs are paid £23,000 per annum, with new police officers paid £19,000.

He said he thought PCSOs were doing a good job but wanted to make sure those officers were able to 'intervene more decisively' in all types of situations.

"One of the challenges with making the budget balance is simply this," he said. "The government is giving us ring-fenced money to pay for PCSOs.

"In the future that money is going to cease and we are going to have to pay for it from the overall collective budget.

"If this aspiration is ultimately to say to people we are not going to tolerate antisocial behaviour, we need people who have got the power to take that action."

He added: "It's simply trying to get the maximum bang for our buck."

Mr Hurley said he would continue to examine ways in which money could be saved and would be talking to other forces, including the Met, about working together.

