

£300,000 salaries support Police and Crime Commissioner



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THE Police and Crime Commissioner in Gloucestershire has moved to justify around £300,000 of annual salaries for jobs all geared towards supporting his role.

Martin Surl, who is on a £65,000 annual salary himself, has 10 members of staff beneath him, all on taxpayer-funded salaries.

These include a chief executive on £88,564, a commissioning development manager on at least £42,639 and a treasurer on £34,557, plus a communications advisor charging £350 a day.

Mr Surl said he is keen to hire those in the know to help him do his job better and that he is adamant his role will be transparent.

He said: "One of the major changes has been the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner as the voice of the people.

"Good communications are paramount in a county as large and diverse as Gloucestershire. It's an essential part of being an effective PCC.

"This is not about promoting me. I often accused the old Police Authorities of being invisible, a view shared by the government and many people I spoke to during the campaign.

"It's vital I engage with the public, either on a one to one basis or through the media and in a county with a [population](#) of 600,000 - young and old - that takes specialist skills.

"I am determined to give value for money and am happy for anyone to scrutinise the [work](#) I am doing and the things I have achieved so far. I have been open and transparent in all my dealings."

Six of those 10 posts beneath Mr Surl transferred from the Police Authority. Only three new posts, one of which is a job share, have been filled since Mr Surl's appointment in November 2012.

That includes Andy Champness, former chief executive of Gloucestershire Police Authority, in the same role for the PCC.

He said: "Only this week, the Policy Exchange, which is the UK's leading think tank, published its report entitled 'A plan for a cheaper, more effective justice system'.

"It said 'PCCs must not be squeamish about hiring the experts in policy, finance, commissioning and operations that they will need to do a good job'.

"It also concluded that 'comparing PCC office costs with Police Authority costs to defend the policy (of introducing PCCs) is likely to constrain PCC development and perpetuate a misunderstanding of the new role'."

Mr Surl has chosen not to employ a deputy so not to use up more money on salaries.

Joyce Dugden, 43, of Abbeydale, said: "I do see Mr Surl doing a lot of things around the county when I read The Citizen promoting different things and it's good to have a [public](#) face. I do feel he

is working hard for the county but I don't know how he is helping the police force to do their job. It's a lot of money that his department is being paid so I hope it is money well spent."

Robert Oxley, campaign director for the Taxpayers' Alliance campaign group, said: "Police and Crime Commissioners are very good at delivery for residents and expanding their little empire on taxpayers money. The last thing commissioners should be doing is funding much cash on the back office but instead on the front line. Thankfully residents will chance make a decision as to where cash can be spend at the ballot boxes."

Read more: <http://www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk/pound-300-000-salaries-support-Police-Crime/story-19708770-detail/story.html#ixzz2dlq8NBmv>

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