

Police Federation of England and Wales

Police Federation Office
Police Headquarters
Church Lane
Lewes
East Sussex BN2 7DZ



Established by Act of Parliament

SUSSEX POLICE FEDERATION

Tel: 01273 404211
Fax: 01273 480068
e-mail: admin@sussex.polfed.org

Our Ref: PS/sh

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Katie Bourne
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner
Sackville House, Brooks Close
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2FZ

Dear Commissioner Bourne

Please consider the contents of this open letter as we in the Sussex Police Federation feel that the time has come when we must say "enough is enough" in relation to the savage cuts that Sussex Police is being forced to sustain by a Government intent on cutting policing in this country to the bone.

Since 2010, Sussex has lost over 300 officers and more than that amount of police staff. Before 2020 we must save a further £53M (20% of our total budget) which will result in similar numbers leaving our rapidly shrinking Force. Those who are left behind are facing an ever increasing workload and are being asked to do more with less whilst staffing levels for a 2020 Sussex Police force will have to return to those last seen in the 1980's. Our recent staff opinion survey shows that morale is on the floor and our brightest people are considering leaving us for careers elsewhere.

We have been shown the design principles of Sussex Police's new Target Operating Model. We are in the process of rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. For the first time the Force is acknowledging what we in the Federation have been saying for years, that we must decide what it is we are not going to do any more. You will agree that we must provide an emergency response and we must continue to lock up criminals so where is the give? We suggest that we are about to witness the demise of community policing, the very bedrock of our service which allows us to police by consent and of which you speak so highly and were elected by your promise to support.

Commissioner, desperate times require desperate measures. This Government has abandoned policing and it is the public who will suffer. Therefore we must fix it ourselves. You have previously consulted on marginally raising the precept to cover some of our shortfall but have stopped at 1.9% when all your consultation told you that 3.6% was acceptable to people. We are asking for a radical rise that will ensure that Sussex Police can deliver effective policing and not just an emergency response.

We believe that you should consult on the following for a Band D property: a £25 per annum rise in 2015-16 followed by rises of £25, £15 and £10 in the ensuing three years making a total rise of £75 over four years or £1.50 per week which in our opinion would balance the shortfall caused by the Government's swingeing cuts. We are aware of how drastic this proposal is but if implemented it would mean that Sussex Police can abandon its Target Operating Model and provide a proper service of which we can all be proud. If properly consulted on, a referendum to endorse these increases could be held at the same time as next year's General Election thus keeping the costs of such a referendum to a minimum.

The time for political rhetoric and inaction is over. Your police force is in crisis.

The public of Sussex need to be told the truth; the thin blue line is now a dotted blue line and is going to get more so.

Those that are left are demoralised and looking to leave. With this one act we can restore levels of service to where they should be and you can invigorate a tired, disenchanted workforce and demonstrate that you have more affinity with your constituents than with your own political party in Westminster.

We can then give the people of Sussex the platinum police service that they deserve and not the sub-standard "policing on the cheap" model we are predicting.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Sellings
Chair
Sussex Police Federation