



Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP,  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Dear Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP,

**RE: Funding challenges facing West Mercia Police**

As Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, I am committed to delivering a police service that addresses the needs of local communities across Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.

With a 10% overall reduction in crime over the past twelve months, I want to ensure this long-term downward trajectory continues.

Following the budget announcement, I am concerned that the uncertainty on police funding may dent this progress.

In this letter, I will set out a number of the funding challenges facing West Mercia Police.

- I understand economic stability is vital and there are financial challenges impacting organisations across the public sector but the lack of certainty on how much funding is available to the Home Office, and specifically policing, is impacting my financial planning for 2025/26 and beyond.
- The decision to increase the amount employers pay in National Insurance is lacking clear guidance. If West Mercia Police is required to pay the increase, it will impact our budget by more than £4 million.

This is a significant financial burden, so I am seeking to understand whether police forces are exempt from the rise, and therefore there will be no additional cost to policing, or whether this cost will be reimbursed.

If it's the latter, can you please provide assurances that this will be treated separately to the core grant as I am concerned that any increase will simply be directed towards offsetting these additional costs, instead of going towards local policing.

As you will be aware, the current funding formula does not meet the full cost of employees. This situation meant that West Mercia Police had to find £342,000 within its in-year budget to cover the recent pay increases for officers and staff.

I am concerned that if the National Insurance rise is dealt with in the same way, that this could have even deeper consequences for West Mercia Police as the cost will be considerably higher, forcing tough decisions to be made about cuts and/or increases in council tax.

- As Police and Crime Commissioner, I am responsible for setting the amount communities pay in council tax. Working with the Chief Constable, I am already making decisions on what can and cannot be afforded in next year's budget. However, uncertainty on police funding and council tax flexibility is making this process harder.

I am committed to ensuring the council tax precept is proportionate and fair to deliver services communities' value. However, without increased government investment into policing, I do not want hard-working council taxpayers to disproportionately pick up the cost. It is important to recognise that the proportion of council tax in West Mercia and government funding is moving closer and closer to a 50% split.

- I have supported West Mercia Police with the resources it needs to increase police officer numbers by more than 500 since I was first elected in 2016 both through the Police Uplift Programme, efficiencies and local council tax flexibility.

My local work as PCC can support the government in its mission to increase police officer numbers even further to continue to cut crime, as I know this is a priority for communities across my three counties. However, with much of the core grant being aligned to police officer uplift, this lack of flexibility and lack of financial certainty may mean frontline officers are taken off the beat to fulfil roles currently being done by police staff. Therefore, it's vital that more resources are made available, and the clarity requested above is given, to ensure crime continues to fall in West Mercia.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

John Campion  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**  
**West Mercia**