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**Gwent Police
and Crime Panel**

**Panel Heddlu
& Throseddu Gwent**

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Date: 12th February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Gwent Police and Crime Panel** will be held at the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Friday, 20th February, 2026** at **10.00 am** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

A G E N D A

	Pages
1	Declarations of Interest.
2	Apologies for Absence.
3	Report on the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent's Revised Council Tax Precept Proposal for 2026/27 1 - 4

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Malcolm Day, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor Diane Rowberry, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – subject to Home Office approval
Councillor Marina Chacon-Dawson, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor Colin Peter Mann, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor Lisa Phipps, Caerphilly County Borough Council - subject to Home Office approval
Councillor Tony Easson, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor Tony Kear, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor Farzina Hussain, Newport City Council
Councillor Debbie Jenkins, Newport City Council
Councillor James Peterson, Newport City Council
Councillor Lynda Clarkson, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Nick Byrne, Torfaen County Borough Council

Co-opted Members- Mrs. G Howells and Ms. K Stevenson

By Invitation

Ms J. Mudd, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Ms E. Thomas, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Mrs S. Curley, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr D. Garwood-Pask, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

And Appropriate Officers.

REPORT ON THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT'S PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT FOR 2026/27

INTRODUCTION

This is a statutory report in line with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Schedule 5 (6)). It provides further clarification of points raised in the Gwent Police and Crime Panel report on the 2026/27 Precept proposal, a response to the report recommendation, and sets out a revised Precept figure for 2026/27.

BACKGROUND

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent (Commissioner) formally notified the Gwent Police and Crime Panel (Panel) on 21 January 2026 of the proposed Police and Crime Budget and Council Tax Precept for 2026/27. This included the lowest proposed precept increase in Gwent for three years and the joint lowest proposed percentage increase in Wales.

The Panel's terms of reference and rules of procedures (14.3) state that Panel Members will receive papers at least three clear days before a meeting. The papers were provided eight clear days prior to the Panel meeting on 30 January 2026.

At the Panel meeting, members considered detailed reports and inputs from the Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Section 151 Officer, who has a legal responsibility to ensure financial functions are robust and fit for purpose. These laid out the comprehensive business need and financial case for the proposals. These include funding the Gwent Police budget requirement and the statutory responsibilities of the OPCC, as well as early intervention, prevention and public engagement activities that both support and complement the work of Gwent Police.

Services provided include support for victims of crime, rape, sexual assault, serious violence and domestic abuse. They also include prevention and early intervention activities that aim to keep people out of the criminal justice system, including drug and alcohol services, youth diversionary services and Crimestoppers.

The Panel voted to veto the proposed increase of 6.99% on the Council Tax Precept for 2026/27. Eight members voted against the proposal, with two supporting it. The Panel can recommend an alternative increase to the Commissioner for consideration. No recommendation for an alternative increase was given in the meeting or included in its formal veto report.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerable consideration has been given to the Panel's feedback and its report in determining how best to reduce the Council Tax Precept, without cutting funding for policing, victims or statutory services. Throughout this process, it was paramount that operational policing could not be affected by the Panel's decision.

As highlighted in the budget papers, the Section 151 Officer was assured with the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves of the original proposal. This is the statutory duty of the Section 151 Officer. Furthermore, Gwent Police's Section 151 Officer has the same statutory duty in relation to the Chief Constable's Budget Requirement. Due diligence is therefore undertaken twice by legally-responsible officers. It is not the Panel's role to be assured on the robustness of the

Commissioner's Budget Requirement. The Panel's role is solely to 'review the proposed precept'.

The Panel's terms of reference and rules of procedures state that papers will be issued to Panel members at least three clear days before the meeting of the Panel. Digital copies were sent on 21 January 2026, which is eight clear days before the meeting. All relevant financial information was included in these papers. The Chief Constable's budget requirement, which was presented to the Accountability and Assurance Board on 2 December, was also considered by the Commissioner when setting the budget and this was explained to Panel members. The Chief Constable also delivered an extensive presentation on the operational context of the budget to Panel members on 12 December 2025, which complemented a financial update at the previous Panel meeting in September 2025.

All Panel members were invited to a comprehensive finance briefing by the Section 151 Officer on 16 January 2026. This was 14 days ahead of the Panel meeting and seven members attended. All-member briefings ensure all Panel members have an opportunity to engage and that there are no significant imbalances in members' understanding of issues, particularly relating to complex financial information.

The quarter two 2025/26 forecast outturn highlighted a potential £5.8m non-recurrent underspend. This is a 2.7% difference against the total expected budget. This was explained at the all-member briefing and the Panel meeting. These are projected figures and the actual spend will not be confirmed until quality assurance processes have been completed and the statement of accounts is finished. Any potential savings and underspend would be non-recurrent. It was explained that this would not therefore factor into future budgets.

As explained at the Panel's pre-meet and again at the Panel meeting on 30 January 2026, the Panel could not be provided with financial reports for quarter three 2025/26, as they had not been through Gwent Police's internal governance arrangements. Gwent Police would not complete its quality assurance processes until 2 February 2026. Only then would these reports be formally submitted to the OPCC for scrutiny by the Commissioner. There is no statutory role for Panel members to review these documents; however, once scrutiny has been finalised, they are shared with members for information.

The additional £1m for the implementation of the Police, Crime and Justice Plan was factored into the precept rise approved by the Panel in January 2025. It is now a recurring part of the budget to ensure the successful delivery of the Police, Crime and Justice Plan. Panel members were briefed on the investments at the December Panel meeting and these directly impact frontline policing. For example, the purchase of a much-needed wellbeing van for officers and increased investment in prevention, victim and offender services designed to reduce demand on Gwent Police.

The all-member briefing and the Panel meeting reinforced that the current estate strategy was factored into the budget setting process. This meets the Section 151 Officer's duty to ensure a robust budget in terms of the known expenditure. There could be future financial consequences of the All-Wales Sustainability Strategy, once finalised, that may impact on the development of a revised Estate Strategy, but these are not known yet.

Finally, there is independent financial auditing. In addition to the assurance provided by both Section 151 Officers, the Commissioner and Chief Constable also take independent assurance. In the last four years, internal audit has undertaken 28 audits of financial functions at Gwent Police and the OPCC. Of these, 26 were rated substantial (the highest rating), with two reasonable (the second highest rating). Since the creation of Commissioners in 2013, both the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's respective Statements of Accounts have always had clean, 'unqualified' audit opinions from the Auditor General for Wales. Furthermore, the Auditor General for Wales has confirmed in each respective year that both the Commissioner and Chief Constable have arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources.

DECISION

Having considered the Panel's report, the Commissioner will issue a revised Council Tax Precept of £93,286,500 for 2026/27. This is the equivalent to a Council Tax Precept for a Band D Property of £403.53. This is a precept increase of 6.95% (£26.22 per annum or 50p per week). This will now be the lowest percentage precept increase in Wales and still the lowest rise in Gwent for three years.

This reduction equates to a permanent loss of income of £34,676 per annum. It is essential that neither operational policing nor statutory policing services are affected by the Panel's decision to reduce the precept level. To ensure a balanced budget, the Commissioner will reduce partnership funding by the same amount on a permanent basis.

The revised Council Tax Precept of £93,286,500 will be apportioned to each Unitary Authority according to the following table:

Unitary authorities	£	Council Tax Base Band D equivalent
Blaenau Gwent	8,558,924	21,210.13
Caerphilly	25,308,522	62,717.82
Monmouthshire	19,760,739	48,969.69
Newport	25,676,860	63,630.61
Torfaen	<u>13,981,455</u>	<u>34,647.87</u>
Total	93,286,500	231,176.12

The Council Tax Precept will generate the following amounts of Council Tax Precept:

Council tax band	£
A	269.02
B	313.86
C	358.69
D	403.53
E	493.20
F	582.88
G	672.55
H	807.06
I	941.57

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