

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Council		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	22nd January 2026 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	ClIr Robert Douglas and ClIr Kay Wesley		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	11 PCSOs in Congleton		
BACKGROUND	<p>The policing precept is the portion of the council tax that funds local policing. It is set annually by the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) as one of their statutory responsibilities. Rising costs and demands mean the PCC is facing a £7.3 million shortfall. The Chief Constable has proposed to reduce the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 60 (from 87 down to just 27).</p>		
INFORMATION	<p>ClIr Robert Douglas attended an Extraordinary Meeting of the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel on the 9th January to seek urgent clarification from the Police and Crime Commissioner on the steps he is taking to safeguard the roles and numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) across Cheshire following the decision by the Chief Constable.</p> <p>ClIr Douglas' statement is attached in Appendix 1.</p> <p>The Police and Crime Commissioner announced an alternative option, reducing proposed PCSO redundancies from 67 to 57, leaving 37 PCSOs, which was agreed with the Chief Constable. He also stated that a public consultation would be launched immediately on increasing the April 2026 Precept to retain all 87 PCSOs.</p> <p>The PCC advised that even if the option for the increased Precept to retain all PCSOs was the most popular in the public consultation, it was not guaranteed that all the PCSOs would be retained because such an increase in the Precept would require government approval.</p> <p>You can take part in the survey - https://www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/policing-precept-2026-27/</p> <p>The survey points out that there is £3m of additional funding for policing, but it is important to note that this is ring-fenced and does not cover cuts elsewhere in the service. Cheshire Constabulary was expecting a budget of £179.7 million, but found out in December it is only getting £176.7 million, so in fact it is facing an unexpected additional shortfall in funding of £3 million.</p> <p>The PCC's survey states the situation and asks a simple question: "You will have seen recently the proposal from the Chief Constable to reduce the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Cheshire. I am pleased to say I have saved 10 PCSOs from redundancy. I have also written to the Government to ask for more flexibility in my budget setting through the council tax. As part of this, I am giving you the</p>		

ability to help me save all 87 PCSOs if you are willing to pay less than a small takeaway coffee more each month in my 'Do more' option."

The options presented in the survey are:

Cut back + £0p/m	Manage + £0.97p/m	Do more + £2.14p/m
Invest in automation (to save in future years)	Invest in automation (to save in future years)	Invest in automation (to save in future years)
Review police stations	Use existing drones more (ASB and illegal E-bikes)	Save all 87 PCSOs
Review victim support services	Maintain call response times	An additional 21 neighbourhood officers
Cut prevention programmes	Review recent prevention programmes	Extra drone capability
Fewer people answering calls	Redeploy 50 officers into neighbourhoods	More prevention programmes
Cut all 87 PCSOs	Cut 50 PCSOs	Calls answered quicker
Select	Select	Select

Councillors and members of the public are encouraged to save our PSCOs by responding to the survey by 12 noon, Friday 23rd January.

We propose that Congleton Town Council should send a written response asking the PCC and Cheshire Constabulary to retain our PCSOs. We are not suggesting a particular precept level, as it is not the role of the Town Council to determine how the outcome is achieved, but our submission specifically deals with the need to retain the PCSOs.

PROPOSED RESPONSE

Here is the response we propose from Congleton Town Council:

“Congleton Town Council works closely with the local Cheshire Constabulary Beat Team through our Community Safety Working Group. This group includes other partners such as the Cheshire East Antisocial Behaviour Team, the CCTV team and the Street Pastors, and it liaises with PubWatch, ShopWatch and local businesses.

Together, we support ‘Design out Crime’ Days and ‘Street a Week’ initiatives, and we share intelligence and information about crime hotspots around the town. We look at crime statistics and trends and evaluate how the community and partners can help the Constabulary to prevent and solve crime, as well as how the police can help the community to feel and stay safe.

One constant and significant contribution to this crime prevention work in Congleton has been the PCSOs. They support the initiatives mentioned

	<p>above, and engage with all sections of the community, especially young people, to nip activities in the bud before they become crime statistics.</p> <p>PCSOs work with community groups to identify people or sections of the community that might become victims or who may help to report or prevent crime.</p> <p>The PCSOs take action on behaviours which might not yet meet the crime threshold but are very intimidating for vulnerable or elderly people, and thus prevent crimes being committed. Our PCSOs are well-known in the community and provide a visible police presence, which is a deterrent for criminals and reassuring for residents.</p> <p>They are not the same as PCs because their job is not to arrest people, therefore they are seen as less threatening and more approachable by some sections of the community. Would-be future criminals, and sometimes their parents, are willing to talk to our PCSOs and get the support they need to take a more positive path away from illegal behaviour. The PCSOs liaise with CTC, local charities and CEC youth teams to build this engagement and trust even further.</p> <p>This is not the job of a Police Constable, it is a specific community role, and whilst we recognise that it cannot be measured in terms of arrest and convictions, we believe one of the reasons that Congleton is one of the safest towns to live in is the exemplary work of our experienced PCSOs.</p> <p>Congleton Town Council therefore urges the PCC and the Constabulary to retain all 87 of the PCSOs and in particular the ones that serve Congleton.”</p>
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	None for the Town Council, except that there might be more problems for CTC to deal with in Congleton without the PCSOs.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	Antisocial behaviour of the type the PCSOs help to prevent can have an adverse impact on our public realm.
EQUALITY CONSIDERATION	The PCSOs play an important role in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. It is likely that the elderly, young people needing support, and those most likely to be victims of crime will be the adversely affected if the PCSOs are removed.
DECISION REQUEST	To approve Congleton Town Council’s response to ask the PCC to save the PCSOs serving Cheshire East.

STATEMENT FOR CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
9th JANUARY 2026

Robert Douglas, Congleton Town Councillor.

Reducing the number of Police Community Support Officers adversely impacts community visibility, public reassurance and the ability to proactively tackle local issues.

Cheshire police already make clear the importance of additional police officers being visible to our communities.

Congleton Police Facebook states:

- Firstly, in July and August 2025, they provided an extra 116 hours of foot patrol in “Hotspot Areas” in Congleton town centre to deter and prevent anti-social behaviour and violent crime, which resulted in a reduction of ASB reports and violent crime and an increase in people feeling safer.
- Secondly, in September 2025, they continued with their commitment for high visibility foot patrolling with an extra 88 hours in Congleton town centre, which received overwhelming support from the community and businesses alike resulting in a decrease in reports of anti-social behaviour and incidents of violence. This additional patrolling continued into October.
- Thirdly, in November 2025, they completed an additional 83 hours of patrol which continued into December, which also was well received by local businesses, door staff and members of the public.

The overall crime rate in Congleton in 2025 was 62 crimes per 1,000 people, which while below the national average, is about 8% higher than the rate for Cheshire as a whole.

With the recent increase in foot patrolling successfully reducing crime, it makes no sense to reverse that good work by reducing the number of PCSOs.

The Government has recently rightly, albeit belatedly, announced the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners, which will make savings to enable the provision of additional front line or neighbourhood policing. However, this will not take place until 2028.

STATEMENT FOR CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
9th JANUARY 2026 (Continued)

The idea of Cheshire police incurring significant costs of redundancy and severance pay by terminating contracts of experienced front line police officers in 2026, only then to incur additional significant costs in taking on and training new front line police officers just two years later is the “economics of the madhouse.”

I urge you to require Cheshire police to find a solution to avoid this proposed reduction in the number of PCSOs, which would result in increased crime to the detriment of our local communities.

If Cheshire police refuse to stop this proposed redundancy of our PCSOs, I urge this Panel to write to the Government calling on it to bring forward by two years to March 2026 the abolition of the PCCs, so that the resulting savings can be effectively used to reduce the number of our PCSOs being made redundant.

Councillor Robert Douglas 4th January, 2026