



Lincolnshire
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

SAFER TOGETHER

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By Email: jaclyn.gibson@lincoln.gov.uk

Dear Jaclyn

Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22

Thank you for your letter of 11th November 2020 in which you invite comment on the above. I note and have no specific comments on the proposals included within your letter.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is proposing the introduction from April 2021, within Local Council Tax Support Schemes, of a council tax discount for members of the Special Constabulary details of which are attached at Appendix A to this letter. The proposal has previously been presented to and discussed with the Leaders of all Lincolnshire councils.

Yours sincerely

Julie Flint
Chief Finance Officer

LINCOLNSHIRE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT SCHEME

Background

1. The Special Constabulary consists of members of the public who give up their spare time to assist with the policing of Lincolnshire. Special Constables (SCs) are warranted officers who have the same powers as a regular officer, wear the same uniform, and carry the same equipment. They are volunteers, so do not receive any pay for their efforts.
2. SCs perform police duties under the supervision of regular officers and experienced specials. They take on a diverse range of roles including:
 - conducting local, intelligence based patrols
 - taking part in crime prevention initiatives
 - policing major incidents
 - conducting inquiries
 - assisting at scenes of accidents
 - safeguarding the public at local and major events
 - tackling anti-social behaviour
 - spending time at local schools to educate on safety
 - providing operational support to regular officers
3. SCs are a vital part of the police service, helping to prevent crime and interacting with the diverse communities they serve. The contribution which SCs make in supporting their regular colleagues is invaluable; during the 12 months to the end of May 2020 the Special Constabulary contributed over 49,000 hours to Lincolnshire Police, with each SC volunteering an average of 29 hours per month.
4. There are currently 140 SCs in the Force, including a current cohort of 20 new SCs going through training. The Force is also looking to have another intake of SCs in the autumn.

Proposal

5. The PCC wishes formally to recognise the huge contribution which SCs make to keeping our county safe and is proposing that they be offered a discount to their Council Tax charge. This would reward their community service and act as a positive incentive to assist Police with recruitment and retention of SCs.
6. Where the scheme has been introduced elsewhere in the country e.g. the Humberside force area, anecdotal evidence suggests that it has received broad public support recognising the unique nature of the voluntary office of Special Constable.
7. A rough calculation, based upon current Special Constabulary numbers, their current residential distribution (some live out of county), Band D properties and 2020/21 levels of Council Tax provides an indicative cost for the county of £53,000 broken down as below.

	Number of Specials	County £	PCC £	District £	Total £
City of Lincoln	32	10,701	2,011	2,241	14,952
Boston	10	3,344	628	633	4,605

	Number of Specials	County £	PCC £	District £	Total £
East Lindsey	18	6,019	1,131	661	7,811
West Lindsey	10	3,344	628	544	4,517
North Kesteven	14	4,682	880	594	6,155
South Kesteven	22	7,357	1,383	825	9,564
South Holland	12	4,013	754	539	5,306
Total	118	39,459	7,415	6,036	52,910

Eligibility Criteria

8. A liable party will be able to apply for a maximum 25% discount of their council tax charge where the following criteria are met.
 - 8.1. The liable party is a member of the Lincolnshire Police Special Constabulary.
 - 8.2. The majority of their duties are to benefit the residents of Lincolnshire.
 - 8.3. They must be liable as an individual for the [Insert District Council] Council Tax Charge or they must be jointly or severally liable for the Council Tax Charge.
 - 8.4. Only one application per household can be made.
 - 8.5. Where more than one Special Constable is in occupation of a single property, a total 50% discount of the full band charge will be awarded. Where a discount based on an individual's circumstances has already reached 50%, for some other reason, no further discount will be awarded.
 - 8.6. Where a single occupier claims the discount, a further discount of 25% of the full band charge will be made (as a 25% reduction will already be awarded as a single occupier). Where a discount based on an individual's circumstances has already reached 50%, for some other reason, no further discount will be awarded.
 - 8.7. A person who is not liable to pay the Council Tax charge direct to [Insert District Council] cannot apply for a discount.
 - 8.8. That any discount awarded be calculated on a daily basis to reflect new starters and leavers within the Special Constabulary.
 - 8.9. The allowance will only be paid where the applicant is up to date with their current year Council Tax payments.
 - 8.10. A Special Constable must undertake a minimum of 16 hours duty per four weeks to be eligible for the Council Tax allowance.
 - 8.11. Payments will be reimbursed at the end of any given financial year.

A charge payer is as defined by Section 6 Local Government Finance Act 1992.