

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

Report of the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel

To Member Authorities

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters dealt with at a meeting of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel on 29 January 2018 in order to draw your attention to issues of wider interest and/or implications.

Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed Precept for the Policing Element of the Council Tax Bill and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The PCC is required to submit his proposed Precept to Panel for approval. They have the right to veto the proposal if they think that the Precept is either too high or too low, and to require the submission of a revised Precept for consideration.

In submitting the proposed Precept the Commissioner reported that for 2018/19 and 2019/20 Government has given specific authority to PCCs to raise up to £12 per annum additional Precept per household, over and above the 2% increase limit already permitted. In announcing this increase Government also indicated that Home Office funding would remain 'cash flat' for the 2 year period. For Staffordshire that grant is £116.900million each year.

Working with the Chief Constable, the OPCC had considered a number options for the allocation of the potential £12 increase. The PCCs final budget proposes to increase the Precept by £11.40 in total giving a maximum increase of 6.29% in Council Tax Band rates. This equates to almost £5million additional funding for Policing and/or community safety priorities.

Combining the funding from Government and via the Precept, the PCCs proposed budget for 2018/19 is £183.449million (compared to £178.587m for 2017/18).

The PCC submitted a detailed report on the allocation of the funding , stressing that the primary aims of his proposals were to reinstate resources for neighbourhood policing and to better enable the Force to respond to the changing and increasingly complex nature of crime such as CSE, Domestic Violence and Cyber crime. The Forensic Service was identified as an area requiring a significant increase in budget allocation.

The Panel debated and questioned the PCC at length on neighbourhood policing with the PCC acknowledging that in recent years resource had had to inevitably be redirected from that area towards dealing with more 'sophisticated' crime. He was conscious of his pledge to maximise visibility/presence of the Force and referred to the provision in the budget for an additional 44 Police Officers in 2018/19 contributing to a total of 69 additional officers by 2020. The provision of additional resource was accompanied by stringent Performance Management measures to be implemented by the Chief Constable. The PCC acknowledged the Panel's comments

on the need to evidence to the public that their support for an increase in Precept had a positive impact in terms of improving policing presence.

The Panel discussed various other elements of the PCCs Budget/Precept report including the anticipated level of Capital Receipts, partly attributed to the imminent completion of the sale of the former Police HQ site and the target reduction of £750k in overtime payments as the Chief Constable addressed perceived inefficiencies.

The Panel decided to support the PCCs budget and proposed Precept for 2018/19.

Proposed Changes in Police and Fire and Rescue Services' Governance in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Having submitted his Business case to the Home Office for their assessment /consideration, the Commissioner was unable to provide any update on it's progress as he awaited further contact.

Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire

The Commissioner submitted progress reports on the implementation of his overall SFU Communities for Staffordshire Strategy and on the recently included additional theme of 'Modern Policing'. Highlighting a few of the key elements the Commissioner referred to action to address Child Sexual Exploitation with the continued funding of a co-ordinator and a Missing Children Service, the latter being jointly commissioned with Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils. A collaborative approach including the use of standard phraseology had been adopted and now provided a model for adoption nationally.

On the 'Modern Policing' Theme the Commissioner referred to the need to develop more effective specialist capabilities and maximise the use of new technology. The Chief Constable had drawn up a 'Blue Print for Change' containing various operational initiatives such as the development of a resolution centre to deliver a more informed and streamlined response to non-emergency service requests, thus reducing the demand on front line resources to enable them to be used more effectively.

Other issues Discussed

The remainder of the agenda gave the opportunity to discuss the PCCs wish to develop a 'Connected Staffordshire' with improved co-ordination and information sharing between public sector agencies, including Local Authorities; Rural Crime following recent press coverage of incidents reported in Staffordshire with the PCC reporting the existence of a dedicated Rural Crime team and the PCCs ongoing discussions at national level on processes to better manage the transfer of Looked After Young People outside their home Authority.

For more information on this meeting or on the Police and Crime Panel in general please contact Julie Plant (01785 276135 e mail Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Helen Phillips (01785 276143 or helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Details of Panel meetings are issued to contact officers in each of the District/Borough Councils in the County and Stoke-on-Trent City Council for posting on their own web sites.

David Williams

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Chairman

Staffordshire County Council