



28th February 2018

Cllr Nicola Davies
Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Chair
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Dear Nicola

Warwickshire Policing Precept 2018/19

Thank you for your prompt response to my budget proposals. I am pleased that the Police and Crime Panel has unanimously supported my proposal for an increase of 6.25% or £12 in the local policing precept for 2018/19. I found the discussions at the Panel both helpful, constructive and insightful.

I note the recommendations that the Panel has made. These broadly cover three areas and I will address each in turn.

Fairer Funding from Central Government

I welcome the Panel's recognition of the pressures policing faces, both nationally and locally in Warwickshire. I will continue to put a strong case to Government to press for fairer funding for Warwickshire police and Warwickshire residents. As you are aware, I have already spoken to the Home Secretary, the Policing Minister and the Warwickshire M.P.s about the funding Warwickshire receives and will continue to do so at every opportunity. I hope that you will support me in this important work.

As you requested in your letter, I will continue to take a prudent approach to the use of reserves and will scrutinise closely both their use and the delivery of the Force's savings targets. In the Medium Term Financial Plan, the savings target is currently estimated at £8.512m from 2019/10 to 2021/22. The Forces will be preparing plans to deliver these additional savings. I will be discussing these with the Chief Constable between April and September. The Treasurer and I will continue to brief both the Panel and the Budget Working Group on a regular basis in this regard.

Definition of Police Officer Numbers

I welcome the opportunity to give a more detailed written explanation of the current and planned position, given the increase in the precept.

Turning to the number of police officers, the budgeted staffing establishment is as follows:

	F.T.E.s
Budgeted police officer establishment as at April 2016	887.9
Budgeted police officer establishment as at April 2017	898.8
Budgeted police officer establishment as at April 2018	893.7

It should be noted that the average cost of a police officer (or a transferee) is estimated at £54000 per annum and the average cost of a new recruit is estimated at £35000 per annum. Clearly the actual number of police officers may change based on the balance of recruitment undertaken between transferees and new recruits.

In preparing the consultation proposals I asked the Chief Constable to assess the impact of increases in the precept. He stated the minimum number of police officers that could be retained based on the average cost of a police officer (i.e. a transferee). At my request he also reviewed these figures to include new recruits. With an increase in the precept of £12, it was estimated that 33 transferees could be recruited. If new recruits are included (at a lower cost) this rises to above 50.

For your information the actual number of police officers employed by the Chief Constable for Warwickshire is 824 (January 2018). The difference between the budgeted staffing establishment (F.T.E.) and the actual number of officers arises largely because:

- Natural turnover occurs
- The money for 24 Detective Posts is currently being used to employ additional Police Staff Investigators (at a lower cost)
- A small number of police officers are deployed on national and regional operations and teams.
- Some Warwickshire Police Officers are deployed in teams that operate across the entirety of the Alliance in line with demand (as are some West Mercia officers).

I hope that I will be able to recruit the additional police officers during 2018/19 and would hope to achieve a full staffing establishment (subject to natural turnover). However, as you will appreciate this is dependent on the Force's ability to recruit both transferees and/or new recruits. The Chief Constable and his staff are progressing plans for effective recruitment. The recruitment process, including the assessment by the College of Policing and the training programme is lengthy and onerous. The process is dependent on the capacity of the College of Policing to undertake the required assessments. Given the financial settlement, we have increased our requirement for such assessments by the College as have several other forces, and are discussing the likely timescales. We are also hoping to retain existing police officers employed by the Warwickshire Force. The Chief Constable is personally leading initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of existing staff and to promote talent management and development opportunities.

I intend to review the budgeted and actual staffing establishment for police officers, police staff, P.C.S.Os, Special Constables and Volunteers, and the recruitment and training programmes at my weekly meetings with the Chief Constable. In this letter I focus on the concerns raised by the Panel in relation to Police Officer Numbers.

Public Consultation

I found the discussion at the Panel useful and informative. I look forward to working with the Panel to further develop the consultation process. Like you I am keen to reach out to all residents, whether they live in the North or the South of the County and would like to include underrepresented groups further. I am confident that with the Panel's help I will strengthen consultation and engagement over the coming year. I would like to invite a Member of the Panel to assist me with the design of next year's consultation process.

Finally I would like to thank you as the Chair and all members of the Panel for the open, transparent and constructive approach you have taken to my budget and precept proposals. We share a common desire to see an effective policing service in Warwickshire that keeps our residents safe. I look forward to working with you to achieve this in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Seccombe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'e'.

Philip Seccombe TD
Police and Crime Commissioner