

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Monday, 3 February 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor David Reilly (Chair)

Councillor Nicola Davies

Andy Davis

Councillor Ian Davison

Councillor Jenny Fradgley

Councillor Peter Gilbert

Bob Malloy

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke

Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins

Councillor Andrew Wright

Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince

Office of the Police and Crime Panel (OPCC)

Sara Ansell, Chief Finance Officer

Neil Hewison, Chief Executive

David Patterson, Development and Policy Lead (Performance and Scrutiny)

Philip Seccombe, Police and Crime Commissioner

Neil Tipton, Head of Media and Communications

Warwickshire County Council Officers

John Cole, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

Tom McColgan, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Jane Pollard, Legal Service Manager

Virginia Rennie, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Strategic Finance)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Poole sent his apologies and Councillor Simpson-Vince was present as a substitute.

Councillor Watkins sent his apologies for the meeting.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

There was none.

2. Proposed Local Police Precept 2020/21

The Police and Crime Commissioner presented the proposed budget for Warwickshire Police including the Proposed Local Police Precept increase of £9.99 (4.38%) for Band D properties (and equivalent percentage increase for all other bands) in the 2020/21 financial year (Appendix 1). In his presentation, the Commissioner welcomed the increased police funding settlement which enabled the setting of a budget which did not require council taxpayers to contribute a greater amount than that provided from central government. He stated that the improved funding would allow scope to increase the number of police officers and allow for greater investment in crucial infrastructure.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that he had paid close attention to the results of the precept public consultation which had indicated clear support for continued investment in police services. He added that respondents had also highlighted concerns regarding the effect of a large increase in council tax. On this basis, the Commissioner notified the Panel that he had determined to implement a smaller rise than that which was consulted on.

The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that the budget was subject to considerable cost pressures and that funding from reserves would be utilised to support the cost of the transformation programme precipitated by the termination of the strategic alliance with West Mercia Police. He reported that a settlement with West Mercia Police had not been reached but it was hoped that an agreement would be concluded that would be fair to both parties. He added that resolution of the settlement would help to alleviate financial pressures in coming years, however, the cost of re-establishing independent policing functions would need to be supported by existing finances.

The Police and Crime Commissioner emphasised his commitment to ensure that resources were utilised effectively to the maximum benefit of Warwickshire's residents and communities. He advised that rigorous financial control would be exerted to facilitate continued focus on policing priorities, including:

- Investment in projects that support the Police and Crime Plan, including provision of support for the victims of crime;
- Recruitment of an additional 41 police officers;
- Investment in infrastructure to support front-line policing;
- Doubling in size of the Rural Crime Team to enable six officers to be deployed in the north of the County and six officers in the south;
- Strengthening of patrol policing, including five officers to be deployed in the north of the County and five in the south;

- 12 additional uniformed firearms and roads policing officers to operate county wide;
- Deployment of 13 additional detectives to a specialist Child Abuse, Trafficking and Exploitation Team;
- Creation of a Warwickshire Firearms Licensing Team;
- Deployment of Inspectors to command Control Room functions and the implementation of higher standards of call-taking and responsiveness to high risk firearms incidents.

The Police and Crime Commissioner summarised that the proposed precept increase would constitute an increase of less than 20p per week to the average council tax bill of a Band D household and commended his budget to the Panel.

In response to Councillor Davies, the Police and Crime Commissioner advised that the income generated by the Vetting Service would not impact negatively on voluntary groups or schools as the service was orientated to support private companies and other police authorities in specialist areas, rather than to undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

In response to Councillor Davison, the Police and Crime Commissioner reported that the proposed review of the policing estate would be subject to a climate impact assessment and that it was perceived that improved energy efficiency standards offered a double advantage, benefitting operational costs as well as the environment. He added that the introduction of electric vehicles was an on-going consideration for the Police Force but that this was subject to cost constraints and wider infrastructure limitations such as the availability of charging points.

In response to Councillor O'Rourke, Neil Tipton (Head of Media and Communications, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) reported that the General Election in December 2019 had delayed declaration of the National Policing Settlement and presented a challenging timescale for the precept consultation. He advised that these factors had imposed a reduced duration and limited scope for the consultation, as it had not been possible to make a judgement on the status of the budget and implications on the precept proposal without prior knowledge of the National Settlement. He added that the survey had reached a significant number of people, but that response rates were predicated on a self-selecting basis. He accepted that the number of responses represented a small proportion of the population of the County but added that larger policing areas had received a lower proportional response to their consultations. He stated that engagement of a market research company would be likely to increase response rates, but it was felt that this option was prohibitively expensive. The Police and Crime Commissioner added that the consultation had attracted a range of comments which had been especially valuable when reaching a decision.

The Chair acknowledged the limitations imposed on the precept consultation but urged the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to reflect upon the concerns raised by the Panel and to consider alternative strategies to improve response rates and encourage wider participation for future consultations of this type. Neil Tipton responded that self-selecting surveys presented inherent limitations and that alternative approaches were already under consideration as part of the Policing Priorities Consultation.

In response to Councillor Whalley-Hoggins, Sara Ansell (Treasurer, OPCC) advised that the projected revenue increase of £2.359million from the budget of 2019/20 to that of 2020/21 was thought to be a reliable forecast based upon income targets which included operation of the Vetting Service.

In response to Andy Davis, the Police and Crime Commissioner advised that securing a fairer funding formula from the government settlement remained a priority and that there was a consensus amongst rural police forces that the current formula was biased in favour of urban forces. He added that he had highlighted the issue to successive Home Secretaries and Policing Ministers in Westminster, and that Warwickshire MPs and local authorities had indicated their support for this disparity to be addressed. He advised that a governmental comprehensive spending review was underway, and that Home Office spending would be addressed as part of this process. He advocated patience and stated that he would continue to lobby for a change in funding allocations.

Councillor Davies highlighted the constraints of the budget and risks associated with overspending. She asked the Police and Crime Commissioner how he intended to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that expenditure remained on track.

In response, the Police and Crime Commissioner reported that a monthly “Money Matters” meeting had been set up with the Chief Constable to monitor the budget and ensure that individual projects were not exceeding allowances. He added that the process of ‘holding to account’ was on-going by means of weekly and monthly meetings with the Chief Constable which included regular examinations of specific issues with the input of specialists within the Force. He reported that questions to the Chief Constable were recorded in writing and published on-line alongside written responses to ensure compliance and transparency.

The Chair highlighted that the Budget Report referred to a need to “identify increased savings targets in future years, if other funding streams or efficiencies do not emerge.” He requested clarification in respect of the areas that could be subject to future efficiencies.

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded that detailed planning work had focused on efficiencies and designed a structure for the organisation from the ground up. He added that the ‘Evolve’ change programme had benefitted this process and that the organisation would act in accordance with CIPFA codes of practice. Sara Ansell commented that the budget had been approached from a ‘zero-base’ and that a reviewing process would be scheduled to examine newly created service areas and collaborations once an embedding period had been observed to identify potential efficiencies. She added that savings targets had been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan and that these areas would be monitored across the organisation.

In response to the Chair, Sara Ansell stated that the OPCC had responded effectively to the observations of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue (HMICFRS) in respect of understanding the costs of services. She advised that the ‘Evolve’ change programme and zero-base budget strategy had enabled a firmer understanding of key issues. She added that work was on-going to unpick Alliance budgets but that the outlook suggested that the right approach had been adopted.

The Chair moved that the Police and Crime Panel support the proposed precept for 2020/21. Councillor Simpson-Vince seconded the motion.

The Chair called a vote on the motion which was accepted unanimously by those present.

Resolved:

That the Police and Crime Panel accepts the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget and precept proposal for 2020/21.

The Police and Crime Panel's response to the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget is attached as Appendix 2.

3. Policing Priorities Consultation

Neil Tipton (Head of Media and Communications, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) presented a verbal report regarding the Policing Priorities Consultation.

Neil Tipton reported that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had jointly commissioned the consultation with Warwickshire Police, and had commissioned the services of a professional market research company, SMRS, to conduct the survey and analyse the results. He advised that the consultation would aim to reach 750 residents, it would be primarily telephone-based with a supplementary on-line survey.

Neil Tipton stated that the consultation would target a representative sample of Warwickshire residents taking into consideration a proportionate geographic spread as well as factors such as age, gender and ethnicity. He commented that minority groupings would be prioritised to ensure that the results of the survey accurately represented the population demographics of the County. He added that SMRS had undertaken to vary the times of day and days of the week when residents were contacted to increase the scope of the consultation.

Neil Tipton advised that opinions would be sought from the public in respect of priorities for policing, areas or issues that should receive attention, levels of confidence in the police, reasonable response times for 101 calls, perceptions of stop and search practices, deployment of tasers and body worn video apparatus, and attitudes towards policing governance arrangements following termination of the Alliance. He reported that the questions were currently being use-tested prior to launch of the survey. It was anticipated that the consultation would be active for a period of three weeks. Neil Tipton advised that SMRS would analyse the data received at the end of this period and provide headline findings to the OPCC prior to a detailed report. He advised that it was unlikely that the results would be announced before the outcome of the Police and Crime Commissioner election was known in May 2020.

Neil Tipton advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner was supporting a separate on-line survey which would run concurrently with the Policing Priorities Consultation to focus on perceptions of crime, road safety, business crime, hate crime and antisocial behaviour.

In response to Councillor O'Rourke, Neil Tipton reported that representation of minority groups including members of the LGBT+ community and disabled people would not be overlooked by the consultation. He advised that the survey would be conducted predominantly by telephone which would not disenfranchise residents who did not have access to the internet. He added that hate crime awareness events were held across the year and that the OPCC would be seeking feedback from individuals affected by hate crime.

In response to Councillor Davison, Neil Tipton advised that it was not possible to disclose the total cost of the consultation due to commercial sensitivities, however, he reiterated that the project would be jointly funded by the OPCC and Warwickshire Police. He added that, though the project entailed a significant financial outlay, it was a justifiable investment as the information derived from the survey would help to inform the development of the Police and Crime Plan over a five-year period. He advised that, as the Precept Consultation was held annually and did not contain the same breadth of information, it would not be appropriate to commit to the same level of investment. The Police and Crime Commissioner added that the budget for the Office included provision for public consultations.

In response to Andy Davis, Neil Tipton acknowledged that response rates in the Boroughs of Rugby and Nuneaton & Bedworth had been consistently below average. In the case of Rugby Borough, he advised that considerable effort had been made to encourage greater participation in public consultations including targeted advertising, additional media coverage and support from Rugby Borough Council. He reported that these efforts had not prompted a noticeable improvement in participation rates, but that work was on-going to consider strategies to stimulate wider engagement. The Police and Crime Commissioner added that Rugby residents were not hesitant in approaching him in person which suggested that there was an appetite for engagement within the Borough.

In response to the Chair, Neil Tipton reported that the timescales for the Policing Priorities Consultation and the Perceptions of Safety Consultation were aligned, which presented benefits. The Chair observed that the HMICFRS PEEL Report had identified a requirement to consult on future policing governance arrangements; Neil Tipton confirmed that this had been included within the Policing Priorities Consultation.

4. Work Programme

The Panel was notified that the next meeting would take place on 16 March 2020, and that items marked on the Work Programme for consideration on 2 April 2020 would be brought forward.

Bob Malloy called attention to the item 'Outcomes of Criminal Investigations' which had been assigned for future consideration by the Panel. Neil Hewison (Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) advised that the OPCC's response to the Panel's Planning and Performance Working Group was being prepared; it was felt that the proposed meeting to discuss the issue (which had been scheduled to follow this meeting) should be rescheduled to another date prior to the next meeting of the Panel. Neil Hewison stated that the OPCC was amenable to timetabling of the item on the Work Programme but underlined that this was a long-term issue that would benefit from an initial consideration by the Panel, followed by a second update in around six months' time. The Chair indicated that the meeting with the OPCC would be rescheduled.

5. Dates of Meetings 2020/21

The Chair invited the Panel to take note of the future meeting dates:

- Monday 16 March 2020
- Thursday 18 June 2020

- Thursday 24 September 2020
- Thursday 19 November 2020
- Monday 1 February 2021
- Thursday 1 April 2021

6. Any Urgent Items

The Chair expressed the appreciation of the Panel for the support provided by Tom McColgan (Senior Democratic Services Officer) who was leaving the organisation and wished him well for the future.

7. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved: 'That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

8. Exempt Minutes

Resolved: That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

9. Complaints

There were none.

10. Update on the Strategic Alliance

The Panel received an update on matters relating to the Strategic Alliance.

The meeting rose at 12.30pm

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Chair

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Philip Seccombe
Police and Crime
Commissioner
for Warwickshire

WARWICKSHIRE POLICE BUDGET 2020/21 and MTFP

Police and Crime Panel Meeting
3rd February 2020

Budget 2020/21

- 2020/21 Home Office police finance settlement released 22nd January 2020.
- Headline grant increase of £4.484m for Warwickshire.
- Assumes that the precept will increase by the maximum permitted - £10 on a band D property
- Accompanied with conditions around outcomes, efficiency and reform:
 - Recruitment of the first phase of uplift officers
 - Efficiency savings through collaborative procurement and shared services
 - Drive productivity through digital and technological solutions eg mobile working
 - Achieve best value from investment in technology

2020/21 Draft Revenue Budget – cost pressures and efficiency savings

- Net 2020/21 budget of £111.590m
- Use of £3.855m of reserves
- Increased core grant as notified in the settlement of £3.651m
- Uplift grant for the first phase of officers of £1.153m
- Precept increase proposed by the Commissioner and included in the budget of £9.99 or 4.38% on a band D property

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The budget includes:

- Costs of the additional 41 officers as part of the uplift programme
- All known costs and unavoidable spend pressures eg pay inflation
- Efficiency savings of £1.401m
- Increased vetting income of £0.500m

What will the draft budget and precept increase deliver in 2020/21?

- The draft budget will deliver:
- 41 Additional Police Officers:
 - 13 additional detectives deployed to a specialist Child Abuse, Trafficking and Exploitation team (CATE) to operate county wide
 - 12 additional uniformed firearms and roads policing officers to operate county wide
 - 10 additional officers in the force patrol teams to provide improved response to calls for service – 5 in the north and 5 in the south
 - 6 additional officers in the rural crime team to create a separate north and south team

Rebuilt services in Warwickshire:

- Building a firearms licensing capability based at Leek Wootton that is responsive to the local community
- Warwickshire Inspectors taking command within the Control room to provide local deployment to incidents, local management of high risk firearms incidents and higher standards of call taking
- Increased investment in support functions e.g. HR, finance, procurement, corporate communications to ensure we can recruit, support and sustain the increased numbers of police officers

Reserves and Capital Expenditure

- Estimated reserves as at 1/4/20 of £13.4m
 - Includes £5.0m general reserve
 - Includes £1.5m ring fenced reserve road safety
- Change in reserves strategy following the termination notice
 - majority of reserves used to finance one-off & short-term revenue costs
 - £2m retained in infrastructure reserve to finance capital in 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Reserves anticipated to reduce to £7.14m by the end of 2022/23
 - Increased financial risk
 - Requires delivery of MTFP projects on time and on budget
- Increased capital programme 2020/21 - £17.4m investment
- Financed by increased borrowing, reserves, capital receipts and capital grant

Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23

- Assumes no increase in central funding other than for additional uplift officers in 2021/22 and 2022/23
- Modest assumptions on council tax
- Based on new collaborative partnerships
- Pay inflation at 2.5% per annum
- Reducing reliance on reserves to support the budget
- Total savings target of £3.2m in 2021/22 and 2022/23, likely to be delivered through more efficient working

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Warwickshire's commitment to deliver best value and efficiencies

- Seeking new collaborations to deliver value for money
- Transactional services – improved services should enable front line officers to be more efficient and less distracted by inefficient back office functions
- Forensics – new collaborations which will bring forensic capabilities – to lead to improved investigative capability & improved service
- ICT investment – new collaborative working will enable all staff and officers to work more efficiently on robust systems and infrastructure which will help to create opportunities for future efficiency savings

The future.....

- Stand alone force - majority of services now outside the alliance
- Affordable 2020/21 budget, capital programme and MTFP
 - But with increased borrowing and reduced reserves
 - Careful monitoring of progress and spend over the next 12 months to manage risk
- 6 month Home Office direction to enable smooth transition and facilitate the discussions on finances between the forces to agree a settlement.
- Ongoing collaboration with West Mercia - 4 service areas post April 2020
- New collaborations for improved service delivery



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Mr Philip Seccombe
Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
3 Northgate Street,
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7 February 2020

Dear Mr Seccombe,

Warwickshire Policing Precept 2020/21

Thank you for presenting your budget proposals to the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel on 3 February 2020, and for addressing the broad ranging questions posed by Panel members.

I write to confirm that all Members of the Panel present at the meeting voted to support your proposal of an increase of £9.99 (4.38%) in the local policing precept for Band D properties (and equivalent percentage increase for all other bands) in the 2020/21 financial year. In their deliberations the Panel identified several areas of significance that they will seek to scrutinise further over the coming year:

2020/21 Uncertainties

The Panel recognised that the development of a predominantly independent police force following termination of the Strategic Alliance represented a significant achievement. However, it was highlighted that, given the diminished level of reserves and uncertain resolution of the financial settlement with West Mercia, increased vigilance will be required to safeguard against overspending. In these conditions, the Panel noted that limited scope was available to respond effectively to unforeseen circumstances such as a shortfall in anticipated income derived from the Vetting Service.

The Panel observed that the National Policing Settlement had been determined for a period of one year only and recognised that the longer-term outlook of the budget will be subject to future governmental funding allocations. The Panel will continue to monitor the financial position in detail through the Budget Working Group.

Precept Consultation

The Panel acknowledged that the delayed declaration of the National Policing Settlement presented a challenging timescale for the precept public consultation, however, it was felt that wider engagement with Warwickshire residents would contribute to improved representation. The Panel would therefore urge you to consider strategies to broaden the scope of future precept consultations to encourage improved participation.

Climate Change

The Panel emphasised the importance of ensuring that the proposed review of the policing estate includes consideration of priorities determined by the climate emergency and highlighted the potential additional costs of retrofitting. The Panel would welcome information in respect of the energy efficiency standards of refurbished buildings.

Fairer Funding

The Panel emphasised that the issue of fairer funding remained a concern for Warwickshire residents and expressed support for your efforts to secure a more equitable Policing Settlement formula and redress the bias towards urban forces.

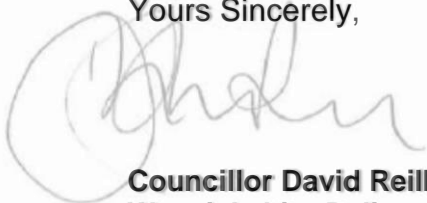
The Panel acknowledged that progress in advancing the issue had been impeded by parliamentary time being occupied by other matters. The Panel would welcome an update in due course.

Conclusion

The Panel will continue to work as your 'critical friend' supporting and challenging as you navigate the delivery of new policing arrangements for Warwickshire in 2020/21.

The Panel would like to record its thanks for the quality of information they have received and commend the open and transparent approach that your office and Warwickshire Police have taken in setting the budget.

Yours Sincerely,



Councillor David Reilly
Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Chair