



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

THREE RIVERS
DISTRICT COUNCIL



WELWYN
HATFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

BOROUGH OF
BROXBOURNE
www.broxbourne.gov.uk

MEETING OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Thursday 1 February 2018

Stevenage Borough Council

MINUTES

1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies - Cllr Israel Imarni, Mr Ian Laidlaw-Dickson

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 15 JUNE 2017

Agreed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

None

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

A question was posed by Cllr Pervez Choudhury on behalf of one of his constituents.

A link to the question and written answer provided by Michelle Dunn the Deputy Chief Constable can be found [here](#)

5 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or petitions were received.

6 PCC UPDATE REPORT

Report presented; Public and Panel invited by Chairman to pose questions. A short summary (non-verbatim) of the questions and answers are provided below:-

Q: Cllr Woodward, it is welcome that the HMICFRS ratings were 'good'. How will your increased budget and staffing impact on future ratings?

A: Nature of crime is complex. Even though crime is coming down CBI inspections show more crime is now reported, difficult to measure impact.

- Q:** Cllr Ruffles, in your update report you talk about the volume of case work involving counselling, tied in with the work of PCSOs. Due to funding challenges to Local Authorities, some are no longer funding PCSOs.
- A:** Stevenage still pays for 3 PCSOs. I think they are a brilliant part of what we do. They are more on the counselling end rather enforcement side. They do more work for victims and to avoid people getting into the criminal justice system.
- Q:** Cllr Hutchings, raised concern that PCSOs are being dragged into Police administration.
- A:** That is why I am putting the funding into the intervention teams, to reduce the need for PCSOs to cover shortages in the neighbourhood teams and the neighbourhood teams covering shortages in the intervention teams.
- Q:** Cllr Hollywell, how will you enhance outreach teams to support victims that don't report crimes?
- A:** The Panel are invited to see our Beacon Centre; we are investing in our Investigation Management Unit (IMU). This enables victims to get a swifter service; victims do not have to report a crime to get support.
- Q:** Cllr Woodward, do PSCOs have standard powers? And do you consider you get value for money with them?
- A:** Yes to both questions, the Chief Constable determines which powers are used. It is an advantage that they do not have the power of arrest, so the public interact with them differently.

7 RESPONSES FROM THE PCC TO HMICRS

The responses were noted by the panel.

8 THE PROPOSED POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS PRECEPT

The PCC summarised his report.

The government have given us flexibility to raise the precept. PCC therefore proposes to raise band D Council Tax by £12 (7.9%) to a figure of £164.00, this will generate income of £5.298 million per annum.

Budget is heavily reliant on reserves but this is not sustainable.

The pressure on policing is increasing; demand is up, particularly in the control room. We took 1000 calls on New Year's Eve. Since the Manchester bombings we have seen a significant rise in 999 calls. More crime is being reported, violent crime is up.

This precept will mean 35 additional officers will be employed in Hertfordshire.

We are unique in Hertfordshire in that we have not had to cut front line staff, due to our healthy reserves.

However, the governments approach to reserves has changed. We are now required to spend more of our reserves. Reserves will be used for fixed costs.

The Governments approach to income generation has not changed; we are still not allowed to make profits through income. We do not have the general power of competence in line with Local Authorities.

(a) Public questions

A short summary (non-verbatim) of the questions and answers are provided below:-

Q: Referring to paragraph 6.5 of the report, it was asked, where will we be in 4 years' time, when the reserves will be depleted; at that stage, what are you hoping will happen to avoid a cliff edge?

A: The important thing is how we use the reserves; we are reducing them to the 3 - 6% recommended by CIPFA. We are maximising the money we get from the precept to reduce the reliance on reserves.

Q: Referring to page 26, table 12 I am concerned we will get to 2021/22 and have a £5 million gap?

A: Table 12 assumes no change to government grant. The PCC will review the approach to precept and reserves annually. There is some scope in the force to increase the level of planned savings.

Q: Are the new officers to be recruited full time?

A: Yes.

Q: Cllr Hutchings - The Public might be disappointed to only see a 35 officer increase?

A: The use of reserves has stopped us having to cut officers in the past; therefore the increase in officers is not going seem as significant. Putting funding into the control room is just as important as that ensures the most effective deployment and use of frontline officers.

Q: Referring to paragraph 9.1, the PCC was asked what exactly does this mean?

A: The budget hasn't increased, it has stayed the same. A review of the office has taken place. The scope of the teams work has broadened.

(b) Panel questions

A short summary (non-verbatim) of the questions and answers are provided below:-

- Q:** Cllr Hodgson - does the fact you are working with a £12 increase instead of £52, impact on your plan.
- A:** The government encouraged us to move to this level. Hertfordshire is well funded because we have money in reserves due to the good decisions taken in previous years. My greater concern is partner organisations not having sufficient funding, e.g. NHS and local authorities. Lack of funding in those areas has an impact on Policing.
- Q:** Cllr Hunter – My question is about reserves, your projected reserves are broken down into different categories, are you able to vire from one to the other if necessary.
- A:** Mike Collier – Yes
- There are capital and revenue reserves. Revenue reserves we can use, capital reserves we can't.
- Q:** Chris Cowdrey – referred to table 12, the level of savings this year are much lower than last year, why the lack of ambition?
- A:** This doesn't mean the savings won't come in.
- (James Hurley) – The medium term savings were on ITC, HR and public contact. Our review of these areas suggested it would be prudent to retain resourcing. Last years' savings were achieved.
- Q:** Cllr Scarth – referred to the 10 JPS posts that would be removed.
- A:** The 10 JPS posts are included in the establishment figure; however, they have always been vacant. It is not about taking officers away, it is about reducing the establishment figure. We have retained performance levels in JPS at these reduced figures.
- Q:** Cllr Scarth' – asked about the effectiveness of 999 calls.
- A:** 999 calls work very swiftly. The public's perception on the response time to non urgent calls such as a 'burglary not in progress' may be low. This is why I am investing more money in the control room and the force.
- Q:** Cllr Scarth' – could data be made available to the Panel to see where the shortages and hotspots are, to enable us to focus on the specifics rather than generalisations?
- A:** (James Hurley) – that can be made available to you.
- PCC - One of the problems I think we have in policing is how you measure whether you have an effective service. Figures are not necessarily the best measure.
- Q:** Cllr Scarth' – Safer neighbourhood teams, what number would be needed for the public to feel safe?

A: Public realm crime doesn't happen as much as before, less likely to be attacked on the street than you were 20 – 30 years ago. Children are less safe in their own homes now due to exploitation over the internet.

Cllr Woodward commented there are a lot of acting sergeants; officers acting up into senior roles, what we want are effective Officers.

Q: Dr Ramsay – It is difficult to know where we are on crime, we have an aspiration to keep crime low, we need better measurement of performance, it needs to be better documented. The PCC post has existed for 6 years, therefore it should have been possible to compare the first 3 years to the last? To show value for money.

A: The level of crime is lower; however, no victim of crime will say 'that's ok' because crime is low. There is a danger that the public don't understand crime figures, we will never entirely know what the level of crime is, some crime is not reported. Last year in Hertfordshire we had 5 murders and 9/10 burglaries a day. Most people would probably say that was low.

Q: Dr Ramsay – The public are given a distorted picture of crime, there is a need for a review of the ONS.

A: I will take that point away.

Q: Cllr Hodgson – referred to the commissioning budget and the £500,000 fund for efficiency and innovation and asked what that was about?

A: I want the Police to have the ability to put in place innovative ideas, not sure how well it will go, it is a one off.

Q: Chris Cowdrey – referred to capital budget and said it was difficult to pull out if there are savings? **

** This became a written question to the Commissioner, sent with the PCP's report.

Q: Cllr Rabi Martins – referred to the Community initiative fund, and asked what the PCC wanted to achieve with this?

A: Herts community fund is money for Parishes and Councils to use to fund good ideas for crime reduction.

Q: Cllr Rabi Martins – how do you measure there success?

A: I ask for a report afterwards – some ideas have been more successful than others. My website gives a list of all the people who have applied for this funding and what they have used the money for.

Cllr Hutchings addressed the Panel and said he proposed that they accept the Precept which was seconded. Members unanimously voted in favour of accepting the precept.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7:00PM THURSDAY 12 APRIL 2018 AT ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL