

## **PCC BUDGET 21/22**

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE PCP**

#### **The structure of the report and general requests from the PCP**

- The structure of the report is very difficult to follow and does not provide the Panel with the confidence it requires to comment on the whole picture.
- Can the Panel be provided with a one-page summary of the full budget (and Medium Term Financial Plan), showing both income and expenditure?
- The report has been constructed in a manner that key information is repeated and then sometimes enhanced section by section, this makes the report very difficult to follow (for example on police numbers).
- The Panel would like budget updates at every panel meeting throughout the year so that it can check on progress around the PCC's "ambitious" statements and 4 key themes, with some kind of performance indicators.
- On the capital side the huge amount devoted to developing the HQ site needs to be a separate report at a future meeting.

#### **Questions**

##### **1. Summary**

- The budget report uses phrases such as "ambitious" and "transformative" on many occasions. How confident is the Commissioner and his key officers that the budget and related service plans are deliverable on time and within budget?
- The budget provides for an increase in the number of Police Officers, but the report does not make it clear on the overall staffing levels. Please can a simple table be provided showing the movement in staffing numbers (including anticipated new starters and leavers) over the MTFP period?
  - For example, Section 1 says that 252 new police officers will be employed during 2021/22, but Section 2 says that "frontline police officers" will increase from 2,100 to 2,267 (an increase of 167)?
  - In section 3, please explain Table 3, what is a PUP split ratio?
  - In section 3 (Uplift Funding), there appears to be a target for 2,190 FTE – how does this reconcile with figures given elsewhere?
  - In section 7, this recruitment programme is considered "ambitious". Please can the Panel be provided details on how this programme will be monitored? What is the impact of not meeting this ambitious target?
- What assumptions have been made about the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on budgets?

##### **2. Organisational and Operational Context**

- Can the Commissioner provide the Panel with further details on the Prevention First approach and how this affects the work of policing in Hertfordshire?

##### **3. 2021/22 Police Finance Settlement**

- How is the Hertfordshire force planning its approach to delivering efficiency savings? Can the Panel see the "high-quality data" that has been requested by the Home Office?

- Please explain the significance of the “reallocations” section and how it impacts locally?
- Has the Commissioner now received notice of Ministry of Justice grants for 2021/22? If so, does the allocation have an impact on the budget? If not, what assumptions have been made about such funding?

#### **4. Precept Proposal**

- Please can the Commissioner provide further analysis on the budget consultation undertaken? In particular, the various media used to encourage residents and service users to respond to the survey?
- What is the impact of the MTFP period of the changes in Council tax base?
- What is the impact on the budget of the 25% of Council Tax losses that are not to be met by Government?

#### **5. Standstill Cost Pressures**

- What is the impact of the September 2020 pay award not being fully funded?
- Are there any implications on the pay-freeze announced for 2021, for example on moral, recruitment and retention?
- Capital financing – what is the financial impact of increased borrowing on the revenue budget? What is the policy on Minimum Revenue Provision?

#### **6. Efficiency Savings**

- Please provide further information on the 7 Force Procurement function. What savings has this initiative already delivered and what assumptions have been made on savings over the MTFP period (the report mentions only first-phase savings). What has been the upfront cost in setting up this approach?
- Similarly, please provide further information on the Beds, Cambs, Herts Collaboration? What were the transition costs and how much saving has been assumed over the MTFP period?

#### **7 Investment and Growth**

- The section on Student Officers implies changes in training procedures as a result of the Prevention First agenda. Please can the Panel have further information on how the Commissioner is planning to make such adjustments to the training programme?
- How many fully qualified officers will be ‘front-line’ in their substantive Police Officer roles; how many more senior roles eg Sgt et al will be covered by not fully qualified ‘acting up’ POs?
- How many ‘beat’ officers will be students and for how long; what is the supervision ratio ie additional work for otherwise frontline community based Police Officers?
- The Panel would like to know is what is the justification for the additional officers, is the number the Commissioner suggesting based on what he can spend and therefore the numbers emerge? I would like an explanation starting from what is the establishment is and how is that grown over the period. I would also like to know whether there is a pivot between more officers/less staff and vice versa.

- In terms of neighbourhood policing how many extra officers are going to be deployed to neighbourhood policing? (the response could be that's down to the Chief Constable) but the PCC has created a budget.
- Investigative Support – The Panel notes that the Phone Download Kiosk plan will provide 7FTEs at approximately £25k per FTE. This seems somewhat low and is not in line with other such calculations elsewhere in this section. Also, how can 7FTEs cover 12 kiosks? Please can the Panel have further information on this proposal.
- Serious Fraud & Cyber units - Did the grant cover the full cost of this initiative or is the proposed £0.231m just the grant that will be lost?
- Organisational Learning
  - What is a Thinking and Analysis Strategic Hub? Has a business case been carried out on this investment?
  - Will 1 Police Officer be sufficient for the Well-being & Blue Light Programme? Has a business case been undertaken?
  - Probationer Development Programme? Can the Panel have further information on the implementation of the Police Education Qualifications Framework?
  - Positive Action Team – this Team appears to be focussed on recruitment. How will it have an impact on retention as well?
- Victim care – What is a Beacon Safeguarding Hub? Has there been a business case for this new initiative?
- OPCC – Can the Panel have more detail on the “range of services” to be commissioned with the additional £400,000?

## **8. OPCC**

- The Panel notes that this budget will increase by 8% next year. Does this include the investment above as this section seems to say that only the £100,000 on complaints is included?
- Are there any comparator statistics on the performance of the OPCC as well as the maximum overall cost?

## **11. Reserves**

- The Panel notes that the level of General Reserve has increased again for next year. Please can the Chief Financial Officer provide further details on how this assessment has been made? What assumptions have been made on the budget implications of COVID as we move into 2021?
- The organisation-wide priority-based budgeting exercise appears to be costing £300,000 next year. What is this cost comprised of? How much is the project expected to generate in the way of ongoing budget savings? How much did the previous zero-based budgeting exercise generate in savings?

## **12. Capital**

- The Panel notes the large increase in the ongoing capital programme. What is the overall revenue implication of this programme going forward (both cost and saving)?

### 13. MTFP

- Please can the Panel be provided with a detailed MTFP rather than just a set of assumptions?
- Table 17 suggests a balanced budget going forward, but only on the assumptions that further savings are to be made. How sustainable is the assumption?
- However, the paragraph below suggests that there may be a potential budget gap. How does this relate to Table 17?

### Appendices

- Please can the Table in appendix A be explained further? What impact does it have on the budgets being discussed?
- Why is the Table in Appendix D only for 2020/21? What are the equivalent figures for 2021/22 and over the MTOFP period?

### Covid

What effect COVID has had on setting the budget and what are the implications for next year as well, and what contingencies have been made to mitigate any financial risks – are the reserves enough for example?

### General comments/questions

- The timetable starts with the funding available (obviously the key final restrictor) but the Panel are surprised not to see that before that stage the CC and PCC haven't identified efficiency savings or what they might desire in terms of funding which could then be trimmed in on a priority basis in the light of the provisional settlement. We don't think local authority financial planning is on hold until a figure is known
- As HCC have budgeted for their capital costs of Longfield (JESA) would it not be prudent for the PCC to set aside a sum rather than defer all to future years?
- Prevention First is much lauded. How does this work and how does the precept relate to this? "Once in a generation for policing to revitalise and re-energise the work force" Is Herts police tired and failing in its duty to tackle crime and keep the community safe? Page 2-3
- The new Police Education & Qualifications Framework [PEQF]. Does this mean all Officers, PCSOs & staff need training to get this qualification? What happens if they fail?
- Tackling cybercrime £1.490m. 5 FTE staff. Is this team part of the 2267 officers [end of 2022]?
- How is the force going to adapt its training programme for student officers under Covid-19 regulations?
- Investigation Support page 16 b ...7 bullets points here 22FTE appointed . Can this be clarified? Does this number come out of the total of 2267?
- Same applies for Organised Learning...6 bullet points. 9.5FTE plus one BAME officer.
- Capital Financing Requirements [Borrowing] page 23. Where does £97.486m [2021-2025] come from and how is it paid back?
- What advantage has been taken of Kickstart?
- Why has there been a switch from zero-base budgeting to priorities budgeting this year?