



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



HERTFORDSHIRE Police and Crime Panel

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16 February 2017

Mr David Lloyd
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire
Harpenden Police Station
15 Vaughan Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 4GZ

Dear David

REPORT OF POLICE AND CRIME PANEL ON YOUR PROPOSED PRECEPT

Further to my letter of 3 February, formally notifying you that the Panel supports your proposed precept of £152.00 for Band D properties, this is to advise you that the minutes of the Panel meeting of 2 February have now been published and that they include the comments made in the discussion of your proposal. For completeness I repeat them here.

Questions from the public:

Mr Bowden asked the Commissioner whether he could confirm that he was projecting an increase in the precept for each of the next five years.

The Commissioner confirmed that he is only proposing a £5 increase for the coming year. There is no implication of an increase thereafter. The position will be reviewed in a year's time.

Cllr Chapman asked if the proposed budget was just to maintain the status quo or to increase the police presence.

The Commissioner replied that the money raised will not just ensure that local police stays at the same level. It will also ensure that areas of greater vulnerability, such as domestic abuse, get the funding that they require.

Questions from the Panel:

The Chairman noted that this was a significant turnaround from a previous reduction in the precept to a £5 increase now and asked the Commissioner to comment.

The Commissioner said that he made it clear last year that he would charge the right amount. At that time he was of the belief that the collaboration savings would materialise and had not anticipated that the settlement from central government would reduce by £1.5million. He commented that when the facts change, he changes his opinion. If he is able not to increase next year, he will not.

The Chairman asked how likely it was that the savings would be achieved this year.

The Commissioner replied that a consequence of collaboration is that he is not solely responsible for the achievement of savings.

Cllr Hodgson asked if there was a medium term strategy for council tax.

The Commissioner replied that the medium term strategy was not in the budget report but was addressed in the Police and Crime Plan (page 50).

Cllr Hodgson queried the increase in the office budget from £1 million to £1.6 million.

The Commissioner replied that he had kept the budget at £1 million for the first four years, but the role of the PCC had changed significantly. He said that it is a very efficient office with very few people in it.

Mr Laidlaw-Dickson commented that there is a tension between the local policing model and other requirements, and that the local policing team might be seen as a 'rainy day' fund. He asked the Commissioner how he balances the tensions between major crime and the reassurance agenda.

The Commissioner replied that both he and the Chief Constable believed in neighbourhood policing. The strategic policing requirement does create a tension and the most serious crime needs specialist funding, but local policing is not regarded as a 'rainy day' fund.

The Chairman asked if the establishment was at the right level.

The Commissioner replied that the Chief Constable believes that it is. They are currently undertaking an exercise on demand management. It is for the Chief Constable to determine the establishment number required to deliver the Plan.

Mr Cowdrey asked how the Commissioner would ensure that the budgeted numbers did not change.

The Commissioner replied that this is difficult as 50% of activities are carried out in collaboration with other organisations, and it can be that overall numbers of staff come down but the outcomes are achieved. So it is far more subtle than just the hard numbers.

Cllr Choudhury noted that last year the Commissioner had been able to maintain the number of PCSOs and asked if he was able to absorb the reduction in local authority funding.

The Commissioner said that PCSOs are key to local policing. It is not unreasonable that organisations that withdraw funding will no longer be able to demand a PCSO presence at a particular location. Their deployment will be considered as part of the demand management exercise referred to earlier and determined on an operational basis.

The Panel agreed to support the Commissioner's proposed precept of £152.00 for Band D properties.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Tim Hutchings
Chairman of the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel