

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

7 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT:

Gateshead Council	Councillors J McElroy (Chair) and J McClurey
Newcastle City Council	Councillors N Kemp and J Robinson
Northumberland County Council	Councillors I Hutchinson and L Simpson
South Tyneside Council	Councillors G Kilgour and J Welsh
Sunderland City Council	Councillor H Trueman
Independent Co-opted Members	J Guy and S Isaacson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Dame V Baird QC	- Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria
E Snaith	- Chief Executive
M Tait	- Chief Finance Officer

Gateshead Council

M Harrison	- Legal, Democratic and Property Services
B Wilson	- Democratic Services

APOLOGIES: Councillors C Burdis and T Mulvenna (North Tyneside Council) and P Watson (Sunderland City Council)

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 January 2017 be approved as a correct record.

41. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 31 – It was commented that drug related issues were not included in the six priority areas identified in the force annual strategic assessment. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) replied that whilst it had not been highlighted as a priority, the police were aware of and were tackling the drug related issues.

42. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2020/21

The medium term financial strategy 2017/18 to 2020/21 was submitted. It described the financial direction of the PCC and outlined financial pressures. It also provides options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term including how the PCC can provide the Chief Constable with the resources to deliver the Police and Crime Plan priorities within a challenging financial climate. A presentation on the medium term financial strategy and precept proposal 2017/18 was given by the Chief Finance Officer.

The overall financial strategy seeks to deliver the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, support 'Proud to Protect', the mission, vision and values of Northumbria Police and meet the requirements of the Strategic Policing Requirement.

The Panel raised the following issues:-

It was commented that in the presentation the weekly increase for a £5 per annum increase for a band A property has been referred to as less than 7p and £0.06. There should be some consistency. This was acknowledged by the Chief Finance Officer.

It was asked how the PCC's level of reserves compared with other PCCs. It was replied that the PCC was in the bottom quartile for reserves held and other PCCs had greater general and earmarked reserves than here.

It was suggested that the Government, in its 2017/18 funding allocation, had already presumed that the PCC would be increasing the precept by £5 per annum. If the PCC did not, then the area would fall further behind and be penalised. The public need to be told this.

The insurance reserve has not been increased for four years and it was asked if this was still prudent because of increased costs, etc. It was replied that the reserve was for one off occurrences that they were unable to deal with and there had been no need to change the current level.

It was asked if the risk of further reductions in funding including an unfavourable review of funding formula should not be recorded as high. It was replied that as the Government had not made a decision on its review of the funding formula, the impact was unknown. However, it is likely that there will be further reductions in funding.

RESOLVED - That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2020/21 be noted.

43. PROPOSED PRECEPT FOR 2017/18

In accordance with the Police and Crime Panels (Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012, the Police and Crime Commissioner notified the Panel of the proposed 2017/18 council tax precept.

The proposed 2017/18 revenue budget and capital programme, a review of the 2016/17 budget position and future funding, fully aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2020/21 were submitted.

The precept excessiveness rules for 2017/18 are unchanged from the previous year. The majority of PCCs will be limited to a maximum 1.99% increase to their precept for 2017/18. The ten PCCs with the lowest precept, of which Northumbria remains the lowest, have the flexibility to increase their precept by up to £5.

The PCC's preferred option as there are no council Tax freeze grants available for 2017/18 is therefore to increase the precept by £5 per annum for a band D property, which equates to about 10p per week. This will allow for an additional and recurring £2.570m.

The PCC circulated details of the police precept consultation that had been undertaken and the comments received. Over 80% of the responses received were fully supportive of the increase in the precept of £5.00 per annum.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That a report be issued by the Panel to the PCC that with reluctance it accepts the PCC's proposed increase in the precept by £5 for a band D property.
 - (ii) That a joint press release from the PCC and the Panel giving an explanation to the public of the context and reasons for the rise in the precept be issued.

44. THEMED TOPICS

It was agreed that:-

- (i) the PCC prepare a report on the findings of the Court Observers' Panel as the themed topic for the next meeting.
- (ii) the themed topic for the Panel's meeting on 25 April 2017 be prepared on ways in which the PCC and the Community Safety Partnerships can work closer together and the Clerk invite the Partnerships to put forward their suggestions and discussion points.

45. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 28 February 2017 at 2.00pm