



Agenda Item No: 6

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

4th February 2020

Update regarding PFCC Proposed Police Precept, Revenue Budget 2019/20, Capital Programme & Medium Term Financial Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report provides the Panel with a brief update in relation to the delay the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) has experienced in preparing the various financial reports for Policing in 2020-21.

2. Background to the 2020-21 Report

- 2.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is the recipient of all funding, including the government grant and precept and other sources of income, related to policing and crime reduction and all funding for a force must come via the PFCC. How this money is allocated is a matter for the PFCC in consultation with the Chief Constable, or in accordance with any grant terms.
- 2.2 The PFCC is also responsible for deciding the budget, allocating assets and funds to the Chief Constable and setting the precept for the force area.
- 2.3 The PFCC has to inform the Panel of their proposed precept which is then scrutinised by Panel members who have the power of veto if two thirds of the total Panel membership do not support the proposal.

3. The 2020-21 Police Funding Settlement

- 3.1 At the time of writing the spending review (SR2019) identified an extra £750 million in policing, however, the Police Provisional Finance Settlement which provides details of the allocations to forces was still to be published. Indications from the Home Office suggested that the £750m increase on the total Home Office budget was to cover all costs associated with the additional officers and any cost pressures. Such cost pressures would, for example, include the impact of national ICT developments and the additional 0.5% pay award assumed each year from September 2019.
- 3.2 No information on precept referendum levels for policing was provided in the Referendum principles nor as part of the review. Therefore, the PFCC was in a position where it was necessary to undertake a precept consultation exercise across a range of scenarios in Northamptonshire to help inform his intentions alongside the provisional settlement information.

- 3.3 The PFCC's office commissioned Social and Market Strategic Research, an independent research organisation to undertake a consultation to seek the views of residents who pay council tax in Northamptonshire about the precept level for Policing and the Fire & Rescue Service for 2020/21
- 3.4 An interviewer led telephone questionnaire was designed by SMSR and OPFCC staff. Interviews were conducted with 1100 residents of Northamptonshire between 23rd December 2019 - 22nd January 2020, using random quota sampling to ensure the sample was representative. A full report will be available in due course on the PFCC's website and headline information will be included within the Precept report.
- 3.5 No indications have been received in respect of the levels of top slicing for national policing requirements in 2020-21. These top sliced elements are significant and it is anticipated that these details will be available at the time of the provisional settlement.

4. Presenting the Proposed Precept

- 4.1 The 2020-21 Police Precept proposal will be the fourth put forward by the PFCC for consideration by the Panel. However given the very late announcement of this year's policing funding settlement, it has not been possible to fully prepare and compile all the reports and information that are needed for members to properly scrutinise and consider this year's proposed precept within the set timescales of the Panel.
- 4.2 Given the time constraints and the need to produce accurate and comprehensive financial reports and appendices, the decision was taken to circulate the Proposed Police Precept, Revenue Budget 2019/20, Capital Programme & Medium Term Financial Plans after the agenda publication deadline for the meeting of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel being held on the 4th February 2020.
- 5.3 This decision has been forced upon the PFCC by the very late announcement of the Police Funding Settlement. It is clear that this is not an ideal way to present complex financial information for the Panel to consider, but on balance, it was felt that it was more important to ensure the Panel and residents have access to accurate financial reports.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the content of the report.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner