

This matter is being dealt with by:

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W www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/partnerships/police-and-crime-panel

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel

Mr Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner
Arnot Hill House
Arnot Hill Park
Arnold
NG5 6LU

cc Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive

7 February 2020,

Dear Paddy,

OUTCOME OF PANEL'S CONSIDERATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2020-21

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Police and Crime Panel's consideration of your proposed precept at the Panel meeting of 6 February 2020.

As you are aware, the Panel supported your proposed precept increase of £9.99 for Band D properties, with nine Members voting in support and one Member voting against.

The Panel had supplied you with a number of questions around the themes of consultation, Operation Uplift (whereby Police forces nationally are being provided with additional funding from Government to pay for additional police officers), savings and efficiencies, reserves, transport, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Programme.

The input of yourself and your officers into the previous budget workshop and the timeliness of your officers' written response to the answers were appreciated by Members, although it was recognised that some of the written responses required further clarification on this occasion.

Within the meeting you described the funding from Government this year as an 'interim year settlement', pending the planned spending review later this year. You also highlighted the difficulties which the delay in the Government's announcement of the grant settlement for 2020-21 had caused.

With reference to your letter to the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service, which you had shared with the Panel Members, you explained that 107 police officers would be recruited by 31 March 2020 as part of Operation Uplift. You

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel, c/o County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

clarified the difference between headcount and Full Time Equivalents in terms of these calculations. You stated that the additional £3m recruitment performance grant had not been included within the base budget at this point but was likely to be received this financial year and that you would inform the Panel at the point when this was received.

You underlined that the rest of grant funding was essentially 'frozen' in cash terms and that the precept increase would equate to a rise of almost £8 per year for Council Tax Band B properties (the average property within Nottinghamshire).

With regard to consultation, you explained that the Force was one of only two nationally to conduct ongoing surveys throughout the year. The recent focus groups had attracted almost 50 attendees, concluding with participants feeling strongly in favour of the increases following further discussions and explanations.

You stated that the 'Surge' funding from Government to fight knife crime, which had helped achieve reductions in the City, would be provided again this financial year. The exact amounts were not yet known and a working assumption of £0.7m was being used. The funding for the Violence Reduction Unit was likely to continue for the period of the forthcoming spending review.

You underlined that only £2.2m of the planned £3.3m savings and efficiencies for 2019-20 were likely to be achieved. The most recent expenditure projections were forecasting an overspend of £0.5m at financial year end. You clarified that the general reserves were set at £7m which equated to approximately 3.5% of total funds, within accepted best practice thresholds. You felt that the capital programme was ambitious, making specific reference to the new Custody Suite and Joint Police and Fire Headquarters buildings which would likely cost £12m each next year, with the total remaining costs rising to £15m and £17m respectively.

During discussions, the Panel raised the following issues:-

- With regards to consultation, Members sought your comments on the fact that the proportion of residents supporting an increase within the limits of the referendum threshold (i.e. up to £10 increase) had fallen from 45.4% to 24.7% over the last year. You felt that this could be due to the 12% increase in 2019-20 and the fact that people had faced 10 years of austerity measures, although you underlined that, once the issues were explained within focus groups and consultation events, participants are always persuaded that it is better to increase the precept. Members recognised that residents are carrying the burden of Government funding reductions and that communications need to be improved to ensure that residents are better informed about the changing nature of policing and the relevant costs. You and Members were in agreement that the numbers of police officers after the Operation Uplift funding would still not be at the level of prior 2010 and it was recognised that it would take a couple of years for training to be completed and for new recruits to be fully established.
- Members welcomed the expansion of Operation Reacher across the City and the County and highlighted that the new team in Gedling was already

achieving successes. Members recognised that, aside from the Uplift grant, funding generally remained under pressure. Members also acknowledged that as well as losing out on grant funding for the last ten years due to the inherent problems with the funding formula, Nottinghamshire continued to lose out as the 'Uplift' funding had been allocated based on that same formula. They also highlighted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy showed that £8.5m efficiency savings were needed over the next five years. You agreed with that assessment and felt that the current funding formula saw Nottinghamshire lose out on over £10m on an annual basis and that you continue to be involved in the discussions to revisit this. You added that this would not be changed until after the spending review and that early indications are that Policing could be required to achieve savings of up to £600m over the next three years. You underlined your belief that this was a 'standstill budget', when the 'Uplift' money was considered separately.

- In light of discrepancies between the costs included in Reserves Strategy and other reports, Members asked for clarification of the total costs and deadline for completion of the Custody and Headquarters buildings. You stated that the Chief Constable was negotiating hard with the contractors Wilmott Dixon to ensure that costs were kept to a minimum (although the final figures could not be confirmed at this stage) and the buildings were due to be commenced in the 2021-22 financial year. You also clarified that the building designs would give due consideration to environmental sustainability and that a proportion of the Force's new fleet would be electric cars.
- In light of a lack of clarity about the use of the £3m recruitment performance grant for 'Uplift', Members sought explanation as to whether this was earmarked for particular issues. You stated that this funding was included in existing plans with the £3m expected at the end of the first quarter of the next financial year (2020-21). You highlighted that your letter to the Minister had underlined the Force's willingness to recruit further officers if other Forces struggled to do so in the timeframe.
- At your request the Chief Constable explained that the 107 new officers via 'Uplift' would be allocated across a range of teams including:-
 - the expansion of Operation Reacher as previously discussed;
 - increased capacity for the Knife Crime team;
 - the Robbery team will be expanded to enable one team in the City and one in the County;
 - Adult Protection would be increased to bolster arrangements for the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub;
 - increased officers to address fraud and online crime;
 - a small increase to the Road Crime team.
- Members queried whether the other partner agencies within the Criminal Justice System were geared up to cope with the potential increase in prosecutions which could arise from the Force's increase in officers. You

acknowledged this concern which you said was the subject of debate nationally.

As well as the 'Uplift' additional resources, the Chief Constable also clarified that 10 additional response officers would be posted to Ashfield and Mansfield to largely deal with domestic incidents. The split between the two Districts could not be confirmed at this stage but the arrangements were likely to be flexible to some extent. This additional resource was also welcomed by Members.

In summary, the Panel supported your proposed increase in the precept.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Goldstraw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Goldstraw OBE
Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel