

## **Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021**

#### **Present:**

##### **Chair**

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council

##### **Committee Members**

Councillor Mohammed Khan, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council,  
Councillor Ivan Taylor, Blackpool Borough Council,  
Councillor Afrasaib Anwar, Burnley Borough Council  
Councillor Munsif Dad, Hyndburn Borough Council  
Councillor Jean Parr, Lancaster City Council  
Councillor David Whipp, Pendle Borough Council  
Councillor Simon Hore, Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Councillor Sue Bibby, Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale Borough Council  
Councillor Gareth Dowling, West Lancs Borough Council  
Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council  
Councillor Peter Le Marinel, Wyre Borough Council

##### **Also in attendance**

- Clive Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Angela Harrison, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Steve Freeman, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- David Fairclough, Secretary
- Asad Laher, Head of Governance and Legal
- Phil Llewellyn, Corporate and Democratic Lead

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair, Councillor Alistair Bradley welcomed all to the meeting, and advised how the remote meeting would operate. Apologies had been received from Councillor Keith Iddon.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

#### **3. Police and Crime Commissioner's Budget 2021-22**

The Commissioner delivered a presentation and presented a report which set out the latest financial position for the Police and Crime budgets in Lancashire for 2021/2022 and proposals in relation to the Council Tax Precept.

The presentation outlined the increasing funding available as a result of the national uplift programme, which would mean more officers on the beat and investments in neighbourhood policing, but that this was at the expense of the Council Tax payer, and the Commissioner reflected on the flawed and unjust funding formula where areas such as Lancashire, which had large levels of properties in lower Council Tax bands compared to others nationally.

The presentation also highlighted a shortfall of 300 Police Officers compared to 2010 levels and detailed how the uplift for 2021-22 would be distributed in terms of staff deployment across Lancashire.

The Commissioner advised that he had no choice other than to increase the precept by £15 for a Band D property in 2021/22, if he did not do this it would mean Police Officers would need to cover civilian staff duties instead of carrying out their primary roles.

The report submitted outlined the investment in policing referred to, with the increase in needed to deliver the uplift, balance the budget and protect jobs. Without this increase, the budget for 2021/22 would have to be reduced. An additional 58 officers would go into neighbourhood policing teams, along with 34 from within the 2021/22 uplift allocation giving an extra 92 neighbourhood police officers to be phased in over 2021/22.

As a result, by 31 March 2022, the Commissioner would have invested in more than 400 additional officers since April 2019, including more than 170 officers in to neighbourhood policing. This still represented a shortfall of some 300 officers on the 750 lost to Lancashire since 2010/11 because of the government's austerity programme and the Commissioner continued to engage actively with the Home Secretary to argue for all of the 750 officers to be reinstated.

The report identified the current provisional funding position for 2021/22 and also identified the cost pressures that had emerged, savings required and investment needed for policing in Lancashire. The impact of the proposals for the 2021/22 budget were identified in an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Members of the Panel then asked a number of questions and made comments on the Commissioner's proposals, in particular, commenting on the need for each Lancashire district to receive its fair share and that some districts should not be funding others, with some Members commenting that they would have expected more officers of the being recruited being deployed into neighbourhoods. It was noted that in terms of Precept increases over three years, including the £15 increase proposed, that a Band D property would have seen a £49 increase in the period, and that the Commissioner should consider scaling back his property expansion and refurbishment plans or delay them.

The Commissioner responded to the comments and questions, advising that it would not be possible to scale back or delay accommodation changes and improvements, as premises were required for the extra officers who would be recruited. The Commissioner also indicated that areas should see more visibility of officers in neighbourhoods as a result of the uplift investment. The Chair asked that the Commissioner reflect back comments received on numbers of officers being deployed into neighbourhoods.

The Panel noted the disparity in the allocation of resources nationally, the inequity of the funding system and the unfair position that the Commissioner had been placed in, in having to propose to raise the precept to meet a government commitment made for the national uplift programme.

The Chair then requested the meeting move to the vote, and asked for the recommendations in the report to be moved and seconded.

Councillor Ivan Taylor moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Munsif Dad.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Roger Berry moved an amendment that the recommendation in the report relating to the increase if the Council Tax precept by £15 be not accepted, which was seconded by Councillor Peter Le Marinel.

The Chair then took a vote on the amendment proposed that the recommendation that the Council Tax precept be not be accepted, with votes being cast as follows:

**For-2**

**Against -8**

**Abstain – 3**

The Vote was lost.

The Chair then took a vote on the recommendations in the report, with votes being cast as follows:

**For-8**

**Against -2**

**Abstain -3**

The Vote was carried.

The Chair agreed to write to the relevant Government Minister to reflect the views of the Panel made during the scrutiny process and to seek a view from the Minister on when the historical inequalities in budget allocation would be addressed, removing the unfair burden being placed on local council tax payers.

## **RESOLVED –**

That the Police and Crime Panel:

- Note the details of the 2021/22 provisional police finance settlement, cost pressures and investments and the impact on Lancashire's budget;
- Approve the Commissioner's proposal to increase the council tax precept by £15 for a Band D property in 2021/22;
- Make arrangements to ensure that a formal written response to the proposals is sent to the Commissioner by 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

- Note the draft capital investment programme for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26;
- Note the position of the Commissioner's reserves in 2021/22 and future years
- Note the disparity in the allocation of resources nationally, the inequity of the funding system and the unfair position that the Commissioner has been placed in, and that the Chair write to the relevant Government Minister to reflect the views of the Panel and to seek a view from the Minister on when the historical inequalities in budget allocation would be addressed, removing the unfair burden being placed on local council tax payers.

#### **4. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

The meeting scheduled in case of the Precept not being agreed (on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021) was now not required, so the next meeting of the Panel (Virtual) would be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Signed.....Chair  
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