

Police and Crime Panel for Lancashire

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1st February 2023

Present:

Chair

Councillor Jackie Oakes, Rossendale Borough Council

Committee Members

Councillor Quesir Mahmood, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council

Councillor Peter Edwards , Hyndburn Borough Council

Councillor Ged Mirfin, Lancashire County Council

Councillor Ash Sutcliffe, Pendle Borough Council

Councillor David Whipp, Pendle Borough Council

Councillor Nweeda Khan, Preston City Council

Councillor James Flannery, South Ribble Borough Council

Councillor Gordon Johnson, West Lancs Borough Council

Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council

Councillor Peter Le Marinel, Wyre Borough Council

Richard Glover, Independent Co-opted Member

Also in attendance

- Andrew Snowden, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Angela Harrison, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Steve Freeman, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Asad Laher, Secretary
- Phil Llewellyn, Corporate and Democratic Lead

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Councillor Jackie Oakes, welcomed all to the meeting, apologies had been received from Councillors Hunter, Townsend, Boswell, Threllfall, Alcock, Thornberry, Walton and from the Deputy PCC Andrew Pratt.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

3. Police and Crime Commissioner's Budget 2023-24

The Commissioner outlined his report which set out the forecast for the Police and Crime budgets in Lancashire for 2023/2024 and proposals in relation to the Council Tax Precept.

The report identified the current provisional funding position for 2023/24 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 2023/24 budget were identified in an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The report referred to the Government announcement on 14 December 2022 for the Provisional Police Grant Settlement. Lancashire had been allocated police grant of £231.500m, as well as a separate specific grant of £7.027m to maintain the delivery of the police officer uplift programme.

The Commissioner outlined cost pressures of £17.924M, and savings of £7.875M had to be offset across the Constabulary. Referring to the assumption that Council Tax base in Lancashire would increase by 1.5% in 2023/24, it was therefore proposed to increase the Council Tax precept by £15 for a Band D property in 2023/24.

The PCC also reported on the use of Reserves, and on engagement with the public in respect of his budget proposals for 2023/24.

Members of the Panel then asked a number of questions and made comments on the Commissioner's proposals, the Commissioner responded to the comments and questions, advising:

- Sustainability of the levels of Council Tax – whilst acknowledging the concerns raised by Panel Members about the proposed increase, no one wanted to pay more Council Tax, but responses to the Poll undertaken showed that people were prepared to pay more Council Tax towards Policing.
- Use of Reserves – the amount outlined in the report was in line with the Reserves strategy and a higher proportion of use of Reserves was not considered.
- Inflationary pressures/MTFS Assumptions – the PCC outlined pressures resulting from Covid and the Energy Market in particular, and these made budget planning more difficult, and it was assumed that pressures would continue and discussions were ongoing with the Home Office on future funding, and the need for longer term settlements to assist planning for future years.
- Engagement with the Public – the PCC was confident that the Poll was a good indicator of public opinion, and had been carried out by professional company, and the Commissioner also engaged with the public on a daily basis.
- Savings – in terms of the 15 posts identified in the report, the Commissioner advised that these were vacancies across various teams, and that decisions on these were the responsibility of the Chief Constable.

Panel Members then moved to the vote.

RESOLVED –

That the Police and Crime Panel:

- Note the details of the 2023/24 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 (6.34%) for a Band D property in 2023/24;
- Make arrangements to ensure that a formal written response to the proposals is sent to the Commissioner by 8th February 2023.
- Note the draft capital investment programme for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
- Note the position of the Commissioner's reserves in 2023/24 and future years

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 15th February 2023) was now not required, so the next meeting of the Panel would be held at 4pmm on Monday 6th March 2023.

Signed.....Chair
2023