

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

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019**

#### **Present:**

##### **Chair**

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Chorley Borough Council

##### **Committee Members**

Councillor Andy Kay, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Councillor Alistair Humphreys, Blackpool Borough Council

Councillor Ben Aitken, Fylde Borough Council

Councillor Liz Oades, Fylde Borough Council

Councillor Geoff Driver, Lancashire County Council

Councillor Gareth Mullineux, Hyndburn Borough Council

Councillor Margaret Pattinson, Lancaster County Council

Councillor David Whipp, Pendle Borough Council

Councillor Brian Rollo, Preston City Council

Councillor Ged Mirfin, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Rupert Swarbrick, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Catherine Moon, South Ribble Borough Council

Councillor Kevin Wright, West Lancs Borough Council

Councillor Roger Berry, Wyre Borough Council

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

- Clive Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Steve Freeman, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Sian Roxborough, Council Solicitor
- Phil Llewellyn, Governance and Democratic Services Manager

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

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Ivan Taylor, Munsif Dad, Brendan Hughes and Margaret Foxley.

#### **2. Declaration of interests**

Cllr Moon declared a non-pecuniary interest (relative of a Police Officer).

### **3. Police and Crime Commissioner's Budget 2019/20**

The Commissioner presented a report and delivered a presentation which set out the latest financial position for the Police and Crime budgets in Lancashire for 2019/20 and proposals in relation to the Council Tax Precept.

The report identified the current provisional funding position for 2019/20. It also identified the cost pressures that had emerged, savings that had been delivered and investment to be made in policing in Lancashire. The impact of the proposals for the 2019/20 budget were identified in an updated MTFS detailed in the report.

The budget for 2019/20 reflected the funding announcement made by the Police and Fire Minister in his Provisional Settlement statement made on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018. The statement acknowledged that the Police Service needed to invest in additional resource to meet the significant increase in demand the service faced. The Minister also recognised that PCCs were also facing a major cost pressure relating to the cost of pensions for police officers.

The Minister made it clear in his statement that additional funding for policing needed to be delivered through additional grant from government and an increase to Council Tax by PCCs. The Home Office had set out a funding position that required PCCs to increase Council Tax for a Band D property by £24 in 2019/20 to deliver the additional investment needed to meet some of the increased demand faced by forces.

The provisional financial settlement for Lancashire was published on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and included an increase in core grant of £3.721m giving Lancashire a total Police Grant of £193.745m for 2019/20. An additional specific grant had also been provided of £3.104m towards the additional costs of employer contributions to the police officer pension scheme.

The additional grant funding provided to Lancashire in 2019/20 did not meet the full additional cost of pensions so savings would be identified elsewhere in the budget to meet the remaining cost.

The Commissioner outlined the budgetary pressures that had been identified that related to the cost to the Constabulary of dealing with additional demand for the service and supporting the front line in meeting the increased demand.

A key element of the Commissioner's financial management strategy was the ongoing review of the organisation's activity and the identification of additional cost reductions and savings that could be made. This work was undertaken in conjunction with the Constabulary's 'Futures Team' and has identified further savings that would be delivered in 2019/20.

Additionally, a number of risks and uncertainties had been identified which would impact upon the final position for 2019/20 and the MTFS for future years which were outlined in the report submitted.

The Commissioner also reported on the position in terms of general reserves and earmarked reserves.

A funding gap of nearly £6m existed if the Commissioner's precept proposals were not accepted. The Commissioner proposed an increase Council Tax in 2019/20 by £24, giving a Council tax charge of £201.45 for a Band D property, providing additional income of £10.533m. This income would enable some investment to be made in policing services in Lancashire at a time when both costs and demand pressures were rising at a significant rate. This increase would therefore meet the funding gap of £5.899m and provide £4.634m for investment in policing services in Lancashire.

The Commissioner reported that following consultation, the results showed that 63% of people were willing to pay more Council Tax to support policing.

In the presentation delivered, the Commissioner gave examples of a Place based approach for each area of Lancashire, highlighting the extra resources available if the Precept proposals were accepted, which included a dedicated drone team, and extra police resources across Lancashire.

Members of the Panel then asked a number of questions and made comments on the Commissioner's proposals, in particular on the deployment of drones in comparison to the use of a police helicopter, the practicalities of the sharing of resources across neighbouring areas and how these would be deployed, the potential locating of police officers in Council Offices (ie. Ribble Valley) where front counters had recently been closed, and the potential for further changes to accommodation/estates.

Additionally, the Commissioner received detailed questions on the Capital and Revenue budgets, MTFS and use of Reserves and several panel members were critical of the way the Government had reduced funding for policing whilst expecting Council Tax payers to fund the gap, with panel members highlighting a north/south divide.

The Commissioner, supported by Steve Freeman, provided responses to the questions and comments arising. The Commissioner also agreed to circulate the slides from his presentation as appropriate, after checking what content could be shared.

The Chair then asked the Panel to consider the recommendations in the report.

Several Panel Members were critical of the Commissioner's budget proposals, indicating that they felt that the proposals should be looked at again, particularly in terms of the increases to back office staff proposed and the Capital Budget proposals. Panel Members also commented on the need to support frontline policing and whilst being reluctant to put the burden on Council Tax payers, felt that there was no other alternative, given the direction indicated by the Government. Panel Members also wanted to see more detail on the allocation of resources going forward as highlighted by the Commissioner in terms of the extent of resources for each area and how these would be allocated, prioritised and deployed.

The Panel then moved to the vote and the recommendations were carried.

## **RESOLVED -**

That the Police and Crime Panel:

- Note the details of the 2019/20 provisional police finance settlement and the overall impact on Lancashire's budget;
- Note the report on the public consultation undertaken in respect of the proposed precept level;
- Agree the Commissioner's proposal to increase the council tax precept for a Band 'D' property by £24 in 2019/20;
- Make arrangements to ensure that a formal written response to the proposals is sent to the Commissioner by 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- Note the draft capital investment programme for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24 and the financing available;
- Note the proposed use of the Commissioner's reserves in 2019/20 and future years.

## **4. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **5. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday 11th March 2019 at 6.30pm in Meeting Room 'A' at the Town Hall, King William Street, Blackburn.

Signed.....Chair  
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