

NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT TO THE NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Precept Proposal 2016/17

On 29 January 2016 the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner formally notified the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel of her proposed precept for 2016/17. The panel is required to review the proposed precept by 8 February of the relevant financial year and report to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

The panel met on Thursday, 4 February 2016. Membership of the panel at the meeting was:

Harrogate Borough Council	Cllr Michael Chambers MBE
North Yorkshire County Council	Cllr Carl Les
Richmondshire District Council	Cllr Helen Grant
Selby District Council	Cllr Mel Hobson
City of York Council	Cllr Peter Dew
City of York Council	Cllr Ashley Mason
Community Co-opted	Santokh Sidhu

The panel is asked to consider the 2016/17 Precept Proposal and must, therefore, ensure focus on the 2016/17 annual budget, priorities and Police and Crime Plan. However, the PCC provided appendices providing an overview of assumed changes and the current Medium Term Financial Plan up to and including 2019/20. This enabled the panel to consider the Precept Proposal in the context of a longer term financial position and the risks, challenges and uncertainties over that period.

The panel would like to thank the PCC and her staff for: the level of transparency in the papers provided; for attending its meeting on Thursday, 4 February 2016; and the responses they provided to the wide variety of questions and issues that panel members raised.

It is noted that the 2016/17 Settlement is still provisional thus key grant figures are awaiting final confirmation, although this is expected shortly. It is expected that any variations from the final Settlement are likely to be small and will be managed in year.

When reviewing the proposal, the panel took into account the requirements to satisfy the statutory requirements of setting a Council Tax Requirement and a balanced budget for 2016/17. The Precept Proposal achieves this with no unfunded shortfall.

The 2016/17 'balanced budget' position is based on a 1.99% precept increase. This would increase the average Band D charge by £4.23, from £212.77 to £217.00. For exemplification, a 1% increase is worth approximately £614k.

In its discussions with the PCC, the panel particularly remarked on the following:

- The PCC's submissions show that since February 2015, there have been considerable improvements in funding, reassessment of pay and non-pay inflation costs resulting in lower overall costs, an improvement in the taxbase and a higher than anticipated council tax collection surplus. The 1.99% proposed precept also increases the funding available.
- That by 2019/20, the Medium Term Financial Plan assumes that the Major Capital Reserve, Estates Strategy Reserve and Cost of Change Reserve will be fully depleted.
- There are some major risks and uncertainty over the next four years – not least of which is the Police Funding Formula review.
- Planned investments in technology and better ways of working, coupled with developing collaborations, internal savings programmes and the better than expected financial settlements mean that the PCC has indicated she can invest in these priority areas without needing to reduce the size of the organisation in other areas.

Decision

The Police and Crime Panel accepted the Commissioner's proposal for a proposed precept increase of 1.99%.

As far as the panel is concerned, this ends its scrutiny process of the Commissioner's proposed precept for 2016/17.

General Comment

For the panel, the issues raised as a result of its considerations and dialogue with the PCC, have encouraged it to make sure that the following items remain at the forefront of panel business over the coming year:

- NYP Workforce numbers, profile, structure and deployment.
- Improvements to operational delivery by more reliable infrastructure and better use of technology.

- Estates Strategy and the potential additional relocations of particular services that result from the move from the current HQ.

The causes of crime are often deep and complex. Solving crime involves so many factors. The panel appreciates the difficulty in making predictions about what direct effect funding levels are likely to have on crime figures - especially in the short term. Nevertheless, the panel looks forward to continuing its conversation with the PCC on the relationship between funding levels and overall performance against the aim, as set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, to cut crime and anti-social behaviour. In this respect, the panel will especially focus upon the impact on those priority areas identified for investment like Cybercrime and Online fraud, and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Carl Les.

Chairman, North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

8 February 2016