

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

### **REPORT TO THE NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

#### **Precept Proposal 2018/19**

On 30 January 2018 the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner formally notified the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel of her proposed precept for 2018/19. The Panel is required to review the proposed precept and report on its decision, including any recommendations, to the Police and Crime Commissioner by 8 February of the relevant financial year.

The Panel met on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Membership of the Panel at the meeting was:

Craven District Council	Cllr Peter Madeley
Hambleton District Council	Cllr Peter Wilkinson
Harrogate Borough Council	Cllr Michael Chambers MBE
North Yorkshire County Council	Cllr Carl Les
Richmondshire District Council	Cllr Russell Lord
Ryedale District Council	Cllr Val Arnold
Scarborough Borough Council	Cllr Sandra Turner
Selby District Council	Cllr Mel Hobson
City of York Council	Cllr Ashley Mason
City of York Council	Cllr Peter Dew
Community Co-opted	Paula Stott
Community Co-opted	Santokh Singh Sidhu

The Panel would like to thank the Commissioner and her staff for: the level of detail and transparency in the papers accompanying the proposal; attending its meeting on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018; and the responses provided to the wide variety of questions and issues that Panel Members raised.

When reviewing the proposal, the Panel took into account the need to satisfy the statutory requirements of setting a Council Tax Requirement and a balanced budget for 2018/19. The precept proposal achieves this with no unfunded shortfall.

The 2018/19 'balanced budget' position is based on an increase of £11.50 per annum (for a Band D property) over the 2017/18 level, which would result in a charge at that level of £232.82.

During the discussions surrounding the context for the Commissioner's proposal, the Commissioner and her Chief Financial Officer were keen to highlight the following points to the Panel around financial planning for the coming year and beyond:

- Additional flexibility has been given to Commissioners by the government to be able to increase their precept by up to £12 per year (Band D) in 2018/19 and it is anticipated that this will continue in 2019/20;
- This flexibility is set against a finalised police funding settlement which will see the grant remain at the same level for 2018/19 as was allocated last year;
- In looking to give greater certainty on plans for 2019/20, the Home Office wants to see evidence of a serious commitment to improve productivity and efficiency from all forces, including reviewing the use of reserves (particularly where there are forces whose levels remain high);
- Transformational change will need to be delivered across the force to ensure that it continues to improve its service performance, its ability and flexibility to meet changing demand and to embrace new technology to support this.
- The uplift from the precept increase will be invested back into the public's priorities and key areas supporting delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, to include further investment in the Force Control Room and victims' services.
- Efficiency savings will pay for improved wage increases and other inflationary pressures. These include savings across estates, ICT and staffing vacancies.
- The Commissioner will be asking the force to bid for funding for investment going forward. This will require a clear business case and demonstration of how greater productivity and efficiency will be delivered.

The Panel noted the good response rate received to the Commissioner's public consultation on the precept as compared with 2017/18. However, the Panel also wished to note that while a majority of respondents had been favourable towards an increase of up to £12 following the inclusion of this question (as a result of the government announcement), the correlation with those responses received in favour of an increase of more than £10 prior to this announcement did not amount to an overall majority in favour of an increase of more than £10. The Panel

therefore felt it particularly important for the Commissioner to be clear for the public about what will be provided to them as a result of this uplift over the next year. It was noted that the Commissioner's Decision Notice provides detail around this and that consideration will be given to a leaflet for the public, to help explain how the money is being spent.

In the course of arriving at a decision on the proposal put forward and the plans to be put in place as noted above, the Panel were keen to highlight the following points in relation to the assumptions and forecasts put forward:

- The level of general reserves is felt to be rather low, drawing down to £4.6m in the next year. The Panel are however reassured that these will be kept under close review and that there are other mechanisms for dealing with unforeseen external circumstances, such as the £0.5m funding earmarked for major incidents.
- The target of £7.5m in savings over three years will be a challenging one, requiring a considerable transformational and cultural shift across the force. The Panel noted that plans for achieving this indicated that it is an attainable target. They also welcomed the Commissioner's commitment to ensuring that there is good communication with staff throughout the process.
- In line with the challenging context for improvement and value for money being set for the police force, the Commissioner's office will similarly need to ensure it can continue to demonstrate that it is managing its own budget well.

The Panel will continue to incorporate scrutiny of progress against the Commissioner's plans for savings and investment into its forward work plan over the coming year.

## **Decision**

The Police and Crime Panel supported the Commissioner's proposal for a proposed precept increase of £11.50 (for a Band D property) for 2018/19.

As far as the Panel is concerned, this ends its scrutiny process of the Commissioner's proposed precept for 2018/19.

**Carl Les.**

**Chairman, North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

7 February 2018