

# Norfolk Police and Crime Panel



Date: **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

Time: **10.00am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**4. Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's revised precept for 2016-17**

Annex 4 - Response to Panel Report - 3 February 2016

**A3**

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# OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORFOLK

## **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO THE NORFOLK POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**16 FEBRUARY 2016**

### **RESPONSE TO PANEL REPORT 3 FEBRUARY 2016**

#### **Summary:**

On the 2 February the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel vetoed the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to freeze the police element of the council tax in 2016/17. The Panel sent a report to the Commissioner by way of letter from the Chairman dated 3 February 2016.

The Panel commented as follows, "Having weighed-up your reasons against the Chief Constable's arguments that the precept should be raised by the maximum amount, the Panel agreed that a freeze would not support the Constabulary to meet its future challenges."

This report addresses the concern of the Panel and sets out, in a little more detail, the plans the Chief Constable currently has in hand to address the policing demand pressures in the medium term.

#### **Decision:**

It is recommended that the Panel considers this report in the context of its determination of the Commissioner's revised precept proposal.

**Police and Crime Commissioner**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Commissioner's updated budget and precept report is attached to the Panel's papers at Annex 3.
- 1.2 If the freeze proposal had been agreed by the Panel, there would have been a budget deficit of £1.2m in 2016/17 and this would have been funded from a contribution from the Budget Support Reserve. This £1.2m would then have increased the total amount of savings required in the Medium Term Financial Plan period.
- 1.3 The Commissioner now proposes to increase the council tax by the full amount possible, in accordance with the feedback from the Panel.
- 1.4 This increase balances the budget for 2016/17, it does not provide £1.2m of extra money.
- 1.5 At the meeting of the Panel the Chief Constable described the current and growing demands on the service.
- 1.6 The Chief Finance Officer pointed out that in any option savings and efficiencies continue to be required to ensure a balanced budget. For financial planning purposes, the 'worst case scenario' (excluding the potential adverse effect of a new formula) will be used. This scenario assumes a council tax freeze for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. The four year deficit of £5.5m is set out in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix A(i) of the budget report.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1 The budget report (para 4.7) describes the New Change Programme and makes reference to the recent speech on police reform made by the Home Secretary (delivered after the Spending Review announcement), when she made it very clear that the decision to protect police funding overall in cash terms did not change the fact that "every force will still need to make savings year on year" and needed to continue with savings plans to make further efficiencies. There is a continuing obligation to modernise working practices and ensure the force is fit-for-purpose going forward. Of course, funding is only 'protected' (at current cash levels) if PCCs exercise their powers to increase the council tax.
- 2.2 The section below provides more detail on the New Change Programme.

## **3. Work in Progress**

- 3.1 The Norfolk Local Policing Review (Norfolk 2020) was established by the Chief Constable to address two major aspects; the change in demands the organisation faces and the financial deficit. The scope is all areas within Local Policing; Neighbourhood Policing, Safeguarding and Investigations and

Command and Control. As such, the more positive financial outlook has re-aligned some aspects of the review work, allowing the temporarily established team to work with the organisation to design Neighbourhood Policing for the future, the most efficient and effective deployment model identifying threat, risk and harm, and reorienting the organisation to the changing threats and demands.

- 3.2 The review is using knowledge gained from academic papers evidencing 'what works' in policing. Where this knowledge is unavailable, Norfolk 2020 will establish and run pilots and mini projects to provide an evidence base. In addition the team is working with the jointly funded Better Policing Collaborative programme.
- 3.3 The Chief Constable is updating all of the Strategic Assessments given the change in the nature of the crimes being committed. The crime types becoming more prevalent are more complex to investigate and require significant skills and training to be able to manage and support victims and tackle offending in the most appropriate way.
- 3.4 It should be noted that, crime is not the primary source of demand for the constabulary. Public Safety incidents (e.g. concerns for safety [including mental health]), domestic incidents, missing persons) are reported in greater numbers. The Public Safety demand is varied in nature, presenting multiple issues which again require expertise, time and appropriate information sharing to address.
- 3.5 Anti-Social Behaviour calls, although significantly reduced since the inception of Operational Partnership Teams, also require attendance, risk assessment, and partnership working to resolve. How we work with partners, for example through the district based early help hubs is also under consideration.
- 3.6 It is also clear that the Constabulary Safeguarding and Investigations Command which both investigates crimes of a serious nature; child abuse, adult abuse, rape, and provides safeguarding and partnership support to the vulnerable, will have to receive further resources, both officers, civilian staff and back office support (e.g. High Tech Crime Investigators for the processing of devices which hold images).
- 3.7 The organisation is also required to adapt to the world of digital evidence, providing capacity to store the property subject to enquiry, as well as developing mechanisms for sharing, processing and capturing digital evidence in an efficient manner.
- 3.8 The Chief Constable has acknowledged that in the £25m of savings made since 2010 there have been some reductions in neighbourhood policing. Both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable are keen to try and reverse this. They have both, over many years, expressed a wish to protect frontline policing.
- 3.9 Both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable are committed to collaboration. Wider collaboration has recently been re-energised by the decision of all the PCCs and Chief Constables in the Eastern Region (plus Kent)

to look at collaborating on procurement, back office services, criminal justice and Athena. This work is complex and ambitious and subject to changing views following the PCC election in May 2016. After piloting through some smaller areas everything except local policing could be looked at. The savings, which are potentially significant, will not be achieved quickly. An application has been made for Home Office Innovation Fund Grant support of the project.

- 3.10 There may be some further savings possible from the Norfolk and Suffolk collaboration and both constabularies have bought in consultancy expertise to assist with an Outcome Based Budgeting exercise. This will help the Constabulary to see, in a fresh way, the activities that are carried out, and the cost of them. This work will inform the change plan and the 2017/18 budget. It will also ensure that spend is rightfully allocated to the priority areas.
- 3.11 Finally, it is apparent that the Constabulary's use of technology needs to be enhanced to provide officers and staff with better information at the right time, as well as efficiencies in working practices. It is also necessary for the organisation to embrace digital interaction with the public. However, being a rural county the network coverage in many areas is poor or non-existent. Significant investment is required, and factored into spending plans, to enable the improvements the organisation is seeking.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 This report gives an overview of the work currently in hand to address the demand pressures in the medium term. It does not articulate the commissioning activity of the Commissioner's Office which seeks to reduce demands on the police.
- 4.2 Norfolk 2020 will report in the summer, after the PCC elections, and the direction taken will be heavily guided by the potential funding envelope set out in the financial plan.
- 4.3 At the same time, as the Panel is aware, there will be changes to the Police and Crime Plan.