

## **Suffolk Police and Crime Panel Outcomes of Consideration of the PCC's Proposed Policing Precept for 2019/20**

On 25 January 2019 the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel considered a recommendation of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Suffolk regarding the proposed precept level and Council Tax requirement for 2019-20 for policing in Suffolk. Twelve of the thirteen members of the Panel were present. The PCC was accompanied by his Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Communications Manager, the Chief Constable (CC) and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO). The agenda and papers for the meeting are available on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

The Panel reviewed the PCC's proposed precept report, the PCC's proposal to increase the precept by 12.6787% in 2019-20, and the associated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019-20 to 2022-23. The Panel noted that although the Appendices to the MTFP had not been included with the reports for the Panel meeting, these were published and available for perusal on the [PCC's website \(PCC Decisions 2019\)](#).

The MTFP had been prepared following notification of the provisional grant settlement for 2019-20 via the Home Office on 13 December 2018, and in conjunction with a range of assumptions which were set out in the report.

The Panel noted that two Options had been considered by the PCC in determining the precept. The implications of each option were detailed in the written report. The Panel was informed that a decision to implement the proposal of Option 2 (an increase of 12.6787% or just less than £24 per annum for Band D) would result in additional funding of £3m more than Option 1, and would provide the necessary funding to deliver a balanced budget in 2019-20 and ensure Suffolk remained a safe place in which to live, work, travel and invest.

In introducing his report, the PCC expressed regret at having to put taxes up but he considered he needed to do what was best for the people of Suffolk. He highlighted that the small increase in the Home Office Grant for 2019-20 of 2.1% had been welcomed, but the financial context for policing remained challenging, with reducing funding, additional pressures from pension costs, and significant service pressures due to the changing nature of crime. The situation was exacerbated by financial pressures in other public sector organisations resulting in the Constabulary absorbing additional demand as an emergency service of last resort.

The Panel noted the PCC's comments regarding how the additional £3m funding provided by Option 2 would be used. This was set out clearly in the report, and included addressing violent crime, gang violence and drug dealing; enhancing public trust and confidence by increasing police visibility; recruiting an extra 29 police officers and 69 police staff (shared with Norfolk); further investment in technology; enhancing the emergency response; providing additional police staff investigators; improving public engagement and maintaining financial viability.

The PCC reported that collaboration with Norfolk was continuing and further savings had been identified for 2019-20. Workstreams were also being pursued regionally, through the Seven Forces Strategic Collaboration Programme.

The PCC highlighted the commitment to deliver the planned savings of £2.043m in 2019-20.

The PCC expressed his concern that the Home Office had not reviewed the current funding formula, from which Suffolk currently gets significantly less than other areas of the country, meaning that a greater percentage of the funding for policing therefore needed to be raised through local taxation.

The PCC was pleased to report that his public survey on the proposal for the precept had captured over 800 responses, 69% of which had been supportive of the proposal to increase the policing element of the council tax for 2019-20 by £2 per month.

The PCC noted that he had been grateful for the support he had received and would be monitoring the position closely through the Accountability and Performance Panel to ensure that the funding available was used, in a timely manner, to meet the aims set out in the report.

The Panel noted that changes had taken place to the policing model in 2018 and highlighted a need for the new model to be stabilised now that the changes had been implemented. Members questioned the PCC on matters relating to consultation, the future focus of multi-agency working, reserves, pension costs, capital receipts, the changing demographic of the workforce, capital investment and future investment in CCTV. The Panel also sought assurances about timescales for achieving the improvements from the additional £3m which would be provided by Option 2.

### **The Decision of the Panel**

Following consideration of the information provided, the Panel:

- 1) supported the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 12.6787% in 2019-20 by a majority vote of 11 in favour and 1 against;
- 2) agreed that the Panel Chairman would make a formal report, on behalf of the Panel, on the PCC's precept, by the statutory deadline of 8 Feb 2018.

A copy of this report of the Panel will be put on the County Council's [website](#).

Councillor Patricia O'Brien

Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

28 January 2019