

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel Outcomes of Consideration of the PCC's Proposed Policing Precept for 2020/21

On 31 January 2020, 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 2020-21 for policing in Suffolk. All thirteen members of the Panel were present. The PCC was accompanied by his Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Head of Communications and Engagement (HCE), 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 4.69% in 2020-21, and the associated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020-21 to 2023-24. The PCC's Decision Papers are available on the [PCC's website \(PCC Decisions 2020\)](#); reference [5-2020](#) and [6-2020](#).

The MTFP had been prepared following the Home Office notification of the grant settlement for 2020-21 on 22 January 2020, and in conjunction with the assumptions set out in the report. It was noted that the Home Office announcement of the grant settlement and the council tax referendum limit was delayed due to the December General Election, and the PCC commended all those involved in their hard work in producing the MTFP and precept proposals in accordance with statutory deadlines.

The Panel noted that two options had been considered by the PCC in determining the precept. The detail and rationale for each option were detailed in the PCC's [Decision Paper 6-2020](#). The Panel was informed that the decision to implement the proposal of Option 2 (an increase of 4.69% or just £9.99 per annum for a typical Band D property) would result in additional funding of £1.5m more than Option 1 (an increase of 2%), and would provide the necessary funding to deliver a balanced budget in 2020-21 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 increase the precept, but he considered this necessary to enhance the Constabulary's ability to deliver his Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 and deliver national requirements. The increase would ensure the Constabulary remains effective and efficient and is able to address the issues that matter to local people. A summary report has been produced by the PCC setting out the proposal for the policing precept and detailing the areas where the additional funding will be invested. This is available at: <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PCC-Precept-Proposals-2020-21.pdf>.

The PCC also referred to the Constabulary's proposals for the introduction of 54 additional officers in 2020/21 as part of the National Uplift Programme. The PCC's report detailing the initial proposals for deployment of these officers is available at: <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PCC-Uplift-Proposals-2020-21.pdf>.

The proposals for increasing the precept complements and supports the 'uplift' proposals.

The PCC highlighted the 8% increase in crime reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the high caseload of officers. He expressed his continuing concerns that the Home Office had not reviewed the current funding formula, from which Suffolk currently gets significantly less funding than other areas of the country (specifically highlighting the difference in the per capita funding between Norfolk and Suffolk), meaning that a greater percentage of the funding for local policing needed to be raised through local taxation.

The Panel noted the PCC's comments regarding how the additional precept funding would be used. This was set out clearly in his report and included 'county lines' and serious and organised crime, ANPR, rural policing, commercial vehicle enforcement, enhancing the outcome resolution team, increasing neighbourhood policing teams, creating a domestic abuse perpetrator scheme and creating a neighbourhood crime proactive team. This would directly address violent crime, gang violence and drug dealing; and increase public trust and confidence through higher police visibility.

The PCC emphasised the success of the 'Operation Sentinel' teams, with over 500 arrests for drug-related offences last year.

The Head of Communications and Engagement was pleased to report that the PCC's public survey on the proposal for the precept had captured 950 responses, 68.7% of which had been supportive of the proposal to increase the policing element of the council tax for 2020-21 by £0.70p per month (for a Band D property - equivalent to a 4.0% increase). Over 600 comments were received and it was agreed that a paper highlighting themes raised in the survey would be presented to the Panel at its meeting on 20 March 2020.

The PCC reported that collaboration with Norfolk was continuing and further savings had been identified for 2020-21, noting that £19.0m of savings for Suffolk had been realised to date. Savings and efficiencies were also being pursued regionally, through the Seven Forces Strategic Collaboration Programme.

The PCC highlighted the commitment within the MTFP to deliver planned savings of £1.3m in 2020-21.

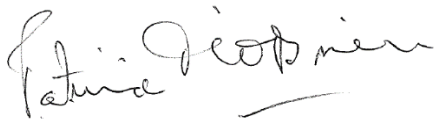
Members questioned the PCC on a variety of matters including; his consultation, deployment of the additional resources, tackling 'volume crime', increasing police visibility and improving public confidence, future recruitment (including Special Constabulary and volunteers etc.), public engagement, and training and equipment for new officers.

The Decision of the Panel

Following consideration of the information provided, the Panel:

- 1) unanimously supported the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 4.69% in 2020-21 (13 votes in favour and 0 against);
- 2) recommended that the Panel receive a further update on the precept increase and MTFP at its meeting on 20 March 2020; including analysis of the feedback from the public consultation and an update on the deployment of additional officers and Community Engagement Officers
- 3) 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 February 2020.

A copy of this report will be uploaded onto the County Council's [website](#).



Councillor Patricia O'Brien

Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

31 January 2020