

Report of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel ('The Panel')

to the

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire ('The PFCC')

With regard to:

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire's Draft Policing Service Budget and Precept 2020/21

As required under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 this is the formal report by the Panel on their consideration of, and decision on, your proposed Policing Service Budget /Precept for 2020/21. The legislation gives us the power to veto your Precept if we consider it to be too low or too high and sets out the procedures to be followed both by the Panel and yourself in the event of the veto being exercised.

The Panel met on Monday 10 February 2020. You attended, accompanied by your Chief of Staff and your Director of Finance.

The Panel received your report on the proposed budget/Precept which showed a total net budget requirement of £212.402million for 2020/21. Your report included details of Home Office and other central grant allocations for 2020/21 (£131.479million), which included an additional £10.551million over the previous year's allocation. You specifically highlighted the inclusion of a Ring Fenced Grant of £2.532million towards the recruitment of an additional 90 Police Officers in Staffordshire by 31 March 2021. The Terms of that Grant were yet to be published therefore you were unable to clarify for us whether the monies would be available pro rata should it not prove possible to recruit to the full 90 posts in the timescale permitted. We were concerned at the detrimental effect on your overall budget if a pro rata payment was not forthcoming.

For the remainder of the increased funding your proposals included: investment in the Special Constabulary to enhance their role in the community, investment in ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) to support the further growth of the Team and it's capability in terms of tracking offenders throughout the County and beyond, further expenditure on technology and digital capability in order to maximise their benefits (eg. purchasing the most up to date mobile devices), and investment in IT software to assist with demand management and prioritising the deployment of resources.

Your resulting Precept proposal was an increase of 3.94% (£8.53 pa for a Band D property). This was below the Referendum threshold of 4.62% (£10). You felt that the 3.94% increase struck a balance between what could reasonably be asked of the Council Taxpayers and the investment required in local policing.

You reported on £1million reduction in the Borrowing requirement (down to £10m) following the use of Cash Reserves as alternative funding for some projects, and on your aim of bringing down the Capital Programme from £16m


to £5m by 2022/23. We queried an increase in the Programme over the next two years which you explained was to facilitate the delivery of the Niche IT project and a vehicle replacement programme.

Our final area of interest was your Reserves strategy as we had previously had concerns at the low level of Reserves allocated. We were satisfied that the General Reserve will be maintained at £5.9m and the Earmarked Reserve, whilst fluctuating during the next 5 year period, was forecast to be around £2.9m by 2024.

Your report to the Panel concluded with a statement by your Director of Finance on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. That Statement was noted.

At the conclusion of our discussions on your proposal we unanimously resolved to support your Precept and Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

As required, this Report will be published on the County Council's webpages for the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that curves downwards and to the right.

S. Sweeney

Chairman
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

On behalf of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel.