



Police and Crime Commissioner's Response to Plymouth City Council's Budget Scrutiny

We are pleased to be invited to provide scrutiny input to the City Council's Budget for 2015/16 and have reviewed the full four year budget report for 2015/16 to 2018/19 and would make the following comments.

The Police and Crime Commissioner will shortly consult on his annual refresh of the Police and Crime Plan 2014-2017. The Commissioner has reviewed the existing 6 priorities within his Police and Crime Plan and is of the view that these priorities remain appropriate for Devon and Cornwall, subject to a few alterations, in areas such as safeguarding and cyber crime. The views of Plymouth City Council will be sought as part of this process.

In terms of our own financial position, the Police and Crime Commissioner faces a similar financial position to that faced by the City Council. Our budget plans are set against a national economic background of continuing austerity at least until 2019/20 and are built to produce savings to comply with reductions in central grant income.

Over the period April 2011 to March 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner has requested the Chief Constable to make savings of £39m which represents 14 % of Net Revenue Spend. It is estimated that over the next four years to 2018/19 a further £29m will need to be found of which 31% still needs to be identified. In The Police and Crime Commissioner could find the additional budget requirement by reduction in the front line, however like you, both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable are committed to reducing the impact on front line services. This involves taking a transformational approach to service re-design which will take longer to achieve but will be more sustainable. This means that planning horizons have to stretch beyond one year and would fully support your approach to forecasting of 2016/17 to 2018/19.

As public bodies we rely on the services provided to each other, the police for providing a community which is safe to live in and free from crime and in return the City Council provides services through community safety partnerships and the full range of municipal services to our employees and estate.

Partnership is a central part of this – in areas such as protecting vulnerable members of our community and in community safety. We support your planned investment in social care services for both adults and children – it is vital that we all make the necessary investments to safeguard and protect the vulnerable people within our communities. Any changes in partnership working due to

austerity measures may increase cost or result in a loss of service provision we therefore value any consultation during this time of change.

We would be particularly interested to understand your budgetary plans for the Plymouth Community Safety Partnership and for activities in key areas such as domestic and sexual abuse and anti-social behaviour which are not specifically picked up within the report.

In reading your budget proposals, which integrates well with the objectives of the corporate plan and shows aligned thinking in resource allocation, the following series of other questions arise from the financial proposals contained within the four year plan:

- What process has been undertaken in each of the service review areas to understand the impact upon customers and stakeholders in addition to the internal comparison with the Council blueprint at 6.15.
- Whilst transformation is a crucial activity during the reshaping of services what plans are there to reduce the £27m budget once the key elements of delivery are achieved.
- Central government has provided a major incentive to Local Authorities to increase income through business rates allowing the retention of 49% of the proceeds. The GAME programme is attracting investment of £5.6m in 2015/16 to promote growth and increase income. How are decisions made which prioritise funding for this purpose against their use in essential service delivery?
- The current year budget is currently reported as overspending, is this now under control and does it have base budget implications for future years.
- The capital programme has an underlying funding from revenue of £5m, in times of scarce resources on revenue can this be afforded or is it a technical adjustment?
- Does the capital programme have significant revenue effects?

We hope that these comments are useful in your consideration of the 2015/16 budget.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

7 January 2015