



Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall

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17 February 2015

To: Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S RESPONSE TO REPORT OF THE DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 6 FEBRUARY 2015

Thank you for your report following the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 6 February 2015. At that meeting my Chief Executive Officer presented my proposed precept for 2015/16 and my plans for refreshing the Police and Crime Plan. I am delighted that the proposed precept was supported unanimously by the panel in my absence.

I have read through the Panel's formal report in relation to the matters discussed at the meeting and, as required in statute, I hereby respond to those reports and the Panel's recommendations.

I have set out below my responses and intend to publish these on the OPCC website in due course.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's plans for refreshing the Police and Crime Plan 2014/17

Police and Crime Commissioner's response

- (i) I will have regard to the comments made by the Police and Crime Panel prior to issuing the final Plan. I will of course submit a final copy of the Police and Crime Plan to the Police and Crime Panel prior to its publication.
- (ii) With regard to the additional points which the Panel raised I am able to assure the Panel that it is my intention to include a clearer focus on domestic abuse in the final version of my Plan.
- (iii) I understand why the panel wishes to have a full draft of my Police and Crime Plan to the Panel at its annual January/February meeting but I am still concluding my wider consultation at that time and considering the findings of the Peninsula Strategic Assessment so this will not be possible.

2015/16 Precept Notification

I am pleased that the Police and Crime Panel agreed to support my proposal unanimously to increase the precept by 1.99%. This was not a request that I made lightly but on the firm belief that this additional investment is necessary to protect our policing service.

Police and Crime Commissioner's response

The Police and Crime Panel made a number of recommendations relating to the precept setting process and the associated reports. My response to each recommendation is provided below:

- ***When providing details of proposed significant future savings, to include what each saving represents in percentage terms of the overall budget line.***

My Chief Executive Officer agreed at the meeting to provide this additional information and it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Panel before the end of March 2015.

- ***Provide the Panel with a report which details options for giving primacy to non-staff savings as opposed to resorting to staff reductions.***

Devon and Cornwall Police have received reduced levels of funding for several years. Throughout this period we have focused as far as possible on non-staff savings. Given that 80% of our total costs relate to staffing it is inevitable that to meet the magnitude of savings that are required over the next four years we will see a reduction in headcount. In all areas of business we will look carefully at the options available for delivering savings and it is my intention, in consultation with the Chief Constable, to ensure that staff reductions are avoided wherever possible. The options will be considered through detailed business cases as we explore opportunities for savings – not through a common formula.

- ***Undertake a review of procurement options to maximise on efficiencies and report back to the Panel upon completion.***

At the last meeting my Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer assured the Panel that achieving the highest level of efficiency in each procurement exercise continues to be a priority for me and the Chief Constable. I wholly support the statement that was made on my behalf. Devon and Cornwall are the lead force for the South West Procurement Department which acts on behalf of Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. This collaborative approach has achieved significant savings and I would be pleased to provide further details in my update report to the next meeting of the Panel.

- ***With the Chief Constable, provide a report to the panel on the viability of introducing initiatives and options for the scrapping of untaxed/abandoned vehicles and the potential for income generation.***

I have spoken with the Chief Constable and he has undertaken to prepare a report for me in respect of the recovery and scrapping of untaxed/uninsured/abandoned vehicles. This is an area which relates to other areas of public service as well as policing. The report will include where there

has been or are opportunities for cost recovery and potentially income generation.”

- ***Provide a report to the Panel detailing options for maximising capital receipts, commercialisation and leasing options, joint initiatives with partners, as methods of income generation and maximising return on estates in revenue terms that will minimise reliance on the use of reserves and an increase in police precept in the future.***

I am currently awaiting final legal advice on how we can take advantage of commercialisation opportunities, including ongoing income generation. This new area of activity for us has been made possible through changes introduced under the Localism Act and would be in addition to our current efforts to maximise capital receipts. The Panel has included an item on Innovative Income Generation in its work programme for the June/July meeting and I would welcome the opportunity to provide an update at that time.

- ***Provide the Panel with a detailed report clarifying where staff reductions will be made as a matter of priority.***

I appreciate the Panel’s desire to understand in greater detail how the footprint of the police family may alter as a result of action that needs to be taken to address the significant challenges we face. As you will be aware from the detailed discussions that took place at the Panel meeting last week there is a considerable amount of work that needs to take place in the coming year to identify what changes we may need to make and what impact they may have on staffing. Even in areas like the Strategic Alliance where an overall headcount figure has been identified as part of budgeting processes we are still at a relatively early stage in developing and considering business cases. As such I am not able at this stage to provide such a report. As work in this area becomes clearer I will of course share developments with the Panel.

- ***Report to the Panel a detailed longer-term strategy of how the policing landscape will look in four years’ time and how savings will be realised.***

I am working closely with the Chief Constable to develop our view of the shape of policing in Devon and Cornwall in the future. Whilst there is a need to achieve considerable savings over the next four years, it is also important that we consider how the expectations that the public have of the police service can be delivered in the most efficient way possible. This will involve transformational work on how policing is delivered. Staff reductions will inevitably be an element in this, given that staff costs equate to over 80% of our total budget and given the strong emphasis placed on non staff reductions over the past 5 years. An item on “Transformation” of policing has been included in the work programme of the Panel for the autumn meeting and I believe that this will provide an excellent opportunity to share the findings of our work with the Panel.

- ***Lobby the Home Office against making cuts to the grant provided to Devon and Cornwall Police of £1.2M for tackling terrorism and allied matters in the South West.***

It is expected that after the General election in May the review of police funding formulas will be a priority for the new administration. Police and Crime Commissioner's Treasurers have already prepared a technical submission to the Home Office for addressing inequalities in the existing system to which D&C have made an input. The general funding settlement has also been raised with South West MPs and the reduction in counter terrorism and capital grant will feature on future MP liaison agendas

- ***Provide the Panel with a report of initial details and proposals for income generation in the autumn 2015.***

The Panel has included an item on income generation in the work programme for 2015 and I will be happy to provide an update to the relevant meeting.

- ***Provide the Panel with a more detailed report to enable them to scrutinise 'earmarked' reserves. This detail should be routinely provided as part of budget/precept-setting reports.***

As part of the 2016/17 Precept submission to the panel an additional appendix will be included showing the purpose of earmarked reserves, the forecast risks they are expected to cover and plans for their use over the four year period of the MTFS.

Publication

In accordance with my statutory obligations, I will be publishing this response on the OPCC website in due course.



Tony Hogg
Police and Crime Commissioner