

# MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 19 November 2018



## Policing for Plymouth

In October the Police and Crime Commissioner abandoned the potential merger between Devon and Cornwall and Dorset Police, despite a 17 month effort by her office and the Chief Constable's team at considerable expense to drive towards closer integration. The decision reflected Plymouth City Council's and other Local Authorities' views that there was not an adequate business case that could demonstrate any significant benefits to local policing that would justify the inevitable and substantial increase in the Police precept.

The Chancellor's Budget on 29 October disappointed many in failing to deliver any additional funding for Policing except for national level counter-terrorism. Reference was made to a provisional funding settlement in December, but there is no timetable for a comprehensive update to the funding formula that has been deferred since 2015 and now looks set for 2020/21.

A public backlash protesting at the lack of Police resources is backed by authoritative statements about the unsustainability of police funding by the National Audit Office and comments by the Police Federation for Devon and Cornwall highlighting significant increases in recorded crime (up 31% in the past 2 years), alongside the loss of 975 personnel overall including 510 Police Officers (down 15%) and Police Community Support Officer reductions continuing until 2021/22 (down 41%).

The Police Commissioner has, as far as we can see, remained quiet and the Police and Crime Panel meeting scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> November has been cancelled for the time being due to a "lack of business". Meanwhile the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall spoke publicly to the BBC on 1 November calling for more government funding and stating that **"..the Thin Blue Line is broken"** across Devon and Cornwall, and admitted that lives are being put at risk as a direct result of Police cutbacks.

If Plymouth is not to see the safety of its citizens put further at risk as a direct result of political choices made outside this Chamber, then this Council must take greater action. The safety of Plymouth residents is increasingly being put at risk by a critically over-stretched Police Force, and a Police Commissioner who, in our view, lacks focus on driving the improvements needed to secure more effective policing in our city.

In these circumstances this Council resolves to:

1. Protest in the strongest possible terms to the Chief Constable at the reduction by 25% in PCSO numbers allocated to Plymouth as advised in a letter to this Authority signed by the Plymouth Police Commander, dated 2nd November 2018.
2. In a letter to the Home Secretary signed by the Leader of the Council, call for;  
An uplift in funding for Devon and Cornwall to fully address the crisis in its Policing. The December provisional funding settlement for Devon and Cornwall Police to be at least adequate to ensure an immediate stabilisation of Police Force numbers at current strength (Officers, PCSOs and staff), and to note other actions being taken (described below).
3. Take immediate steps to conduct direct engagement with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable as appropriate to ensure that policing in Plymouth is resourced fairly, and

to assess and plan the improvements necessary to address the requirements endorsed unanimously by full Council on 17 September 2018, namely;

- a. Investment back into Neighbourhood Policing, specifically the provision of more PCSOs and Neighbourhood Beat Officers.
  - b. Improvements to 999 call responses.
  - c. Commitment to improve the condition and use of the Police estate in Plymouth in line with the ambitions of a modern Police Force.
  - d. A spend profile for Plymouth that reflects the complexity of needs and demands of policing a major urban centre.
  - e. Retention of the city's Basic Command Unit.
4. Ensure that the requirements for enhanced Policing for Plymouth as developed under the action at 3. above are factored into any submissions by the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Home Secretary as part of the comprehensive review of the Police funding formula.
  5. Write to the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel, calling for an emergency meeting no later than December 2018, for the Panel to address these significant concerns.

Proposed – Councillor Gareth Derrick (via email)

Seconded – Councillor Sally Haydon (via email)