

CUMBRIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 7 February 2020 at 1.00 pm at Control Room, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Carleton Avenue, Penrith CA10 2FA

PRESENT:

Mr W McEwan (Cumbria County Council) (Chair)

Mr RK Bingham, Cumbria County Council
Mr KR Hamilton, Barrow Borough Council
Mr A Kirkbride, Allerdale Borough Council
Mr P McSweeney, South Lakeland District Council
Mr K Meller, Carlisle City Council

Also in Attendance:-

Mr T Gale	- Senior Policy and Scrutiny Project Officer
Mr P McCall	- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mrs G Shearer	- Deputy Chief Executive - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr B Spencer	- Group Solicitor/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Mr D Hamilton	- Democratic Services Officer
Ms M Bellis	- Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr R Marshall	- Joint Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms J Cooke, Ms G Dinsdale, Ms D Holden and Mr M Johnson.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting for any items of business on this occasion.

29 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of public participation to be considered at this meeting.

30 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

31 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 2

a Constabulary Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Panel considered a report from Cumbria Constabulary which gave details of the Revenue Budget Monitoring for 2019/20.

Members were informed that the current forecast of net expenditure amounts to £122.307m compared to a revised budget of £122.019m. It was explained that the variance amounts to a forecast overspend of £0.288m (0.24%) which represented an increase of £0.303m compared with the underspend of £15k reported at the end of June 2019.

The Panel were informed that overall core expenditure remained broadly in line with budget and that the increase in forecast expenditure was principally in relation to additional police officer recruitment in response to the government's proposed increase in police officer numbers (Operation Uplift).

Members discussed the Government's pledge to recruit an additional 20,000 officers nationally by the end of 2022/23 and it was explained that £0.989m of expenditure was currently expected to be incurred in 2019/20 to service this. The Panel noted that as part of Operation Uplift (Phase 1) the Home Office had given Cumbria a target of recruiting 51 additional officers by March 2021. Members were told that Cumbria's preparations were well advanced and that a substantial proportion of the additional officers would be in place by the end of the current financial year.

Members asked if it was known where the 51 additional officers would be deployed. The Commissioner answered that exact details would be dependent on expectations of phase 2 and 3 of Operation Uplift but he assured the panel of their commitment to getting officers back into local communities. Similarly, the structure would be reviewed after Operation Uplift to establish the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) needed by the service.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

b Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Panel received a report from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/19.

Members were informed that the current forecast of net expenditure amounted to £104.109m compared to a revised budget of £103.742m. It was explained that the variance amounted to a forecast overspend of £0.372m (0.35%).

The Panel noted that the forecast underspend on the commissioner's own office budget arises principally as a result of underspends on staff in the office of the PCC (£24k).

It was explained that in respect of the other budgets managed by the Commissioner, the forecast overspend arose as a result of combination of a slight overspend on premises costs, a change in how capital expenditure is financed and lower than budgeted investment income.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

32 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PRECEPT PROPOSALS

a Cumbria Constabulary: 2019 HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles Analysis

Members received a report regarding the Cumbria Constabulary: 2019 HMICFRS Value for Profiles Analysis.

The Panel was informed the profiles compared the forces within Cumbria's Most Similar Group (MSG) which were Lincolnshire, Norfolk and North Wales. It was noted that the aim of the profiles is to compare performance and the costs of achieving that performance.

It was highlighted to members that the VFM Profiles in themselves had limitations and that they required more detailed investigation before they could be safely used as a basis for decision-making. It was explained that in particular the profiles focussed on costs per head of population which tended to show Cumbria as relatively expensive across all services due to its low resident population. It was emphasised to members that the increased population due to tourism was not taken into account.

The high level analysis only covers areas of service where Cumbria had been identified as an outlier compared with its peer group. It was explained that an outlier was defined as being in the top or bottom 10% and where the effect of the difference is greater than £1 per head.

The 2019 profiles show that the areas identified as being significantly above all forces or MSG average cost are the same this year as they have been in previous years and this has consistently been the case across the period since value for money profiles were first introduced.

The general points regarding VFM profiles was brought to the Committee's attention explaining that Cumbria's geography, topography and socio-economic environment were unique and there were fixed costs associated with this regardless of comparisons within the MSG. It was explained that the main determinant used in the profiles for assessing value for money is the sparsity of the population and the rural nature of the county. Both of which result in higher costs to deliver police services compared to other forces, and limits the opportunities for cost effective collaboration with other forces for specialist operational services or private companies to provide services. As a result Cumbria Constabulary required more people and more equipment to deliver a police service to a small population distributed over a large area.

It was explained to members that all of the above resulted in additional fixed costs irrespective of policy or strategy decisions made by senior management.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

b Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast

Members considered a report by the Cumbria Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided a detailed analysis of the figures contained within the revenue budget for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) to 2023/24.

The report also provided a more detailed analysis of the budget for 2020/21 together with comparative information from the 2019/20 approved budget.

Members were provided with additional information in respect of the more unusual aspects of the budget and explanations where the budgets had changed significantly between the years.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

c Draft Capital Programme 2020/21 and Beyond

The Panel considered a report by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided information on the proposed capital programme for 2020/21.

Members were informed of the three main recurring elements to the Commissioner's capital programme namely Fleet, Estate and ICT schemes. It was explained that the ICT Capital Programme primarily provides for the replacement and improvement of the full range of ICT equipment but that the medium term financial forecast also supported the Constabulary strategy to invest in technology to modernise the police service that is delivered to communities.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

d Precept Consultation Responses

The Panel received an update on the Precept Consultation responses and noted the methodology used.

The consultation represented a significant proportion of the population and returned a 66% approval of the Commissions proposed increase to the Council Tax precept.

e Precept Proposal and Medium Term Budget 2020/21 to 2023/24

The Panel considered a report by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an overview of the medium term financial outlook. The report included the proposal for the precept that the Commissioner was presenting to the Panel for their views as part of his budget setting process.

Members noted that the precept proposal for 2020/21 was for an increase in the precept of 3.47%, which is an increase of £8.91 per annum for a band D property and took the total police element of the precept at band D to £265.59.

It was explained that whilst Operation Uplift funding has had the effect of increasing formula grant funding to Cumbria by £4.5m in 2020/21 and also provided a further £1.4m of grant conditional upon achievement of

officer recruitment, the additional grants have largely been committed to the recruitment of 51 new police officers and associated police staff and equipment. The precept proposal therefore aimed to mitigate the impact of real term reductions in core government funding.

Members were told that there were challenges presented in the medium term but that these challenges could be managed with the increase of the precept as it would prevent the creation of a permanent structural deficit.

33 DRAFT PRECEPT PROPOSALS (CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL) 2020/2021

Members considered a report by the Director of Finance (Cumbria County Council) regarding the Draft Precept Proposals 2020/21). The information accompanied the report from the Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner which set out the proposed budget and precept for 2020/21 and explained the Panel's options for decision-making.

The Panel was asked to review the proposed precept and decide whether to, support the precept without qualification or comment, support the precept and make recommendations or veto the proposed precept.

The Panel discussed the Commissioner's proposed precept and raised questions regarding the balance of new officers and the established provision of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's). The Panel supported the precept proposal but further recommended that the establishment provision of 95 PCSOs is maintained and this figure is aspired to, rather than maintained as establishment only.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the precept of 3.47% be supported;
- (2) the Panel makes the following representation to the Commissioner: the establishment provision of 95 PCSOs is maintained and that the figure is aspired to, rather than maintained as establishment only.

34 UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS

The Panel received a report from the Monitoring Officer (Cumbria County Council) which advised members of any complaints received in accordance the Panel's Complaints Procedure. The report outlined where appropriate, what, if any, action had been taken in respect of the complaints.

35 PANEL UPDATE REPORT

Members received a Panel Update report which provided information on key issues and developments that had occurred since the last meeting of the Panel on 14 October 2019:

- Progress on actions agreed at the October Panel meeting
- National policy developments

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

36 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Friday 22 May 2020 at 10.30 am in the Large Conference Room, Barrow Police Station, Andrews Way, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 2YE.

The meeting ended at 14:00pm