



WMPCP West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

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Mr Bob Jones
West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner
Lloyd House
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cc. Jacky Courtney,
Chief Executive, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

7th February 2014

Dear Bob

**West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Report on the Proposed Precept
2014/15**

Thank you for your attendance at the Panel meeting this week. Please find attached the Panel's statutory report on your proposed precept.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Jess Phillips
Vice Chair, West Midlands Police & Crime Panel

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Report of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

To the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

7th February 2014

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL REPORT ON THE PROPOSED PRECEPT 2014/14

1. Introduction

In accordance with Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Panel must review the proposed precept and make a report to the PCC. The Panel has the power to veto the precept proposal if two thirds of the total panel membership (10) members support this.

On 3rd February 2014 the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel considered the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) proposed 2014/15 Precept and Revenue budget and the 2014/15 – 2017/18 Capital budget.

2. Commissioner's Proposed Precept

The PCC's proposal was to increase the precept for 2014/15 by 3%, setting the Band D precept at £105.50. However, as the referendum trigger has not yet been announced a series of options were set out as the PCC had no intention to trigger a referendum.

Budget Options

£ million	2013/14	3% increase	2.5% referendum limit	2% referendum limit	1.5% referendum limit
Total Revenue budget	£566.0m	£553.4m	£553.4m	£553.4m	£553.4m
Less Government grant	-£498.8m	-£475.9m	-£475.9m	-£475.9m	-£475.9m
Balance to Fund via reserves and precept	£67.2m	£77.5m	£77.5m	£77.5m	£77.5m
Less use of reserves	-£2.3m	-£9.6m	-£9.9m	-£10.3m	-£10.5m
Precept	-£64.9m	-£67.9m	-£67.6m	-£67.2m	-£66.9m
Band D Council Tax	£102.43	£105.50	£104.99	£104.4	£103.97

3. Police and Crime Panel Members Present

Cllrs Alden, Bains, Hosell, Jamieson, Meeson, Phillips, Rowley, Smith, Tyler, Lionel Walker and Nick Drew

4. Panel Decision

A motion was proposed and seconded for the Panel to veto the precept and recommend that the PCC use £0.9m of his reserves. On a vote this was lost 2:8.

The Panel subsequently agreed (with Cllrs Alden and Meeson voting against) to support the PCC's proposal to set the Band D precept at £105.50, an increase of 3% on 2013/14.

The Panel further agreed that when the referendum trigger is known, it supported the PCC's proposal to reduce the precept to a level below that which would require a referendum, with the balance to be funded from the budget reserve.

The Panel notes that the PCC was minded to accept the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2014/15 if the referendum level is close to the freeze grant level of 1%.

5. Panel Comments on the PCC's Budget Proposals

Reserves

The Panel considered the level of reserves and noted this is unjustifiably high.

The Panel, therefore, supports the overall budget and plans to spend half of the £72m budget reserves up to 2016/17, as discussed, to address the PCC's concern that a lack of investment in the police service and preventative work could produce a "tipping point" where crime and anti-social behaviour levels increase.

Police Recruitment

The Panel welcomes the proposals to recruit police officers and release more for operational duties by establishing 100 more police staff posts. The Panel felt that the term 'additional' in paragraph 11a of your report could be misleading, given that the intention to recruit 450 officers over the next two years would not result in a net gain of officer numbers, but would replace some of the 1300 police officers already lost through retirement and those otherwise leaving the Force.

Victims' Funding

The Panel was concerned about an ongoing lack of clarity about funding for Victims. Following the Consultation Paper "*Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses*", Justice Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, announced in July 2012 that

an additional £50m nationally would be available to support victims. The Panel would like you to seek clarity about how this is being used and the amount available to the West Midlands force area. The Panel will also write to the appropriate Minister seeking clarification.

Children's Safeguarding Board Funding

The Panel would like you to confirm the funding for the seven Children's Safeguarding Boards. If the West Midlands Police contribution is expected to be less for 2014/15 compared to 2013/14 the Panel would like an explanation, as we would be concerned about this.

6. Conclusion

The Panel will publish this report on its website on Monday 10th February on www.birmingham.gov.uk/wmpcp.

The Panel looks forward to the Commissioner's response to this report and for confirmation of the 2014/15 precept level following the Government's referendum announcement.

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