

Report of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel ('The Panel')

to the

Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire ('The PCC')

with regard to

**The Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire's Draft Budget and Precept 2018/19**

The Panel met on Monday 29 January 2018 to receive and consider your proposed Budget and Precept for 2018/19, including details of the provisional Police Finance Settlement and other grants from the Home Office, your estimates of revenue from Council Tax and other funding proposals including the use of Reserves. You attended at that time to present your proposals. You were accompanied by your Chief of Staff and your Director of Finance and Performance.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and associated Regulations require us to consider and report on (with recommendations as appropriate) your proposed Precept. The legislation gives us the power to veto your Precept if we consider it to be too low or too high, and sets out the procedures to be followed both by the Panel and yourself in the event of the veto being exercised.

You reported that Government had announced a 'cash flat' Grant Settlement for both 2018/19 and 2019/20 which for Staffordshire equated to £116,900million per annum. In addition Precept flexibility had been introduced giving you the ability to raise up to £12 per household in 2018/19 in addition to the maximum 2% increase in Precept already provided for. You reminded us that, to date, you had resisted increases in Precept holding the view that economies and efficiencies should be maximised from existing resources before additional funding was sought. You were confident that that situation now existed. You also highlighted the challenges facing Policing in view of the changing and increasingly complex nature of crime including Domestic Violence, Child Sexual Abuse and Cyber Crime which had necessitated a complete review of the way in which Police Services were structured and resourced (notably in relation to Forensic services)..

You reported on public support for an increase in Precept particularly in order to provide for greater emphasis on Neighbourhood Policing. You acknowledged that resources had been transferred from this area of service to support other priorities. To demonstrate your commitment to improving policing presence and visibility you indicated an intention to allocate the additional funding to the recruitment of 44 additional Police Officers with that figure rising to give a total of 69 by 2020.

You proposed a total Precept increase of £11.40 per household (6.29%) for 2018/19 which would generate a £65.757 million council tax requirement, with an overall net budget requirement of £183.449million.

We discussed in detail the need for enhanced neighbourhood policing as called for by our constituents. You reported consistent policing numbers in recent years, including PCSOs and stressed that their operational deployment was for the Chief Constable and his Local Police Commanders to determine. You did however highlight the introduction of stringent Performance Management measures recognising the need to demonstrate to the public that their support for increased funding was justified.

We scrutinised a number of elements contained in your proposed revenue budget including overtime payments, noting the Chief Constable's intention to reduce this area of expenditure by £750,000 in 2018/19. We queried the progress of your Transformation Programme noting its contribution to achieving budget savings built into your Medium Term Financial Strategy. In addition we noted the level of Capital Receipts included in your overall budget which were to be generated by your review of the Police Estate.

Together with the Panel you discussed various projects being pursued as part of the 'Connected Staffordshire' initiative. The varied aims of those projects include achieving economies of scale and improving co-ordination and information sharing between agencies.

Your report to the Panel concluded with a statement by your Director of Finance and Performance on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. That Statement was noted.

At the end of our deliberations we resolved to support your Precept and Revenue Budget for 2018/19.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Williams', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

D. Williams  
Chairman  
Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

On behalf of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel.

