

Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2022 AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr Junab Ali (Chairman), Cllr Ross Henning (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Steve Bucknell, Cllr Daniel Cave, Cllr Caroline Corbin, Cllr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tony Pickernell and Mamie Beasant

Also Present:

Philip Wilkinson – Police & Crime Commissioner
Russell Holland – Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Naji Darwish – OPCC
Clive Barker – OPCC

Perry Holmes – Wiltshire Council
Kevin Fielding – Wiltshire Council

Total in attendance: 16

43 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Anna Richardson – Independent Member, Cllr Jenny Jeffries – Swindon Borough Council and Cllr Rich Rogers – Wiltshire Council.

44 **Minutes and matters arising**

Decision:

The minutes of the meetings held on Thursday 16 December 2021 and Thursday 13 January 2022 were agreed as the correct records and signed by the Chairman.

45 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

46 **Chairman's Announcements**

Cllr Brian Mathew advised that the Police and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee had met on Wednesday 2 February 2022 for its first meeting.

That the roll of the Complaints Sub-Committee was to look at complaints against Mr Philip Wilkinson - Police and Crime Commissioner ("the PCC") for Wiltshire and Swindon, and that the Police and Crime Panel was the vehicle to raise any other concerns or issues.

That the Chair of the Complaints Sub-Committee would report back to the Police and Crime Panel at the 10 March 2022 meeting.

47 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

48 **Formal consideration of PCC Precept proposal 2022/23**

The Commissioner outlined the report on the consultation process which sought to provide the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) with a summary of the PCC's public consultation and the public's view on the proposed £10 a year, per household, increase in the policing precept on a band D property.

That in January 2022 he had presented to the Police and Crime Panel with a paper which identified his initial thinking on the 2022-23 budget and draft MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy).

Central Grant

As detailed in the January paper the grant for Wiltshire had risen by £3.831m to £76.775m (excluding Pensions Specific Grant). This was Wiltshire's portion of the £550m provided by the government to fund nationally an additional 8,000 officers (the last year of the national uplift to 20,000 officers). After considering the cost of funding the 62 new officers allocated to Wiltshire the amount remaining for inflation or growth pressures is £1.8m (2.3%). Pressure on costs due to the National Insurance increase for the Social Care Tax and Pay awards were expected to exceed this amount.

It should be noted that the 5.2% cash increase for Wiltshire reported by the government included the funding of the 62 new officers and that the precept was increased by £10 for all Band D dwellings (the maximum available to all PCCs without referendum).

The Precept

Local funding was the sum of the precept plus collection funds. Collection funds hold any variances on precept collection in both collecting authorities (Wiltshire Council (WC) and Swindon Borough Council (SBC)). The collecting authorities must estimate the number of equivalent Band D properties, considering their local support scheme and the collection rate to arrive at a council tax base.

Pressures still remained on local councils with SBC reporting a deficit of £0.135m. This was cancelled about by the surplus of £0.430m reported by WC leaving a net figure collection fund surplus of £0.295m.

The council tax base had recovered this year with a consolidated increase of 1.1% leading to a total base of 266,748.

That the initial paper identified that the Commissioner was considering a £10 increase in precept. This would result in a 4.3% increase and would help resolve issues arising from the limited central grant settlement.

That the Commissioner was considering the whole funding position. Wiltshire remained the 3rd lowest total funded area per head of population. It had the lowest council tax in the South West (the 2021-22 regional average excluding Wiltshire was £250.86 for a Band D property). Based on this low funding position he was minded to increase the precept by £10 for a Band D property to £241.27 (from £231.27 in 2021-22).

This increase would assist in the long term funding of Wiltshire Police as it would impact the base for which all future precepts start from.

The Commissioner continued to campaign for fairer funding for Wiltshire. To not increase the precept when the government had specifically given the option to do this would be a missed opportunity.

Points made by the Panel members included:

That there were concerns why nearly 50% of the consultation respondents did not want a precept increase and the important that residents understood that the Commissioner was working with the Chief Constable to deliver an effective and cost efficient service, giving greater value for money.

The importance of utilising police vehicles to deliver a cost efficient service.

The need for all officers be fully trained if Wiltshire Police was to deliver a better, value for money service.

Better training for call handling staff.

That Wiltshire Police needed better channels of communication with the public, particularly with victims of crime.

That many residents had a perception that Wiltshire Police did not appear to do a great deal – lots of cars at road traffic accidents and other incidents etc.

That the public wanted to see better services, particularly burglary detection rates.

The hope that Wiltshire saw a measurable improvement in the funding of its Police force over the coming years – with the need for the Commissioner and local MPs constantly lobbying central government for a more fairer funding formula. The need to have regular meetings with the Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, and more co-ordinated work through Area Boards etc.

That the LGBT community were reluctant to report crime as they did not feel that they were listened to by the Police.

The importance of creating a good team spirit between the OPCC and PCP – PCC keen to make Wiltshire Police a better force, delivering a good service that was recognised by Wiltshire residents.

That 64% of survey respondents were older residents – important to try and engage younger residents to get their views.

That Wiltshire residents needed to see improvements in service if the budget precept was increased to the maximum.

The need to consider plain clothes Special Constable operations.

Decision

- **That the PCP supported the Commissioner's precept proposal to increase council tax by £10 per annum (4.3%)**

The Chairman thanked the Panel members and Commissioner for their input in the discussion.

49 **Future Meeting Dates**

Thursday 10 March 2022 - Assembly Room, Town Hall, St.John's Street, Devizes SN10 1BN

Thursday 9 June 2022 - venue to be confirmed

Thursday 29 September 2022 - venue to be confirmed

Thursday 15 December 2022 - venue to be confirmed

50 **Any Other Business**

The Commissioner advised that:

National Police Air Service – That Wiltshire Police did not need the fixed wing aircraft that they paid for, but did not use. That he was in discussions to remove Wiltshire from this contract, working with other like minded Police forces, and was taking legal advice on this. That he would continue to pursue the contract issues to get Wiltshire a fairer deal.

The Police and Crime Panel were happy to support this.

Salisbury Police Station – That he was actively looking at two options for a new Salisbury Police Station – ongoing negotiations to take on the Bourne Hill Hub from Wiltshire Council, or a new build site at the Church Field estate.

That he would update the PCP when more information became available.

Drugs - That he was working with other South West Police Forces to target embedded drug dealers with a planned two week intensive Police operation during March 2022. It was agreed that Wiltshire Police would release a communications paper to help local councils promote this operation when more information was available.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner for his updates.

51 **Close**

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.30 am)

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