



BUSINESS COORDINATION BOARD

APPROVED MINUTES

Date: 8th January 2019 **Time:** 15:00

Location: Conference Room 1, Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters

Members:

Jason Ablewhite	Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Ray Bisby	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Nick Dean	Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Dorothy Gregson	Chief Executive, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Dan Vajzovic	Assistant Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

In Attendance:

Jim Haylett	Head of Business Development, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Chas McDevitt	Head of Finance, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Cristina Strood	Head of Policy for Police and Fire, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Matthew Warren	Interim Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Aly Flowers	Senior Policy Officer, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Niki Howard and Alan Baldwin.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Verbal update on Medium Term Financial Strategy and Precept Setting

3.1 Matthew Warren provided a verbal update to the Business Co-ordination Board (the "Board") on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the formal launch of the Police and Crime Commissioners (the "Commissioner") survey seeking the public's views on how they are willing to support policing as part of their council tax (the precept survey).

3.2 The Board were informed that the MTFS is based on the Commissioner's preferred option, Option 2, for a precept increase of £2 per month/£24 per year on a typical Band D household. This option was consistent with the proposals being made by the majority of Police and Crime Commissioners nationally. The level of funding Option 2 could generate would address some of the challenges and cost pressures Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the "Constabulary") face, such as increases in costs for funding both pensions and insurance premiums but at the same time giving the scope to allow an additional increase up to 50 local policing officers. Option 1 of the Commissioner's survey is to increase the precept by £4 per year would mean the loss of 80 officers. Option 3 to increase the precept by £10 per would require a public referendum but would provide funding for more than 350 officers and bring the funding more in line with the national average.

3.3 Whilst the Board welcomed the flexibility provided by the Government to give Police and Crime Commissioners the ability to raise the precept up to £24 without going to public referendum, the level of funding this would generate for the Constabulary is still below the national average. Consequently, this meant that funding would still be challenging over the next few years to meet the demand placed upon the Constabulary. Option 3 would create a sustainable budget.

3.4 Clarification was still being sought from the Home Office on whether the pension costs would be built in permanently to future Government police funding but until this position can be confirmed, increase pension costs would have to be funded out of the local policing precept and not from the Constabulary's budget reserves.

3.5 The Commissioner wished to commend the Chief Constable, his team and the Constabulary's officers and staff for all they do to keeping Cambridgeshire safe within the current financial constraints. This not only demonstrates their resilience and commitment to public service but shows even when the demand outstrips resource, the value for money that is delivered. There were challenges, such as a drop in public confidence, and using the precept to balance the budget, but the Commissioner gave his assurance to the Board that he was committed to getting fair and adequate funding for the Constabulary.

- 3.6 The Commissioner wished to take the opportunity to state to the Board why he considered that his preferred option of £2 per month for the precept rise was appropriate. This was first and foremost based on his awareness of the challenges that the Constabulary constantly face and will continue to face. Whilst he fully recognised that the rise was above inflation, he felt he was able to justify in respect of putting Cambridgeshire first, and felt there were three fundamental reasons to justify this.
- 3.7 Firstly, the Commissioner was clear that the Government needed to review the way the Police Funding Formula was divided up in respect of ensuring that the Constabulary receives fair, equitable and sustainable funding. This would redress and rebalance the position that the Constabulary faces, in particular in respect of a growing population and consequential demand growth. The growth prediction for Cambridgeshire of 20% by 2031 consequently means that a bigger population requires a bigger police force to serve it. The population growth needs to be tracked against an increase in officer numbers and the realistic current and increasing demands, such as the response to those in mental crisis, and the time taken to investigate more complex and historical crimes.
- 3.8 Secondly, given the pressure on the Constabulary especially at peak times, the Commissioner felt that he owed it to the Constabulary's officers and staff to propose a precept rise. In recognition of his statutory duty to maintain an efficient and effective police service, he wanted to create a financial environment for the Chief Constable to flourish effectively. Whilst he had a number of meetings with Policing Ministers and continued to lobby Government along with his fellow Commissioners, when the proposed changes to the Funding Formula would come into effect remained out of the control of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- 3.9 Thirdly, the Commissioner acknowledged that the Constabulary had worked hard at creating efficiencies and the cost per head of population was lower than the national average, however he felt that there was still some challenges regarding further efficiencies that needed to be faced in the coming financial year. The Constabulary and partners need to identify where efficiencies can be made to ensure we all work in the right direction together.
- 3.10 The Commissioner reminded the Board that the Estates Strategy needs to delivery efficiencies and generate income streams.
- 3.11 The Chief Constable welcomed the acknowledgement given by the Commissioner of the Constabulary's work but acknowledged this is a reflection of the hard work of everyone in the organisation. He agreed with the Commissioner's summary of three reasons why the precept rise was needed, in particular that the Police Funding Formula had not been fair and needed sorting; the pressure on the police force in respect of volume and complexity of demand and the impact of the pressures on partner-led services; and the growth in population was very evident.

- 3.12 The Chief Constable assured the Board that the Constabulary were working hard to create further efficiencies but were not complacent and recognised there was still work that needed to be done. Work was underway to look not only within the force but across collaborative partnerships such as the tri-force (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire) and the Seven Force (tri-force plus Essex, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk).
- 3.13 The Chief Constable was of the opinion that the investment the precept proposal would deliver of up to 50 officers would mean positive gains in policing for Cambridgeshire, in particular to strengthen the neighbourhood policing profile.
- 3.14 The Chief Executive reminded the Board that the MTFs was still a working draft. The final version would be submitted to the Police and Crime Panel meeting on the 13th March 2019. There were two substantive matters to note for the MTFs. Firstly, the articulation of the demand for service faced by the Constabulary and the need to better inform the public of that in order to manage their expectation regarding the Constabulary's response. Secondly, the need for a productivity strategy to give assurance that both productivity and effectiveness are being addressed particular in respect of back-office transactional processes.
- 3.15 The Commissioner informed the Board that he was holding a briefing session for Police and Crime Panel members ahead of the formal Panel meeting on the 30th January. This briefing would enable the Panel to have a fuller understanding of the challenges the Constabulary were facing and what the Commissioner and the Chief Constable were trying to achieve with the money generated from the precept proposal.
- 3.16 The Board recommended that they were content with the aims and direction of the draft MTFs and were supportive of the Commissioner's preferred option in his precept survey.



Jason Ablewhite