

## **WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

### **WEST MERCA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) PROPOSED PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2020/21**

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#### **Recommendation**

1. It is recommended that the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) considers the:
  - (i) West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Proposed Budget 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23;
  - (ii) Mid-year report of the PCP's Budget Scrutiny Task Group; and
  - (iii) provides a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner on the proposed precept, including any recommendations, outlining whether it vetoes the precept or not.

#### **Background**

2. Each police force area raises extra money to pay for policing activity through council tax. This is called the police precept and is included in every council tax bill. The level of police precept is set locally every year (in February) by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
3. Under the provisions of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Panel ('the Panel') has a statutory role to review the PCC's proposed precept level and formally respond to it. The Panel is required to submit a formal response to the PCC no later than 8 February 2020.
4. The legislation only requires that the Panel 'respond' to the proposed precept – there is no requirement that the Panel has to either support the precept or veto it; therefore, the Panel can choose to only comment on the proposal if it wishes. Guidance related to the scrutiny of the precept by Police and Crime Panels is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **Budget Scrutiny Task Group**

5. Due to the late receipt of the Government settlement, the Budget Task Group has not been able to meet with the PCC prior to this meeting to consider the proposed precept. It has however met to consider the mid-year budget position, reflecting on issues highlighted by the Panel as priorities for review for the 2019/20 financial year. A summary of the issues discussed is enclosed at Appendix 2.

#### **Consultation**

6. The PCC carried out a Consultation on his proposals which closed on 24 January 2020. In this he set out that the Government settlement was not yet known. For the consultation the Commissioner proposed a 2.94% increase for the policing portion of

council tax (which equated to approximately 50p extra per month for a Band D household). He suggested that this was consistent with a strategy he announced a year ago and covered the rising costs facing West Mercia Police. It would also support the Commissioner to continue reforming the force, allow investment for the tools that officers needed in order to carry out their roles effectively, and would enable officer numbers to be protected.

7. For completeness, and due to the uncertainty around central funding, the Commissioner included two other scenarios in his consultation. The first was based on a 2% council tax increase (a cap that was currently imposed by Government), and the second was based on the maximum that was allowed for the current financial year of £12/5.54%.

8. The West Mercia PCC Proposed Budget 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 is attached at Appendix 3 and the results of the Budget Consultation 2020/21 are attached at Appendix 4.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 - Guidance related to the Scrutiny of the Precept by Police and Crime Panels

Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police and Crime Panel: Report of the Task Group on its review of the mid-year budget position 2019/20

Appendix 3 – West Mercia PCC proposed Budget 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23

Appendix 4 - Budget Consultation Summary 2020/21

## **Contact Points for the Report**

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal & Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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