



Councillor Nicola Davies
Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Chair
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7th February 2019

Dear Mr Seccombe,

Warwickshire Policing Precept 2019/20

Thank you for presenting your budget proposals to the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel on 4th February 2019, and for addressing the broad ranging questions posed by Panel members.

I write to confirm that all Members of the Panel present at the meeting voted to support your proposal of a £24 per annum increase in the local policing precept for band D properties (and equivalent percentage increase for all other bands) in the 2019/20 financial year. In their deliberations the Panel identified several areas of high significance that they will seek to scrutinise further over the coming year:

2019/20 Uncertainties

The Panel acknowledges the uncertainties created by the decision of West Mercia to end the Strategic Alliance between the two forces in October 2019. The Panel noted that your budget includes an assumption that the model of policing adopted by Warwickshire Police from October 2019 will have an equivalent financial envelope to the arrangements in the first half of the year. This uncertainty around the Force from October 2019 carries obvious risks for the viability of the budget as well as the ability of the Force to deliver on improvement projects especially the significant investment in ICT which has been identified.

The Panel therefore expects to be kept informed of both progress towards the new model of policing that will be adopted when the Strategic Alliance ends and its financial implications.

Increasing Officer Numbers

The Panel supports the increase in the establishment as presented in your public consultation and will closely monitor progress made towards the new establishment figure of 987 over the coming year. A number of Panel Members have received feedback from across the county that residents want a more visible police force and expect to see increased investment in local policing following a £24 increase in the precept. Whilst it is important to acknowledge a desire for more visible policing and the positive impact this would likely have on the fear of crime some of the Members were keen to stress that the primary driver of policing resource allocation should be to need and protecting the vulnerable from high harm crimes.

Rural Crime

The Panel welcomes your acknowledgment of the challenge the County faces from rural crime and Chief Constable's intentions to reinforce the resources available to help tackle it. The Panel stressed that the impact of rural crime is felt by all communities; urban, suburban and rural and welcomed the establishment of a new Rural Crime Team. The Panel support you in working with the Chief Constable to expand the unit should the initial allocation of four officers and a sergeant produce positive results.

Fairer Funding

The Panel continues to express their support for your efforts to secure a fairer funding formula from the Government settlement which currently favours urban forces and thus places a heavier burden on residents in Warwickshire to directly fund the police through council tax. The Panel would welcome an update in due course.

Conclusion

The Panel will continue to work as your 'critical friend' supporting and challenging as you navigate the delivery of new policing arrangements for Warwickshire in 2019/20.

The Panel would like to record its thanks for the quality of information they have received, and commend the open and transparent approach that your office and Warwickshire Police have taken in setting the budget.

The Panel also acknowledges the proactive work undertaken by you and your office to engage with Panel Members to contribute towards delivery of enhanced public consultation. The targeted approach to engaging with residents particularly in the north of the county in this year's precept consultation has been notable and welcome.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D'.

Councillor Nicola Davies
Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Chair