



11/02/2020

By email

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Dear Councillor Reilly

Re: Warwickshire policing precept 2020/21

Thank you for your prompt response to my budget proposals. I am pleased that the Police and Crime Panel have unanimously supported my proposed policing precept increase of £9.99 per year on a band D property (and equivalent increases for all of the other bands) for the financial year 2020/21.

As outlined in my presentation to the Panel, this budget and precept increase will enable the funding to be in place to support an additional 41 officers in Warwickshire, will also provide for the support and infrastructure to maintain and sustain the increased number of officers and enable the force to continue its work to transition from the alliance. It will however also require the force to work more efficiently and productively to achieve their savings, and the increased income targets particularly in vetting services.

These extra resources will ensure that Warwickshire Police is able to provide a better, more visible presence across the County which will be more responsive, whilst also ensuring that the various elements are in place and funded to ensure that services can continue to be transitioned from the alliance to standalone services in Warwickshire. The resources will also be available to enable Warwickshire police to develop the work with our new partners to deliver improved services which will protect our communities and keep them safe.

I do however note the Panel's areas of significance and the intention to scrutinise and monitor these over the coming months, either through the Budget Working Group or the wider committee. I would however comment on them further as follows:

2020/21 uncertainties:

I agree and am grateful of your acknowledgement of the significant achievement by Warwickshire Police to transition to a predominantly standalone force, but also accept the ongoing challenge and diminished ability within the budget to deal with sudden or unforeseen shocks or changes, due to the reduction in reserves and the increased borrowing. I will continue to review the Force's progress on the transition

of services, programme delivery, budget monitoring and the developing picture on entering new collaborations through the newly established governance arrangements in Warwickshire. I will keep the Panel fully informed at future PCP meetings, or through the budget working group.

The one year settlement provided to forces does create some ongoing uncertainties around future funding across the medium term. However, if and when any further information becomes available through a comprehensive spending review or by other means, a report will be brought back to the Budget Working Group and Panel as appropriate.

Precept consultation

I acknowledge the feedback on the precept consultation, which still achieved a good response despite the difficult circumstances offered by the uncertainty over the timing of central funding announcements and the limitations in supporting information that could be given to the public. Analysis by my office shows that our consultation achieved the fourth highest participation per head of population of the 22 PCCs disclosing consultation results across England, despite Warwickshire having among the smallest offices and staff numbers.

Nevertheless, I understand the Panel's desire for further improvement in these figures and can assure you that my office will work to develop and improve the reach of our public consultation, working with our partners wherever possible, to use the most cost-effective ways of encouraging increased participation, particularly from those areas of the County where response rates in the past have been light.

Climate change

As explained at the meeting, I am keen to seize any opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of our estate, but also of our fleet to minimise the impact on the climate. The comments the Panel made regarding the cost effectiveness of retro-fitting are acknowledged and resonate given the need to ensure value for money for taxpayers. I can confirm that as we invest more heavily in our estate over the coming year, the consideration of energy efficiency and the impact on the climate will remain a priority. I will aim to keep the Panel informed of the specific work under this agenda and will report back accordingly to future meetings.

Fairer funding

I am grateful for the Panel's support and appreciation of the work undertaken by myself and the office to secure more equitable police funding which recognises more appropriately the demands on rural forces. I will continue at every opportunity to raise this issue – with the Home Secretary, the Policing Minister and, of course, our Warwickshire Members of Parliament. I will keep the Panel informed and very much hope that this will be back on the national political agenda over the coming months, with a positive outcome for Warwickshire achievable.

Finally, I wish to put on record that I am extremely grateful for the support and challenge provided by the Panel to myself and to the work of the wider office. I believe we have a common interest and desire to ensure that Warwickshire Police

provides excellent and effective policing services throughout the county, particularly as we continue to transition from the alliance. The open and constructive manner in which the Panel has scrutinised me and the work of the office has been invaluable to ensure that this remains the focus and that our communities are kept safe. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Seccombe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip Seccombe TD
Police and Crime Commissioner