

The Police and Crime Panel meeting on 05 February 2015 centred around two things: an update on the Safer Cyber initiative and the agreeing of the Gloucestershire Police Precept.

Safer Cyber

A presentation was given on Safer Cyber, the sixth priority in the Police and Crime Plan. It was a progress update as well as giving some information around the governance of this work. Glos Police have been involved in a number of EU funded initiatives to help secure the Cyber safety of both the residents and businesses in Gloucestershire. This included Cyber Impact Events and training of officers in the prevention of Cyber Crime.

A Digital Investigation Governance Board has been established to develop a plan covering the 6Ps Framework. The 6Ps being: Protect, Pursue, Prepare, Prevent, Pre-event positioning, Post event.

There was also an update regarding a project between the Constabulary, the University of Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to create a Green Cyber Security Training Centre and Conference Centre. This is to help bridge a skills gap in the County as it was assessed that there was a 66% gap between the current Cyber Security Skills and where the business need was. It was stressed that this would be a good opportunity for local young people as Cyber Security is a well paid and in-demand skill set that could lead to a good career.

There was also an initiative by the Constabulary called the Gloucestershire Safer Cyber Forum for local businesses to share alerts and warnings that could help other members be prepared for future cyber threats.

Police Precept

The Commissioner stated last year, when arguing for a 1.9% increase, that he had committed to not raising the precept this year. So he produced a budget on that basis. He did use the caveat of saying unless something came up that he did not know about. He outlined the Government's future position on police funding and set out what will happen if the budget remains the same. There will be a reduction in Police Officers and Officer recruitment will be on hold from 1 April 2015. The reduction in numbers will mainly be due to retirement. The Commissioner stated that he was confident that the Constabulary will rise to the challenge within these difficult financial circumstances.

The Commissioner asked the Chief Constable to contribute to the debate, and she stated while the budget was sound a further increase of 1.9% would reduce the deficit and allow some priorities to retain their current level of funding.

There was a good debate around whether or not to ask the Commissioner to revise his budget in light of a higher precept or to accept the budget and for the Constabulary to find ways, other than raising taxes, to ensure the work is done.

There was a motion to veto the budget in light of raising the precept, but that did not pass. So the no increase in precept was accepted and the Panel requested that the Commissioner consider alternative ways of reducing the savings.