

PCP Report for O&S – 11th February 2019

Date of meeting: Monday 4th February 2019

Summary

This month, the Police & Crime Panel approved a proposal from the Commissioner to increase the precept we pay by £2 per month. This will come into effect as of April 2019.

Agenda item 6: Proposed Gloucestershire Police Precept

The current funding from central government is not sufficient to support policing needs in the county. We have a low core funding level relative to other parts of the country, receiving £86.43 per head against a national average of £121.02. While the Commissioner recognises that this is unfair, he has stated that there are no sources of additional revenue available to him other than raising the precept.

A 10% increase, which constitutes around £2 per month for an average band D property, was tabled, debated and approved with a recommendation. While this may not be the fairest financial deal for people living in Gloucestershire, it is the right decision to take in order to deliver them the best possible policing. The panel concurred that raising the precept to guarantee sufficient funding was something it simply had to authorise.

Increases in reported crimes, increases in the complexity of crimes, and a huge spike in the volume of crimes being committed on various online platforms, have all contributed to a need for greater resources. The monies generated, which come to an additional £4.1m, will deliver an additional 74 police officers, with investment in key policing areas:

- Burglaries and robberies, gun crime, knife crime and organised crime
- Roads policing
- Emergency response
- Reporting incidents
- Keeping children safe
- Protecting vulnerable adults
- Cyber crime

A major source of additional crime is online. Threats of violence, including assaults, rapes and killings, are considered violent crimes. As such, the widespread use of several major online platforms has led to a substantial increase in the number of crimes. The Commissioner and his team spoke of the increased challenges that police forces around the country face as a consequence of this. The tech companies who provide the forums where these crimes are being committed are taking no responsibility for this. With this in mind, the panel agreed to pass the motion, with the recommendation that the Commissioner returns to central government and calls on the Treasury to levy more taxes from these firms specifically to pay for an increase in police funding.

Standard item: Chief Executive's Report

The key item from the Chief Executive's Report is the withdrawal from the Tri-Force command structure with Avon and Somerset. This has been done amicably and professionally, but the constabularies and commissioners have each concluded that cross-county collaboration was no longer best operational practice. Tri-Force Specialist Operations will cease to exist. All Gloucestershire Tri-Force officers and staff come back to the sole command of Gloucestershire Constabulary as of April.