

Police & Crime Panel Report for Overview & Scrutiny – 24th February 2020

Date of Panel: 3rd February 2020

Summary

The main focus of the February Panel was the debate surrounding an increase to the precept. The Commissioner was requesting a small increase, 2.7%, but this is against a context of a 10% rise last year and an initiative from central government to provide funding for new police officers.

Beyond the precept discussion, the commissioner updated the panel on progress with X and Y. He reported that the constabulary's new training centre in Berkeley is due to open – on time and within budget – which is expected to become a significant facility, and should also offer opportunities for commercial revenue.

Annual Item: Budget

In July 2019 the Prime Minister pledged to put 20,000 more police officers on the streets of the UK. To achieve this, funding from central government is to be distributed to constabularies, which will be ring-fenced. This will give Gloucestershire Constabulary 74 additional officers and 37 additional staff, which should be ready to begin service in two years. The formula used to distribute the funding is the same formula that the Commissioner described as unfair a year ago – Gloucestershire will receive just 0.76% of the total monies distributed across all 43 constabularies.

The Commissioner reported that the constabulary is in a healthy financial position, but needs the precept to increase in order to generate additional funding for other parts of the operation, and to mitigate against inflation. The Commissioner requested an increase to the precept by 2.7%, which amounts to £6.76 for a Band D property. This request was granted.

Non-Standard item: National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels

The panel considered whether or not to join the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels. As there is no cost involved and no compulsory commitments for members, the Panel saw no down side to this and agreed to join.

Standard item: Chief Executive Report

The Commissioner gave a short PowerPoint presentation providing information about the new training centre in Berkeley, called Sabrina. This looks to be a well thought through, state-of-the-art facility. The facility, acquired due to its size, location and potential, is larger and has greater capacity than the constabulary requires. As such, there may be opportunity to monetise the asset by hiring space out to other organisations and other police organisations.

This report was noted by the panel, with some discussion around road safety.

At the suggestion of one panel member, a future meeting of the panel will take place at the new Sabrina training centre. Panel members will be given a tour of the facility prior to the meeting. Members supported this idea unanimously.