

Mr M Nundy
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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11 February 2019

Dear Mr Nundy

Police Precept Proposal for 2019/20

Thank you for your e-mail of 8 February 2019 enclosing a copy of the Panel's statutory report following the meeting on Tuesday of last week.

Once again, I very much welcome the fact that the Panel unanimously agreed to my proposal to increase the precept by £23.99. This represents a 12.04% increase, the maximum amount permissible without breaching the £24 referendum limit for a Band D property. This is in line with the Government's assumption that all PCCs will maximise the amount that they can raise from the Council Tax.

I note the Panel's reluctance and as I indicated at the meeting, the decision to recommend this increase has not been taken lightly. Whilst recognising the additional pressures on the service, I am very concerned about the Government's policy of ensuring that the responsibility of generating such a large proportion of the extra funding needed falls on PCCs and local taxpayers. The Panel recognised that there is little choice in the circumstances but to increase the precept by the maximum amount possible without requiring a referendum. I endorse the concerns of Panel members over this approach which I and many of the public share. I welcome their constructive comments and the intention to write to the Government outlining the added burden that this places on the poorest in our communities. This is helpful, as is the decision to contact the Home Secretary and Minister for Policing and Fire over the fact that the 2019/20 Police Grant settlement is only for one year, seriously inhibiting medium term planning. As discussed at the meeting, it would also be of assistance if these matters could be brought to the attention of Leaders of the four unitary authorities in the Force area.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Panel for allowing me to explain my reasons for recommending the maximum increase. This allows me to make the best resources available to the Force and to continue the development of partnership working to try to maintain the momentum that is driving the improvements in the service being delivered to our local communities.



With regard to the observations and recommendations, it is the role of the Panel to hold me to account and for me to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of service to achieve the outcomes set out in my Police and Crime Plan. In relation to the need for clarity over police officer numbers, the Chief Constable provides me with regular updates on staffing levels. I will make arrangements for my Chief Executive, Rachel Cook, to work with you to ensure that reports on this are built into your work programme. Similarly, the Chief Constable will be reporting on the budget as the year progresses, including progress on the achievement of savings and efficiencies and arrangements will be made to keep Panel members informed.

Also, as mentioned at the meeting, I agree that it would be helpful, in view of the current level of uncertainty about future funding arrangements, if we would provide Panel members with advance notice of issues that will impact on the precept decision for 2020/21 and financial projections for later years, ahead of next year's formal precept setting meeting.

In closing, having considered the Panel's report and observations following the discussions on 5 February 2019, I can now formally confirm that I have determined that the precept for 2019/20 will be £223.31 per annum for a Band D property. This represents an increase of £23.99 or 12.04% on the precept for the current financial year.

Yours sincerely

Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner

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