



**Norfolk Police and Crime Panel**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 31 January 2014 at 10.00 a.m**  
**County Hall, Norwich**

**Main Panel Members Present:**

Alec Byrne (Chairman)	Norfolk County Council
Dr A Boswell	Norfolk County Council
Mr Brian Hannah	Norfolk County Council
Mr Paul Kendrick	Norwich City Council
Dr Christopher Kemp	South Norfolk Council
Mr Brian Long	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Mr William Richmond	Breckland District Council
Mr Richard Shepherd	North Norfolk District Council
Mr Lee Sutton	Great Yarmouth Borough Council

**Officers Present**

Mrs Susan Farrell	Democratic Support Manager
Mr Greg Insull	Assistant Head of Democratic Services
Mrs Jo Martin	Scrutiny Support Manager

**Others Present**

Mr Stephen Bett	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk
Mr Simon Bailey	Chief Constable for Norfolk
Ms Jenny McKibben	Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk
Mr Mark Stokes	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Chief Executive
Mr John Hummersone	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Chief Finance Officer

**1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Ms Sharon Brooks (Co-opted Independent Member), Mr Ian Graham (Broadland District Council) and Mr Alexander Sommerville CPM (Co Opted Independent Member).

**2 Members to Declare any Interests**

- 2.1 None.

**3 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency**

- 3.1 The Chairman advised that there were no urgent items of business to consider.

#### **4 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2013**

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- Attendance of the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, Ms Jenny McKibben
- Para 5.6 - I am a qualified Chartered Public Finance Accountant
- Para 5.10 – Cambridgeshire was in partnership with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police Authorities.
- Para 5.14 – I have no other paid employment, but I do unpaid charitable work.

#### **5. Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Proposed Precept for 2014-15**

- 5.1 The Chairman welcomed the Commissioner for Norfolk and his officers and invited him to present his proposed precept.

- 5.2 The Chief Constable, Mr Bailey, gave a presentation, set out at Appendix 2 to these minutes. As part of his presentation, it was noted that there were 3 overriding areas of focus for the coming year, namely to:

**KEEP** Norfolk one of the lowest crime counties in the country  
**SUPPORT** victims of crime, vulnerable and elderly people and  
**PROTECT** the frontline in the face of cuts

He went on to describe the impact and change in the nature of crimes, in terms of the most vulnerable in Norfolk society, and he set out the approaches being taken to move resources and address this nationally increasing trend.

- 5.3 He advised the Panel that the work which was now well underway jointly with Suffolk Constabulary was heralded as exemplary, with only two other police authorities in contention for matching this degree of cross border collaboration. He added that further inter activities were planned between the two police forces, which would be publicised in February, making this degree of complex and comprehensive joint working unmatched within England and Wales.
- 5.4 He drew to members' attention the fact that Norfolk Constabulary was a highly performing police force, ranking within the top 3 or 4 in the country for many areas of its operations. This continued to be the case despite the current challenging times and continuing pressures to reduce the workforce. He concluded by stating that his biggest challenge was how to carry on maintaining this performance and tackling complex crime within the context of a reducing budget and ongoing reductions in his workforce.
- 5.5 Mr John Hummersone, Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Chief Finance Officer addressed the Panel to present the financial implications of the precept proposal. In doing so, he noted that he would present to the next Panel meeting information on the cost of the Office of the Commissioner and details of the Police & Crime Commissioner's delegated budget.

- 5.6 He explained that the decision to propose an increase in the police and crime element of the Council Tax in 2014-15, by a maximum of 1.9722%, had not been taken in isolation; the decision needed to be seen in the context of the medium term. He also drew members' attention to the fact that there was no clear information at this stage on the point at which a referendum might be triggered, as details on the final Government Grant settlement would not be made known until around 3 February. He stressed however that there was no intention to trigger a referendum and so the precept proposal was at this stage provisional. He then highlighted references in the report, at paragraph 10, to significant collaborative arrangements which should reduce borrowing and deliver future efficiencies.
- 5.7 In concluding, Mr Hummersone advised that, with increasing inflationary pressures and the need to address this in pay awards, coupled with the significant need to work to support those most vulnerable within Norfolk, the impetus to address demand led growth needed to be met. The Commissioner was, therefore, minded to recommend Option 2 as set out in the report as his proposed precept. Mr Hummersone confirmed that he had a statutory responsibility to be assured of the processes carried out in preparing the budget and he noted that he was content to do so.
- 5.8 Mr Mark Stokes, Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Chief Executive, addressed the Panel on the consultation process undertaken in respect of the proposed police budget for 2014-15. He explained that a consultation had been carried out by means of hard copy questionnaires, telephone and online surveys, public consultation meetings and discussion at Forums and other Consultative Groups. The responses arising from this consultation exercise would be made available on the website of the Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk shortly. In excess of 1,000 people had participated in the consultation with an overall outcome of 53% in favour of an up to 2% rise and 47% in favour of a freeze in the budget.
- 5.9 Mr Stephen Bett, Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, addressed the Panel to confirm that he had listened to the public about the level to be set for policing in Norfolk in the coming year. In considering their comments, he was of the view that a Band D increase of £3.96 per annum, or 8 pence per week was a modest rise and formed part of an overall strategy for the medium to long term. The increase proposed was consistent with his 10 Point Pledge and the Policing and Crime Plan for Norfolk.
- 5.10 The following questions were addressed to Mr Bett and his Team:
- 5.10.1 Question from Dr Kemp. He noted that paragraph 1.2. of the report, proposing an increased precept for 2014-15, stated that "the proposals in this report are consistent with manifesto commitments". As someone who has written academically on the doctrine of the mandate I share your stated adherence to that doctrine. Nevertheless, could you please identify your expenditure proposals in 2014-15 specifically towards the objectives set out in the fifth and ninth bullet points listed in that paragraph?

Answer by Mr Bett. He responded to state, protecting services from privatisation is not necessarily the panacea it was made to be and this was clearly seen with

the contract let to Capita at the County Council. Equally, G4S have not done what they said they would. It is important to achieve as much as possible in efficiency savings from the collaborative work between Norfolk and Suffolk police authorities. Once that work is completed will be the time to look at private companies and how further efficiencies can be made, but this is not yet the time to start down that road. The overriding interest in this must be the people of Norfolk, not single party views.

In addition, Ms KcKibben commented that the 10 Point Pledge outlined the Commissioner's priorities; it did not commit him to any pre-determined allocation of funding. Some would be achieved through strategic discussion, as with the development of closer working on Restorative Justice initiatives, others involved collaborative work with National Bodies but in all instances the focus would be on what was best for the victim and the reduction of offending.

It was confirmed that the 10 Point Pledge was series of aspirations with no specific budget allocated to support them.

- 5.10.2 Question from Mr Sutton. I appreciate the desire to maintain Norfolk's position as safe county therefore, does the Commissioner consider the precept rise to be insufficient versus the reduction in central government funding and how does he see the impact of funding reductions on the future policing beyond 2018?

Reply by Mr Bett. It was noted that there would be a change in government in the near future. He was very aware that by continuing to budget into the future at a 2% increase would lead to a vast shortfall. This was particularly of concern to him as 80% of the constabulary budget was people. He noted that, even with the collaborative efforts underway in working with Suffolk and others, there would still be a shortfall to make up in financial terms, resulting in the loss of frontline officers.

In addition, Mr Bailey added that no part of the business was excluded from review where efficiencies were concerned; everything was under scrutiny in order that frontline officers were protected. Any deficits would impact on the ability to police, however, to date, £23 million had been driven out of budgets and still another £20 million needed to be identified.

In summary, Mr Sutton noted that decisions today would impact on service provision in the coming four or five years and the funding gap would clearly have an impact at some future point – he saw the service heading to a cliff edge. The Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk concurred.

- 5.10.3 Question from Dr Boswell. I understand from your Financial Officer that your three key budget streams - your office OPCCN budget, your PCC commissioning budget and the Chief Constable budget are all set at the same level for 2014/2015 whatever the precept level is -1%, 0% or 2%. It would appear then that whatever precept you set, there is no difference to 2014/2015 operations for your office or for the Constabulary. I understand that the main impact of different precepts now is the rate of depletion of the revenue reserve budget, and particularly the impact from years 2017 onwards. If this Panel were to veto your proposal today, and a lower precept is set, which future years would you start making cuts and to which budgets; which front line services would be effected first?

Answer by Mr Hummersone. He commented that the Police & Crime Commissioner was clear, when taking a high level view of where the share of cuts would fall, the Commissioner's Office budget would be the focus of a review next year, absorbing the challenge of cuts proportionally. In the years ahead, cuts would need to be found in every year but, if there were no increase in the precept, cuts would need to be even deeper. He assured the Panel that there was to be an analysis of the Commissioner's delegated budget for the coming year, with the aim of identifying reductions in this area too.

Mr Bailey added that all areas of the service were being reviewed, with each review being coupled with a risk assessment, and the intention was to complete this work by the Spring. He confirmed that, at this point, it should be possible to see and plan in greater context what ongoing changes to the service could be supported in the four years ahead. The intention was to brief the Commissioner on future service delivery with a recognition that there would be a significant reduction in funding in the years 2016/ 17 and 2017/18. However, in the end funding service reductions did equate to fewer Police Officers and that £30 million equated to 60 Officers.

Mr Bett observed that it was tempting to state he could cut/ slash across all areas of the Police Force; however, this had proved disastrous in the field of mental health and was not what he wanted for his Police Force. He added that he wanted to take time to consider, understand and review the risks before making the necessary expenditure reductions. He assured the Panel that this would be done but he was not intending to rush at it and was clear any reductions proposed were evidence based.

- 5.10.4 Question from Mr Hannah. It appears that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk intends to freeze its precept in the coming year. Why have you not considered this approach for Norfolk, given that the two authorities work in such close collaboration?

Answer by Mr Bett. Suffolk is doing what it has to do. However, Mr Bett noted that he would not have taken the approach being adopted by the Suffolk Commissioner, in his place. He considered whether the Commissioner had a hidden pot of gold but could comment no further as he did not have detail of the finances at Suffolk. He did comment, however, that both constabularies were working on increasing collaboration in terms of managing finances.

- 5.10.5 Question from Mr Hannah. Can I be assured that the ongoing strategy of collaboration with Suffolk will continue in full despite the present challenges, and where do you see this ending up?

Answer by Mr Bett. He confirmed that collaboration was an essential element of working for both constabularies and without it both Forces would be in serious difficulties now. Once the collaborative strategy was achieved, it would be reviewed again as part of ongoing discussions. Collaboration was not easy and needed to be worked at by both organisations, in all senses, but particularly in terms of pay, IT systems and culture. It was a long process and was not to be undertaken lightly but further collaborative work was planned with others.

Ms McKibben supported all that had been said, adding that collaboration

supported such work as restorative justice and in aligning collaborative work with partners, ensured the best approach for victim services.

- 5.10.6 Question from Dr Boswell. Your current policy is to maintain a general reserve at around 3% of net revenue expenditure whilst other public bodies are moving to a risk management strategy for reserves which allows a more flexible approach. There are £14.97m of reserves today, £9.8m of these are still planned to be there in 2018. Can you not use more of these to protect these services now and in future years without burdening the Council tax payer this year?
- Answer by Mr Hummerstone. He confirmed that the financial policy was to maintain general reserves at 3%. He noted that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government believed that reserves should be kept to a minimum; however, he added that in terms of policing, single, major events could cost considerable sums of money and the Force needed the capacity to cope with exceptional operational demands. He noted that reserves could only be spent once; they could not be used to support ongoing salary costs. He confirmed that such funds would, however, be used to support new, large projects and reminded the Panel that the use of reserves had formed a report to this meeting in the recent past.

In addition, Mr Bett commented that, in terms of major expenditure arising from Police investigations, the Thomas Marshall murder inquiry had cost in excess of £2 million. He also noted there were unplanned cost implications for his Police Force arising from flooding due to the current adverse weather conditions.

- 5.10.7 Question from Mr William Richmond. With regard to the public consultation exercise, had you put in place measures to ensure that people could only vote once?

Answer by Mr Stokes. He agreed that replies at public meetings and in paper form were easier to check for fraud compared to online, but confirmed that scrutiny of results did not provide any evidence of this.

- 5.10.8 Question from Mr Brian Long. He asked whether changes to Band D equivalents caused by Council Tax schemes being localised at district council level, had affected police budgets and whether the changes might inadvertently trigger a referendum, as the detail was not precise yet?

Answer by Mr Hummersone. He confirmed that the council Tax bases had been finalised; the only matters outstanding related to the return of surpluses and collection funds. He noted that he had not himself seen the calculation relating to the referendum trigger but he was certain that any minor changes would affect the outcome.

- 5.10.9 Question from Mr Brian Long. He noted that recent media activity had reported that the government was looking to renegotiate PFI funded contracts relating to the delivery of assets. He noted that the Police Headquarters at Wymondham was such an asset. He asked if there were plans to review and renegotiate that PFI contract in order to achieve further efficiencies.

Answer by Mr Hummersone. He confirmed that the contract had been awarded some time ago and he had no knowledge of any intention to do so.

Mr Simon Bailey also responded, noting that he too was unaware of this approach. However, he **agreed** to take the suggestion away for further consideration.

- 5.10.10 Question from Mr Shepherd. He noted that, at a recent Home Affairs Committee Meeting in December 2013, Mr Tom Winsor, HMI advised MPs that he had cause for concern that police forces were manipulating their crime figures to show themselves in a much better light to the public. As the PCC was responsible for police performance was he satisfied that there were no such practices ongoing in Norfolk and what action has he taken to ensure that this was the case?

Answer by Mr Bett. In response, Mr Bett confirmed that an independent body regularly oversaw the figures and he was therefore assured as to their accuracy.

In addition, Mr Bailey explained that the responsible body referred to by the Commissioner was the Force and Crime Recording Registrar. He managed a team of auditors who reported to the Commissioner. The Registrar was an independent appointment who validated data statistics.

- 5.10.11 Question from Mr Alec Byrne. He asked what progress had been made with the efficiency savings arising from the current comprehensive spending review period, the challenge programme and collaboration with Suffolk and what impact did they have on the medium term financial strategy.

Answer by Mr Bailey. He noted that information was constantly being updated, however, in the first instance savings of around £24 million had resulted from the first Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), through the collaboration work with Suffolk Constabulary. The next CSR to be carried out would drive out further savings through joint located, shared services partnerships. One possible option being investigated currently was for a single Contact Control Room – which was a significant, ground-breaking opportunity if it came about.

- 5.10.12 Question From Mr Alec Byrne. He asked, what impact the precept proposal would have on commissioning intentions and partnership working to deliver community safety and crime and disorder reduction objectives.

Reply by Mr Bett. He commented that the first year in office as Commissioner had been devoted to listening to communities, voluntary groups etc and from there, developing his 10 Point Pledge. He was now looking to put the efforts of his Police Force into commissioning and delivering his Pledge. He noted that £100,000 had already been allocated to the Norfolk Community Fund to support grants and work was underway to support a range of charities and groups to support families and individuals through prevention initiatives to avoid criminal action and to prevent reoffending. He confirmed that funding in these areas would continue until the end of his term of office, to give a degree of certainty to the 10 Point Pledge.

Mr Stokes noted that the Panel would be receiving a report to its April meeting on commissioning, at which point further detail would be provided.

Ms McKibben concluded by confirming that budget pressures had the effect of making the work of Norfolk Constabulary very effective at what it did best. She referred to a recent funding with a £1.2 million grant through the Innovation Fund

which required the Commissioner to give a level of commitment but equally, enabled the Commissioner to maximise its returns.

- 5.10.13 Question from Mr Lee Sutton. What might you do if the government had not put in place the constraint of a spending cap?

Reply from Mr Bett. He noted that the government impetus had been, through the Localism Act, to work to provide the types of services that people wanted. However, he noted that most Commissioners were of the view that it was not helpful to set an upper limit on expenditure, to consult on that proposal and then to hear that something different was expected. His view was that 2% was a reasonable uplift, conscious that any tax imposed was a tax too far. However, he was sure that a successful, effective police force was essential to maintaining law and order and that to slash budgets and depreciate police work was not the right way forward. He concluded by noting that the situation would be more draconian over time and there was pressure to think outside the box but working with other bodies, jointly and avoiding duplication was the right way forward.

- 5.11 At the conclusion of questions put to the Commissioner, a debate ensued and a proposal was put by Mr Long, seconded by Dr Kemp, to **VETO** the proposed precept. Mr Long noted that other public bodies were looking to lessen the burden on the public purse, efficiencies were being made sooner and it had been shown that other Police Commissioners were able to set a budget freeze this year.

- 5.12 The proposal to veto the proposed precept was put to a Recorded Vote (see Appendix 1) with 5 members voting in favour and 4 against. The proposed veto was therefore **LOST**.

In explanation, the veto was lost as Part 2 of the Police and Crime Panels (Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012 requires that, for a veto to be confirmed, such a veto must be agreed by two-thirds of the Panel's members (the full membership rather than those present at a meeting). On this occasion, with three apologies given, there needed to be at least eight members voting in favour to secure the veto.

- 5.13 A proposal to support an increase in the Police Precept not exceeding 1.97% was put by Mr Hannah and seconded by Mr Sutton. This proposal was put to a vote and, with 4 votes in favour and 5 against, the vote was **LOST**.

- 5.14 A third proposal was put, by Dr Kemp and seconded by Mr Sutton which recommended that the Commissioner reconsider his proposal with a view to bringing forward a lower precept figure. This proposal was put to the vote and, with 6 votes in favour and 1 against, the vote was **CARRIED**.

In explanation, this outcome required that the Commissioner has regard to the Panel's recommendation and gives the Panel a response.

#### **RESOLVED TO:**

- 1) Note the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's proposed Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2014-15 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2014-15 to 2017-18.



- 2) To invite the Commissioner to reconsider his proposal with a view to bringing forward a lower precept figure.

## 6 **Complaints Monitoring Report**

- 6.1 The Panel was presented this report (agenda item 6) by Mr Mark Stokes.
- 6.2 In response to a query regarding the progress on Complaint No 2 it was confirmed that there had been a change of staff at the IPCC but that a reply was expected in February, after which the matter could be considered by the Sub-Committee which the Panel had set up to review the outcome of the IPCC's investigation.

**RESOLVED** that report be **NOTED**.

## 7 **Work Programme 2014-15**

- 7.1 The Scrutiny Support Manager presented the report (agenda Item 7) and noted that the equivalent meeting in early 2015 would move to the first week in February as this would allow the Commissioner's Office to collate all relevant information on budget setting, prior to reporting to the Panel.
- 7.2 The Panel noted that a Sub-Panel had been set up to review the PriceWaterhouseCooper audit report about internal control procedures, following the resolution of related complaints. She added that it had been agreed the Sub-Panel should consist of Panel members only, not substitutes and therefore the Panel:

**RESOLVED**

That the following members comprise the Sub-Panel:

Mr Richmond  
Mr Sutton  
Dr Boswell and  
\*Mr Graham (\* replacing Mr Foulger)

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

**CHAIRMAN**



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## Recorded Vote – Recommendation to VETO the proposed police budget for 2014-15

Panel Member	For	Against	Abstain
Dr Boswell	√		
Mr Byrne		√	
Mr Hannah		√	
Mr Kendrick		√	
Dr Kemp	√		
Mr Long	√		
Mr Richmond	√		
Mr Sutton		√	
Mr Shepherd	√		

In favour 5 votes  
Against 4 votes