



Norfolk Police and Crime Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2023 at 11am at County Hall, Norwich

Panel Members Present:

Cllr William Richmond (Chair)	Norfolk County Council
Air Commodore Kevin Pellatt (Vice-Chair)	Co-opted Independent Member
Cllr Donald Tyler	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Cllr Graham Carpenter	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Jonathan Emsell	Broadland District Council
Cllr Sarah Butikofer	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr James Easter	South Norfolk Council

Officers Present:

Harvey Bullen	Director of Financial Management, Norfolk County Council (NCC)
Giles Orpen-Smellie	Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC)
Peter Jasper	Assistant Chief Officer, Corporate Shared Services, Norfolk Constabulary
Sharon Lister	Director of Performance and Scrutiny, OPCCN
Nicola Ledain	Committee Officer, NCC
Jill Penn	Chief Finance Officer, OPCCN
Jo Martin	Scrutiny Support Manager, NCC
Paul Sanford	Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary
Mark Stokes	Chief Executive, OPCCN

- 1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**
 - 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare and his substitute Cllr Jade Martin, Cllr Cate Oliver and her substitute Cllr Paul Kendrick, Peter Hill, Cllr Gordon Bambridge and Cllr Tim Adams.
- 2. Minutes**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- 3. Members to Declare any Interests**
 - 3.1 There were no interests declared.

4. To receive any items of business which the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Questions

5.1 No public questions were received.

6. Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Norfolk's proposed police precept for 2023-24

6.1 The Panel received the report which set out the PCC's 2023/24 precept proposal and outlined its budgetary and financial impact. It also set out the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2022/23, the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27, and the funding and financial strategies that must be published by the PCC. The Panel also received the precept consultation results for 2023/24.

6.2 The Chair thanked the PCC for providing the information outlined in the agenda and invited the PCC to introduce the report. The PCC introduced the report (Appendix A of these minutes) and confirmed that he proposed to increase the precept by 5.19% per annum at Band D (£14.94). He then asked the Chief Constable to report to the Panel.

6.2.1 The Chief Constable gave further information to introduce the precept funding report (Appendix B).

6.3 During the discussion, the following points were raised;

6.3.1 The Panel asked if there were any further savings that could be made through more collaboration with either Suffolk or any other regional partners. The PCC explained that an extreme measure would be to merge the two police forces, but neither wished to have a joint police force. Every proposal was approached with an open mind, but it had to be looked at from the perspective of what was best for Norfolk and a sensible decision for Norfolk's context. There may be some things that could be found but it would require partners' agreement. It would be quite difficult to table for the next financial year but going forwards the PCC confirmed he always had an open mind.

6.3.2 There were some penalties mentioned within this budget and the Panel queried what the PCC had meant by this phrase and what those penalties were. The PCC explained that in discussion, he and the Chief Constable refer to the 'thin blue line being stretched further', for example reducing five officers to four, and as the Chief Constable had suggested the service would become slower and less efficient. If the budget was balanced, then no part of the service would be stopped, but if there were to be a precept freeze then there would be various functions that would need to be reduced to balance a budget and essentially find that money. The PCC added that the 'blue line' was being stretched thinner and eventually it would take its toll, for example, sickness absence was currently down on previous years, but

he felt that it couldn't go on forever. The Chief Constable confirmed that the penalties would be the slower answering of calls, the management of sex offenders in the community and other operational challenges. He added that they were currently at the point of making decisions which they did not want to do.

In response to the PCC's answer, the Panel pointed out that if the Government had not increased the amount by which the precept could be raised, Norfolk would be facing cuts to Police services. The PCC replied that it would have been highly likely, as the difference between the £10 precept and the recently allowed £15 precept rise was significant. The Government turbulence of the last year had meant that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was delayed. The PCC reported that the Spring Statement would be on 15th March 2023, and it had been suggested that defence, which could include policing, could get a significant uplift to take account of inflation due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, 2023/2024 could be entered based on the current CSR assumptions. The PCC reported that Sir Stephen House Review on police productivity and what policing was doing on behalf of other departments. The PCC explained that 20% of calls that came into the Norfolk control room were regarding mental health, and it was felt that the Constabulary were not the correct people to deal with that situation. The proposed precept increase would give the time to see the outcome of the examination of the Humberside trial, the Sir Stephen House review, and some practical solutions. The Panel expressed concern that although the PCC was doing the best he could with what he had, the public were once again picking up the pieces.

- 6.3.3 The Panel noted from the results of the consultation, that the most responses had been around visible policing, "too many police stations were closing", wanting "dedicated local bobby", therefore the Panel asked what the PCC was going to do to address this. The PCC acknowledged that this was a point that he heard frequently whilst being out in the county. He reported that in 2010, there were 1800 Officers, and currently there were 1800 Officers but no PCSOs. However, Officers were more deployable. Once the number of Officers had been broken down into shift patterns and how many Officers would be available whilst dealing with caseloads and immediate priorities, it was easier to see how difficult it would be to be visible in 540 parishes. The PCC added that when the public state that they want to see visible policing, they needed to define what they meant. Norfolk was one of the safety counties in England Wales, which was great testament to the Constabulary, but because the public didn't see them, they didn't know this. There were also focus areas around the county such as rural crime, safer communities, countylines. There were several initiatives being worked on to increase visible policing, but it would never get back to the old style of policing. Public confidence in policing was often driven by media headlines. The Chief Constable added that on page 121 of the report, data had been provided regarding visible policing. He explained that for the first time, Officers were being held accountable for the time spent out of their police stations and this data was being captured. This was the first year of that data but for future years there would be year on year comparisons. There had also been updates to software which allowed Police Officers to fill in forms on their phone whilst out and about which would have been otherwise carried out in the police station. The Chief Constable acknowledged that he would love to be able to provide more visible policing, but also needed to put the resources on those crimes which needed solving. Visibility was targeted, based on information from the public at Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel meetings as well as other intelligence.

- 6.3.4 The PCC explained that there would be more discussion around the matter of mental health and policing not being the appropriate partner to deal with mental health cases, based on the outcomes of the Sir Stephen House and Humberside reviews. One of the many issues arising is that most of the partners are not available out of office hours. The Constabulary was becoming relied on by others and that burden needed to be handed back but in a measured and appropriate way so that those individuals were not ignored. The Chief Constable confirmed that there was dialogue with those mental health partners and there had been for a while. The mental health crisis in the county was costing the Constabulary tens of thousands of pounds per year, and the impact on the service was significant. The core service of the Constabulary was crime and there could be instances in the future when they would have to say no. It would be a while before the mental health issues were taken completely away from the Constabulary.
- 6.3.5 In response to a question regarding grants and funding for the Constabulary, the PCC explained that the core policing budget came from Home Office grant and the other half of the core budget came from the Norfolk residents in the form of the precept. The role of the OPCCN was to apply for grants for programmes relating to particular issues. The basic budget for the OPCCN was approximately £1 million which could then increase with grants to £2-£3 million. Grants were normally issued for one year for hundreds of thousands rather than millions. The Panel queried if the money used for programmes was well used and monitored. The PCC explained that the money from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was not given to organisations to do with as they wish. The OPCCN would look at the need and formally commission organisations against a contract to deliver the solution to the need. Those organisations reported against that contract, some of which were time- limited and in some instances the OPCCN could stop the funding or reduce it on a sliding scale. Having looked at the priorities in the police and crime plan and the policing priorities in Norfolk, the PCC confirmed that he was adjusting how he was committing to commissioning services.
- 6.3.6 The Panel commented on the number of responses to the consultation, and it was suggested that if 48% of respondents had not supported an increase and 6% of respondents had said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, a total of 54%, that outweighed the 51% in overall support. The PCC reported that he would have liked to have consulted for longer, possibly two to three months, with various engagement events running parallel to an online survey but the political turbulence meant that the funding announcements were delayed. There had been 888 completed responses with approximately 200 incomplete responses, as they did not answer the personal questions such as ethnicity, and a significant proportion of those had also indicated support for the increase. The PCC acknowledged that he would have liked to have received more responses.
- 6.3.7 Having raised the precept to the maximum in 2022/23, the Panel asked the PCC if he was satisfied that the commitments set out in the 2022/23 consultation had been delivered. The PCC confirmed that he was happy these had been delivered. With additional tasks having been given to the Constabulary and the additional financial pressures, the conversation between him and the Chief Constable would be about sustaining those commitments.
- 6.3.8 The Panel referred to page 34 of the agenda and the unavoidable cost pressure of police pay which could be higher than previously planned. The Panel asked how

that was considered. The PCC acknowledged that this was one of the major worries. The previous pay rise had been a fixed amount of £1900 which included a contribution from the Home Office but was predominantly picked up by the Constabulary. The Chief Constable reported that the 3% increase in the budget was based on affordability. If there was going to be a greater pay increase than that, it would have to be funded by the Home Office as the Constabulary could not afford it.

- 6.3.9 The PCC confirmed that he was content with the level of reserves and what was being held. The level was continuously being monitored and all the information was contained within the medium-term financial plan.
- 6.3.10 The Panel suggested that if a County Deal were put in place, it could jeopardise the future of the OPCCN with the funding being moved into policing. The PCC explained that for a County Mayor to have PCC responsibilities there had to be a Combined County Authority. With the Elected Leader model proposal set out currently by NCC, the OPCCN would continue. However, there were discussions being held about how the County Deal could be used to support the OPCCN, and how it could be streamlined and work closer with NCC. Those discussions had been well received and the detail of how that would be delivered was being worked through. The PCC reported that Norfolk was the only county in England to have a single Community Safety Partnership which incorporated all seven districts and in future his role could include bringing together several parties such as policing, the community safety partnership and criminal justice.
- 6.3.11 The Panel acknowledged that the case for the maximum precept was well put and asked if there was anything that the PCC would ask the Chief Constable for if the precept rise was agreed. The PCC recognised that the rise was about sustaining what was currently being done within the Constabulary. There was always Government pressure to put funding in particular areas.
- 6.4 The Chair thanked the Panel for their questions and invited comments on the precept proposal.
- 6.4.1 The Panel accepted that visible policing would never be as it was, but the case for the precept rise had been well argued, and there was a need for a good Constabulary for the county. It was noted however, that with only 7 votes in the room, if the Panel was minded to veto the PCC's proposal, it would be unable to do so. The Chair explained that to veto the proposal, it required 8 votes out of the 12 members of the Panel to be present. It was disappointing for the residents of Norfolk that this option was not available if the Panel felt this appropriate.
- 6.5 The Panel:
- **NOTED** the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2022/23, the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 and the funding and financial strategies;
 - **VOTED** (by 7 votes for, 0 against and 0 abstention) to endorse the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed precept increase of 5.19% per annum at Band D (£14.94) for 2023/24;
 - **AGREED** that the Chair should write to the Commissioner to formally report the outcome of the Panel's consideration of the precept proposal.

7. Police Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24 Performance Monitoring

- 7.1 The Panel received the report which provided the second of the PCC's new style performance reports to the Panel and it sets out an overview of progress against all six strategic priorities (pillars) contained within the Plan.
- 7.2 The Chair thanked the PCC for the information provided and asked the PCC to introduce the report.
- 7.3.1 In introducing the report, the PCC highlighted that the new performance monitoring formed part of new streamlined and quarterly process which fitted the financial year and the cycle through the Strategic Board and the PCC Accountability Meetings and then onto the Panel. It was still the PCC's intention to merge the Estates Governance Board with the Strategic Governance Board, and estates would be an agenda item on that meeting. He was also intending to dovetail the collaboration meeting with Suffolk into this cycle given that a third of the budget is spent within Suffolk, he felt that was important.
- 7.3.2 The report updated the Panel since the last meeting. The PCC highlighted that the report covered all six pillars of the Police and Crime Plan, and it gave an opportunity to scrutinise the full extent of progress which was needed given the tempo of events. He also noted that the report offered a useful standing reference document and handbook to support routine business as well as remove the formal scrutiny process.
- 7.4 During the discussion, the following points were raised:
- 7.4.1 With reference to the 'Trusted Policing' pillar of the plan, the Panel noted that there had been a lot in the press recently regarding the conduct of Police Officers. Although this had been predominantly in London, it was recognised that it would affect the rest of the country. The Panel asked the PCC what he was doing to engage the public and lift public confidence. The PCC explained that he scrutinised the Chief Constable about what he is doing, but he general felt that the residents of Norfolk wanted to see Police Officers, and whilst there had been headline stories in the press, Norfolk residents felt that the majority of Police Officers were still trustworthy. The Chief Constable needed to change the culture within the Constabulary, but there was growing confidence within the Constabulary, that any concerns would be acted upon. The Chief Constable would always brief the PCC about any more serious concerns so that he was aware of the scale of issues. The Chief Constable referred to page 119 of the report and added that comparing to a covid year, or where restrictions existed, the data often posed more questions than answers. The Chief Constable had confirmed to all staff that the issues were not just regional, they were about standards and conduct of all Police Officers and he was in the process of meeting all Inspectors and Sergeants explaining fully about the standards and what was expected by him and the public. The Chief Constable explained that he had increased the resources in his local standards department and, because of the David Carrick case, had increased numbers in the vetting department. This was predominantly in anticipation that vetting would increase and need a further and deeper look into the history of people that joined the Constabulary. He noted that this would be a challenge particularly with regards to social media, but they needed to act swiftly when staff and officers crossed the line. However, the Chief Constable had concerns at how long this process could sometimes take, especially if it was taken

out of his hands and an independent panel were involved. The Chief Constable explained that the increase in reporting could inevitably mean that there would be an increase in conduct investigations before the data improved. The public was urged to judge the Constabulary on the actions taken when these cases were uncovered.

- 7.4.2 The Panel expressed concern about how policing complaints were dealt with and asked the PCC if there were circumstances where a complaint was dealt with at a lower level when it needed to be investigated. The PCC reminded the Panel that if a member of the public wanted to make a complaint, then the correct approach was to the Standards Department of Constabulary and the details were on the website. The PCC reported that he routinely heard about complaints but could not get involved due to the separation of powers. He would forward complaints to the Constabulary for their view and advise the complainant accordingly. If he felt there was an issue, advice would be offered about where they could complain, either a formal complaint to the OPCCN or the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC). The PCC added that he would very rarely be involved with complaints, and only had been so a couple of times.
- 7.4.3 The Panel asked if the PCC had achieved the target for recruitment under the Uplift programme. The PCC confirmed that the target for Norfolk was 224 and on 31st March 2023 that target would have been achieved. He added that in addition to that target, they have had to recruit under the normal turnover and will have recruited an additional 300-350 Officers in that time, The Chief Constable confirmed that the target had been met. He added that the Uplift programme was funded through a ringfenced grant so the Constabulary would have to maintain those numbers of recruited Officers to receive the funding. This would be checked bi-annually in March and September. This did mean that it gave the Chief Constable less flexibility over whether to recruit a member of police staff or an Officer and sometimes that flexibility was unhelpful.
- 7.5 Having considered the PCC's summary of progress towards delivering the six strategic priorities, the Panel **NOTED** the report.

8. Information Bulletin – questions arising to the PCC

- 8.1 The Panel received the report summarising both the decisions taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC) and the range of his activity since the last Panel meeting.
- 8.2 The Chair asked if there was anything arising from the Public Accountability Meetings that took place on Tuesday 31st January 2023 that the PCC wanted to highlight. The Chief Constable reported that he had provided the PCC with progress against each of the six pillars in the Police and Crime Plan, had discussed the national David Carrick case and he assured the Panel that the PCC had very much held him to account. The recording of the meeting would be on the website that day.
- 8.3 The Chair asked the PCC if there was anything from the recent Audit Committee meeting that he wished to highlight. The PCC reported that he hadn't attended the meeting, but the Chief Finance Officer added that the meeting discussed the internal audit reports, all of which were positive, and details were on the website.

8.4 The Panel **NOTED** the report.

9. Work Programme

9.1 The Panel received the work programme for the period February 2023 to April 2024.

9.2 The Panel **AGREED** the work programme and the Chair highlighted that the next meeting would take place on 27 April 2023.

Meeting 12.40pm ended

**Mr W Richmond, Chair,
Norfolk Police and Crime Panel**



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POLICE PRECEPT - FY 22-23

In presenting my case to the Panel this morning, I'll give a view and then, if I may, I'll ask the Chief Constable to offer his operational perspective.

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KEY MESSAGE UP FRONT IS THAT I'M RECOMMENDING A 5.19% INCREASE OF THE POLICE PRECEPT FOR THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR.

THIS TRANSLATES TO A £14.94 INCREASE, OR 29 PENCE PER WEEK, ON A BAND 'D' PROPERTY; AND TO AN £11.62 INCREASE, OR 22 PENCE PER WEEK, ON A BAND 'B' PROPERTY.

MY CONSULTATION RAN FROM THE 3RD TO THE 16TH OF JANUARY AND WAS BASED ON THE SINGLE QUESTION OF WHETHER NORFOLK WOULD ACCEPT A 5.19% INCREASE.

THERE WERE 888 RESPONSES TO THE ONLINE SURVEY.

I ALSO CARRIED OUT A LARGE NUMBER OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS AT WHICH I WAS ABLE TO EXPLAIN MY VIEW AND ANSWER QUESTIONS.

AS A RESULT - THE PUBLIC'S RESPONSE TO THE ONLINE SURVEY WAS THAT 51% AGREED WITH MY RECOMMENDATION – 6% NEITHER AGREED NOR DISAGREED - AND 43% DISAGREED.

* * *

AS I'VE SAID BEFORE - IF YOU DISTIL MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS COMMISSIONER DOWN TO A SINGLE LINE, IT'S THAT LINE IN THE *POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2011* THAT REQUIRES ME TO ENSURE THAT NORFOLK CONSTABULARY IS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT.

CLEARLY, RESOURCES - MONEY - ENABLE EFFECTIVENESS - WHILE EFFICIENCY ALLOWS FINITE RESOURCES TO BE STRETCHED - TO MAXIMISE THE EFFECTIVENESS THAT CAN BE GOT FROM FINITE RESOURCES.

AND ON THAT POINT - I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THE PANEL THAT - IN OCTOBER - HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF CONSTABULARIES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES GRADED NORFOLK CONSTABULARY AS '**OUTSTANDING**' FOR ITS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF REOURCES.

HOWEVER - AND BY WAY OF CONTEXT - THE TEN YEARS OF AUSTERITY REQUIRED SAVINGS OF £42M TO BE FOUND FROM NORFOLK'S BUDGET. IN ADDITION, THE BUDGET ALSO HAD TO ABSORB £174M IN AGGREGATED INFLATION OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

IN SHORT, AUSTERITY LEFT NORFOLK CONSTABULARY AS A LEAN - AND ARGUABLY – GIVEN THE DEMANDS PLACED ON IT BY THE PUBLIC - UNDER RESOURCED - ORGANISATION.

* * *

NORFOLK'S BUDGET FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR - 2022-23 - IS £197M - 55% [£108M] PROVIDED BY THE TREASURY VIA A HOME OFFICE GRANT, AND 45% [£88M] BY THE HOUSEHOLDS OF NORFOLK THROUGH THE PRECEPT.

ONE OF THE THEMES IN COMMENTS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION IS THAT POLICING SHOULD BE PAID FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE PANEL WILL BE AWARE THAT THE PRECEPT IS A CORE COMPONENT OF POLICE FUNDING. IT'S NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA.

ANOTHER THEME OF COMMENTS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION IS THAT, INSTEAD OF INCREASING THE PRECEPT, THE POLICE SHOULD MAKE **FURTHER** SAVINGS.

DESPITE MY REMARKS ABOUT THE CONSTABULARY BEING FINANCIALLY LEAN, THE CHIEF CONSTABLE SOUGHT AND HAS FOUND 3% EFFICIENCIES ACROSS THE CONSTABULARY. THERE WILL BE SOME PENALTIES BUT THESE SHOULD - MOSTLY - BE INVISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.

THE PANEL IS ALSO AWARE OF OUR HEALTHY COLLABORATION WITH SUFFOLK. AROUND A THIRD OF THE BUDGET IS SPENT IN THE SHARED SPACE WITH SUFFOLK. AND THIS COLLABORATION HAS DELIVERED EFFICIENCIES OF £46M OVER THE LAST DECADE - OF WHICH NORFOLK'S SHARE IS £24M.

YOU MAY WISH TO BE AWARE THAT SUFFOLK'S PANEL HAS SUPPORTED AN EQUIVALENT PRECEPT INCREASE SO - IF YOU ACCEPT MY RECOMMENDATION TODAY - NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK WOULD REMAIN IN STEP - WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL GIVEN THE FUNDING OF THE SHARED SPACE.

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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON THE 14TH OF DECEMBER THAT NORFOLK'S PROVISIONAL BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24 WOULD INCREASE BY £7.4M - 3.8% - TO £204M.

AT FACE VALUE THAT'S GOOD NEWS AS ANY INCREASE IS BETTER THAN NO INCREASE

THERE'S A 'BUT'.

THE £7.4M FIGURE COMES IN TWO PARTS. THE FIRST IS AN INCREASE OF THE HOME OFFICE GRANT BY £1.9M - OF WHICH £1.6M IS RING FENCED FOR THE POLICE UPLIFT PROGRAMME.

THE SECOND IS THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSUMPTION THAT THE OTHER £5.5M WOULD COME FROM AN INCREASE OF THE PRECEPT.

LOOKING MORE DEEPLY - IN OCTOBER 2021, THE THEN CHANCELLOR, RISHI SUNAK, ANNOUNCED THE THREE-YEAR SETTLEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW.

THAT CSR SETTLEMENT WAS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT INFLATION WAS 3.1% - MIGHT JUST GET TO 4% - BUT WOULD THEN FALL BACK TO BELOW THE BANK OF ENGLAND'S TARGET OF 2%.

INSTEAD - INFLATION HIT 11.1% - IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR - AND TODAY STANDS AT 10.5%.

INFLATION IS FORECAST TO FALL DURING 23-24 BUT - DEPENDING ON WHOSE FIGURES YOU USE - SEEMS UNLIKELY TO FALL BELOW 5% UNTIL FINANCIAL YEAR 24-25.

FOR EXAMPLE – THE BANK OF ENGLAND IS CURRENTLY FORECASTING THAT INFLATION SHOULD FALL TO 5% BY NOVEMBER THIS YEAR. BUT – ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY – THE BANK'S CHIEF ECONOMIST WARNED THAT HIGH INFLATION MAY WELL LAST LONGER THAN IS CURRENTLY FORECAST.

OF COURSE - A BUDGET INCREASE OF 3.8% DOESN'T SIT COMFORTABLY WITH TEN PLUS PERCENT INFLATION - OR EVEN WITH INFLATION REDUCING TO 5%.

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THE REFERENDUM THRESHOLD FOR THE PRECEPT WAS PREVIOUSLY 2%.

THE PANEL WILL RECALL THAT RISHI SUNAK INCREASED THE THRESHOLD TO £10 PER YEAR ACROSS THE THREE YEARS OF THE CSR SETTLEMENT.

ON THE 12TH OF DECEMBER LAST YEAR - THE POLICING MINISTER – CHRIS PHILP - ANNOUNCED THAT THE PRECEPT THRESHOLD FOR 2023-24 – YEAR 2 OF THE CSR SETTLEMENT – WOULD BE INCREASED AGAIN TO £15.

THE HOME OFFICE MADE IT CLEAR THAT COMMISSIONERS WERE EXPECTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE £15 THRESHOLD.

AND ON TUESDAY JUST GONE - THE POLICING MINISTER PLACED THE FINAL POLICE FUNDING SETTLEMENT BEFORE PARLIAMENT

THE MINISTER SAID IN HIS STATEMENT – AND I QUOTE – WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU - FOR RESPONDING TO OUR REQUEST ASKING YOU TO SET OUT **HOW YOU WILL BE REPRIORITISING** WITHIN YOUR BUDGET – **DELIVERING FURTHER EFFICIENCIES** – AND DRIVING PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS IN YOUR LOCAL AREA. **WE RECOGNISE THAT INCREASED PRESSURES WILL BE A CONCERN FOR MANY FORCES** – AND THERE WILL BE SOME CHALLENGING TRADE OFFS AT A LOCAL LEVEL TO SET A BALANCED BUDGET – END QUOTE.

THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT "CONFIRMED" THAT NORFOLK IS GETTING A £7.4M INCREASE AND SO "CONFIRMED" THE GOVERNMENT'S **EXPECTATION** THAT I WOULD MAKE FULL USE OF THE INCREASED PRECEPT FLEXIBILITY.

[PAUSE]

THE PROBLEM I FACE – AND IT'S A ROCK AND HARD PLACE CONUNDRUM – IS THAT - WHILE I HAVE CONSIDERED A LOWER PRECEPT INCREASE - THE HARSH FACTS REMAIN THAT THE BUDGET MUST LIVE WITH THE LEGACY OF AUSTERITY

AND NOW ABSORB THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION - AND ANY OTHER UNFUNDED COSTS - SUCH AS PAY - THAT MAY BE IMPOSED ON US – WHILE – AS A MINIMUM – SUSTAINING CURRENT LEVELS OF POLICE SERVICE.

AT THE MOMENT THE KNOWN COST PRESSURES FOR 23-24 AMOUNT TO AN UNFUNDED LIABILITY OF £13.6M.¹

I CAN BALANCE THE BUDGET - JUST - **WITH** THE 5.19% PRECEPT INCREASE **AND WITH** THE CONSTABULARY'S 3% EFFICIENCIES. AS I SAID – THERE WILL BE SOME PENALTIES.

WHERE THINGS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT IS WHEN I LOOK FORWARD TO FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-25.

I ASSUME - THE HOME OFFICE HAS INDICATED - THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE FUNDED ON THE BASIS OF THE 2021 CSR ASSUMPTIONS - AND SO INFLATION - PAY - AND OTHER UNFUNDED COST PRESSURES ARE FORECAST TO BECOME AN EVEN GREATER CHALLENGE.

IT FOLLOWS – I WOULD ARGUE THAT - IN TERMS OF THE PRECEPT DECISION TODAY - THIS WOULD NOT BE THE TIME TO SQUEEZE THE POLICE BUDGET MORE THAN IT IS ALREADY BEING SQUEEZED.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO REDUCE POLICE HEADCOUNT, CAPABILITY AND ACTIVITY, WHICH WOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCE OF FURTHER FINANCIAL RETRENCHMENT.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO PUT AT RISK THE GREAT WORK THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND HIS OFFICERS ARE DOING TO RESTORE VISIBLE COMMUNITY POLICING, WHICH AS YOU KNOW IS A PILLAR OF MY POLICE AND CRIME PLAN.

I NEED TO PROVIDE THE CHIEF CONSTABLE WITH SUFFICIENT FUNDING IN ORDER FOR HIM TO BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN WHAT NORFOLK CONSTABULARY IS DOING NOW – FOR HIM TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE DELIVERING AGAINST ALL SIX PILLARS OF MY POLICE AND CRIME PLAN.

* * *

SO: I'M PLACING BEFORE THE PANEL A **CLEAR** RECOMMENDATION OF A 5.19% PRECEPT INCREASE.

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CHAIR - AT THIS POINT - MAY I BRING IN THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND I'LL THEN TAKE QUESTIONS AFTER THAT.

¹ Report p.24

Police and Crime Panel 2/2/23

The Commissioner has set out in comprehensive detail the financial challenges faced by the Constabulary. I will not repeat what he has covered, but I would like to reiterate some key points:

- Due mainly, but not exclusively, to inflation the financial challenges facing the Constabulary are considerable not just this year but in the future. We face ongoing financial uncertainty at a local and national level and every year this is getting harder.
- I have made further savings of 3%, but we have been doing that for the last decade whilst absorbing growing demand.
- And we are lean. I would never ask for what we don't need. Not ever and certainly not now.
- I need to be clear that even after increasing precept as recommended by the PCC, I will have very limited scope to increase capability or capacity in key areas such as fraud and cybercrime. This proposal is about lessening impact rather than maintaining or growing.
- But if precept is not increased there will be significant operational consequences that I would like to spend a few moments setting out.

For context, I would like to start with a summary of what has changed since last year:

- Volumes of 999 calls have increased by 13% - up to 120,000 in the year
- We've seen a significant increase in missing person reports – 7,400 in the last year
- An ever growing volume of calls relating to mental health
- More policing of protests, events and highway related issues
- And all of this is before I mention crime. More domestic abuse, more sexual offences – up 13.5%. Neighbourhood crimes are down, but the complex less visible and most impactful forms of crimes are rising.
- In summary, we have never been so busy and the demands that we face are increasingly complex.

Like most forces, we have previously made savings in what is often termed 'the back office'. The term does not do justice to the critical role that these departments play. The back office can include vetting, recruitment and training. We have seen in recent months the consequences when those departments are under resourced. In light of the horrendous cases where officers have carried out the most despicable criminal acts, I need growth, not cuts in these critical departments.

We have rationalised our estate including recently with the opening of our new police station at Broadland Gate which enabled a reduction in the number of our buildings and a long-term saving of £14m. Further estate reductions would mean the closure of police stations in our communities. Something that I do not want to do.

Modernisation has allowed me to make some back-office savings this year, but those opportunities are running dry. So without a precept increase I would need to look at frontline policing for further cuts. That might mean:

- Longer waits for us to answer the phone when some is in crisis or risk of harm
- Reduced supervision of sex offenders
- Slower investigations with worse outcomes
- Less visibility
- Less proactivity and engagement with young people to prevent them from entering a life of crime.

This is not the policing I want to deliver and not the policing the County needs.

Panel members will no doubt have read the papers and seen my more detailed comments there along with a detailed breakdown of our financial pressures. I will therefore finish at this point to allow questions.