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Mr M Wedgewood
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10 February 2017

Dear Mr Wedgewood

Police Precept Proposal for 2017/18

Thank you for your letter of 8 February 2017 enclosing a copy of the Panel's statutory report following the meeting on Monday of this week.

I am very pleased that the Panel unanimously agreed to my preferred option of increasing the precept to £187.33 for a Band D property, the maximum permissible without breaching the 2% referendum limit. Please pass on my thanks to the Panel for providing me with the opportunity to explain my reasons for recommending this increase and for the continuing constructive dialogue in respect of my Police and Crime Plan which we had discussed earlier in January.

With regard to the Panel's observations, I can confirm that I will provide details of the Force's delivery plan, prepared by the Chief Constable, and the one for my Office, produced by the Chief Executive, as soon as possible after they have been finalised. We can then agree the best way to provide the Panel with opportunities to periodically monitor and review the implementation of the plans and use of resources.

As I indicated at the meeting, the budget and Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) will enable more police officers and PCSOs to be employed. I also pointed out that there has already been some recruitment and I have sanctioned the employment of additional officers in localities. Numbers are already higher now than when I came into office. My views on the importance of Neighbourhood Policing and "boots on the ground" were clearly expressed at the meeting. The Police and Crime Plan highlights that I feel very strongly that the police service must not be pushed away from public interaction and from policing in the style the public want. The police need to make community priorities their own if the public are not to feel that they are being ignored. Whilst I am sure that the Panel understand that the deployment of resources is an operational matter and something for the Chief Constable, I see success in this area of activity as critical to delivering the outcomes set out in my Plan.

Along with my officers, I explained the work that had been undertaken to develop a more sophisticated approach to workforce planning and links with the MTRS. This has provided more detailed information on the projections and timing of changes in the numbers of police officers and PCSOs in particular. The numbers of officers being recruited is based on information from the Force HR department on planned new intakes. This is supplemented by forecasts of likely transfers into the Force from other parts of the country. The new intakes are phased throughout the year which should enable officers to be adequately supported when they enter the service. The Chief Executive also highlighted that changes were being made to the internal assurance processes to monitor the implementation of the delivery plans which will include close scrutiny of staffing numbers and deployment.

Having considered the Panel's report and observations following the discussions on 6 February 2017, I can now formally confirm that I have determined that the precept for 2017/18 will be £187.33 per annum for a band D property. This represents an increase of £3.66 or 1.99% on the precept for the current financial year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Hunter', followed by a long, horizontal, sweeping flourish that extends to the right.

Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner