



POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST YORKSHIRE

RESPONSE TO THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

INTRODUCTION

On 28th January I notified the Police and Crime Panel for West Yorkshire of my proposed precept for 2013/14. The Panel formally considered the proposal on 5th February, and, as it is required to do by law, has issued me with a report on that proposal.

I proposed a precept of £79,577,993 representing a 3.8% increase in the police council tax, which makes up around 10% of the overall council tax bill. In doing so I was conscious of the very low council tax for policing in West Yorkshire, currently the third lowest in England and Wales, and the disproportionate impact that government funding reductions have had and will continue to have on the budget.

My proposal, which means an increase of around a penny a day for the 64% of households in West Yorkshire in Bands A and B, also reflects feedback from my Listening to You First survey which has informed decision making regarding priorities and overall support for the approach.

The only realistic prospect of recruiting police officers in 2013/14 given the medium term financial position is to utilise the additional latitude allowed by the government for those Commissioners with council tax levels in the bottom quartile nationally. This will allow for the recruitment of 44 police officers in 2013/14.

THE PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS

The Panel issued its report on 8th February and this is attached at Appendix A. I have a duty to take into account the recommendations made to me by the Panel and to issue a public response to it.

THE COMMISSIONER'S RESPONSE

I welcome the Panel's unanimous support for a £5 per annum council tax increase at Band D.

My response to the specific recommendations set out in the Panel's report is as follows:

Panel Recommendation	Commissioner's Response
5.1.1	Agreed
5.1.2	Agreed
5.1.3	Agreed
5.1.4	Agreed
5.1.5	Agreed
5.1.6	Agreed
5.1.7	<p>The initial restructure of the Commissioner's office is being conducted under the Organisational Change procedure and as such is subject to consultation with the staff involved and the Trades Unions. Once this has been completed I am happy to share details of my agreed staffing structure.</p> <p>I am also required to submit a stage 2 transfer scheme to the Home Secretary setting out my intentions as regards those staff who will transfer to the Chief Constable Corporation Sole.</p> <p>I will be looking at both of these issues in the round and in consultation with the Chief Constable, to ensure that an appropriate scheme is submitted in accordance with the Home Office deadlines.</p>
5.1.8	<p>Of the estimated number of police staff leaving due to natural turnover during 2013/14, provision is made in the budget for 50 to be replaced where in the opinion of the force Resourcing Panel the post is essential to the effective operation of the force. It is not possible to predict where vacancies will arise during the year or the number which will need to be filled. The estimated cost of filling these vacancies is based upon past experience. The remaining cost of police staff leavers is removed from the base budget.</p> <p>The police staff budget provides for the cost of increments and phased savings resulting from regional collaborative activity have been deducted.</p>

5.1.9	<p>The medium term financial forecast shows the net cost of PFI at £1.303m in 2013/14, £3.414m in 2014/15, £3.125m in 2015/16 and £1.653m in 2016/17.</p> <p>This reflects the fact that the scheme becomes operational during 2013/14 for a part year, with a full year cost in 2014/15 and beyond. Costs include the Commissioner's contribution to the sinking fund which is being used to smooth the impact on the revenue budget, plus staffing, utilities and non domestic rates.</p> <p>Savings are also phased and include benefits realisation as well as reductions in running costs resulting from disposal of the existing estate. The actual timing will depend upon when the disposals take effect, and best estimates have been used for the purposes of the medium term forecast.</p>
5.1.10	<p>The impact of the council tax benefit localisation scheme will be kept under review as part of the annual budget planning process.</p>



**Report of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
Precept Proposal 2013/14
Wednesday 6 February 2013**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This document constitutes the report and recommendations of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (hereafter referred to as 'the Panel') in respect of the Commissioner's proposed precept for 2013/14.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 3, Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- 1.3 The Panel endorses the Commissioner's proposal to increase the Council Tax at Band D by £5 per annum¹ on the basis of commitments made by the Commissioner at the meeting on February 5th 2013.

2. West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

2.1 Those Panel Members present to consider the proposed precept were as follows:

- Cllr Peter Box Wakefield (Chair)
- Cllr Sarah Ferriby Bradford
- Cllr Imran Hussain Bradford
- Cllr Michael Walls Bradford
- Cllr Steve Sweeney Calderdale
- Cllr David Hall Kirklees
- Cllr Alison Lowe Leeds
- Cllr Mohammed Iqbal Leeds
- Cllr Les Carter Leeds
- Cllr Jean Askew Wakefield
- Jo Sykes Independent Member
- Roger Grasby Independent Member

3. Powers of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

- 3.1 The Panel have the functions conferred by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Issuing Precepts.) This enables them to:
- (i) Review the proposed precept notified by the Commissioner
 - (ii) Make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept
 - (iii) Include recommendations within the report as to the precept that should be issued for the financial year

¹ Cost implications for the different Council Tax bands can be found in Appendix A

- 3.2 The Panel may, having reviewed the proposed precept, veto the proposed precept:
- (i) If the Panel vetoes the proposed precept, the report must include a statement that the Panel has vetoed it
- 3.3 If the Panel does not veto the precept:
- (i) The Police and Crime Commissioner must have regard to the Panel's report and recommendations and publish a response to it.
 - (ii) It is for the Panel to decide in what way the Commissioner's response is published.
- 3.4 If the Panel does veto the precept:
- (i) The Police and Crime Commissioner must not issue the proposed precept
 - (ii) The Police and Crime Commissioner must issue a revised precept-
 - Lower than the originally proposed precept if the Panel indicated it was too high
 - Or:
 - Higher than the originally proposed precept if the Panel indicated it was too low
 - (iii) The Panel must then review the revised precept and submit a second report to the Commissioner including recommendations as to the precept that should be issued.
- 3.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner will then:
- (i) Have regard to the second report and publish his response to it.

4. Panel's Consideration of the Precept Proposal

- 4.1 The Panel received notification from the Office of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner of the proposed precept on January 28th 2013.
- 4.2 The Panel considered the precept proposal at their meeting on February 5th 2013 in the Old Court Room, Wakefield Town Hall. The Police and Crime Commissioner attended to present his proposal and take questions from the Panel. The meeting was held in public.
- 4.3 The Panel asked the Commissioners a series of questions which related to his precept proposal, the budget assumptions which underpinned it and his future financial plans.
- 4.4 The questions covered:
- The ways in which future savings will be made whilst protecting frontline policing
 - The £10 million underspend in 2012/13
 - The intended approach to utilising existing reserves
 - The overall increase in the cost of staff within the Commissioner's Office
 - The staffing structure/ resource within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
 - The proposed recruitment of Specialist Police staff

- The future costs associated with the PFI scheme
- Assumptions around the Council Tax support grant and implications of potentially reduced collections rates
- The timescales for the recruitment of 44 new police officers

5. Panel's Decision

5.1 The Panel, through its discussion with the Commissioner on February 5th, agreed to endorse the proposal to increase the Council Tax by £5 per annum at Band D² on the grounds that:

- 5.1.1 The £1.4 million of additional funding generated by increasing the Council Tax by 3.8% as opposed to 2% is invested in the recruitment of 44 front line police officers to be situated within the Neighbourhood Policing Teams across West Yorkshire.
- 5.1.2 The recruitment and training of the 44 front line police officers is initiated immediately and in a way which promotes diversity with the Force.
- 5.1.3 Future efforts to realise savings focus on back office functions within the Police Force so front line policing is protected wherever possible and funding should be prioritised accordingly.
- 5.1.4 Significant efficiency savings are sought in 2013/14 and beyond, through delivering services jointly with local authorities and criminal justice agencies in addition to the on-going work with other Police Forces in the country.
- 5.1.5 The existing reserves are used in a prudent way in 2013/14 and beyond which helps to meet budget shortfalls whilst also protecting the Force against any potential emergencies.
- 5.1.6 The overall cost of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is reduced in 2013/14 in line with the reductions faced by the Force.
- 5.1.7 Detailed information on the OPCC staffing structure is supplied to the Panel with a view to progressing a future re-organisation/ review of requisite staffing resources.
- 5.1.8 Further information is provided to confirm that the 50 Specialist Police staff posts referred to in the Commissioner's budget paper do not amount to an additional cost to the Force.
- 5.1.9 That further information is supplied to confirm the assumptions upon which the future costs attached to the PFI scheme do reduce over time.
- 5.1.10 The budget is sufficiently flexible so as to address the additional pressures created by future cuts in Council Tax Benefit.

6. Conclusions and Recommendation

6.1 On the basis of the commitments made by the Commissioner, as specified above, the Panel unanimously agreed to support a £5 Council Tax increase per annum for Band D properties³.

6.2 The Panel confirmed this approval was based on their recognition of the importance of front line policing and thus the belief that the public would sufficiently benefit from their investment in 44 new police officers across West Yorkshire.

RESOLVED:

² Cost implications for the different Council Tax bands can be found in Appendix A

³ Cost implications for the different Council Tax bands can be found in Appendix A

That the Police and Crime Commissioner increases the Council Tax by £5 per annum/ 3.8% for Band D properties in 2013/14.⁴

Appendix A: Cost Implications of 2013/14 Precept Level by Council Tax Band

Council Tax Band	Increase £p per annum
A	3.34
B	3.89
C	4.45
D	5.00
E	6.11
F	7.23
G	8.34
H	10.00

⁴ As above