



Home Office

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HOCS Reference: MIN/0001887/19

14 FEB 2019

*Alison Lowe*

Thank you for your letter of 1 February, on behalf of members of the Police and Crime Panel, about funding for West Yorkshire Police.

I have engaged extensively with the police about the challenges they face from increasing complex demand and financial pressures. In response, we enabled the police to increase funding significantly for 2019/20. I welcome your decision to approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's request to use the full precept flexibility available and have taken careful note of your reservations about the increase, including your concerns about the potential impact on local taxpayers. The Government believes that an increase in council tax of £2 per month for the average band D household is manageable, but it is right that these decisions are taken locally in consultation with the public.

Your letter raises the issue of the pension cost increase to the police. As you know, the Chancellor has provided additional funding for the police to cover costs above £165million, which was the level of increase previously expected. The Treasury has also agreed to remove the additional premium on police pensions, thereby significantly reducing the total liability. In the 2019/20 funding settlement, the Government has increased general grant funding as well as providing flexibility for the police to raise up £509 million through increases in precept. In total, the funding settlement provides an increase of up to £970 million next financial year.

I understand your concerns about the longer term position beyond next year. Funding decisions for the medium term will be taken in the round as part of the next Spending Review. We have been working closely with the police to build a clear evidence base on future demand and financial pressures to help inform these decisions. The position on pensions costs will form part of these considerations.

*Nick Hurd*

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