

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

PANEL HEDDLU A THROSEDD



NORTH WALES POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT ON THE COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT FOR 2021/2022

Background

This report is made in accordance with the Police and Crime Panel's (PCP) statutory duty contained in Paragraph 3(2), Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Act).

Review of Proposed Precept

The North Wales PCP was notified of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) proposed precept for 2021/2022 on 18 January 2021, in accordance with Paragraph 2, Schedule 5 of the Act.

The PCP considered the PCC's report outlining the proposed precept and budget for 2021/2022, together with the Medium Term Financial Plan at its virtual meeting held on Tuesday, 2 February 2021.

The PCC proposed to increase the precept to £89,687,902 (an increase of 5.53% from the 2020/2021 precept), which would increase Council Tax by 5.14% (equivalent to £305.55 per annum, an increase of £14.94 per annum, or 29p per week for a Band D property).

The PCP also received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), which highlighted the following:

- Budget Update for 2020/21.
- Recommendations
- Changes in national funding allocations between 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Central Allocations (top slicing)
- Government Grant for 2021/22
- Standstill Structural Costs
- Savings and Growth
- Officer Uplift Funding and Costs
- Survey responses

- Comparison of funding between 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Changes in Budget
- Risks

In scrutinising the proposed precept, the PCP acknowledged that the provisional settlement was the same as last year (flat cash), plus funding awarded for Operation Uplift, which is the Government's programme to increase police officer numbers.

A number of issues were raised as follows:

- Central Allocations or top slicing in relation to the Police Technology Programmes; Top ups to the National Crime Agency and ROCUs; and the Police Special Grant
- Covid related funding
- Risks associated with a significant increase in General Inflation; costs associated with the Emergency Service Network Programme; implications of the Apprenticeship Levy; and the impact of changes to the Funding Formula.
- Level of reserves to deal with a major incident

The PCP acknowledged that the 5.14% equated to an increase of 0.25% on last year's Council Tax increase (which was 4.89%), to take account of inflation requirements, an allocation towards the Emergency Service Network Programme, and would allow for some reinvestment.

The PCP also acknowledged that the PCC had considered all the options within the resources available and recognised the extensive work carried out by the Organisation Planning Process, in order to identify savings of £2.902m. Therefore, taking these factors in account, the PCP felt they could support the proposed increase, in order to provide a sufficient budget to enable the operational delivery of the policing service in North Wales for 2021/2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(a) That the precept be increased for 2021/2022 to £89,687,902.

- **This will increase Council Tax by 5.14% - this is equivalent to £305.55 per annum, an increase of £14.94 per annum, or 29p per week for a Band D property.**
- **This increase matches the Home Office assumed increase of £15.00.**
- **This is an increase in precept of 5.53% from 2020/2021.**

(b) That it be noted that £2.902m of savings have been identified for 2021/2022.

(c) That it be noted that £2.642m of the savings will be reinvested in front line activities.

- (d) That it be noted that there will be a further increase of 62 Police Officers, of which 58 are a result of the North Wales Police's allocation of the Government programme to increase police officer numbers (Operation Uplift). In addition, 3 ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit) Officers from North Wales are to be funded from Operation Uplift in 2021/22.**
- (e) That it be noted that £0.750m growth has been included for implementation of the Emergency Service Network (ESN).**
- (f) That the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted, which includes the following assumptions:**
- That Council Tax will increase by an estimated 5.14% in 2021/2022, 3.93% in 2022/2023, 3.78% in 2023/24, 3.64% in 2024/25 and 3.51% in 2025/26.**
 - That policing grants will be frozen at current levels in 2022/23 onwards.**
 - That annual pay awards will be 0% in September 2021 and 2.5% in each following September.**
 - That the increase in grant has been awarded in support of Operation Uplift (recurring and set up costs) and has been earmarked for these purposes until final funding is known.**

05 February 2021