



Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Hosted by Somerset County Council Democratic Services



Reply to: Patricia Jones
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Email: PLJones@somerset.gov.uk
Date: 6th February 2019

Dear Commissioner,

Precept Proposal

Thank you for attending the Panel's meeting yesterday and explaining the Constabulary's Budget position and rationale for your proposal to raise the council tax Precept by an average of £24.00 per annum.

As representatives of the tax payers of Avon and Somerset, the Panel's focus must be value for money and the continuing pressures faced by our residents in the current economic climate. An increased council tax burden will inevitably contribute to these pressures and the Panel was required to balance this against the demands on the Force and the increasingly complex criminal challenges of modern policing. This was not easy to reconcile.

The majority view of the Panel was that your proposal is necessary at this time and should be supported. However, as confirmed to you, approval is subject to a number of performance measures of your plans to enable the Panel to make an assessment of the effectiveness of your Budget and its allocation in the longer term.

You will understand that transparency is a key factor in the Panel's ability to hold you to account, and the Panel would therefore be grateful to see something measurable that can justify the increase to our residents. In particular, the Panel would like to be sure that the additional money raised will lead to tangible improvements in tackling crime, particularly in the areas of burglary and rural crime. Previous assurances that the downward Burglary detection trend would be reversed by the development of an improvement plan to improve the management and detection of burglary offences have not been reflected in outcomes. Today, there was mutual recognition detection rates at 6% are not acceptable and the Panel would like to be assured that you are confident in the arrangements the Constabulary is putting in place.

A Policing presence in both rural and urban communities that is capable of addressing local demand are equally important. The Panel would be grateful if the specific concerns reported at the meeting could be taken into consideration.

The Panel noted that the Precept income would underpin the vital recruitment of 100 new officers to provide extra resources to tackle serious violence, burglary and County Lines. The Panel welcomes your plans and would be grateful for the opportunity to retain oversight of the recruitment process by way of a timeline report to each Panel meeting on progress and levels achieved.

The Panel respects and is thankful for the challenging work undertaken by Police officers and staff. We will continue to support your efforts to achieve better funding support from Government in order to maintain a strong and responsive policing presence in our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Weston
Vice-Chair
Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel