

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 5 February 2021, remotely via Microsoft Teams.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Panel at its next meeting.

Members:

(*Present)

Councillor Andrew Povey
*Councillor David Reeve (Chairman)
*Councillor Victor Lewanski
*Councillor Hazel Watson (Vice-Chairman)
*Councillor Fiona White
Councillor John Furey
*Councillor John Robini
*Councillor Will Forster
*Councillor Josephine Hawkins
*Councillor Christine Elmer
*Councillor Bernie Spoor
*Councillor Bob Milton
Mr Philip Walker
*Mr Martin Stilwell

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Povey, Councillor John Furey and Mr Philip Walker.

Councillor Bernie Spoor joined the meeting at 10.42 am, lost connection at 11.34 am and re-joined at 12.43 pm (noted in items 5 and 14) due to IT difficulties.

2/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 were agreed as a true record of that meeting.

3/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [item 3]

There were none.

4/21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

One question was received from Paul Kennedy (District Councillor - Mole Valley District Council). The response can be found attached to these minutes as Annex A.

A supplementary question was asked by Paul Kennedy and the response can be found below.

• *Supplementary question asked by Paul Kennedy:*

The questioner thanked the Chairman and thanked the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for his written response, but noted that it did not offer much hope for a fairer future and agreed with the PCC about the impact of past

government cuts and the apparent ineffectiveness of Surrey's MPs concerning fairer funding.

He explained that his supplementary question related to two contrasting comments in the PCC's answer concerning local councils' restriction of their increases to less than 3% who had been "under the same cosh" as Surrey Police and that Surrey Police would be as well funded overall as in 2010, which implied that the PCC had made no net real efficiency savings.

He asked why the PCC was asking for another large council tax increase from Surrey residents:

- When so many residents were suffering financially;
- When local councils who really were "under the cosh" had restricted their increases to less than 3%;
- When his overall funding position was comparatively healthy, thanks to the already high level of the police precept; and
- When the investments he offered in return, which were welcomed but after five years as Commissioner residents should be getting already?

Response:

The PCC explained that he would be answering the points above in detail when introducing item 5: Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed Precept 2021/22. He noted that he rejected the use of the word healthy, as Surrey Police although in a better position than it was two years ago, was still recovering from the savage cuts starting in 2010 from previous government administrations. Although Surrey Police had in real terms roughly the same amount of money available to them compared to ten years ago, the demand both in volume and complexity of crime had increased hugely.

5/21 SURREY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT 2021/22 [Item 5]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner
Kelvin Menon - Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced the report and noted that:
 - It contained his provisional recommendation for a proposed 5.5% precept increase which equated to £15 for a Band D property and he confirmed his recommendation to the Panel.
 - The public consultation through the Council Tax Survey 2021/22 closed at 9 am that morning. There were 4,464 responses to the Survey which answered the yes or no question on the proposed precept increase and of those, there were 2,602 comments in the 'free text' box.

- He took the Survey seriously, in which 49% supported the proposed precept increase and 51% did not support it. This was considered to be a balanced response. In particular, he highlighted comments from respondents relating to:
 - financial hardship particularly as a result of Covid-19.
 - not feeling that they saw any additional police from the last year's precept increase - he noted that although there were more police on the streets, recruitment and training took a long time but was on target for 31 March.
 - wording the Survey better in relation to the proposed 67 staff as although it was the technical term as they were not warranted police officers, the term was perceived as back office roles - he clarified that the staff that he was proposing to fund were operational staff on the frontline such as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), analysts, crime investigators.

Councillor Bernie Spoor joined the meeting at 10.42 am

- Once the Survey results started to trickle in two weeks ago and given his concerns about going for the maximum increase he called for another meeting with the Chief Constable of Surrey Police and finance officers which he had not done in the past, in order to look at what the impact on policing of going for a £12 increase - 4.4% - or a £10 increase - 3.8% - would be. Following lengthy discussions, he was satisfied that the impact of going below £15 would be serious. At £15 the proposed increase would fund a total of 77 operational staff and police officers, if the precept increase was reduced the numbers of staff and officers which could be funded would decrease rapidly and impact some key areas such as rural policing.
- He viewed Surrey Police as an efficient force, which had been confirmed by a recent external audit report. Although there were some adverse comments under the efficiency umbrella within Surrey Police's PEEL Assessment 2018/19, efficiency was measured in terms of demand management and future planning which could have been improved; rather than efficiency as resource management.
- Since 2010 the force had saved over £75 million with another £6 million in savings included in the current budget proposal. As PCC he expected yearly savings and those had been achieved, providing reassurance to the Panel and residents that money had been and would be well spent.
- Although with this increase Surrey Police was back to where it was in 2010 in real terms of funding, that masked two factors:
 - The demand had increased in the last decade, the volume of total notifiable offences had gone from 50,000 in 2010 to 70,000; it was positive that victims reported crimes such as sexual offences and domestic abuse.
 - The complexity of what the force had to deal with had increased such as cybercrime.
- The force's funding had changed hugely. Surrey Police was an outlier receiving the lowest proportion of government funding of any police force (38% of the force's funding) through the central grant and if the proposed precept increase came into effect, 59% of the force's funding would be from council tax.
 - The PCC noted that it was fundamentally wrong. Although he continued to lobby the Government on fairer funding having

written to the Home Secretary a year ago and spoken with the Minister of State for Crime and Policing a few days ago on a collective call; he noted that he hoped the Comprehensive Spending Review would address fairer funding going forward.

- He firmly recommended the proposed precept increase as that along with the Government uplift would ensure that the force's three broad priorities in relation to the Police and Crime Plan would be met:
 - More police officers and frontline staff.
 - Better crime prevention - as much of the increase was for community reassurance and detective intelligence.
 - More crimes solved.
2. The Vice-Chairman who had chaired the Finance Sub-Group earlier in the week thanked the OPCC and Surrey Police for the excellent presentation and summarised the key points made:
- That Surrey Police received the lowest government funding per head of population in the country in 2020/21 and so the funding burden fell on council taxpayers.
 - That Surrey Police was back to the level of funding in 2010, with no real term increase in line with inflation, despite an increased demand and over that same ten-year period 2010/11 - 2020/21, £75 million of savings had been delivered.
 - That the combination of the Government uplift providing 73 officers and the proposed precept funding providing funding for 10 police officers and 67 operational staff would redress that.
 - That the £15 proposed precept increase consisted of £7 to break even plus an additional £8 to fund services such as rural crime and to reduce fatal road traffic incidents.
 - That if the precept was not increased to the £15 maximum permitted by the Government, there would need to be a significant review of the allocation of the amount of the total 77 police officers and operational staff as some teams were all or nothing regarding operational capacity.
 - That a £1 reduction in the precept was equivalent to a £500,000 reduction and if the maximum increase was not agreed, the funding gap would keep widening and savings needed would keep increasing.
 - That the force had engaged with CIPFA to identify savings, the extent which savings could be brought forward was limited as immediate savings had been made and CIPFA was looking at strategic long-term savings.
 - Reserves could only be used once and so was not sustainable to fund the increase in police officers and staff on an ongoing basis.
3. A Panel member noted that personally in her borough she had not seen any increase in visible police presence despite precept increases over previous years. She asked whether the PCC thought the response rate from 4,464 residents was good bearing in mind Surrey's 1.19 million population as of 2018.
- In response, the PCC provided comparative figures on Survey response rates noting that in 2019/20 he had received approximately 5,800 responses and 3,100 responses in 2020/21. More responses were always welcome, noting the wide circulation of the Survey through social media and he was open to the Panel's suggestions to increase engagement.
 - The PCC added that he took the Survey results seriously as the mixture of responses to the 2021/22 Survey both positive and negative provided a reasonably accurate reflection of the views of Surrey's population.

4. A Panel member highlighted that as Surrey's district and borough councils were keeping their council tax increases predominantly low to within 2 to 3%; she asked how she would explain to her residents that Surrey's PCC would like to increase the police element of a Band D Council Tax bill by 5.5%. Residents were living in hard times financially due to the pandemic and so it should be a time where council tax rises were kept as low as possible.
 - In response, the PCC explained that the Survey responses were evenly split and that he recognised the financial hardship faced by many residents. He explained that the increased police element of the total council tax for a Band D property was a small amount, the £15 a year increase equated to thirty pence a week and for that small amount residents would get the beneficial return of a safer Surrey.
5. A Panel member thanked the PCC for his clear report and congratulated the PCC and Chief Constable as well as all police officers and staff for their work over the last year during the pandemic. He also thanked his Borough Commander who led on excellent partnership work.
6. The Panel member noted that if the Panel was going to support the recommendation to increase the PCC's proposed precept by 5.5%, it needed to have that increase in funding translated into an increase in performance through measurable targets such as the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as opposed to the vague statements set out in the Chief Constable's investment requirement. He stressed that the PCC's duty was to hold the Chief Constable to account especially as for the last few years the force's crime solving performance had flatlined.
 - In response, the PCC assured the Panel that the extra investment from the proposed increased precept would feed into increased performance, noting the constant cuts made four years ago and the major reorganisation of the Policing in Your Neighbourhood (PiYN) model five years ago. For the first three years of his tenure he instituted rigorous performance and finance regimes, noting that although he would like to see increases in the KPIs, they had held up well especially the measure for residents' confidence in Surrey Police in which statistically representative surveys were run in conjunction with Surrey County Council. The force continually wanted to improve its services to the public and the proposed precept increase would provide more resources to do that.
7. The Panel member replied to the PCC's earlier comment that the length of time to recruit and get police staff and officers on the beat was very slow, a year was a long time and needed to be speeded up. In response, the PCC noted that recruitment and training took time. The major recruitment drive - both replacing police staff and officers and filling new posts - had been accelerated two years ago from the previous precept increases and Government uplift, with the training wing at Mount Browne full of high-quality police staff and officers.
8. A Panel member thanked the PCC for his honesty concerning the Survey results and comments. He explained that his main concern was that the proposed precept increase would be used to fund only 10 police officers compared to 67 staff noting the perceived back office roles for the staff as the public wanted police on the beat. He asked why it was skewed that way.
 - In response, the PCC agreed that he wanted more police on the beat which would come from the Government uplift which would fund 73 police officers and complemented the proposed precept increase of 10 police officers and 67 operational staff. He clarified that the police staff

- from the proposed precept increase would be on the frontline, or provide frontline support, as opposed to back office functions.
- The PCC highlighted that the side effect of having many more police officers than staff was 'reverse civilianisation' which had been seen nationally; in which warranted officers were taken off the beat to fulfil the work of staff which was both inefficient and expensive. A modern police force needed both police officers on the beat as well as operational staff under the crime prevention and crime solving umbrellas.
9. A Panel member noted that the PCC had referred to the results of the Survey where 51% said that they were not in favour and provided some of the comments for those who said it would be difficult to fund the additional £15 a year increase for a Band D property. That increase equated to thirty pence weekly on top of the rise in local borough and district council tax and could be detrimental for those on restricted incomes, using foodbanks and claiming benefits. She asked why the PCC felt that the police should not have to work to same financial disciplines as Surrey's borough and district councils who were keeping their council tax increases below 3%.
- In response, the PCC stressed that the decision on the proposed precept level was more difficult than in previous years due to the pandemic. He recognised that the small rise of thirty pence a week was added to the main council tax and so that was why he had a further round of discussions with the Chief Constable and finance officers to review what the difference would be of reducing the increase to £12 or £10.
 - He explained that the small decrease would severely restrict the operational capacity of the force as for example staffing rural crime teams or the roads policing unit would most likely not be possible. He made a judgement that in order to fulfil the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan and wishes of Surrey residents the small increase numerically would have a large effect towards ensuring a safer Surrey by increasing crime solving and supporting victims of crime.
10. A Panel member noted serious concerns regarding the 5.5% proposed precept increase, as it was hugely above inflation at a time of the pandemic where people were losing their livelihoods and the increase was noticeably higher than last year's rise. He noted that the potential rise in energy bills by £100 annually had only just been announced and so the PCC needed to see the context of those struggling and if there was an option to reduce that burden than it would be useful. He noted that the Survey was evenly split. As most borough and district councils were using reserves to reduce the burden on the council taxpayer by keeping the council tax rises under 3%, he asked whether Surrey Police could do the same noting the £20 million in reserves and £8 million non-earmarked reserves at the start of the year; and what the level of the force's reserves was compared to local councils and similar police authorities.
- In response, the PCC explained that Surrey Police was out of kilter with other forces as it had the second lowest reserves in the country and was significantly lower than its neighbour Sussex Police. The force followed the Government's deliberate policy of running down reserves and had the minimum of 3% unallocated reserves saved for emergency use.
 - The Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) added that the £8 million non-earmarked reserves were kept to cover unexpected events and had the Government not part funded the force £6 million total Covid-19 costs a large amount of the force's reserves would have been used up.

11. The Panel member further asked how the Panel and residents could ensure that the funding from the proposed precept was spent effectively, as Surrey Police's PEEL Assessment 2018/19 noted that the force still required improvement for efficiency.
 - In response, the PCC reiterated that although there were some adverse comments under the efficiency umbrella within Surrey Police's PEEL Assessment 2018/19, "efficiency" examined demand management and future planning which could have been improved; rather than "efficiency" as resource management and the force had taken those comments on board noting the latest positive report on efficiency from the external auditors.
 - The PCC noted the need to do better and the relentless focus on efficiency and his rigorous finance and performance regimes instituted for the first three years in his tenure had been effective noting the stringent savings targets.
12. The Panel member further noted that Surrey Police had made a lot of savings ten years ago but it had not been able to keep that momentum going and asked why as many councils had continued to make efficiencies had Surrey Police struggled and asked whether the identified savings for future years could be brought forward in order to reduce the proposed precept rise.
 - In response, the PCC noted that although those savings had diminished over the last few years as the easy savings had been made first and so was more difficult; he hoped that greater efficiencies would come as a result of the increasing use of technology and national programmes going live over the next year.
 - The PCC explained that savings could be brought forward and a number of them had been, the force had a multi-year savings programme as a complex organisation and so could not bring forward all savings and it could not lose sight of its day to day operational capacity to provide policing to make communities safer.
13. A Panel member explained that he found difficulty in supporting the force noting the positives of funding to tackle rural crime and the commissioning of victim services whilst at the same time noting that many local residents were struggling financially, highlighting the distinct increase in requests for food from his local free community store and unlike in March last year those increases were particularly from the middle class due to redundancies and businesses collapsing. Regarding the Surrey Capital & Investment Programme 2021/22 he queried the high amount of spending for the Estate Strategy of £12.6 million compared to £300,000 for Operational Equipment.
 - In response, the PCC recognised that residents were hard hit by the pandemic but noted that the force needed more resources to cope with the increase in demand through the volume of crime and increase in complexity of crimes. The thirty pence a week increase was the best balance between making Surrey safer and having to fund that.
 - The PCC commented that the large spending on the Estate Strategy was primarily for the new Leatherhead headquarters and the short-term borrowing requirement needed next year - efficiency savings over the next few years would meet that cost.
14. The Vice-Chairman highlighted that the additional thirty pence per week was a small sum to pay for that extra funding to tackle crime solving and key areas such as rural crime and fatal road traffic accidents. She asked whether Surrey Police had received full recovery of expenditure on Covid-19 costs or whether a shortfall remained.
 - In response, the Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) reiterated that the force incurred £6.5 million in Covid-19 costs and had received

£3.5 million back from the Government which covered costs relating to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recovered and some of lost income; however the costs of overtime for both police staff and officers had fallen on the overall force budget.

Councillor Bernie Spoor left the meeting after losing connection at 11.34 am

The meeting was adjourned at 11.34 am as Panel members went into a private deliberation session

The meeting was resumed at 12.21 pm

RESOLVED:

The Police and Crime Panel reviewed the precept proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 3.7 of the Surrey Police and Crime Panel's Constitution, a **recorded vote** was requested by three Panel members, proposed by Councillor Lewanski and seconded by Councillor White and Councillor Hawkins.

The following Members voted for the precept proposal:

Mr Stilwell, Councillor Watson, Councillor Reeve.

The following Members voted against the precept proposal:

Councillor Lewanski, Councillor Elmer, Councillor White, Councillor Robini, Councillor Hawkins, Councillor Forster, Councillor Milton.

There were no abstentions.

In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 a veto must be agreed by two-thirds of Panel members, which equates to ten Panel members (the full membership rather than those present at the meeting) and as that requirement had not been met, the Panel:

- (i) Accepted that the PCC's proposal to increase the Band D Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Precept by £15 for 2021/22 from £270.57 to £285.57 would come into effect; and
- (ii) Would formally report to the Commissioner (by 8 February 2021), noting its concerns and reasons for Panel members not supporting the proposed precept (see Annexes B and C).

Actions/further information to be provided:

R1/21 - On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman will write to the Commissioner to confirm that his 2021/22 precept proposal would come into effect, noting the Panel's concerns and reasons for Panel members not supporting the proposed precept, including its requests going forward.

6/21 OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S BUDGET FOR 2021/22 [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Kelvin Menon - Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) introduced the report and noted that the OPCC's budget represented 1% of the force's total expenditure.
2. He explained that the budget was split into two parts consisting of the OPCC's operational budget such as the PCC's and staffs' salaries, office and governance costs; and the commissioning budget of £644,000 - contingent on the precept increase - which included the Community Safety Fund (CSF) and victim services and was the PCC's statutory duty to provide.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

7/21 SURREY POLICE GROUP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MONTH 8 FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21 [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Kelvin Menon - Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) introduced the report and noted that the Surrey Police Group was predicted to have a slight underspend of £0.7 million against the total budget of £250 million.
2. He noted that police officer pay for the full year was below budget but that was countered by temporary and agency staff being over budget.
 - The Vice-Chairman asked what steps were being taken to reduce expenditure on agency staff. In response, the Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) explained that spending on agency staff was under review and of the £1.7 million overspend, £1 million was for thirty investigative assistants over three divisions to support crime solving until new detectives had been trained.
 - The PCC recognised that as there was a lag between the money allocated from the precept and uplift, and the recruitment of new police officers and staff; temporary and agency staff filled that gap.
3. The Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) noted that police officer and staff overtime continued to be a concern, with increased work as a

result of Covid-19 as well as in areas such as ICT and manning the Contact Centre. He added that both the Government's uplift investment and last year's precept investment were on track for the end of financial year in terms of FTE officers and staff and that would slowly reduce overtime.

4. He added that capital expenditure was significantly below budget, the force operated a two-year capital budget programme and it was probable that a number of projects would be rolled forward.
5. He explained that staff resources had been focussed on Covid-19 and so the capital programme had been affected. Covid-19 costs equated to £6.5 million of which £3.5 million had been recovered from the Government. There was no news on whether there would be further Covid-19 grants available for remainder of year or available for the next financial year.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

8/21 OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MONTH 8 FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21 [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Kelvin Menon - Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chief Finance Officer and Treasurer (OPCC) noted that at present expenditure was on track and that it was predicted that there would be a slight underspend at the end of the year.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

9/21 PCC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT [Item 9]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. A Panel member asked how many people had taken part in the engagement sessions. In response the PCC noted that he was pleased with the

attendance with approximately fifty people per event totalling over five hundred and noted the multitude of questions asked.

2. The Chairman asked how the online attendance figures equated to attendance at face to face meetings. In response the PCC explained that attendance between the two was similar and that going forward a hybrid between the two was a potential option.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

10/21 MAKING EVERY ADULT MATTER (MEAM) [Item 10]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. A Panel member welcomed the Checkpoint Plus - Women's Navigator position funded by the OPCC, noting concern on the exacerbation of the level of domestic abuse experienced and the difficulty in reporting as a result of the pandemic. In response, the PCC noted that the precept increase contained a substantial extra commissioning budget to support victims.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

11/21 BUILDING THE FUTURE - UPDATE [Item 11]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The PCC explained that the Building the Future (BTF) project was progressing well and the force looked forward to serving the public more efficiently through the new headquarters at Leatherhead.
2. The PCC added that the next stage entailed interviewing contractors who would be building the new headquarters; further developments would take place throughout the summer and autumn.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

12/21 PCC DECISIONS AND FORWARD PLAN [Item 12]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chairman suggested that for future reports the decisions be tabulated as opposed to accessing the information through the website link provided. In response, the PCC noted that he was happy to take that suggestion on board.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

R2/21 - The PCC will look into tabulating his decisions.

13/21 FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF CONSTABLE [Item 13]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The PCC explained that due to the pandemic all performance meetings with the Chief Constable had been online which posed a different dynamic, however he was satisfied that the rigour of those meetings had been maintained.

RESOLVED:

The Surrey Police and Crime Panel noted the update on the PCC's Performance Meetings.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

14/21 COMMISSIONER'S QUESTION TIME [Item 14]

Councillor Bernie Spoor re-joined the meeting at 12.43pm

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

See Annex D - Submitted Questions and Responses

1. Councillor Hazel Watson (Mole Valley District Council) – Vice-Chairman:

The Vice-Chairman noted that the Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) was taking action on the issue of large numbers of visitors to Surrey's beauty spots and she asked what Surrey Police's involvement was.

In response, the PCC explained that Surrey Police was an integral part of the SLRF as the Chief Constable was a joint chair of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG). He explained that the issue was variable and that he was pleased with the force's response to Covid-19 county-wide as it had the right balance of the 'four Es': Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce. Enforcement was a last resort and that included inappropriate visits to beauty spots. The Government's lockdown guidance was not a clear as it should be, however he emphasised that the overarching principle was for people not to leave their homes unless they needed to. He explained that the Chief Constable echoed the statement by the Secretary of State for Health who urged people to 'act like you have the virus'.

3. Councillor David Reeve (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council) – Chairman:

The Chairman noted the response that there was no full list of topics where national police force positions were shown, regarding the references made at the PCC's performance meetings with the Chief Constable on Surrey Police's positions on various areas compared nationally.

In response the PCC explained that there were various national surveys with some comparative information open to the public, noting that some comparative operational positions were sensitive.

RESOLVED:

The Panel raised issues and queries concerning Crime and Policing in Surrey with the Commissioner.

Actions/further information to be provided:

R3/21 - Outside of the Panel, two operational questions had been asked and responses were provided to the Panel members and the OPCC would follow up any supplementary questions relating to those with Surrey Police.

15/21 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 15]

Witnesses:

Amelia Christopher - Committee Manager, Surrey County Council (SCC)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Committee Manager (SCC) confirmed that the Panel's Complaints Sub-Committee had received no complaints since the last Panel meeting.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

16/21 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 16]

Witnesses:

Amelia Christopher - Committee Manager, Surrey County Council (SCC)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Committee Manager thanked the OPCC for its detailed responses to the actions, including the annexes to actions R38/20 and R44/20.
2. The Committee Manager (SCC) noted that the Panel would receive a verbal update from the PCC on action R7/20 on the EQUIP project under Part 2, agenda item 18.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the Actions & Recommendations Tracker and the Forward Work Programme.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

17/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 17]

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

PART 2 – IN PRIVATE

18/21 EQUIP - UPDATE [Item 18]

Witnesses:

David Munro - Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The PCC provided a Part 2 verbal update noting that the Equip system had moved into a new phase and that he would keep the Panel updated as plans progressed.

RESOLVED:

That the Police and Crime Panel noted the verbal update.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Panel will be kept updated on the Equip programme in line with action R7/20 which will be added to the Forward Work Programme as a standing Part 2 update.

19/21 PUBLICITY OF PART 2 ITEMS [Item 19]

RESOLVED:

The Panel agreed that no confidential information within the item considered under Part 2 of the agenda should be made available to the Press and public.

20/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 20]

The Panel noted that its next public meeting would be held on 22 March 2021, the location was to be confirmed however it would most likely be remote via Microsoft Teams due to Covid-19.

Meeting ended at: 12.49 pm

Chairman

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SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 5 FEBRUARY 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Question submitted by Paul Kennedy

If your proposed precept rise is implemented, you will have increased Surrey Police's council tax burden on Surrey residents by nearly 30% during your term, and Surrey council taxpayers will be paying a larger share of their police force's funding than almost anywhere else in England.

Can you offer any hope to Surrey residents that such huge rises can be avoided in future, and have you asked any of Surrey's MPs for their support in securing a better deal from the Government for Surrey residents? If so, what has been their response to you, and what support have they provided?

Response:

Surrey Police, in common with the whole national policing community, has been subject to savage cuts since 2010 when the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government began their programme of reductions to public services. Thankfully, these started to be reversed in the last few years so, if my precept recommendation is accepted, Surrey Police will be back to the overall financial position in real terms that it was a decade ago. The last 10 years have however seen a huge increase in both the volume, range and complexity of reported crime and I believe it is to the force's credit that they have made the substantial savings required in order to accommodate these severe budgetary and operational pressures.

Although overall funding, allowing for inflation, is back to where it was, its nature has changed significantly. Central government grant has reduced in real terms by 34%, with the shortfall being made up through increases in the police precept and, more recently, by the ring-fenced 'Boris's Bobbies' uplift.

At 59%, Surrey Police will head the national league table in the proportion of funds obtained through the precept. This is widely acknowledged as highly undesirable, with homeowners having to pay disproportionately for policing (and other local public services) than other residents. Rightly, it has led to many complaints.

This problem is not confined to the police: local councils are under the same cosh. As an elected representative for over 25 years I have come to realise that, although our 11 MPs say they make forceful private representations to government to change this inequity, I have never seen any evidence that their interventions have had the slightest effect. The argument that Surrey is a special case has never had any traction in central government, whoever is in power.

The only way, in my view, to effect real change is through a radical review of police funding nationally, through a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). That will give a platform and an opportunity to present a detailed, well-evidenced case that the funding system is deeply unfair to Surrey residents. Such a review has been promised for years, but has been repeatedly delayed, the last time being derailed by the Covid crisis. I understand, but I am not holding my breath, that the CSR is planned for the near future: when it is launched I will certainly be presenting as persuasive a case as I can that police funding needs a significant swing from local to national taxation. I hope all political leaders in Surrey will unite around this position.

Although I communicate with Surrey MPs regularly, and have met all in the last year despite Covid restrictions – and I can assure you that police funding was on that agenda – I have not, for the reasons above, presented in detail the case for a change in funding to them. That will have to wait until the CSR is launched – it is the only realistic chance of changing this inequitable situation.

I did however write to the Home Secretary and Policing Minister in January 2020, when a CSR was on the cards for later that year, expressing my grave concerns about the fairness of police funding, including the disproportionate balance of the Surrey police settlement, and urging a root-and-branch review. That was overtaken by events I fear (I do not recall a reply), but I will return to the charge at the earliest realistic opportunity.



SURREY PCP

Minute Item 5/21

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8 February 2021

Dear Commissioner,

Proposed Precept for 2021-22

In accordance with Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Police and Crime Panel (Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012, I write to inform you of the Surrey Police and Crime Panel's decision with regard to your proposed precept for 2021-22.

The following recommendation was presented to the Panel on 5 February 2021:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Police and Crime Panel:

- i) Review the precept proposal: to increase the Band D Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Precept by £15 for 2021/22 from £270.57 to £285.57; and
- ii) Report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept.

RESOLVED:

The Police and Crime Panel reviewed the precept proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 3.7 of the Surrey Police and Crime Panel's Constitution, a **recorded vote** was requested by three Panel members.

Three Panel members voted for the precept proposal, seven Panel members voted against the precept proposal and there were no abstentions.

In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 a veto must be agreed by two-thirds of Panel members, which equates to ten Panel members (the full membership rather than those present at the meeting) and as that requirement had not been met, the Panel:

- (i) Accepted that the PCC's proposal to increase the Band D Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Precept by £15 for 2021/22 from £270.57 to £285.57 would come into effect; and
- (ii) Would formally report to the Commissioner (by 8 February 2021), noting its concerns and reasons for Panel members not supporting the proposed precept (see the Panel's minutes for the detailed discussion).

A summary of Panel members' concerns and reasons for not supporting your proposed precept is provided below for your consideration:

- That despite the precept increase last year, Surrey Police had limited presence on the beat and as part of the proposed precept increase; increasing frontline officers was vital to provide reassurance to residents.
- That as Surrey's district and borough councils were keeping Council Tax increases predominantly low within 2 to 3% it was difficult to justify the Commissioner's proposed precept increase of 5.5% due to the financial difficulties many were facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; with many using food banks and seeking financial aid for the first time.
- That the proposed precept increase needed to be translated into an increase in performance, vague statements on increased performance were outlined in the Chief Constable's investment case. The Commissioner's duty was to hold the Chief Constable to account, there had been a flatline in performance indicators and outcomes which could not continue.
- That the length of time to recruit officers and staff was too slow, a year was a long time for those recruits to be trained and ready for frontline duties.
- That residents provided comments within Commissioner's Council Tax Survey 2021/22 in which 51% said that they were not in favour of the proposed precept noting the difficulty in funding that thirty pence a week increase in addition to Council Tax rises from district and borough councils; particularly for those on restricted incomes.
- That the financial burden on Surrey's council taxpayers was great and so sought clarification on the use of reserves, spending efficiency, the use of savings as alternatives to reduce that burden; as well clarification on the split within the Surrey Capital & Investment Programme of funding for the Estate Strategy compared to Operational Equipment - to ensure adequate funding for frontline officers and staff.

In respect of the above concerns, the Panel requests that:

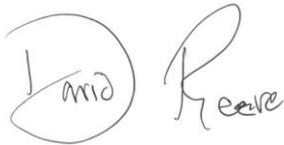
- Going forward it has sight of the various scenarios of proposed precept levels that you consider in order to understand the effect of different precept levels.
- You provide a regular report on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that you will be using to assess how Surrey Police delivers against the Chief Constable's investment case, including:
 - The setting of targets for the Chief Constable to achieve in respect of the three focus areas where the increase in officers and staff is financed through the precept: 'more police officers and frontline staff - reducing the most serious accidents on Surrey's roads', 'better crime prevention - a dedicated rural crime team'; and 'more crimes solved - more police staff focused on assisting local investigations'. Regarding crimes solved, the Panel stress that improvements are needed in the volume of crimes resolved including increasing positive outcome rates, the identification of suspects and prosecution rates particularly for high harm offences as well as total notifiable offences.
 - How the investment case supports all six priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.
 - The measures put in place to ensure that the public get value for money on the £4.1 million additional investment provided as a result of the 2021/22 precept.
- The length of time to recruit officers and staff needed to be speeded up where possible as it is unacceptable that there is a year's delay.
- You continue to lobby the Government and Surrey Members of Parliament (MPs) for a fairer funding formula as Surrey Police received the lowest grant from Government

per head of population in the country, so that the precept next year should not be used to redress the unfair funding placing the burden on council taxpayers.

- Any future Council Tax Survey should give residents the opportunity to select where they want an increase in Council Tax used.

I would like to thank you for your communication with the Police and Crime Panel's Finance Sub-Group regarding your proposed precept and budget position in the lead up to the formal Panel meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the first name 'David' and the last name 'Reeve' written in a cursive style.

Councillor David Reeve
Chairman, Surrey Police and Crime Panel

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10th February 2021

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter dated 8th February in respect of the precept decision taken at the meeting of the Police & Crime Panel on 5th February. In accordance with Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, having had regard to your report, my formal response which will be published, is outlined below.

Firstly, may I thank Members for the constructive debate and challenge at Friday's meeting. As I hope I made clear, this was a very difficult decision in what are for many, the most straitened of times. I echo the sentiments of those members who raised concerns around the affordability of any rise in taxation, but firmly believe that the uplift in funding for Surrey Police that this precept achieves will make a real and tangible difference in keeping our communities safe.

To turn to the specific concerns you raised on page 2 of your letter:

- I would challenge the assertion that Surrey Police had 'limited presence' on the beat in the past year. Reassurance in neighbourhoods is of course a key strand of our policing model and last year (2019/20), an additional 43 officers were put into those borough and district-based teams which are most visible to residents. But as my proposal made clear, there are many other vital roles within the Force which may not be 'visible' to the majority of Surrey residents, but still play a key part in the wider policing model.

Of the 10 extra officers and 67 operational staff posts this year's precept funding will create, the vast majority are 'frontline' roles, even if they are not necessarily 'on the beat'. These include the creation of a rural crime team to tackle and prevent issues in the county's rural communities and a 'fatal five' roads policing team, focused on reducing the most serious accidents on our roads. New roles such as trained research analysts will help ensure officers can more effectively target the criminals causing most harm in communities and some roles, such as those assisting with local investigations, will allow police officers to stay out visible in our communities.

- Affordability for Surrey residents was at the forefront of my mind when putting together my precept proposal this year. I understand that whilst a 29p per week increase on a Band D property may not seem much, it must be seen in the context of many families struggling with real hardship. A 5.5% increase was the maximum amount by which PCCs could increase their share of council tax precept without triggering a referendum. I accept that Districts and Boroughs are proposing lower

increases, but it should also be noted that they have a lower ceiling (the greater of 2% or £5) set by Government for triggering a referendum.

- Residents will rightly expect a return on the precept investment and I will be holding the Chief Constable to account for an improvement in performance at our regular meetings, particularly in areas where Surrey falls behind. Members should also be aware that performance should be considered against a background of increased demand and complexity of crime in recent years. We have seen strong performance in many areas, with the Force achieving an 'Outstanding' rating from HMICFRS for preventing crime; high levels of public confidence; and generally lower levels of reported crimes.

There are areas for improvement, not least in increasing the numbers of crimes solved or 'positive outcomes'. Like many other areas, Surrey Police has a shortage of detectives and this will be addressed through the investment of some of the precept funding. But it will take time to train more detectives and for improvements to be reflected in results. I will be monitoring this and the wider performance of the force closely and holding the Chief Constable to account accordingly.

- Surrey Police has been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic to recruit and train new officers and has exceeded its original targets for the past year. From March 2020 to January 2021, Surrey recruited 313 officers which included Student Officers, re-joiners and transferees. This represents an overall net increase of 78 officers from Op Uplift and 26 from precept funding.
- As Cllr Forster noted at the meeting, the consultation this year was finely balanced with 51% against and 49% supporting my proposed increase. Affordability was one of the reasons cited by those opposing the increase. I can assure members that I take the consultation very seriously and have personally read all the comments submitted. Where possible and if respondents provide contact details, my office has sought to provide a personal response.
- As I explained in the meeting, Surrey Police has amongst the lowest reserves in the country; less than 3% of gross expenditure. This is the lowest level that can be held and yet still be able to provide a contingency to cover unexpected costs, such as those arising from an incident (e.g. flooding) as well as any delay in achievement of anticipated savings. Furthermore, even if reserves were used for this purpose, this is only available as an option for one year and does not address how this expenditure will be covered beyond 2021/22.

I will ensure that Surrey Police continues to place a relentless focus on achieving savings. The report showed that Surrey Police has delivered £75m of savings in the 10 years to 2020/21 and a further £6.3m are included within the budget for 2021/22. Furthermore, the Medium Term Financial Strategy in my report indicated that at least a further £17m of savings will be required in the 3 years beyond 2021/22 and hence it would not be prudent to add further expenditure of £4m in the expectation that additional compensating savings can be identified at some point in the future.

- In respect of the Capital Programme for 2021/22, it is correct that the budget for operational equipment is significantly less than that for Estates. This is simply because for expenditure to be classed as capital it has to be over £10,000 (excluding vehicles) and have a life longer than one year. For these reasons, most operational equipment is charged to revenue and included within the revenue

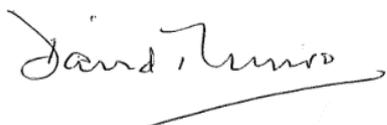
budget. I spend a lot of my time meeting officers and staff and always ask whether they are provided with the right equipment to do their job and invariably the answer is yes, but I am always looking at ways this can be improved.

Turning to the Panel's specific recommendations:

- I would be happy in future to share with members the various scenarios of proposed precept levels that were discussed in and considered when developing the proposal that is ultimately put to the Panel.
- My office already provides a regular report to the Panel on the KPIs that I use in my performance meetings and that assist me in holding the Chief Constable to account against progress with the Police & Crime Plan. It is only right that I am able to demonstrate to residents that there is a positive difference as a result of their investment. I fully intend to ask the Chief Constable to evidence the progress that is being made in those areas that will benefit from an uplift in officers or staff and will report to the panel in due course.
- I know that Surrey Police is working hard to ensure that officers and staff are brought into the organisation as quickly as possible, in spite of the difficulties imposed by Covid restrictions.
- I will continue to lobby the Government and Surrey MPs for a fairer funding formula. I made this very point to the Policing Minister just last week.
- Ultimately, it is a matter for the Chief Constable to determine how operational resource is allocated, but we must also be guided by the views of Surrey residents and the priorities as set out in the Police & Crime Plan. I will consider how best to achieve this balance in future surveys.

I hope this addresses the points raised by the Panel. I look forward to working with you in the coming months to examine in more detail the benefits that the additional officers and staff will bring to Surrey Police and local people.

Yours sincerely,



David Munro
Police and Crime Commissioner

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SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 5 FEBRUARY 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS – PANEL MEMBER QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Question submitted by Councillor Hazel Watson (Mole Valley District Council)

During the Summer of 2020 as lockdown measures were lifted in relation to Covid-19, large numbers of visitors visited beauty spots across Surrey. Given that a similar situation of large crowds of visitors visiting Surrey beauty spots is likely to recur during the Summer of 2021, what lessons have been learned by Surrey Police regarding how to tackle this issue and what actions and strategy is planned for this Summer?

Response:

Whilst we hope that the situation is different in the Summer of 2021, we have been able to use the learning from last year as to what locations and behaviours we may see where and when. Working with the various partners and custodians of these beauty spots we are able to proactively attend where appropriate and help set the tone or expectations but also deal with behaviour that is recklessly endangering the wider public health. We do need however to continue to balance this against the communities need for open space and wellbeing and whatever the regulations are at the time.

It is difficult to agree a strategy at this stage as we really don't know what the situation will be.

2. Question submitted by Councillor Hazel Watson (Mole Valley District Council)

How many drones if any do Surrey Police have to assist their work and if they do have drones, for what types of purposes are they used and what plans are there to use drones in the future?

Response:

3 weather resilient drones. Located at Staines, Guildford and Leatherhead – Operated by NPT & SFRS pilots.

2 Smaller drones available for use by TFU (firearms) and RPU (roads policing) at Burpham – Operated primarily by TFU and RPU pilots.

2 weather resilient and 1 small drone operated by Surrey Specials out of Burpham.

Use (Taken from the Surrey Police internet site).

We are using drones to:

- Assist with searches for Missing Persons
- Assist with investigations into Road Traffic Collisions, Major Crime and Industrial Accident investigation.
- Assist with Event Planning and management
- Provide situational awareness to Officers and Commanders in a variety of policing situations.

Our drones are only deployed for specific operational tasks and are not used for general patrol/surveillance i.e. they are not patrolling the skies above Surrey and Sussex on a daily basis.

How do we think drones will help us? (From Surrey Police intranet)

Using drones will help us:

- Use our resources more effectively by having the right resources in the right place at the right time to resolve incidents quickly.
- Enhance the safety of the Public and Emergency Service staff by deploying a drone into situations which would otherwise involve risks to individuals.
- Provide good quality evidence to assist apprehension and prosecution of offenders
- Enhance joint working with other Emergency Services.

Deployments – 331 in 2020

Future uses - Use of drones in support of policing rural crime – Poaching, tackle and farm equipment theft.

3. Question submitted by Councillor David Reeve (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council)

At your regular meetings with the Chief Constable which is reported under Item 13, reference is made to the national position of Surrey Police on various subjects. Could you please provide a full list of all graded topics showing the Surrey Police position nationally?

Response:

There is no full list of topics where national police force positions are shown. The reference made at Item 13 is with regard to File Quality. This is taken from a national data set for Criminal Justice data, which isn't published. This could be requested through the Surrey and Sussex Criminal Justice Partnership for information, if required.

The most comprehensive set of published national information for police forces is published by the HMICFRS in the Value for Money profiles and they can be found here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/article/value-for-money-inspections/value-for-money-profiles/value-for-money-dashboards/>

These do not provide rankings but do show comparative information for a wide range of indicators.

4. Question submitted by Councillor David Reeve (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council)

It has been announced that Sussex Police officers have been vaccinated using up supplies which would not be used in the daily appointments. Have Surrey Police officers been able to similarly make use of these thus ensuring front line officers receive protection?

Response:

From Surrey Police Senior Lead:

I can confirm that where there are vaccines that would otherwise have to be discarded – and that cannot be used for vulnerable people – we have a policy in place that police officers and staff in frontline roles can take them. This is very clear in that it is only where there are vaccines that would otherwise have to be destroyed and that we would never take the place of someone vulnerable.

I can also confirm that as a result a number of Surrey officers and staff have received vaccinations and we continue to work with our health partners to ensure that we maintain our high ethical standards and allow for no vaccinations to be wasted.

There are a number of reasons why vaccinations would have to be discarded – largely due to them not being able to be returned to storage.

In terms of numbers this can vary but generally is a handful at the end of any clinic so is very ad hoc.

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