

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) – 3 February 2023

Feedback Report to Tewkesbury Standards and Oversight Committee

Meeting attended by Councillor David Gray.

Proposed Gloucestershire Police Precept 2023/24

This item took up the great part of the meeting.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) presented his report on his proposals for the uplift in the police precept for 2023/24, which ran to 41 pages and contains a wealth of detail on all aspects of the Gloucestershire Constabulary, its finances and operations.

This report is available in full via the weblink glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk where agendas and related papers are available to the public, including full minutes of past meetings.

Highlights of the report included:

The results of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) public survey.

Some 657 residents responded to the survey, including 113 from Tewkesbury. Speeding/dangerous driving and burglary/theft were the two topics that affected residents the most, with over 75% of respondents either being personally affected or being aware of the crime. In line with the result for the County, 72% of Tewkesbury respondents said that they did not believe that the Gloucestershire Constabulary has sufficient funds to address their concerns, and the most popular areas for allocating funds, if more were available, were visible policing and policing on roads.

Safer street Fund

The PCC highlighted the benefits that the Force has received following recent applications for Safer Street (SS) Fund. Prior to the current PCC's term in office no application had been made for such funding, but Gloucestershire has now received some £3.1m of SS funding in the last two years, and now has the highest per capita receipts of any Force in the South West.

The PCC outlined actions taken by the Police against his 6 stated priorities

- Creating safer communities
- Tackling violence against women and girls
- Strengthening your constabulary
- Targeting the causes of crime
- Supporting victims and reducing reoffending
- Empowering local communities

Additional officers and staff in the constabulary

In total some 312 fully funded full time posts have been added to the Force

- 115 extra police officers
- 19 extra PCSOs
- 178 extra police staff

Funding provided for 200 additional Special Constables and 100 volunteer PCSOs
60 external roles funded via OPCC in crime prevention and other related areas

The PCC highlighted that a number of the problems that had been highlighted by the Peel Report issued by the Inspectorate, which resulted in the Gloucestershire Force being placed into special measures, had required urgent action including devoting resources to fix the failings in the Force's recording of crime. The later was in the opinion of the PCC the "killer issue" that had to be addressed on his taking office.

The PCC proposed a £15 increase in the annual precept (based on Band D) or 5.36%. The uplift reflected the investments being made in expanding the Force and the significant inflationary pressures that the Force faces. The PCC said that past lower funding requests had "hollowed out" many of the activities of the Force and that this was not a sensible approach.

The Panel welcomed the PCC's report and raised a number of questions.

Two Liberal Democrat members of the Panel invited the PCC to apologise for not hitting his manifesto commitment to increase the number of full frontline police officers by 300.

The PCC noted that such plans had to change when faced by the results of the Peel review, which reported shortly after he took office, which made clear the pressing need to fix the major deficiencies in the recording of crime in the County; he suggested that the real test of his performance would be the effectiveness in addressing those areas and improving crime statistics and improving prevention. He noted that he was unaware of any Force that had added staff at a faster rate proportionally over the period of his office.

The PCC also defended the use of special constables and community support officers as effective ways to both reduce crime and improve intelligence on crime in communities.

The PCC noted that he has been lobbying for both more funding for the police from S106 and CIL type charges to housing developers, and for a change to allow the police to recruit non-graduates, who can offer valuable skills.

The Panel voted unanimously in favour of the suggested increase in the precept for 2023/24.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 24th March 2023

Report ends.