

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Mr John Campion
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Hindlip Hall
Worcester
WR3 8SP

13 February 2025

Dear Mr Campion,

PROPOSED PRECEPT

In accordance with Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, I write to confirm that the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel reviewed your proposed precept on 5 February 2025 in a public meeting at Wyre Forest House, Kidderminster. Thank you for attending and answering questions.

As required in the Act, the Panel must formally make a report to you as Commissioner on your proposed precept; please accept this letter as the formal report of the Panel.

The precept proposal you recommended to the Panel was to increase the precept by 5.05% for 2025/26, adding an average extra £14.00 to the annual Council Tax bill for a typical band D home.

The Panel considered the details in the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan report and the report of the Panel's Budget Sub-Group as included with its agenda. The main areas of discussion were:

- the detail of what was included in the Governance Budget for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Appendix Bii), specifically the cost of maintaining the PCC's office, which would be provided after the meeting.
 - the current situation with the Force's firearms licensing unit, following the additional investment of £460k the previous year to tackle backlogs which had been impacting new and existing licence holders. The investment had resulted in reduced waiting times due to additional staff and vehicles to carry out visits. During the budgetary process the Force had been notified of an increase in the firearms licensing renewal fee. Work was currently being carried out to establish the extent to which the increase in the licensing fee would cover costs, but it was stressed that improvements would be continued.
 - that the sub-group were informed of changes to the operational policing model under Operation Franklin, whereby two community policing areas would be created to replace the five local policing areas. In addition, it
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was highlighted that some back office functions, that currently had civilians in post, may be replaced by police officers in order to add greater value, including the power of arrest. The Panel requested a report back to a future meeting on the impact of this move.

- that the Panel was pleased to receive assurance that all of the proposals included in Operation Franklin were premised on protecting services to the public.
- the update on the Force's final financial allocation for policing and crime received from the Home Office. This included an additional £1.5m for neighbourhood policing, with clarification being sought as to how these resources could be utilised. The Panel was pleased to hear that there was confidence that the end of year performance would be better next year and with a 2-year financial settlement anticipated, this would hopefully provide some certainty going forward

Having considered the reports, the following recommendation as proposed by the Panel's Budget Sub-Group was considered:

That the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel supports the PCC's proposal for an increase of Council Tax by £14.00 for an average Band D home (equivalent to 5.05%) providing that the Panel continues to receive a quarterly budget monitoring report which includes key performance indicators (to monitor the outcomes against the Budget so that the PCP can identify trends, service improvements and satisfaction against the commitments in the West Mercia Safer Communities Plan) and continue to have a baseline for precept reviews in future years.

This recommendation was agreed by Members of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel by a majority vote.

I note that you are required to have regard to the Panel's report and provide a response which will be published. I look forward to receiving this response in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Barry Durkin
Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
13 February 2025

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