

Panel Budget & Police and Crime Plan Speech

Introduction

Thank you, Chair and members of the panel.

Before I begin, I would like to alert you all to a typographical error on the Report. On Page 1, Paragraph 3d the word “deficit” should read “surplus”. A small point, but an important one.

I am here today to ask you to approve my proposal to raise the police precept for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to the amount of £10 per year per household for Band D properties for the year 2022/23...

Before I hand over to the Chief Constable who will provide an overview of his policing requirements and then Kira Hughes, my Interim Chief Finance Officer, who will give you more detailed financial information about the proposal, I would like to say a few words by way of introduction.

The precept that I am hoping that you will endorse today is a vital part of the overall strategy of the Police and of the Office of the OPCC. I have entered into a contract with the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who endorsed the manifesto that I put forward at the election last May, and which was then transferred into the Police and Crime Plan which has now finished its public consultation and will be coming before you shortly.

I do not intend to pre-empt the discussions we will be having on that, but it is worth emphasising that this precept is, I would suggest, essential to pay for the type of policing and other services that the public have said that they want.

I have thought long and hard about this proposal and have challenged the force at every stage of this process to ascertain if I could reasonably present to you a lower precept submission.

I know and understand the economic and financial pressures on people and businesses. People will already be feeling the pinch as price of fuel, food, clothing and other household goods increases. I am sure that everybody round this table has, at some time, felt the pinch of financial hardship. It is therefore our solemn duty to ensure that we take as little from the public in taxation as is possible to deliver the services that they require and request.

I have spoken to the Chief and his senior colleagues about how we can continue to deliver against the backdrop of being one of the worst funded forces in the country and some considerable distance away from the national average. The government funding formula is a challenge and disadvantages the force therefore be assured I will work tirelessly to ensure it is changed so that it is a fair deal for the force.

Those of you who follow me on Twitter will be aware that I meet with Westminster figures on a regular basis and Police funding is rarely absent from the agenda.

In a few moments you will hear from the Chief – and I hope when you have done so you will agree with me there is no real alternative to increasing the precept to the maximum.

This is a Budget for sustainable policing to carry our city and two counties into a **sustainable and a viable** long-term future, built upon Peelian Principles and aimed at giving the people the protection they deserve and demand.

You may have heard me say before but the police are under considerable and unprecedented pressure. The demands on the service are more complex, more scrutinised and more commented upon than at any other time in its history.

Legislation is more complicated and intricate than ever before, the media intrusion is more intense than ever before, criminal activity is more sinister and dangerous than ever before and most importantly the public expectation of our officers and staff is greater now than I have ever known.

The increase in precept is absolutely vital so that we are able to protect people today but also keep people safe tomorrow.

A sustainable police service enables longer term plans to be delivered which will enable decisions to be made so that we can deliver on the needs and expectations of all our communities. For decades policing has delivered the service to the public based upon organisational ease and not community needs. As trust and confidence in the police wavers

we need to be more responsive to the public and their needs and expectations.

It is my duty to improve the service we are able to offer, it is my duty to do all that I am able to protect the front line, it is my duty to provide the force with the equipment and technology that they need so that they can more effectively protect our communities.

It is my duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of the force which I will do more robustly than ever before.

But most importantly it is my duty to listen to the public and respond to their needs. Again, those of you who follow my social media will know that I spend much time out in the community talking to people and organisations about their expectations and hopes. Much as I like my office, a PCC who spends all their time sat behind a desk is not doing their job properly.

In setting this budget and making this submission, I needed to consider the feedback I have received from local people across the City and two counties ~ as you will appreciate there is no point in asking for views if you don't take any notice. That is why my Police and Crime Plan makes clear the areas in which the public and I wish to see improvements. I am, after all, a local resident too.

Whilst the Government uplift of police officers is very welcome I need to build a budget which will enable the force to respond to the expectations of the public.

The people's voices have been clear and therefore we have an ambitious Police and Crime Plan. The public want the force to be more on the front foot and take the fight to the criminal. It is no longer viable just to be responsive.

- We will transform our approach to rural policing so we can stop these inhumane and barbaric criminals targeting the wildlife, businesses and people which can ruin livelihoods and lives
- We need to ensure the calls from the public are answered professionally and to a high quality and standard. We will invest in the communications centre and equip the staff with the training so that when the public make initial contact they have trust the police and have confidence in our response
- We will support the most deprived communities in the city and county so that we are able to target the most serious and prolific offenders, deal with criminals who are engaged in anti-social behaviour and we will be relentless in dealing with criminals who, put simply, blight people's lives.
- We will ensure our engagement and communication with the public and most importantly the youngest and most vulnerable is the best it can be so that we are seen as an organisation who listens and responds. This is a central plank to building trust and confidence.

- We will equip our staff so that they can respond to criminals who are more sophisticated, sinister and mobile than ever before.

These people need to be combatted and we need the resources to respond.

As you will all appreciate this is not an exhaustive list but a brief insight to the operational demands that will have to be addressed.

I'm grateful to all those who responded to my consultation on both the Police and Crime Plan and the amount of council tax paid towards policing.

Their responses have shown **overwhelming** support for both my policing priorities and an increase in the amount of council tax that is paid towards policing (around 10% of the overall bill).

Over 72% of respondents ~ and we had over 2,500 ~ voted to pay £10* a year more towards the sort of policing they want to see. That works out at **only 19p a week** for ~ more policing, better rural response, improved communication between the police and the public, ~ alongside more tailored support for victims of crime.

I was incredibly surprised at the consistency and coherence with which the public spoke. Their messages were clear, their messages were informative and the narrative was in line with the messages I have received from both officers, staff and the members of the public I have met since taking office.

The People have spoken, that's what they voted for, that is what they expect and that is what I feel duty bound to provide.

To summarise.....The public and I want to see greater visibility in the **entire** force area; we want to see neighbourhood policing continue to evolve so that residents can know and see and talk to their local beat officers.

Communication between the Police and the Public will improve
Our work with the Violence Reduction Network will be enhanced...
Business crime will get the attention it deserves,
Victims will receive the support they need
and rural crime will finally have a champion in both Leicestershire Police and me.

Policing by consent is one of the great British traditions that has made our police the envy of the world. It is enshrined in the Peelian Principles. It is of **paramount importance** to me that the value of Peelian policing by consent is neither forgotten nor undervalued.

Panel members, I hope you agree with me that one of my most important roles as the PCC is to hold the Chief and his team to account for the efficient and effective running of the force. As you know I have now introduced the new Corporate Governance Board which is underpinned with a new Corporate Governance and Accountability strategy and I have previously brought to Panel

This is a Regular and in-depth monitoring of standards, outcomes, service delivery and the value for money achieved for the public. I make no apologies for my more robust and intrusive style and have structured my team to enable me to do this on behalf of the public.

The Leicestershire Police are already a good performing force. My ambition is to make them outstanding in the views and opinions of the public who they serve and who pay for them.

Summary

In conclusion, I want to pay tribute to all those who have worked **so hard** to put the budget together – namely the Chief Constable, Deputy, their teams, Paul Dawkins, Kira, Mr Peet, my team, and the public.

In order for me to have complete confidence in this submission and knowing how important it is for the force, senior colleagues have worked incredibly hard to understand in forensic detail the strategic, operational and financial challenges the force will be facing in the short, medium and longer term.

They have developed a blue print for policing which enables them to navigate through a cluttered policing landscape and provide a coherent plan on how they intend to deliver for the public.

I commend their approach which has not left a stone unturned and I commend the Chief Constable for his drive and determination so that we

collectively know that making this policing precept proposal is the right thing to do for our public.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to pay tribute to all the officers and staff from Leicestershire Police who day in day out do an incredible job, many of whom put their lives on the line and provide a service we should all be thankful for.

Protecting our communities and keeping people safe is their honourable duty and I assert it is our collective duty to do the right thing and approve this precept increase so that we can support the policing mission

I am proud to be the Police and Crime Commissioner and I will continue to do all that I am able to support them in any way I am able.

Thank you very much for listening, and I commend this proposal to you.

END

The full presentation and subsequent debate can be viewed, alongside the other agenda items, [here](#)