

Your Reference:

Our Reference: Lincolnshire PCP

Contact: Emma Baldwin

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Date: Friday 8 February 2019

Marc Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Lincolnshire
Deepdale Lane
Nettleham
Lincoln
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Dear Mr Jones,

Re: Lincolnshire Police Precept 2019/20

On behalf of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel I write to thank you, your office colleagues and Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Taylor, for attending the Panel meeting on 8 February 2019 to present, discuss and answer the Panel's questions in relation to your proposed Police Precept for 2019/20.

As ever the Panel found the discussion informative and appreciated your open approach to providing information. An audio recording of the meeting is available on the Panel's website and details will be included in the Minutes of the Meeting which will be available in due course on the Panel's website.

Prior to and during the meeting the Panel thoroughly scrutinised the financial information provided. The Panel noted the following key information in relation to your proposed Precept:

- For 2019/20 the Government has increased the flexibility for raising the Police Precept to recognise the financial pressures experienced by police forces. The referendum threshold is now set at £24 per annum for a Band D property. A proposal above this limit would require a referendum to be held and funded locally, the cost of which you estimate for Lincolnshire to be in excess of £1.0million. Your proposed increase in the Precept of £23.94 per annum (11%) for a Band D property was within the threshold and would provide £5.495million of additional funding.
- Your budget consultation exercise received 3,449 responses and was statistically robust. The majority of respondents indicated a willingness to pay more for more Police Officers and a better policing service in Lincolnshire with 57% willing to pay 15% more through the Police Precept.

However, the Panel has concerns, which it raised in the meeting, that the consultation process should be reviewed because it wasn't clear to survey respondents that a precept increase wouldn't increase Police Officer numbers and that Police Officer numbers would, in fact, be reduced.

- Even with additional funding from the Police Precept you estimate that in 2019/20 you will be required to utilise £1.0million of reserves to balance the budget. This is in addition to the £5.3million of reserves which are forecast to be utilised to balance the budget in 2018/19. It is of course recognised that the continued use of reserves to balance the budget is no longer possible due to reserves being depleted in previous years to balance the budget.
- Significant cost reductions (over £28million to date) have been achieved by Lincolnshire Police in recent years. Whilst efficiencies and productivity gains will continue to provide savings it is likely that a future cost reduction programme will result in fewer Police Officers, PSCOs and staff which will impact negatively on the service provided to the public.
- Despite ongoing and wide ranging recognition that the national police funding formula is not fit for purpose it now appears that change will not be implemented for several years. This is hugely disappointing. The Panel remains strongly of the view that a fairer police funding formula should be introduced and that in the interim funding support should be provided to forces such as Lincolnshire that are disadvantaged by the current methodology.
- The Panel noted your Special Grant Application and requests to be kept informed as to whether or not the application is successful.

Given the above information the Panel was satisfied that you had been able to demonstrate that an increase in the Police Precept is required to ensure that a robust and effective standard of policing can be provided to the people of Lincolnshire in the year ahead.

As such, and in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 I write to confirm that the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel voted to accept your proposal to increase the Police Precept by £23.94 for a Band D property in 2019/20.

The Panel notes that there is no information from Government on the Police Precept flexibility being retained in future and that the next Spending Review will not provide any further clarity until 2021/22 at the earliest.

Finally please note that the Panel will publish this correspondence on its website.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. Cook.

Christopher Cook
Chairman - Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel

CC: Members of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel
Malcolm Burch and Julie Flint, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
for Lincolnshire
Chief Executives of Lincolnshire Local Authorities