



**Durham Police & Crime
Commissioner/ Chief Constable**

Joint Audit Committee

**Tuesday 17 March 2015
11.00 a.m.**



Meadowfield Training Centre

Attendees

Mrs E M Davies in the chair

Members

Mr R J Humphries, Ms J Flynn, Ms M Raine

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Mrs K Bambridge and Mr A Reiss

Durham Constabulary

Mr G Ridley and Mr P Garfoot and Mr S Winship (Inspection of Files)

Auditors

Mr S Carter and Mr M Barnes

Apologies

Cllr E Bell

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

The Commissioning Framework and WOW awards would be presented at the April meeting.

2. Budget

The committee received a report on the Revenue & Capital Budgets 2015/16 Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Mr Ridley highlighted the following points:

- The provisional financial settlement for 2015/16 (received 17th December 2014) announced a reduction in core Government funding to Policing Services of 5.1% then compared to 2014/15. (When comparing total Government funding the reduction was 4.8%).

- The Medium Term Financial Plan in Appendix 3 outlines estimated future year's funding levels. Whilst a balanced budget for the financial year 2015/16 can be achieved there will be a tough challenge for 2016/17 and future years. To balance future years it will be necessary to further reduce officer and staff numbers. Provisional financial settlement figures are not yet available for 2016/17 from Central Government and until those indications are available it is estimated that income from central government will reduce by approximately £3.290m.
- Whilst recognising the impact of any increase in Council Tax on the finances of households in County Durham and Darlington, in view of the future budgetary challenges referred to above, it is the view of officers that it is more important than ever, so far as is possible, to protect the base budget by increasing the Council Tax.
- It should be noted that PCC's will receive funding equivalent to a 1% increase in council tax if they freeze the household charge in 2015/16. When these grants cease to be paid by Government, further permanent reductions to the base budget, equivalent to the level of grant received, will need to be made to balance the budget.

Mr Ridley added that the 2014/15 capital programme is progressing, especially in relation to estate and fleet improvements. The revenue consequences of this programme have been taken into account in the 2015/16 budget and medium term financial plan.

In relation to a question from Ms Raine regarding police staff pay, Mr Ridley confirmed that there would be a 2% pay award for police staff.

Mrs Davies suggested that a report of Risk Management be presented at the next meeting.

The committee would like to express their thanks to the Chief Constable's staff and the PCC staff for their invaluable support and assistance with the budget.

3. Police and Crime Plan

The Committee received a report on the refreshed Police and Crime Plan for 2015-17.

Mr Reiss informed members that the Police and Crime Panel endorsed the plan on 3rd March 2015 and praised the document for being comprehensive yet succinct. The Plan is now being formatted into a public facing and interactive document which enables the reader to navigate the document with ease. He added that the Commissioner proposes to publish the refreshed Police and Crime Plan on the 23rd March 2015. This is so that the Plan can be issued before the start of the pre-election period.

Mrs Davies added that the plan was an excellent public facing document and thanked the PCC's team for their work.

PART B

Mr P Garfoot – Retirement

The committee expressed their sincere thanks to Mr Garfoot for his invaluable support and assistance that he has provided to the former Police Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner over the years and wished him luck for the future.

Inspection of Files

Members of the Joint Audit Committee examined a sample of files involving complaints.

17 files were inspected.