Budget Consultation

December 2018
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Consultation foreword

Staffordshire Commissioner – Police, Fire and Rescue, Crime

This is the first time I have set the amount people pay locally through council tax bills for our fire and rescue service. I have been setting the local tax for policing since 2013.

The amount we all pay locally for the two services in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is added to the money the Government provides from national taxes. Over recent years the Government has reduced the amount provided from national funding. It means for policing around 40% of the total budget comes from the amount I set through council tax bills, whilst for fire and rescue it is around 60%.

This consultation is a chance for local people to give their views on what local charges I should set through council tax bills for each service in 2019/20. This is not a referendum, but I will look carefully at all the comments made by local people before making decisions. I will also listen to the professional views of the fire and rescue service and police service leadership.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I froze the amount people paid locally towards policing for four years, but increased it last year and the year before as Government funding reduced very significantly. Since 2013 the increase in local tax for policing here is less than has been set by any other Commissioner in the country.

My instinct is to ask local people only for what is absolutely needed. I believe in low taxes, but pressures facing, particularly policing, are extraordinary both in demand and the complexity of criminality and harm. Internet crime now accounts for more crime than anything else.

Local policing in the heart of communities is again increasing as a result of investments that I was able to make this year. Whilst that is welcome, looking ahead there is a risk that the resources needed to tackle the most serious, harmful and emerging crime types could impact on that local policing commitment. Then there’s the wider security issues too.

The recent change of fire and rescue service governance sitting alongside policing in my office is providing new opportunities to spend money more collaboratively. We are developing a single administrative and support function that both services will use meaning more of the available money can be spent on both services’ day-to-day work in local communities. Find out more at https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/fire-document/business-case/.

These efficiencies and others already being delivered, will ensure continued good value for the public money spent. I’m pleased that policing in Staffordshire, on the evidence of data published by government inspectors, is one of the most efficient and effective services in the country.

The fire and rescue service, supported by better consumer legislation and more effective safety measures in everyday products, has succeeded in reducing risks of fire and injury.
New vehicles are safer and more resilient, whilst more time is being spent by the fire service around preventing tragedy, particularly for elderly and vulnerable individuals. Whilst the fire service attends fewer emergencies than a decade ago, it often needs significant resources very quickly.

My office commissions support for victims, including those of business crime and we are doing more than ever to prevent crime and other harm in the first place. Alcohol and drug abuse are two of the biggest causes of emergency service intervention and dealing with causes, rather than just the effect is a focus of our commissioning work. This has the potential to reduce future demand on all services.

Both emergency services have different, but also similar, challenges. Common to each is that the money provided from Government has reduced year-on-year, whilst the expectations of the public remain high... quite rightly.

This consultation will help to inform my decision on the amount of local funding you, me and people across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will pay towards these two services through council tax bills.

The full consultation document tries to articulate some of the challenges and provide a sense of demand pressures, particularly in policing, but also the challenges faced by the fire and rescue service and the need for them to respond with a large resource at very short notice.

Finally, this is about two public services that are there for the greater good of our society. Most people rarely need either the police service and/or the fire and rescue service. When they do, both need to be available, properly equipped and with the resources required to help us as individuals. I would ask you to make comment in that context.

Please see below my favoured council tax options for a Band D property for Policing and also Fire and Rescue:

**Policing**
- 44p extra each week, which would mean growth in some police services and an overall better service

**Fire and Rescue**
- 4p increase each week, which would mean broadly the same service as at present

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. You can provide your views on my budget proposals via the following web link [https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/financial/budget-consultation-2019-20/](https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/financial/budget-consultation-2019-20/)

Matthew Ellis
Staffordshire Commissioner – Police I Fire and Rescue I Crime
Purpose of this document

This is a formal consultation document for the Staffordshire Commissioner’s 2019/20 budgets for policing, fire and rescue and community safety.

This document sets out the approach the Commissioner is taking to ensure that policing, fire and rescue and community safety are properly funded in 2019/20 to provide the services that should be expected by those who live and work in Staffordshire.

Increased funding for the services comes from making savings on existing budgets and re-investing this money; or from increases in the amount the Commissioner asks for through council tax, that all householders pay, dependent on the valuation of the property in which they live.

This document makes proposals on both savings from existing budgets and increases in council tax. The views from this consultation exercise will help the Commissioner arrive at his proposals for the setting of the 2019/20 budgets for policing, fire and rescue and community safety. This will happen at the end of January 2019 for policing and community safety and mid-way through February 2019 for fire and rescue services.

You can give your views on these proposals by completing the questionnaire on our website link https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/financial/budget-consultation-2019-20/
On a typical day in Staffordshire...

We will record
793 incidents

- Of these, 232 will be crimes
- 5 will relate to Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse
- 70 will be Domestic Abuse incidents
- 28 will be linked to mental health issues
- 15 people will be reported missing; 14 high/medium risk

We will make
45 arrests

- We will also deal with 6 crimes against businesses, 11 residential burglaries, 5 thefts of vehicles, 2 serious violent crimes, 2 personal robberies, 27 assaults and 9 sexual assaults, amongst other crimes

In a year...

- We deal with 10,200 mental health issues
- We make 16,380 arrests
- We receive 84,847 crimes
- We record 5,500 reports of missing persons
- We receive 543,568 calls; 173,420 of those are to 999

We will receive 1,489 calls, including 475 to 999

We will carry out 10 stop & searches; 6 will relate to drugs

We will issue 23 charges and 10 cautions

We will make 23 charges
We will issue 10 cautions
At a glance 2017/18

Number of incidents attended per year
8,600

Number of fire deaths and injuries per year
29

Number of accidental dwelling fires per year
550

Number of Safe and Well visits per year
25,000

Number of sites
35

Number of fire appliances
39
- 8 Full time
- 2 Day shift
- 29 On call

Number of employees
813

Capital costs of a fire appliance
£250k

The budget for 2018/19
£40.2m made up of:
- 63% £25.4m from Council Tax paid by the 341,485 residents of Staffordshire
- 37% £14.8m in settlement funding

Total savings target to be delivered by March 2020
£1.3m

Number of Safe and Well visits per year
25,000

Equality and Diversity

Female staff
18%

BAME staff
4.1%

Female firefighters
7%

BAME firefighters
4.2%
Section one
The service challenge

Policing and community safety

The police nationally and locally are seeing increases in calls for service, incidents and some types of crime.

The changing nature and increased complexity of that demand has required new, innovative solutions and very different approaches.

There has been a shift from traditional types of crime, such as theft and burglary to crimes against the person, many of which can be described as ‘high harm’ crimes. High profile national events have increased victims’ confidence to report historical and current offences and the proactive work of all agencies in addressing vulnerability and safeguarding has revealed previously hidden demand.

Highly complex investigations into child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and online fraud have become ‘business as usual’ in policing. Crime is more internet-enabled, requiring police to patrol a digital ‘beat’, as well as a physical one and to have more technical tools to combat this threat.

The threats presented by serious and organised crime and terrorism require effective and connected policing between local, regional and national levels.

In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, the police service is increasingly stretched in dealing with complex societal problems such as domestic abuse, missing persons, mental health, sexual offences and substance abuse. These problems are not easy to solve and not solely a policing problem.

The answers are far more about partners working together and all contributing to address the particular issues around the victim, the offender, the family and the vulnerable child or adult.

This need to work together is increasingly difficult, as partners, such as local authorities and the NHS, reduce their resources and change their focus to maintaining core services and managing acute problems. Additional demands are inevitably being placed on the police, which is often the service of last resort for people to access.

Fire and rescue

During the period 2008 to 2017 the fire and rescue service has seen a reduction in the number of emergency incidents it has attended.

However in the last two years the number of calls has started to increase slowly with the summer of 2018 being the busiest in more than 10 years. The types of incidents the service now faces are wide ranging, in addition to dealing with fires and road traffic collisions, through to flooding and terrorism threats.

The demand is not focused on emergency incidents alone with a real focus being placed on preventing emergencies happening. Over the last 3 years more than 100,000 home visits have been carried out to improve home safety.

The impact of the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 was felt locally and placed additional demand in respect of the support housing providers requested.
Over the last 30 months the service has worked closely with providers of multi-storey residential properties of 5 floors or more. The work of the community sprinkler project has resulted in a number of blocks of flats being retro-fitted with sprinkler systems; however this work needs to go further. Changes to building regulations and the introduction of a new Joint Regulators Group is likely to see an increased demand for the provision of technical and legislative fire safety to businesses across the county.

Over the last few years the service has introduced new payment systems for on-call firefighters; a new crewing system; a number of shared services including a shared fire control with the West Midlands Fire Service; a joint transport and engineering centre with Staffordshire Police; a new payroll system with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. These have all been done with efficiency, effectiveness, economy and public safety being at the forefront of each decision.

The types and causes of the emergency incidents and the prevention demand the fire and rescue service faces is complex in nature and needs a partnership approach on many occasions for the resolution to be successful. Collaborative prevention is key, however as other public sector organisations look to reduce their resources and provision, this is having a knock-on effect to the demand being experienced by the service across prevention, protection and response.

Meeting the challenge

The Commissioner has had responsibility for policing and community safety since 2013 and focused on improving the ‘whole system’; working with local partners to provide more joined-up services, reduce cost by sharing resources and tackle demand through prevention and early intervention.

Involving and working with communities is also central to his strategy and he has established grant-funding schemes to support local initiatives and tackle local community safety concerns.

The Commissioner was concerned at the level of practical and emotional support provided to victims of crime. This has been addressed through the creation of the innovative Victims’ Gateway, the Business Crime Matters initiative and more investment in services for domestic abuse victims.

His office has also worked towards more of a joined-up criminal justice process to reduce duplication and delays and improve outcomes for victims and witnesses.

Regional policing partnerships are now stronger with the development of the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit, the development of a well-resourced Counter Terrorism Unit, stronger regional motorway policing and other regional collaborations.

Staffordshire has driven some of this change and contributes resources to all collaborations. More regional developments will take place to ensure the best balance of local and regional capacity and capability.

Locally, collaborative arrangements are also important in meeting the challenges faced. Fleet Services are now jointly delivered between police and fire services in Staffordshire and the Commissioner has taken on responsibility for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service earlier this year. Further opportunities will be taken to extend collaboration between the two organisations as soon as possible.
Major strategic partnerships with private sector organisations have also been progressed. Boeing Defence UK is the Force’s Strategic ICT Partner and Kier provide a range of property services. These arrangements have delivered efficiencies, but also the increased capacity and capability needed to support Staffordshire Police through an unprecedented period of organisational change.

Staffordshire has led the way in adopting new ways of working supported by innovative technology. Body-worn video has brought benefits of improved evidential quality and greater transparency around police activity. The Commissioner was the first to fund a full roll out of this technology and was also at the forefront of rolling out new mobile data devices that removed the need for officers to return to the station to complete routine tasks.

This technology, stronger partnerships and a change in the way people want to contact the police have enabled a re-think around the role of the traditional police station.

In simple terms, the use of police stations has changed fundamentally. Less space is required because officers are more mobile, more sharing of buildings with partners takes place and far fewer people access police stations, choosing to access services in different ways e.g. through the internet, through telephone contact, through face to face contact. Consequently, the buildings used are being reviewed with plans to sell properties, which are no longer suitable or in the optimum location for today’s policing demands. This will deliver recurring financial savings and one-off sums that have and will continue to be re-invested.

New structures and processes have been adopted by the service in 2018, which are delivering a more informed and streamlined response to non-emergency service requests, thereby reducing the demand on frontline resources, so that they can be used more effectively. In turn, this has enabled investment in additional officers in local neighbourhood policing and partnership teams to increase visibility and carry out the prevention and early intervention work essential to reducing future demand.

It is notable that Staffordshire Police is the fourth most visible police force in the country and is by comparison also highly productive, with sickness absence levels lower than the national average.

From 1 August 2018, the Commissioner expanded his remit by taking on the governance of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Service.

The business case he submitted, supported by government, focused on using collaborative opportunities to improve efficiency, enhance public safety and better support the frontline in both policing and fire and rescue.

In 2019/20, the fire and rescue service will be in the last year of a four year Efficiency Plan agreed with the Government in 2015 and implemented in 2016. The plan sets out how the service will address the challenges it faces, aligned with greater flexibility in the money raised through council tax bills.
Section two
The financial challenge

Policing and community safety
The main financial challenges are as follows:

• Overall, demand for policing is increasing and the needs faced are more diverse. Sometimes this means spending more to provide more. For example, more crime can mean more police officers or staff are needed to investigate, respond and be present and visible in local areas and more forensic capacity is required to manage crime scenes.

• Expectations also change through local circumstances, government direction or inspectorate requirements (HMICFRS); this often results in a need to do more. There are very few circumstances where expectations result in a need to do less.

• The price of goods and services change as a result of circumstances that cannot always be controlled; that might be inflation, nationally agreed pay awards, or charges passed on by government, such as increases in national insurance.

For the past 3 years the amount of money directly received from the Government to fund local police activity has not increased and therefore, has not addressed pressures. Over a longer time period, the amount that Staffordshire receives from central government has fallen by 29% in real terms since 2010/11.

Increased funding for policing, when it has occurred, goes in the main to regional teams that focus on major crime challenges such as counter terrorism and serious organised crime. Funding announcements are also sometimes describing increases that will only be met through the council tax bills paid locally.

The Commissioner did not increase council tax at all between April 2013 and March 2017; then increased it by only £3.55 per year from April 2017; and by £11.40 for the current year. For each household, these figures mean that each council tax payer is paying 30p more per week for policing in 2018/19 than they were 6 years ago in 2013/14.

With the service and financial challenges that exist, savings and increases in the amount of money raised through council tax bills are needed. The Commissioner also wants to invest in new ways of working, enabling the Chief Constable to strengthen core policing including neighbourhood policing, investigations and response.

In order to strengthen policing and community safety, the overall budget would significantly increase between this year and 2019/20 to ensure that:

• the commitment made to increase police officer numbers by 44 in 2018/19 and a further 25 in 2019/20 are met;

• the other commitments made by the Chief Constable in delivering the new operating model are sustained;

• all other known budget pressures are met.
In the past there have been opportunities to meet financial pressures through other means than increasing the amount the Commissioner asks for in council tax. Efficiencies have been made, costs have been managed and controlled and many savings have been delivered.

In 2019/20, further savings are proposed that will deliver £6 million to re-invest in the priorities identified to strengthen policing.

However, the Commissioner is consulting on an increase in the amount that local people pay towards the delivery of those priorities, as set out in Section Four of this document.

He is considering several options, each of which will impact differently on the services delivered by Staffordshire Police.

**Fire and rescue**

The fire and rescue service have experienced a significant reduction in government funding during the last few years, with the amount of grant for 2019/20, some £9m (65%) lower than that received during 2012.

During the same time council tax increases have also been modest, with the proposed increase of 2.99% for 2019/20 resulting in the Band D council tax being around 15p per week more than the level charged in 2010.

The previous Fire and Rescue Authority accepted a fixed four-year funding settlement covering the period 2016/17 to 2019/20, which required £4m of savings to be achieved during this period as detailed within its published Efficiency Plan.

So far, £2.2 million of savings have been implemented within the service. The savings included a reduction in whole-time crews of 40 posts phased into the establishment from 1 January 2017 (28 posts) and 1 January 2018 (12 posts) which included the removal of two Targeted Response Vehicles and in addition a new on-call payment system has been implemented.

The balance of savings of £1.8m was reduced to £1.3m as part of the budget setting exercise for 2018/19. This was supported by an increase in Band D Council Tax for 2018/19 and 2019/20, which was 1% above the assumption contained within the Efficiency Plan submission, following the increase in council tax referendum limit to 3%.
Section three
Savings proposals

Detailed savings proposals that total £6.3 million in policing and community safety and £1.3 million in fire and rescue have been identified for delivery in 2019/20. In summary, the savings proposals can be categorised into four strands.

1. Finding efficiencies in new ways of working.

Examples of savings planned for 2019/20 include:

- Investing in new IT systems that will make tasks easier and less manually intensive, provide police officers with the right tools to do their job and provide the general public with different ways to contact and engage with the police and fire and rescue service.
- Further reducing management costs by reducing layers wherever possible and ensuring a limited or negligible impact on services being provided.
- Buying goods and services more efficiently, making sure that value for money is achieved – a good example is making sure that new mobile phone subscriptions are taken advantage of or making sure that electricity, gas and water use in buildings is managed well.
- Not doing some things that may have been done in the past, because evidence shows that outcomes are not achieved – a good example is in using forensic techniques that generally don’t result in a successful criminal conviction.

2. Improving the way we use expensive resources i.e. assets and buildings.

Examples of savings planned for 2019/20 include:

- Managing the balance of buildings and people differently, so there is less reliance on buildings and more on officers on the ground – a good example is reducing the number of police stations the general public can access directly, but providing more online access to services and improving telephone contact.
- Locating police officers, fire and rescue staff and others in buildings owned by other partners, so working together is made easier and there is convenience to the general public in accessing services.
- Selling excess properties so that income for investment increases and the costs of maintaining buildings, such as business rates, decrease.
- Making sure the fleet of police cars and other vehicles is reviewed to match the Staffordshire Police operating model that was implemented in 2018.
3. Making the joint governance with the fire and rescue service a focus in terms of driving savings.

Examples of savings planned for 2019/20 include:

- The coming together of those teams that support frontline services, so that one team supports the two service areas. This will mean that HR, Finance, IT, Procurement and other specialist ‘enabling’ staff work on both police and fire workload. We will also reduce management layers in these specialist services.
- Making best use of the joint estate across police and fire services.
- Saving on Fire and Rescue Authority arrangements, for example saving nearly £300,000 through the transfer of governance to the Commissioner in August 2018.

4. Targeting what we do and doing less of it.

Examples of savings planned for 2019/20 include:

- Reviewing and reducing community safety budgets where better outcomes can be achieved in more efficient ways – a good example is combining the money that the Commissioner and local councils spend on domestic abuse support services and retendering services to achieve better outcomes.
- Replacing 25 PCSO posts with fully warranted police officer posts.
- Reducing spend on running costs such as travel, printing and stationary, information technology consumables, postage, communication budgets etc. through targeting better.
- Reducing commitments to fund services, or partner organisations where there are greater priorities elsewhere. This could include ceasing the part-funding of certain posts, or the support of some lower-level local priorities.
- Renewing governance structures for community safety partnerships so that together with key partners funding can be better matched to strategic priorities.
Section four

Council tax

Policing and fire and rescue are under service and financial pressures, as set out in this document.

Despite the expectation that the two services will continue to become more efficient (see Section Three), by working together under one governance arrangement and making further savings, there will also be the need to re-invest in meeting pressures and challenges.

Policing and community safety

Unlike many other Commissioners, the Staffordshire Commissioner did not raise the council tax for the first 4 years of office, whilst he ensured that Staffordshire Police were as efficient as they could be.

The Commissioner is consulting on setting a council tax increase of **44p per week** for policing, which allows for significant investment in policing and community safety services in 2019/20.

The increase would mean that the following improved outcomes:

- More capability to tackle local problems early on and through new technology, make police officers and PCSOs more visible
- More effective response to incidents and crimes in an emergency – 24 hours a day, 365 days per year
- More capacity and capability for crime investigation, resulting in a reduction in re-offending and a better service to victims of crime
- Continued investment in new technology that allows access to services in a way that suits the individual – making it easier to report, track and monitor crime

Fire and Rescue

The Commissioner is consulting on setting a council tax increase of **4p per week** for fire and rescue in 2019/20, which would provide additional flexibility to deliver the remaining level of savings required and meet the commitments included within the published Efficiency Plan. In broad terms this will maintain the existing level of service provided by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Service.

The financial outlook remains challenging for the service with further reductions in Government funding predicted in future years, alongside significant upward budget pressures for 2020 and beyond.
Section five

How to have your say


To let us know what you think fill in our online survey at:

If you would like to request a paper copy of the survey please email:
pfcc@staffordshire-pfcc.pnn.gov.uk

or write to:
Staffordshire Commissioner
Police I Fire and Rescue I Crime
Block 9
Weston Road
Stafford
ST18 0YY

We cannot respond individually to comments made, but all views will be recorded and incorporated into a full report to be taken into consideration by the Commissioner.

Please note this document forms part of the process that will result in the detailed budget proposals for police and crime, and fire and rescue. Views of others are also being sought where appropriate.