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Our reference: 2020-01009

Sent by email:
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10 February 2021

Dear Councillor Kooner,

Thank you for this report and the Panel's consideration of my budget and precept proposals for 2021-22. I am grateful for the Panel's cross party support. I note the Panel's report and the recommendations therein and, on this basis, will proceed with the proposed budget and precept Waheed capably presented on my behalf on 1 February 2021.

Taking the recommendations in turn:

1. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will make the new Police and Crime Commissioner aware of the recommendation from the Panel concerning consultation and have regard to it in the budget setting process for Financial Year 2022-23.
2. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will, at the appropriate time, liaise with the secretariat of the Police and Crime Panel to agree a format for the presentation of financial information that is more conducive to the Panel's deliberations. I note that this year, unlike previously, the Panel did not avail itself of separate briefings from my Chief Finance Officer, which might explain the difficulties which arose. Following a request from the Panel about 5 years ago, we were asked to provide more in-year briefings leading up to the precept meeting. The Panel have not requested these on the same frequency in the past year. Also, in previous years they had set up a sub-committee to look at the budget in more detail, a practice that seems to have been discontinued. Re-establishing these may ease their concerns.
3. I share the Panel's concerns regarding the government's approach to the funding of West Midlands Police. Our historically and artificially low police precept (which the government prevented me from addressing), the lingering effects of government cuts to West Midlands Police that were harsher than elsewhere and cost us 2100 Officers, the muddled failure to either implement or review the police funding formula, the consequent unfair effects of funding damping which see tens of millions of pounds of West Midlands money go to low crime areas, and the adverse consequences of fragmented, one-year funding allocations to critical areas such as counter-terrorism, serious and organised crime, victim services, community safety and violence reduction, all speak to a systematic failure of leadership at a national level over the last eleven years. As the Panel recommends, I will, with the time in office left to me, I will continue to make these points to government with a vigour, enthusiasm and directness that I have deployed in the past 6 years which I hope meets the Panel's expectations.

I remain grateful for the Panel's consideration of these serious and complex issues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Jamieson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

David Jamieson
Police and Crime Commissioner

