

# **POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

## **PANEL HEDDLU A THROSEDD**



### **NORTH WALES POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

### **REPORT ON THE COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT FOR 2024/2025**

#### **Background**

This report is made in accordance with the Police and Crime Panel's (PCP) statutory duty contained in Paragraph 3(2), Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Act).

#### **Review of Proposed Precept**

The North Wales PCP was notified of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) proposed precept for 2024/2025 on 12 January 2024, in accordance with Paragraph 2, Schedule 5 of the Act.

The PCP considered the PCC's report outlining the proposed precept and budget for 2024/2025, together with the Medium Term Financial Plan at its meeting held on Monday, 29 January 2024, in Bodlonddeb, Conwy.

The PCC proposed to increase the precept to £106,269,443 (an increase of 6.01% from the 2023/2024 precept), which would increase Council Tax by 4.97% (equivalent to £349.65 per annum, an increase of £16.56 per annum, or 32p per week for a Band D property).

The PCP also received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner - OPCC), which highlighted the following:

- The proposed precept
- Changes in funding allocations between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025
- Central Allocations (top slicing)
- Changes to North Wales Police Grants
- Inflation
- Savings
- Growth
- Breakdown of Council Tax increase

- Survey Results
- Risks
- Proposed Budget for 2023/2024

The Member Champion for Finance felt that it was a fair budget and acknowledged the savings that had been identified of £3,171,837, particularly in relation to the work undertaken by the Procurement Department, which had resulted in savings of £0.286m and the investment income proposed. The work undertaken by the Optimisation Programme to look at specific operational areas and how the resources available could be best used was also acknowledged.

It was noted that specific grants for School Liaison Officers would be withdrawn and the grant for PCSOs would be reduced for 2024/2025. However, due to the importance of these roles, it was proposed to use funding from the base budget, reserves and an increase in the Council Tax in order to protect these roles for the forthcoming year. The PCC advised that discussions were being undertaken on how to deliver the all Wales School Liaison Programme in the future.

A number of issues were also raised as follows:

- Reference was made to the areas of growth and policing of Wrexham football matches – it was noted that the Force could only charge for policing inside the ground. However, the Chief Constable advised that she had recently met with the Chief Executive of the football club and advised of the positive work the club was undertaking within the community and that there was a piece of work being undertaken to measure the impact of this.
- Results of the survey undertaken by the PCC
- Retention of Officers.
- The importance of the School Liaison Programme targeting those who had been excluded or did not attend school regularly.

In the current financial climate, the PCP felt that it was a fair budget and acknowledged the work undertaken to identify savings and move resources within the organisation, and therefore, the PCP supported the proposed increase, in order to provide a sufficient budget to enable the operational delivery of the policing service in North Wales for 2024/2025.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**(a) That the precept be increased for 2024/2025 to £106,269,443.**

- **This will increase Council Tax by 4.97% - equivalent to £349.65 per annum, an increase of £16.56 per annum, or 32p per week for a Band D property.**
- **This increases the Tax Base by 0.99%.**
- **This is an increase in precept of 6.01% from 2023/2024.**

- (b) That it be noted that the base Government Grant increased by 5.97%/£5.297m.
- (c) That it be noted that the total inflationary pressure is 8.61% or £16.270m.
- (d) That it be noted that £4.719m was awarded as additional specific grant, but in reality this is to fund the base budget.
- (e) That it be noted that £2.166m of unavoidable and structural growth is included.
- (f) That it be noted that £3.171m of savings have been identified for 2024/2025.
- (g) That it be noted that £0.776m has been included to protect School Liaison Officers and PCSO numbers following withdrawal and reduction of Welsh Government grants.
- (h) That the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted, which includes the following assumptions:
- That Council Tax will increase by £13 in the following years, which equates to 3.72% in 2025/2026, 3.58% in 2026/2027, 3.46% in 2027/2028 and 3.35% in 2028/2029.
  - That policing grants are estimated to increase by 1% in the years 2024/2025 to 2028/2029.
  - That the annual pay award will be 2.5% to be applied in September 2024, with an additional 0.5% being earmarked in reserves for 2024/2025 and 2.5% to be applied each subsequent September.

30 January 2024

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.*