

Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel report to ENC February 2017

As reported at the last Council meeting, I have been elected as Chair of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel.

At the meeting of the Panel on 2nd February, we agreed to endorse the Police and Crime Plan of the new Commissioner. We also agreed the precept for the next year, which will rise by 1.99%.

The Police settlement for next year is £900,000 less than the previous year. The understanding of the Government is that the PCC will recoup this by increasing their precept by 2%, which is also capped. However, this means that we will have a flat budget. Unfortunately however forces beyond the PCC's control increase the costs, e.g. salaries which make up the bulk of costs and wage levels are decided nationally. Increasing population, cyber crime etc. put extra pressures on the police.

However, despite this Stephen Mold is providing an extra 46 police staff for the coming year. The numbers had been frozen since PCCs came into being in 2012. This represents 30 new Police officers and 16 police staff.

The Police and Crime Plan of the new PCC has moved the emphasis. I would recommend looking at the full plan, which can be found on the website of the PCC. One of the headlines is to prioritise early intervention, so we do not get young people entering a world of crime or anti social behaviour. One particular worry he has is with school exclusions. Although ENC do not deal with schools directly, if you find in your area that this is a big problem, please let me know.

He is also expanding the handling of cyber crime, but also is putting specific priority on domestic and sexual abuse and Support for victims of crime.

The PCC's new plan is to be backed up by a new Service Delivery Model. We have not been told the details about this yet, but we are informed that it will support more neighbourhood policing.

The Northants Panel also wanted to raise the profile of the panel and are planning to start to hold our meetings round the county, probably at District/Borough Council chambers throughout Northamptonshire so that we are not so remote from the county. As such we can expect an approach by the County Council officers to ask if we could use ENC's Council chamber for a meeting.

It was also resolved that we look at good practice from other panels around the country. Linked to this we have agreed to look into being involved with the setting up of a new National Association of Police and Crime panels. With this in mind, I attended a meeting in London to discuss this suggestion.

There seemed general acceptance to set up this body by the people present at the meeting, though the details still need to be worked out. The prime purpose will be for lobbying Government, but also to raise the profile of police and crime panels.

When this gets going, we will be raising issues that are of National importance where the Police are struggling to overcome current regulations.

Locally, I have heard from several members that they are dismayed that East Northants towns seem to have very few police currently and little contact with the local police, in one case not even knowing if they have a Sector Inspector or not. I have brought up these issues up with the PCC and will shortly be meeting the new Sector Inspector to discuss these issues.

If there are any particular local issues that you wish to bring to the attention of the PCC or the national body, please let me know and I will either raise them at the public meetings or during my private meetings with the PCC.

Cllr Gill Mercer
19th February 2017