

**MINUTES OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 31 JANUARY 2019 AT CHURCHGATE HOUSE, MANCHESTER**

Members Present-

BOLTON COUNCIL

Councillor Mohammed Ayub

BURY COUNCIL

Councillor Tamoor Tariq **(Chair)**

GMCA

Greater Manchester Deputy Mayor (Policing and Crime) Beverley Hughes

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Nigel Murphy

OLDHAM COUNCIL

Councillor Stephen Williams

ROCHDALE COUNCIL

Councillor Janet Emsley

SALFORD CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Paula Boshell
Councillor David Lancaster

STOCKPORT COUNCIL

Councillor Elise Wilson

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Councillor Mike Freeman

WIGAN COUNCIL

Councillor Kevin Anderson

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Angela Lawrence

Also in attendance –

Chief Constable
Richard Paver
Karen Macrae
Clare Monaghan
Gwynne Williams
Steve Annette
Jeanette Staley

Greater Manchester Police
GMCA
GMCA
GMCA
GMCA
GMCA
Salford City Council & GM Police & Crime
Policy Lead

PCP/19/01 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Eamonn Boylan, GMCA Chief Executive, Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive, Oldham Council, Alison Gwynne and Steven Pleasant Tameside Council and Chris Highton, Rochdale Council.

PCP/19/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Freeman, Trafford Council declared a personal interest in Item 4 – 2019/20 PCC Component of the Mayor Precept, as a GMP police pensioner.

PCP/19/03 MINUTES OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING – 29 NOVEMBER, 2018 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 29 November 2018 were submitted for approval.

In relation to the last paragraph on page 3 (Minute PCP/18/22), Councillor Wilson said that it was her recollection that there was a robust and unanimous feeling amongst Members and that it was agreed Members would be more proactive in sending a message to Government, and she suggested that the minute needed to better reflect the strength of feeling felt by the Panel on this issue.

It was noted that the word ‘respect’ in the same paragraph should read ‘respective’.

The Chair added that a letter was sent to the Secretary of State from the Panel and suggested that this should be publicised on the web site pending any decision made today.

RESOLVED/-

1. That subject to the inclusion of the comments above, the Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 29 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

PCP/19/04 2019/20 PCC COMPONENT OF THE MAYORAL PRECEPT

The Greater Manchester Deputy Mayor (Policing and Crime) presented a report and advised Members of the Police and Crime Panel of the process and the overall context for setting the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) component of the Mayoral precept, the proposal of the Mayor for the precept for that year, outlined broadly the budget and how the additional resources would be used to strengthen policing going forward.

She reported that in the last couple of years Government had conceded that policing was under greater pressure and was in need of more resources and instead of providing funding had in fact ‘passed the buck’ and by allowing Council’s to increase the precept, thereby moving the financial burden from national taxation to local taxation. She highlighted the cuts made in police funding since 2010, including 2000 police officers

and 1000 PCSOs and other staff, and the impact of this on capacity to respond to the public.

The Government conceded the need for additional resources but the provisional settlement from Government received on 13 December 2018 provided that the police grant for 2019/20 would be an increase of £8.5m. In addition, a one-off grant of £6.6m, from HM Treasury, was announced to partially mitigate against rising employer pension costs for police officers.

As the additional grants only covered the increased pension costs, the provisional police grant is still 'flat cash' with no additional funding to cover pressures in meeting rising / changing demand, new threats, pay awards and inflationary rises.

Within the settlement, the Home Secretary announced a maximum police precept increase of £24. In 2018/19, the maximum increase allowed was £12. Whilst this indicates that, the Government have recognised that additional funding is required for policing this burden has been placed squarely on local taxpayers.

She added that the Mayor was proposing to bring in the precept to a maximum of £24 to a band D property (£16 at band A which covered 50% of household in Greater Manchester, though there were district variations, and £18.67 at Band B) adding that the Mayor was conscious of the burden on Council taxpayers and that this was an unpalatable opportunity that needed to be taken. She added that primarily the money raised would be used to re-grow to a considerable degree the number of police officers and that increasing the precept to this level would allow for an additional 170 Neighbourhood police officers. It was noted that the aim would be used to recruit 50 detectives and 50 police officers to add to the 10 already in post to police the transport network, subject to consultations taking place. It was noted that the aim was also to establish a team of police officers capable of being deployed across GM to provide extra flexible capacity. To enable this to happen it was recognised that a considerable recruitment exercise would need to be undertaken and that a dedicated project management approach would be required to achieve this aim.

In addition to the increase in front line capacity the Deputy Mayor said that the transformation programme would continue and that there was a strong commitment to continue supporting workforce development and staff wellbeing, and further developments in information, communications between GMP and the public, and keeping pace with technology improvements.

The Deputy Mayor advised that Panel that public consultation had been undertaken on the proposals, responses were received from just under 500 respondents, of which 59% either supported the £24 precept figure, or a higher figure as the means of increasing the number of police officers.

The GMCA Treasurer provided a brief update in relation the police officer pension issue and how this scheme differed from that the local government pension scheme. He added that whilst there remained uncertainties under the Comprehensive Spending Review, Going forward the reserves within the Police Reserve Budget were in a robust position.

The Chief Constable provided a brief update on the thinking behind the proposal in providing additional support to local policing and described the areas where this additional resource was proposed to be deployed. The public have been feeling the stretch on policing over the past two to three years as GMP has been made to focus on the chief risk areas, at the expense of the Force's response to neighbourhood policing. The proposals to provide additional flexibility to meeting issues in any part of the Greater Manchester area, and to do so effectively, would bring greater responsiveness to the sort of things that were of particular concern to local communities, and especially in respect of transport network safety. He outlined the challenges that would be presented by transformational change and indicated that going forward he would be personally overseeing the governance structure.

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks for the work carried in produce the comprehensive report as presented and added his clear disappointment with the Home Secretary and the Government in failing to listen to this Panel, GMP and those who had lobbied hard on behalf of GM.

Opening up the discussion to other members of the Panel, the following issues were explored –

- The importance of recognising (i) the hard work that has been done over the past five years to manage the 25% reduction in the police budget and the consequent loss of 2000 police officers and 1000 support staff, and (ii) that what was being proposed today would only go part way to improving that situation, and that the service that the public expects from its police service can only be fully delivered when the Government's acceptance of under-funding of the service is met by a realistic financial settlement;
- Public perception of the responsiveness of the police force has also suffered in the recent past, and the resources earmarked to provide flexible responses to community needs was welcomed;
- A number of members highlighted the inequity of the burden for funding the shortfall in the annual settlement falling on the least well off in society through Council Tax contributions, and the need therefore to maintain lobbying and pressure on the Government to ensure that this did not become the pattern for the future;
- Concerns remained about the top slicing of the Police Pension Fund, the proposals in the report deal with the situation for the year ahead, but a long term solution needed to be pursued with vigour;
- The proposals to provide additional officers to police the transport network were welcomed but there was concern that this should not be at the expense of PCSOs who had been performing this function previously;
- The proposals within the report that focus on improving communications between the Force and the public were broadly welcomed.

The Chair, Deputy Mayor, Chief Constable and GMCA Treasurer then took the opportunity to respond to the various comments and concerns raised by Members.

Councillor Wilson said that there had been a complete failure on of the Government's behalf to fund the police properly and added that she agreed with comments expressed earlier in the meeting that we need to speak with a strong voice and that passing the cost on to the Council Tax payer was a regressive form of tax that penalised the least fortunate in society. She added that the 'demand' placed on residents was totally unreasonable and not sustainable going forward. She then then recommended that the precept should be set at £22 for a Band D property and this was proposal was seconded by Councillor Ayub.

In response, the Deputy Mayor said that whilst she had a great deal of sympathy with the comments and concerns raised, it should be noted that the vast majority of residents in Manchester were not in a band D property. She added that the Panel found itself in a very difficult situation and that should it decide not to take up the opportunity presented by Government to set the precept at the maximum level being allowed this year, then it would be very difficult to make a compelling case for resources in future years. She then urged the whole of the Panel to unite in accepting the Mayor's recommendation in full, having said that she agreed in principle that this should not be a pattern infinitum.

Councillor Murphy said that he acknowledged the comments made by both members who were recommending setting a precept of £22 for a band D property but felt that that would be held against us going forward, similar to what had happened in relation to social care.

MOTION MADE AND SECONDED/-

That the Panel notes that the Government accepts that policing across the country is underfunded and is disappointed that despite this yet again no additional funds were made available in the recent budget settlement. It is frustrated that instead of funding this directly the Government has decided to allow the precept to be increased by £24 on a Band D council tax bill, despite the inequalities and unfairness of the council tax system.

By agreeing to increase the precept, we recognise that the number of police officers in Greater Manchester still falls short of the 7000 officers the Chief Constable believes are needed to effectively police the conurbation. However, we note that we are able to invest in the following priority areas, addressing public concerns:

- Neighbourhood policing
- Safety on the Transport network
- Safe night time economy
- Continue to improve the 101 service and other forms of customer contact
- Tackling serious and violent crime
- Tackling violence against women and girls
- Improvements to sickness absence

To support the delivery against the above priorities there will be an increase in police officer numbers by 320, in addition to the replacement of officers who leave the force (c.500):

- Recruit 220 new Neighbourhood Police Officers (NPOs) to enable an enhanced response to calls, particularly to those most vulnerable.
- Create a new proactive Force wide team of 50 officers to allow an effective, flexible, pro-active response to local problems and priorities
- A new transport team, with 50 additional officers, to enable a more appropriate response to problems on the transport network, including a wider focus on other transport matters.
- Undertake direct entry detective recruitment which will support investigations, particularly those into serious and violent crime and violence against women

We will initiate a campaign with the other Police and Crime panels across the country to communicate with the public about the current restraints in police funding and lobby government for fair and sufficient funding so we can provide a police service the residents of Greater Manchester deserve.

1. To note that the Mayor proposes to increase the police precept by £24 for a band D property with effect from 1 April 2019.
2. To note the budget assumptions relating to the budgets for 2019/20, including the proposals for the Community Safety Fund.
3. That the process and context within which the PCC component of the precept has been set be noted.
4. That the Panel propose that the precept level can be issued.
5. That the Panel write to Government expressing their concerns as set out in the above recommendation.

AMENDMENT MOVED AND SECONDED/-

That the precept be set at £22 for a Band D property.

The Amendment being put and voted upon the Chair declared that it was LOST.

The Motion then being put and voted upon, it was –

RESOLVED/-

(Councillors Ayub and Wilson dissenting)

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3. That the process and context within which the PCC component of the precept has been set be noted.
4. That the Panel propose that the precept level can be issued.

5. That the Panel write to Government expressing their concerns as set out in the above recommendation.

PCP/19/05 FUTURE SCRUTINY RESPONSIBILITIES – STATUTORY ORDER PROGRESS UPDATE

The Greater Manchester Deputy Mayor (Policing and Crime) presented a report that provided an update on current progress regarding the Fire Order, which would enable statutory responsibilities relating to Fire to be included within the responsibilities of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Panel.

RESOLVED/-

1. That consideration of the report be deferred to a future meeting of the Panel.

PCP/19/06 GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – FORWARD PLAN 2018/20

The Panel received a report that set out the Forward Plan to inform the business of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Panel (GMPCP).

RESOLVED/-

1. That consideration of the report be deferred to a future meeting of the Panel.

PCP/19/07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

That specific member training regarding future arrangements in respect of Fire scrutiny responsibilities be arranged in due course.