

Joint Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable for West Mercia

Date of Meeting:	21s March 2023
Agenda Item	08_21/03/2022
Subject:	Budget Report 2023/24
	Review the Budget Report for 2023_24
Report by:	Paul Benfield / Richard Muirhead
Number of Appendices:	1

Summary

Attached is the Budget Report 2023/24. This report provides the JASC with an update on progress on setting the budget for 2023/24.

The budget report was presented to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on the 3rd February 2023, where the Council Tax precept was ratified. The Council Tax increase for a Band D equivalent property is £14.84 which is a 5.94% increase, and is now set at £264.50. Following the PCP the total resources available for the revenue budget for 2023/24 has been set at £273.038m. This is an increase in resources of £13.630m from the previous financial year.

The budget report to the PCP identified that there was a budget gap of £13.5m initial identified to continue to provide the services identified as priorities. As part of agreeing the precept increase the PCC has agreed various investments to be made with West Mercia Police, including that there will be an additional 40 officers recruited, principally to join new neighbourhood crime fighting teams. The PCC agreed that funding would also be made available to reduce the budget deficit. Since December the force have been proactive in identifying how it can bridge the remaining budget gap. A Budget Implementation Team has been reviewing all aspects of the budget and has been producing options to consider by both the Chief Constable and the PCC as to action that can be taken.

At the time of writing this report, following agreement between the PCC and Chief Constable on agreed savings to be made, the budget gap is below £1.7m. This is below the level of earmarked reserves available set aside to support implementation of budget savings programmes. The PCC and Chief Constable are now considering the best use of resources to avoid redundancies, ensure that plans are sustainable and to recognise that work needs to ensure that a balanced budget in 2023/24 is also achievable. There is a plan in place to make sure final agreement of a balanced budget is signed off by the PCC in March.

The budget report also includes the MTFP and Capital programme

The budget report includes a reserves strategy and the Treasurer's statement on the soundness of the budget and adequacy of the reserves

Action Required:

Consider and note the presented budget report for 2023/24.