**Decision log: PCCG-2023-025**

**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**TITLE: Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s Budget Requirement and Council Tax Precept Decision 2024/25**

**DATE: 12th February** **2024**

**TIMING: Routine**

**PURPOSE: For Decision**

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| **1.** | **RECOMMENDATION**  That the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent (Commissioner) considers the budget proposals and background information covered in the Annexes and Appendices to this submission and approves, subject to consultation with the Police and Crime Panel:   1. A budget requirement for 2024/25 of £173,027,278; 2. The planned efficiency savings in 2024/25 of £0.698m and further planned efficiency savings of £1.654m (totalling £2.352m) detailed in Appendix 5b of the Appendices to this submission; 3. A further proposed underwriting of the Reserves and Committed Funds of £2.805m to balance the 2024/25 budget (Appendix 7); 4. The initial Capital Programme as described in Appendices 8a and 8b; and 5. The 2024/25 proposed Council Tax Precept to be levied in respect of general expenses of £79,159,573. This reflects an annual increase in Band D of 7.70% or £25 on the 2023/24 Council Tax Precept level, thereby proposing a 2024/25 Band D Council Tax Precept of £349.52. This overall Council Tax Precept sum will be apportioned to each unitary authority according to the following table:  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Unitary Authorities** | **£** | **Tax Base Band D Equivalent** | | | **Blaenau Gwent Caerphilly**  **Monmouthshire**  **Newport**  **Torfaen**  **Total** | **7,317,677**  **21,423,010**  **16,939,672**  **21,435,712**  **12,043,502**  **79,159,573** | **20,936.36**  **61,292.66**  **48,465.53**  **61,329.00**  **34,457.26**  **226,480.81** |  |   The Council Tax Precept shown in the above table generates the following amounts of Council Tax Precept for the various bands:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Council Tax Band** | **£** | | **A**  **B**  **C**  **D**  **E**  **F**  **G**  **H**  **I** | **233.01**  **271.85**  **310.68**  **349.52**  **427.19**  **504.86**  **582.53**  **699.04**  **815.55** | |
| **2.** | **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**  The Commissioner is required to determine the budget for 2024/25 and then set the Council Tax Precept following scrutiny by the Police and Crime Panel. The Commissioner must also make arrangements, before the first council tax precept for a financial year is issued, to obtain the views of the people in that police area and the relevant business ratepayers’ representatives, on the proposals of the Commissioner for expenditure in that financial year.  The greater part of the budget will be allocated to Gwent Police for operational purposes, but an element needs to be retained to cover the cost of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the commissioning of services from organisations other than the Chief Constable. |
| **3.** | **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**  In determining the budget requirement for 2024/25, the Commissioner has considered the Police and Crime Plan 2021-25; the Policing Vision 2025; the Strategic Policing Requirement; the Chief Constable’s view of the financial resources required to deliver the operational requirements of the plans; the level of resources to be allocated for commissioning other than from the Chief Constable; and the cost of running the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.  In determining the proposed level of council tax precept for 2024/25, the Commissioner has sought the views of Gwent residents and is acutely aware of the significant pressures on household incomes at this present time. Whilst the majority of Gwent residents who responded supported an increase in Council tax precept, the Commissioner needs to balance the local investment expectations of government and those of the Chief Constable to deliver an effective and efficient policing service with the affordability of the increase to Gwent’s households.  The proposed increase in council tax precept therefore has been robustly scrutinised and challenged, to ensure that it is the minimum increase required to maintain policing services in Gwent and to support the maintenance of CSO numbers in 2024/25. |
| **4.** | **NEXT STEPS**  The Police and Crime Panel have reviewed the proposed Council Tax Precept for 2024/25 and provided a report to the Acting PCC on 31st January 2024, supporting the precept recommendation. In signing this report the Acting PCC confirms the budget and will now inform the Local Authorities within Gwent of the policing precept for 2024/25. |
| **5.** | **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**  This is a major financial report with clear financial implications. These are fully articulated within the Annexes and Appendices. |
| **6.** | **PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS**  The majority of the Policing and Crime Budget covers Police Officer and Police Staff salaries and employer’s contributions. Central Government Grant Funding has been directed to nationally increasing Police Officer numbers by 20,000 by 31st March 2023, but this is to the backdrop of significant reductions in real-terms funding for many years previous. Gwent Police has achieved the introduction of their quota of officers by the deadline set. |
| **7.** | **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**  Setting the budget requirement and Council Tax Precept are statutory responsibilities of the Commissioner. |
| **8.** | **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS**  This proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.  In preparing this report, consideration has been given to the requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. |
| **9.** | **RISK**  A timely decision on the Council Tax Precept will minimise the risk of failing to achieve the statutory deadline. |
| **10.** | **PUBLIC INTEREST**  This report will be placed on the website of both the Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel. |
| **11.** | **CONTACT OFFICER**  Matthew Coe, Acting Section 151 Officer to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. |
| **12.** | **ANNEXES**  The Annexe to this report and its Appendices provide full details in support of the proposal. |

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| **Eleri Thomas, Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent** | |
| I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.  Any such interests are recorded below.  The above request has my approval. | |
| Signed | Date  19.02.2024 |

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| **Contact Officer** |  |
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| **Background papers** |  |