

Zoë Billingham BA Hons (Oxon)
HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

28 September 2012

Ms Ruth Rogers
Chair – Cambridgeshire Police Authority

Dr Dorothy Gregson
Chief Executive – Cambridgeshire Police Authority

Dear Ruth and Dorothy,

HMIC Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Budget Preparedness Visits

Thank you for the time the police authority spent with the HMIC team on 10 September 2012. The meeting presented an opportunity for you to provide an overview of your budget development process for 2013/14, the funds identified for transition and the development of potential models of governance, decision making and accountability.

I am writing to provide you with a summary of our discussions and to highlight areas that emerged for further consideration.

Budget setting process

You are taking a 'business as usual' and well established approach to your 2013/14 budget setting process. Your medium term financial planning is being regularly refreshed and updated. The September refresh included budget planning for 2016/17. You have completed a detailed analysis of the impact on your budget from a wide range of factors including new council tax benefit localisation arrangements, the council tax base, and the police precept component of local council tax.

You have engaged with prospective PCC candidates to brief them on the budget outlook and the policing model. The police and crime panel (PCP) has been established and held its first meeting in September.

Preparation of scenarios to support the PCC in setting the budget

You are preparing a range of alternative scenarios for the incoming PCC to consider in order to assist with setting the budget. Savings from collaborative initiatives, notably collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary to outsource support functions are a significant part of the 2013/14 budget and the medium term financial plans. Together with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire you have decided that the final decision on the collaboration should

be made by the incoming PCC and you have also prepared alternative savings plans to assist with this.

Workforce and service impact

You described your current workforce plans which are progressing as planned. You have continued to recruit officers during 2012/13 and have protected those police officer posts delivering local policing. If the proposals to outsource support functions do not go ahead as planned or are delayed, then you anticipate that there will be a need for a further reduction in police staff numbers and a vacancy freeze during 2013/14. You recognise that further reductions to police staff numbers may impact on service delivery but will take steps to manage the risks this reduction may present.

As well as the outsourcing proposal the authority is also continuing to develop other collaborative arrangements with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire as a means of increasing efficiency and effectiveness, as well as reducing costs.

Forward planning: governance and the Office of the PCC (OPCC)

You have calculated the likely costs associated with transition, which you intend to meet from your existing budget. The provisional budget for the OPCC is based on the current police authority budget.

You are engaging with prospective PCC candidates in order to identify the principles for how the OPCC could operate and ensuring that arrangements can be put in place for when the PCC takes up office. You have reviewed the roles of current staff and have moved away from 'committee officers' and created 'policy officers' to support decision making. You have refocused the role of your Head of Partnerships on broader partnership working and strategy-setting, focusing on strategic and needs assessments and the development of the police and crime plan. You have recruited a policy officer on secondment for six months to undertake project work relating to partnership working.

A Joint Audit Committee has been established with independent members from the authority and this committee will meet during November 2012.

You are developing options for a commissioning structure for consideration by the incoming PCC.

You are working to develop the governance and decision making frameworks that will enable the PCC to deliver their statutory functions. You have drawn on guidance issued by the Association of Police Authority Chief Executives (APACE) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to assist you with this. You recognise that these proposals may develop in light of further national guidance and following the discussions you will be having with the PCC. You are developing a draft joint strategic risk register for the PCC and Chief Constable which sets out key risks and responsibilities for 2013/14.

In summary, your budget development process is based on prudent assumptions and takes account of a range of funding scenarios. You are developing a range of options for the PCC to consider once in post to assist them in delivering their statutory functions.

You are developing your plans for how the OPCC could operate to support the PCC. While your governance options for how the PCC might hold the Chief Constable to account and decision making options are still work in progress, you are using national guidance to assist in developing these further. Once in post the PCC will have options to consider and these should assist them in delivering their statutory functions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the police authority for its continuing commitment to plan and prepare for the transition to a PCC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background with a light grid pattern. The signature reads "Zoë Billingham" in a cursive script.

Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

Copied:

Mr Simon Parr

Chief Constable – Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Mr Matt Newman

HMIC Liaison Officer - Cambridgeshire Constabulary