

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

28 September 2012

Mr Jon Collins
Chair – Nottinghamshire Police Authority

Mr Kevin Dennis
Chief Executive – Nottinghamshire Police Authority

Dear Jon and Kevin

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 have a well established budget setting process and you are taking a 'business as usual' approach for the 2013/14. The development of the draft police and crime plan has commenced so that the resource implications can be built into the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) and budget; this has included a joint strategic assessment with partners. Your MTFP is being regularly refreshed and updated, and will take into account PCC manifesto pledges as they become known. You have completed 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, the police precept component of local council tax (precept) and grant income.

You are engaging with stakeholders to ensure consistency in planning assumptions and will feed back to PCC candidates the costing implications of their manifestos. You are planning to hold a joint members business meeting with perspective candidates as part of developing the budget options in advance of the PCC taking up office. A joint handover meeting will take place between chairs and vice-chairs of the police authority and the PCC shortly after the PCC takes office. This meeting will include discussion in respect of the budget.

Preparation of scenarios to support the PCC in setting the budget

You are in the process of developing a range of funding scenarios and, together with the risk analysis that has been undertaken, these will provide flexibility and assist the PCC with setting the budget. The scenarios include a precept freeze, precept increases and grant reductions. You have a detailed plan for 2013/14 budget setting showing step by step how the budget will be built by the end of November to incorporate issues arising from the PCC manifesto.

You intend to develop costings for manifesto commitments and the resultant implications ready for candidates during October.

Workforce and service impact

You described your current workforce plans which are progressing as planned, including an increase in frontline policing through continued reductions in back office posts. Your MTFP outlines the underlying investment proposal to achieve the planned workforce mix within your proposed operating model; this includes further precept increases of three percent for both 2013/14 and 2014/15. Depending on the views of the incoming PCC, you are developing models to demonstrate cost and identify any workforce implications.

The authority is continuing to develop collaborative arrangements on a regional basis within the East Midlands as a means of increasing efficiency and effectiveness, as well as reducing costs. You are proposing a regional governance meeting for PCCs to maintain oversight of developed collaborative activities and to continue to progress further collaboration opportunities.

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

You have a transition budget set aside to take account of any one off transition costs. A 130 day induction, decision making and briefing programme has been drafted to run from the 16 November. You are planning to have the OPCC staffing structure in place from 01 October; this structure includes some temporary appointments on secondment from the force to provide flexibility in the future staffing structure. These temporary appointments will cover such things as programme management, administration, commissioning and grants and the press and social media.

You have worked with the force to develop a range of provisional options for how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account. You have drawn on guidance issued by Association of Police Authority Chief Executives and the Association of Police Authorities to assist you with this. You recognise that these proposals may develop in light of further national guidance and following discussions with the PCC.

Arrangements for meeting with the police and crime panel are in place and you have a clear approach for establishing a Joint Audit Committee.

In summary, your budget development process is based on prudent assumptions and takes account of a range of funding scenarios. You have developed proposals for PCC governance arrangements, decision making and accountability. Once in post the PCC will have options to consider and these should assist them in delivering their statutory functions.

I hope that the above comments are beneficial as you continue to plan and prepare for transition to a PCC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoë Billingham". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

Zoë Billingham
HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

Copied:

Mr Chris Eyre QPM
Chief Constable – Nottinghamshire Police

Ms Julie Mair
HMIC Liaison Officer