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Drusilla Sharpling, CBE
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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Mr John Littlechild
Chair – South Wales Police Authority

Mr Cerith Thomas
Clerk – South Wales Police Authority

Dear John and Cerith

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 the discussions and to highlight any 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 and 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, the police precept component of local council tax (precept) and grant income.

You are engaging with stakeholders and prospective PCC candidates to brief them on the budget outlook and you have more events of this type planned in the next couple of months. You are meeting with the police and crime panel (PCP) and other stakeholders including the voluntary sector in October to discuss the budget setting process and how this supports the development of the police and crime plan.

Preparation of scenarios to support the PCC in setting the budget

You have prepared a range of alternative scenarios for the incoming PCC to consider to assist with setting the budget. These include a range of scenarios based on factors that influence the budget. The implications of each scenario on the force's savings and precept requirement have been calculated as well as plans for how gaps identified might be bridged. You plan to share these scenarios with the declared PCC candidates in October.

Workforce and service impact

You described your current workforce plans which are progressing as planned and while you are not expecting any changes to your workforce projections for the next two years you will be reassessing the position from 2015/16 onwards. None of the scenarios you have explored are expected to result in major changes to existing service delivery plans although you acknowledge that once more information on the next comprehensive spending review is available this may change.

You are continuing to pursue options for collaborating with other Welsh forces as a means of increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

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

Your provisional budget for the OPCC is based on the current police authority budget. On current projections, you expect that this budget will also be able to meet any one-off transition costs incurred in setting up the OPCC.

You have identified the principles for how the OPCC will operate and comprehensive arrangements are being put in place for when the PCC takes up office. You have considered staffing requirements through a skills audit and identified areas where further support may be needed such as commissioning services. You have an induction plan and diary for the PCC's first 130 days that identifies essential activities. You are also developing a communications strategy and legacy document which will provide key information to assist the PCC in their early days.

You have already developed a decision making process which is flexible and able to deal with different types of decision and includes a decision making log. You are also thinking through, with advice from the University of Glamorgan, a range of options for how the public will be engaged and updated on key decisions made by the PCC.

You are now focusing on drafting your schemes of consent and delegation and are using national guidance to assist you with this. An interim Joint Audit Committee is also being set up.

You have a range of options for how the PCC may hold the Chief Constable to account which include monthly performance board meetings between the PCC

and the Chief Constable. You are now developing these further and you are drawing on guidance issued by the Association of Police Authority Chief Executives and the Association of Police Authorities to assist you with this.

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

Your plans for how the OPCC will operate to support the PCC in delivering their statutory functions are comprehensive. Your decision making processes have been thought through and are now being tested to identify any issues. You are drawing on additional expertise to inform your consultation and engagement with the public. You have a clear menu of options for how the PCC might hold the Chief Constable to account and are using national guidance to assist in developing these further. You fully understand that it will be a matter for the PCC which, if any, options they choose to adopt.

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



Drusilla Sharpling

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Wales and Western Region

Copied:

Mr Peter Vaughan
Chief Constable – South Wales Police

Mr Simon Merrick
HMIC Liaison Officer