

Report of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel ('The Panel')

to the

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire ('The PFCC')

with regard to:

**The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire's  
Draft Fire and Rescue Service Budget and Precept 2023/24**

We are required under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to consider, and report our views formally to you, on your proposed Budget/Precept for the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service for 2023/24. Accordingly, we considered those proposals at our meeting on 13 February 2023.

We have the power to veto your Precept if we consider it to be too low or too high. In the event of the veto being exercised, a revised proposed Precept would be required from you.

You attended the 13 February 2023 Panel meeting accompanied by the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Panel received a supplementary paper, circulated at the meeting, which set out the revenue budget and precept proposals, should the pay offer made by the National Employers (NJC) be accepted. The offer was 7% on basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments from 1 July 2022 and 5% from July 2023. Members were informed that this did not have an effect on the net budget requirement which remained the same at £46.465million

In your introduction to the report, you explained that the Settlement Funding for 2023/24 had been confirmed at £15.704million, made up of; Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which had been set at £5.422million; Local Business Rates revenue of £4.070million and Business Top up of £6.212million. You informed the Panel that the total budget requirement for the service was £46.465million and that you proposing to part fund the balance from Council Tax funding of £30.761million and proposed an increase of 4.85% per annum (£84.25 p.a per Band D property). This included a Council tax Surplus of £0.405 million.

The Panel unanimously agreed to support the 4.85% increase in the Fire and Rescue Authority Precept for 2023/24.

The Panel questioned the total level of debt (capital financing requirement) which was forecast to increase from £20.8m to £29.3m by 2026 and were reassured to hear that this was due to investment in fleet/estate/equipment etc. and although increasing in the medium term, was being managed.

It was noted that the Service transformation was not an immediate pressure. However, the additional £700,000 savings on top of that in the budget paper (total £1.4million savings) would require options and decisions to be fully considered.

It was noted that the Contingency plans were in place within the Service should industrial action take place.

Councillor R Cox

Vice Chairman, Chair for the meeting  
On behalf of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel.