**FOI Ref: OPCC 20-2023**

**Request: Dated 24th March 2023**

**Response:**

I can confirm that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) holds the information requested, as outlined below:

Question:

Yesterday, 23rd Mar 2023, I received notification of the Police Precept for FY 23/24 showing a marked and unaccountable increase in the previous years charges. I say the word unaccountable as I have advised that great savings have been made in DyfedPowys Police budgeting by the reduction of infrastructure costs.

In recent months I have made enquiries via freedom of information requests as to the value of these cost savings with particular reverence to the demanning and/or closure of eleven of the fourteen police stations located in Powys, and the removal of all yellow 101 service telephones.

On each of the occasions where an FoI was submitted requesting quantification on cost savings, the response was that an answer would be disproportionately expensive to gather the required data. This would lead one to the justifiable conclusion that financial savings were significant and balanced against service provision.

Publicly available data has seen a marked deterioration in the service provision of DyfedPowys Policing with no noticeable sign of improvement. Less crime is reported, less crime is solved, crime rates are rising, police conduct is failing, trust in policing is at an all time low. A Professional Standards Department which lacks both standards and professionalism, etc.

As none of these alleged savings manifest themselves either in a reduced budget or an improvement in service, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, IOC Guidance and your Code of Ethics, please provide me with documentation which would reveal where these savings can be accounted within your financial management system together with an assurance that such savings have not led to a detriment in service and a consequent erosion of public trust.

Answer:

The Police Precept for 2023/24 as part of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 – 2027/28 (as attached or link) was unanimously supported by the Police & Crime Panel on the 27th January, after a lengthy period of extensive scrutiny.

There are a considerable array of financial and service complexities which are set out within the MTFP, which I trust will provide you with further context on the issues that are faced as the police service responds to ever changing service demands set within a very challenging and uncertain financial landscape.

The cost-of-living crisis has clearly put pressures on our communities, but sadly, these challenges have also hit the Police service hard and despite careful financial planning, there will be increasingly difficult decisions to make over the next few years. There is a fine balance between ensuring an efficient and effective Policing Service and ensuring the safety of the public, whilst also ensuring value for money for the taxpayers and sound financial management. The Police & Crime Commissioner considers these factors carefully in his precept deliberations

The Force has an ambitious forward savings/ efficiency plan, aiming to deliver £5.9M in 2023/24 and £11.3M over the period of the MTFP. These are further detailed in section 12, page 37 of the MTFP, please see the relevant link to the plan https://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/11628/2324-mtfp-and-precept-report-for-panel-final-1.docx

Having recognised the extent of the financial challenges, the Chief Constable formally announced the initiation of a Force Review Team in June 2022. This Force Review will assess all areas of activity seeking efficiencies, cost reductions, savings and transformational opportunities. This work continues in anger and will further evolve focussing on the extent of the financial challenges ahead harnessing opportunities for transformation and efficiencies.

The achievement of these savings will be formally tracked and recorded through the Dyfed Powys Police finance system, which will be audited as part of the annual statutory external audit by Audit Wales. It should also be noted that the achievement of the savings does carry some inherent risk, may result in some reductions in service levels which will be formally managed on a risk-based approach by the Chief Constable. As I am sure you will appreciate, there is a careful balance of operational and financial risk which will need to be struck in dealing with evolving and changing service demands.