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26 January 2022

Dear David

### **Police and Crime Panel, Future Budgets and Priorities**

I write to formally request Dorset Police's budgetary requirements for 2022/23. Although the Government has agreed a 3-year settlement there remain considerable pressures on Police funding and a degree of uncertainty regarding long term financial arrangements. Dorset remains 42nd (out of 43) lowest funded Home Office forces and despite plans to review the national police funding formula there remains a significant shortfall in 2022/23 that can be addressed by the approval of the Police and Crime Commissioner to raise the Council Tax precept. This letter will explain the financial requirements and the improvements to policing that I will deliver in the coming years with an agreed precept increase.

I am grateful to you as Commissioner, in setting a clear, realistic and ambitious Police and Crime Plan. This plan accords not only with the public of Dorset's expectations but also very strongly aligns with my vision and priorities for the Force in the coming years. We will be tough on crime, keep people safe and put victims first. We have a shared ambition of making Dorset the safest county and to remain one of the finest police forces in the country.

Since taking over as Chief Constable in August 2021 I have worked relentlessly to assess the current capabilities of the Force to deliver the plan, identified and started to implement a road map to meeting it and ensured that I develop the strategy, priorities and infrastructure to deliver it. I have ensured a forensic examination of Force expenditure and identified where savings can be achieved and where we need to invest in transformation and new approaches. We will tackle developing crime threats and improve visible policing. I have a programme of work to invest more in the frontline with more officers tackling criminals head on who cause misery to parts of our communities, improved ways of being available to our public, ensuring a robust and dedicated focus for rural policing and relentless pursuit of organised

crime gangs involved in county lines drug supply. We are very much starting to see the benefits of this focus with falling crime levels, increased visible policing and some notable success in being tough on crime.

This budget request for this 2022/23 period will ensure we continue with this approach, but I recognise the importance of the continued need for me as Chief Constable to ensure every penny we have is spent wisely. It is critical that both you and the public are assured that the Force are efficiently using public funds. I have introduced tight regulations on spend and tasked my team to challenge costs to ensure we reinvest what we currently have in core budgets in areas that absolutely deliver the very best for our communities. I am requesting a £10 increase in precept for 2022/23. This funding will enable the Force to not only protect our current policing provision but also allow us to invest in a number of priority areas as follows:

- **Strengthened Response to Rural Policing** - Dorset Police will deliver the new rural crime strategy and uplift resources into the Rural Crime Team (RCT). This will expand our rural crime capability to tackle organised crime, protect business owners and those in isolated local communities. An investment in targeted engagement and prevention activity within these communities will reduce crime and increase public confidence.
- **County Lines Task Force** – Dorset is disproportionately targeted by organised crime groups and County Lines criminality yet in response we provide the highest level of disruption activity in the South West. I will invest in a new approach to targeting organised drug supply by introducing a dedicated co-ordinator, increasing proactive policing including days and weeks of action, working with forces across the UK to prevent offending in Dorset and continuing to work with our partners to reduce crime, protect the vulnerable and relentlessly pursue offenders, bringing them to justice.
- **Online Sex Offending** – Dorset has seen a significant increase in reported and proactive online sex offending. I will increase resources and online capability to protect and safeguard children from sexual predators. This will include preventing crimes, increasing proactive operations, improving the timeliness of investigations, safeguarding the most vulnerable and managing those offenders that cause the greatest harm to our communities.
- **Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams** – I will continue to embed local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) in our communities by enhancing our capability with the introduction of Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams (NET). These local teams will provide an early response to emerging ASB and volume crime, pursue perpetrators and support long term problem solving to reduce harm to the public.
- **Violence Against Women and Girls** – Building on our strong strategic and local partnerships the Force will utilise innovative approaches and specialist resources to create safer spaces. This will ensure people feel safe on our streets and support the protection of women and girls from such threats as gender-based violence, sexual assault and drink spiking.

- **Safer Roads** – Through our operational and strategic road safety response the Force will work to further reduce those killed and seriously injured on the roads through investment and hotspot policing. This will involve the latest use of technology and the development of preventative online education.
- **Responding to the Public** – I will advance the way the Force responds to calls for service over the course of a multi-year transformation programme which will overhaul public engagement and contact management systems. This will improve accessibility, including online reporting, live chat messaging, ‘pop up’ community contact hubs and improved services to 101 and emergency response.
- **Crime Investigation Standards** – The development of the force crime investigation capability will continue to improve timely prosecutions through investment in digital evidence, reducing bureaucracy and allowing the public to submit evidence online. We will strengthen our victim and witness hubs to ensure those individuals are at the heart of what we do.
- **Volunteering** – I will further expand the volunteering capability in the Force through growing our established Cadet schemes, uplifting Special Constables and introducing wider volunteering to deliver increased visibility and connectivity within our communities.
- **Investment in Estates** – I will facilitate urgent investment to estates, creating more efficient and cost-effective solutions to workspace, increase ‘new ways of working’ and deliver improved working environments to support our staff and officers and maximise outputs. Benefits include improving our visible policing presence by developing more agile community police surgeries and work with partners and communities to further increase our policing footprint especially in rural towns.
- **Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) and Cyber Crime** – I will ensure that SOC capability within Dorset is increased, bringing regional assets closer to the Force to enhance our ability to combat some of the most dangerous offenders in or entering our County. This will enable us to provide a better, locally delivered, service to the communities of Dorset.

### **Funding background**

The Force is funded by a combination of Government grant and Council Tax. The majority of Government grant increase received in 2022/23 is expected to be focussed on delivery of the Government’s manifesto pledge to deliver 20,000 new officers nationally. This will enable the Force to enhance some of its services to the public and increase visibility within the community.

The increase in Government grant will not cover unavoidable cost increases such as inflationary pressures and enabling costs such as recruitment, training and development, ICT, estates and fleet. The Force is dependent on Council Tax to cover these unavoidable increases. Without such an increase, reductions in service will be required to achieve a balanced budget which will significantly reduce the impact of the incoming officers within our communities.

### **The financial outlook for 2022/2023**

The financial plan enables us to deliver a balanced budget in 2022/23, which assumes a £10 precept increase to cover the inflationary pressures mentioned above. The key risk to our plan is the level of pay reviews for officers and staff, although we believe the assumptions made are reasonable.

Our plan includes cost savings of £1.9m. This has, in part, come from the reductions in the cost of the Uplift programme as well as negotiated savings in regional funding arrangements. We have also realised £0.3m in savings from ICT and rent/rates of premises. £0.8m of this overall saving has been reinvested in a number of areas most notably domestic abuse, firearms licencing and road safety.

A further £0.7m increase in capital financing charges are included in the budget, which reflects the increasing need to borrow to fund part of our capital programme, and to increase our revenue contributions to ensure long term sustainability.

### **Continuing financial pressures**

Whilst we expect to be able to deliver a balanced budget during 2022/23, there remains medium term financial pressures which drive a projected deficit of £2.6m per year from 2023/24. We will continue to explore every opportunity to identify savings and efficiencies to mitigate demand. This work will start immediately during 2022/23 to maximise the chance of successful delivery. Areas of focus will include savings from the change programme (including use of technology and process automation), reviews of discretionary spend as well as ways of banking benefits from the investment in officer uplift.

### **The risks to policing delivery if the Force does not receive an increase to precept include:**

- If the precept was not increased a financial shortfall of £2.9m would be created, significantly impacting our effectiveness in keeping people safe. This funding equates to a reduction of 63 officers or 75 staff posts in real terms.
- The Force would be unable to make the investments in line with the ambitious plans outlined earlier in this letter, and we would need to withdraw from some frontline services currently being delivered.
- It would severely restrict opportunities to invest in innovation to deliver future sustainable efficiencies.

### **Capital requirements**

As already mentioned, our capital financing costs will increase in 2022/23 as we continue to move to a more sustainable capital financing model. It remains our aim that all short-life fixed assets, such as ICT and vehicles will be financed from revenue contributions to capital. This would mean borrowing for longer term assets such as the estate. This strategy has been developed because Dorset Police has no capital reserves and very little surplus property, which could be used to generate capital receipts.

In order to minimise the impact on the revenue budget, we have reviewed the capital programme of the Force in detail with the aim of reducing it to the minimum required to be an efficient and effective Force. Despite these reductions the five-year programme, up to and including 2025/26, still totals £46m, of which £24m relates to the estates programme.

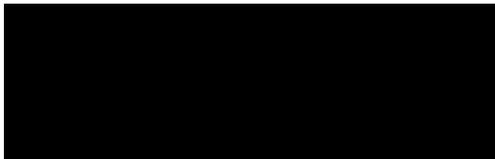
## **Conclusion**

I would like to thank you and the Police Crime Panel for your ongoing support in ensuring that Dorset Police is appropriately funded to deliver a safe county for everyone.

I am committed to making every penny count through our efficiency programme and those savings will optimise our operating model, which is delivered via our continuous improvement and transformation programme. Further to this operational investment, additional funding is also required to meet other nationally agreed commitments such as pay awards, incremental pay progression and the significant inflationary pressures being experienced by all organisations across the UK.

Despite the challenges ahead, with the addition of the precept increase, Dorset Police is in a strong position to make progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan, reducing crime and making Dorset a hostile environment for those who seek to commit crime and target the vulnerable. The Force continues to maximise the opportunity provided by the Government's National Uplift programme, however this is not the only answer to overcoming the financial challenges that we face.

Yours sincerely



Scott Chilton  
Chief Constable

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Progress against the Police and Crime Plan**

#### **Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

The Force has seen a 6.0 per cent drop in recorded crime, (Office for National Statistics – last 12 months to the end of June 2021), and has the ninth lowest crime rate in England & Wales. Whilst we recognise the impact of COVID-19 throughout the last year and the effect the lockdown periods had on the reduction of some crime types, we have also responded to this and maintained a strong focus on the preventing and detecting of crime that affects the most vulnerable members of our communities, for example, Domestic Abuse, serious sexual offences and violent crime.

In terms of more specific crime data, we have seen a reduction in violence against the person offences with a reduction of 1.9 per cent in Dorset compared to an increase nationally of 8.1 per cent. Violence with injury dropped by 7.0 per cent, compared to the national average that was down by 4.0 per cent. Victim Based Crime saw a reduction from 46,116 to 42,972; a reduction of 6.8%.

The total number of crimes reported reduced from 51,997 to 48,873 over the 12 months to the end of June 2021, reducing 4.0 crimes per 1,000 of the population. The Force has supported and safeguarded the most vulnerable in our communities and provided a safe environment for victims and encouraging them to come forward and report crimes.

The Force has also seen increased large-scale public events, including the European Football Championship and the Bournemouth Air Show, and the return of a lively night-time economy, which has contributed to an increase in some crime types. We continue to work with our partners and local businesses to address local needs and keep people safe in Dorset.

#### **Make Policing More Visible and Connected**

The Force is committed to building trust and confidence by engaging and partnering with our communities. Our communities need to have confidence that we are fair, open, accountable and legitimate through inclusive policing, and in return we are focused on understanding, listening to, and responding to the communities we serve and ensuring we deliver a targeted response to emerging issues and risks. In recognition of this the Community Safety Survey for 2020/21 showed that ninety-six per cent of Dorset residents stated that they felt safe in their communities. The survey also showed significant improvements in how the public views the police, with an average of 79 per cent of respondents feeling that Dorset Police is doing a good job, which is an increase from the previous year at 55 per cent. There was also a rise in public confidence to 79 per cent, an 11 per cent improvement in the last year.

Furthermore, 77 per cent of respondents stated that they feel relations between people and the police in their neighbourhood is good, a 19 per cent increase in the last year.

When asked if Dorset Police is 'doing a good job', respondents from all county areas responded positively and reported an overall increase. For example, East Dorset reached 88 per cent, an increase of 24 per cent from the previous year.

There are a number of areas which have helped achieve these results, and these include the changes to the Force operating model and the creation of two local policing areas, aligned to the local authority areas. These were created to provide delivery of Local Policing and improved engagement, strengthening meaningful partnerships, and increasing performance.

Through the Government Uplift programme, we are increasing the size of our neighbourhood policing teams with additional officers so they can focus on local issues including making safer spaces in our response to violence against women and girls. In addition, the introduction of Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams are providing a proactive arm to tackle crime and Anti-Social Behaviour and support local policing teams and partners to develop long term problem solving, for example County Lines enforcement and safeguarding.

The next stage of our continuous improvement strategy is the review of public contact and engagement. This is focused at the front end of our delivery – as within policing everything we do has an impact on someone, from the phone calls, emails and contacts we receive, to the actions and decisions we take. The service we deliver to respond to the public is crucial and the focus on this large piece of work.

## **Fight Violent Crime and High Harm**

As a Force we relentlessly pursue criminality. We are robust with high harm offenders, prevent reoffending and bring offenders to justice. Our whole Force approach ensures offenders are dealt with in a timely manner to support and protect victims and witnesses, through the criminal justice process or by supporting victims to achieve other positive outcomes.

However, we know that a small proportion of offenders (around 9%) are linked to 85% of total harm. To target this, we have a highly effective Fugitive Management Team who are a dedicated team of officers and staff within the Intelligence directorate who provide ownership and grip of these offenders. Dorset already has the highest numbers of organised crime disruptions of all the South West forces. We will continue to meet the growing threat of organised crime and this includes increasing the size of our Serious and Organised Crime capability to relentlessly pursue criminals and protect the public from new and emerging threats.

They are also focused on foreign offenders, and we work effectively with partner agencies such as National Crime Agency, Interpol and the Prison and Probation service. We carryout offender visits and neighbourhood policing teams are involved to ensure increased awareness on intelligence and disruption activity.

Dorset is leading on a voluntary tagging programme which we introduced in 2021 and where Domestic Abuse perpetrators are GPS tagged and subject to monitored, proactive intervention then takes place to prevent further offending and reduce subsequent demand.

## **Fight Rural Crime**

We are strengthening our response to Rural Crime by delivering a new rural crime strategy and increasing the number of officers and staff working in our Rural Crime Team. As an already effective team, the increase in size will ensure they are focused on tackling organised rural crime, able to increase their engagement, and ensure they are more visible in isolated and rural communities.

Our Intelligence Directorate provide resources to prevent and target rural crime, and our neighbourhood teams work closely with the rural crime team to provide further engagement and visibility to our isolated communities.

The work to fight rural crime is also supported by our Alliance Operations Command, and the work of Firearms Teams, the Force Support Group, the Marine Section (recognising our marine communities), our Drones team, Roads Policing and Dog Section. This is further supported by the volunteers, Special Constables and Cadets who are part of the Dorset Police family and who contribute to delivering across all communities in Dorset and support the dedicated work to rural communities.

## **Put Victims and Communities First**

Since November 2019 the Force has led a Vulnerability Programme which has focused on vulnerability and protecting people at risk of harm, particularly victims. The Force has experienced an increase in demand in the area of public protection. Some of these increases are as a direct consequence of our staff being trained in vulnerability and safeguarding and so recognising at an early stage the need for support safeguarding and positive interventions. The Vulnerability Programme within Dorset Police has received national recognition from the National Police Chiefs Council for Vulnerability, Knowledge and Practice team.

This positive work continued throughout the COVID pandemic with ongoing training and changes to process and systems. The COVID pandemic has seen a changing demand on our services from societal changes, so external pressures and increased workload on the Force.

We have invested in external experts to improve our response and we are working with the charity 'Missing People UK' who are supporting our improvements in our response to instances of missing persons. We have delivered Operation Encompass which provides the sharing of information with over 300 schools across the County to keep children safe. We have increased the use of Civil Orders including Domestic Violence Protection Orders with enhanced training to officers which has resulted in a 75% conversion of notices to full orders.

Moving forward we are continuing to develop our operating model to address vulnerability within the system and provide an ever-improving service and outcomes to victims. We are aligning Safeguarding to work closer to neighbourhood teams and local partners within our Local Policing Areas, developing our management of sexual and violent offenders, and realigning the Paedophile Online Investigation Team and Child Abuse Investigation into our new Specialist Investigations directorate.

We recognise that domestic abuse is a big part of protecting people at risk of harm and reducing repeat victimisation. We are working to ensure our response to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls and we have uplifted our response to these areas. This includes the commissioning an external review of our response to Domestic Abuse, and the adoption of the DA Matters Programme. We have invested in dedicated Vulnerability Lawyers who are focused on the ever increasing use of Civil Powers such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Stalking Protection Orders and Sexual Harm Prevention Orders to keep vulnerable people safe and reduce the risk from dangerous offenders.

We have built upon our strong partnership with the existing 'You First' Domestic Abuse programme to introduce across Dorset the Home Office endorsed 'DRIVE Domestic Abuse perpetrator programme. This is making a real difference to support Domestic Abuse perpetrators to change their behaviour and so keep victims safe by preventing an escalation of violence. This programme has a strong evidence base nationally and we are seeing similar if not better results than other areas across England and Wales who are delivering DRIVE. DRIVE also complements the CARA conditional cautioning programme and Footsteps vulnerable female perpetrator programme which we also run across the Force to divert offenders and prevent reoffending.

### **Make Every Penny Count**

Dorset Police is committed to ensuring value for money in all of its activities. The Force works in partnership wherever this will achieve efficiencies, with the Strategic Alliance at the heart of this collaborative work. 27% of our Force budget is spent on Alliance areas, achieving financial savings, economies of scale, and providing the ability to shared best practice.

Dorset Police is a member of the South West Procurement Partnership, which also includes Devon & Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and - since 2021 - Avon & Somerset, which has further strengthened this collaborative working. The Partnership secured savings for Dorset Police of over £0.6m during 20/21 and is on course to realise further savings this year. The Procurement Partnership also works closely with Blue Light Commercial, which is designed to harness the purchasing power of policing on a national basis.

As part of the Spending Review 2021, the need for forces to evidence efficiencies was made clear, with the expectation that forces would need to achieve £100m in annual efficiencies by 2024/25. Dorset is well placed to achieve its contribution to this target, and more, having achieved £1.9m savings in the 2022/23 budget, and the

expectation that further efficiencies will be made through such programmes as robotic process automation.

I know that the Police and Crime Panel have previously been keen to ensure that the Force is continuing to be innovative in its approach, and I am sure that you would expect the same. The Innovation Board, which is a joint PCC / Force Board, will continue, with funding to support initiatives built into our medium-term financial plans.