

**CUMBRIA POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE**

Minutes of the Public Accountability Conference held on
Wednesday 04 November 2020 remotely via Skype conference call
at 10:00am

PRESENT

Police & Crime Commissioner - Mr Peter McCall (Chair)

Also present:

Chief Constable (Michelle Skeer);
Joint Chief Finance Officer (Roger Marshall);
Constabulary Head of Marketing and Communications (Helen Lacey);
OPCC Chief Executive (Vivian Stafford);
OPCC Deputy Chief Exec (Gill Shearer);
OPCC Media & Communications Officer (Laura Milligan);
OPCC Executive Support Officer (Paula Zutic) – taking minutes

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

In line with the COVID-19 Government guidelines the Public Accountability Conference was held remotely via Skype.

001. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Chief Constable (Mark Webster); Assistant Chief Constable (Andy Slattery); Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Michelle Bellis);

002. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public prior to the meeting.

003. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items of urgent business to be considered by the Committee.

004. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of any personal interest relating to any item on the Agenda.

005. MINUTES

The Chair presented the minutes of the Public Accountability Conference held on the 6th October 2020, these had previously been circulated with the agenda. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED, that, the

- (i) Minutes of the Public Accountability Conference held on the 6th October 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair;

006. FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2020/21 – QUARTER 2 TO SEPTEMBER 2020

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report, and to set the context stressed that we are still in only the second quarter out of four, and not at the end stage of the budget.

At the mid-point of the financial year it is a good news story. There is a forecast overspend of £304k (Constabulary and OPCC combined) which is a reduction from £424k forecast in the first quarter – this equated to 0.38% of the budget. Current trends indicate that we will be able to bring in a balanced budget at the year end.

The investment balance as @ 30/09/20 is £20.237m (up 79% from £4.314m at 30/06/20). This increase reflects the receipt of the Home office Pension grant in July for £20.046m. The current investment income forecast has been reduced from £96k to £26k to reflect the extremely low interest rates currently being received whilst prioritising the security of the principal funds.

Expenditure & Income Variances

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) -£4k Includes reductions in staffing (£5k), transport (£3k) and printing and other running costs (£5k), depreciation (+£10k).

Other PCC Budgets +£186k Additional expenditure on Premises (£113k) mostly on additional cleaning due to COVID 19 and small overspends utilities and maintenance. Reduction in Investment Income (£70k).

Funding Provided to the Constabulary +£122k. The overspend is in the main due to additional net expenditure in response to COVID 19 (PPE, sanitisers, ICT cost, overtime etc. £1,278k).

Savings to in-year budgets as a result of reduced activity in areas such as travel, fuel and training during the COVID-19 pandemic are estimated at £953k, these are however offset by reductions in core income not covered by grants of £181k. Overall underspending on other budgets (£270k) including ICT airwave costs. Pages 3 and 4 provide a more detailed analysis of the Constabulary revenue budget position.

It was noted that while there have been a few cases of COVID amongst staff, sickness is low and the early intervention work to split teams etc in March has paid off.

The Chief Constable re-assured the Commissioner that the budget is scrutinised regularly on a weekly basis by the Chief Officer team.

The Commissioner advised that we do not yet know what will be in the Government's spending review due to be announced on 25th November.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Finance Officer for his report and following a discussion the report was noted.

RESOLVED, that,

- (i) The report be noted;

007. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES 2020/21 – QUARTER 2 TO SEPTEMBER 2020

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report, which is submitted to the Commissioner on a quarterly basis.

It was noted that there were quite high cash balances of £25k, as a result of receiving the pensions grant in July (this is cyclical).

The investment balance is £26k, and to put this into context in previous years this figure has been as high as £1.5m. It was noted that no borrowing has been undertaken at the moment.

It is prudent in the current climate to invest balances as safely as possible. Treasury indicators provide an early warning system and would highlight if spending was out of line. All are showing green, with no breaches.

The PCC noted that 2020 had been a roller-coaster year with real challenges & thanked the Finance Team & Chief Officer Team for keeping the budget so well balanced. Council tax going forward will be a challenge.

The Chief Constable assured the Commissioner that while she is not complacent, she is confident they will present a balanced budget at the end of the year.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Finance Officer for his report and following a discussion the report was noted.

RESOLVED, that,

- (i) The report be noted;

Meeting concluded at 10:45

Signed: _____

Date: _____