

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Resources Committee 26 April 2007

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Report of the Treasurer

BUDGET WORKING PARTY 13/04/07, BRIEFING NOTES

1. Present

James Currie, William Thomas, Mike Nevitt, Brian Greenslade, David Money, John Smith, Mike Bull. Apologies from Bryan Preston.

2. Press article on vehicles

There was some debate on an unfortunate Western Morning News story about the police apparently having so few vehicles that they have to beg rides on library vehicles. This should have been a good news story about PCSOs interacting with the community. Instead it appeared to show the Force in a bad light.

There has been an increase in vehicles but no increase in mileage suggesting that there is a real vehicle utilisation issue. Work is underway to determine how many vehicles we need and crucially where these should be. Members have long argued for this to increase efficiency and reduce the number of idle vehicles.

Concern was also expressed about media management and David Money agreed to raise again with the Chief Constable.

3. Council Tax Capping

Members considered a paper from the Treasurer on the recent political decisions on capping. Notwithstanding the tough talk on capping, no authorities were capped this year at a time when Durham increased its council tax by 34.6%. It was resolved that, in spite of this, current spending and savings targets should remain in force and cost reduction efforts should continue in earnest. Any consideration of increased spending in future should depend on quantifiable improvements in policing, rather than on avoiding cost reduction.

4. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium Term Financial Strategy is a living document containing all the key financial issues over the next three years. It was introduced to all members before the last budget and will be amended periodically as new information comes to light. Members welcomed the document as a major step forward and asked a series of questions – particularly on green issues, invest to save, capital and linkages to other plans especially Human Resources. The Strategy will be updated after the next outturn report in the summer.

5. Financial Update

Detailed figures were received on the likely financial results for last year. A modest underspend is forecast. New financial pressures for 2007/08 were listed. These are reported elsewhere on the Resources agenda. Particular concern was expressed on the Staff Handbook, call handling , health and safety, capital cost increases, the museum and vacancy management.

6. Partnerships

Progress is being made on rationalising the Force approach to partnerships. A new forum is being established to introduce corporate governance issues into all partnerships. Several million is spent annually but the value of some partnerships and the full contribution from other players are uncertain. Thought must be given to the Police Authority role and how this can be best discharged. Colin Papworth agreed to take back members' concerns.

7. Next meeting 06/07/07 @ 2.00

John Glasby
16/04/07