

## PFCC Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number:** 174-22

**Classification** (e.g. Not protectively marked/restricted): Not protectively marked

**Title of report:** Precept Leaflet 2023-2024

**Area of county / stakeholders affected:** Countywide

**Report by:** Darren Horsman

**Chief Officer:** Darren Horsman

**Date of report:** 20/12/2022

**Enquiries to:** Darren.horsman@essex.police.uk

### 1. Executive Summary

This report requests the approval of up to £27,000 from the PFCC's communications budget for the production and distribution of a leaflet setting out the 2023-2024 police precept and fire and rescue service budget.

### 2. Recommendations

Approve the allocation of up to £27,000 from the PFCC's communication budget to develop and distribute the precept leaflet.

### 3. Background to the Proposal

Discussions around the precept are detailed and involved significant work from both services, the PFCC and his team and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Discussion papers, workshops and analysis contribute to the final proposal from the PFCC and

these discussions are publicly shared through the normal routes on the PFCC's website and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel's website.

Once a decision has been made a significant amount of publicity and public communication takes place. This helps residents know about the decision and understand what it will mean for them both in terms of the financial impact and the level of service being provided as a result.

To complement this work and fulfil our responsibility to provide clear and accessible information to the taxpayer, a leaflet has been designed and printed which will be included with the hard copy tax letters sent out by councils across Essex. This provides relevant information to the taxpayer alongside their bills so they can understand and easily see the rationale behind the decisions.

Each council has a different way of providing their council tax information to residents – it may be online or hard copy, some undertake the work themselves other pool resources or contract out the printing and distribution. We work with each council to ensure our information is in a similar format. This means that we run slightly different production and distribution processes for each of the districts, so we fit in with their established production systems, sign off processes and delivery mechanisms.

#### **4. Proposal and Associated Benefits**

Proposing the precept is a key statutory duty of the PFCC and one that impacts most of the people in Essex. Explaining why the decision around the precepts were made, what impact they will have on people both financially and in terms of the level of service they will receive is vital to building a transparent and accountable policing and fire and rescue system. In turn, this also contributes to confidence in the services and supports the democratic system that underpins their public accountability.

#### **5. Options Analysis**

We could choose to only provide electronic information on the precept, but there could be a risk that not everyone would receive this important information. We could also provide less detail, but this would limit the ability for the public to understand what they were paying for and the impact it would have on them. This could then reduce their confidence in the services and their engagement in the democratic process, limiting their voice in the governance of the services.

#### **6. Consultation and Engagement**

Significant engagement is undertaken with the public and partners prior to setting the precept but this is not necessary when deciding whether to develop and distribute a leaflet to communicate the decision.

#### **7. Strategic Links**

Funding for policing and fire and rescue underpin both the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan.

#### **8. Police operational implications**

There are no operational policing implications from this decision.

#### **9. Financial implications**

The cost of producing, printing and distributing the leaflet is anticipated to be no more than £27,000 and will largely be budgeted for within the communications budget. These costs are incurred largely in the printing and distribution of the leaflet which is done through various providers dependent on who has the contract with each council. In most cases, we get billed per hard copy leaflet that is included and distributed and as such there is some variation in the costs as exact distribution numbers change. Our agreements with each council also differ with each council sharing costs in a slightly different way leading to some variation in costs. In previous years the total costs have been between £18,000 and £23,000 so it is anticipated that £27,000 will be the most that it will cost this year.

#### **10. Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications from this decision.

#### **11. Staffing implications**

There are no specific staff implications from this decision.

#### **12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications**

The Commissioner has a duty to develop clear and accessible information and help groups with protected characteristics understand and engage with the services and the work that the PFCC does. This leaflet is part of a wider range of communications which is undertaken to ensure that people can access information relevant to them. The same information is also available in electronic format and can be accessed through accessibility devices such as reading software. Simplified versions of the messaging are also shared with partners and on social media.

#### **13. Risks and Mitigations**

There are no specific risks associated with this decision. There is the risk that the costs will have substantially increased from previous years, but this has been mitigated by asking for agreement for up to £27,000 so there is leeway for inflationary increases in costs. These will be understood better nearer to the distribution date.

#### **14. Governance Boards**

This decision has been discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team on the 20.12.2022 and will be included in the papers which go to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The final version of the precept leaflet will be agreed with the PFCC prior to production.

**15. Links to Future Plans**

This decision is not linked to any further plans.

**16. Background Papers and Appendices**

NA

**Report Approval**

The report will be signed off by the PFCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O. Sign: 

Print: Darren Horsman - Deputy Monitoring Officer

Date: 20/12/2022

Chief Finance Officer Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 25 January 2023

**Publication**

Is the report for publication? YES  NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

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If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

**Redaction**

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES  NO  2. Of Appendix? YES  NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

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Date redaction carried out: .....

**Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only**

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

**Sign:** .....

**Print:** .....

**Chief Executive / Chief Finance Officer**

**Decision and Final Sign Off**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

**Sign:** 

**Print:** Roger Hirst

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:** 27 January 2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

.....  
.....  
.....

**Sign:**

**Print:**

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:**