

Police, Fire & Crime Panel Report

January 2020



Update on spend of Additional Precept raised in 2019/20

Introduction

In 2019 the PFCC presented the results of a Neighbourhood Policing Survey to the Panel which provided a timely reminder of the concerns that the public have about the erosion of local policing services in North Yorkshire. The summary findings of the survey were that:

- Overall, residents feel less safe than they did a year ago
- 40% of people feel crime and anti-social behaviour is getting worse in their area
- Policing comes at the bottom of the list when residents are asked to rate local public services
- Less than one third of people are satisfied with the level of police presence in their area
- Scarborough and Richmondshire are standout areas for good practice and community confidence
- There is support for partners to take more action over mental health related issues
- Communities feel they should be given a greater say on resolving anti-social behaviour

Plans to address these concerns

In response to these concerns, and the strategic direction of the PFCC to deliver the 'Reinforcing the Front Line' goal set out in the Police and Crime Plan, the Force developed plans to address the areas that were raised within this survey and proposed the following:

- Community Resilience Teams with a visible presence dedicated to prevention and facilitating multi agency working.
- Mental Health Coordinators to support our most vulnerable residents and reduce the need for emergency secondary interventions
- Increased and structured engagement with communities to understand what matters to the place with a focus on volume acquisitive crime and volume offenders. Subsequently

this will reduce the fear of crime through increased traditional community presence and engagement.

This would include:

- Integrated Offender Management
- Neighbourhood Teams focused on volume acquisitive crime and volume crime prevention and engagement
- Bail Management
- Creation of a Public Safety Officer across public sector organisations.
- Online PCSOs to provide prevention advice and support investigations such as online crime
- A City Task Force, focused on primary interventions to ensure that our more urban communities problems are being solved.

To deliver these proposals would result in an increase in both Police Officers (51 FTEs) and PCSO's (23.5 FTEs) and once fully implementing would cost in the region of £3.3m on an annual basis.

Additional Precept agreed to support this investment

It was proposed in February 2019 that to invest in these priority areas that additional precept, above a £12 increase for a Band D property – which was required for a 'standstill' budget, would be needed.

The agreed Band D precept for 2019/20 therefore increase by £22.95 which generated the additional £3.3m income to fund the proposals put forward from the Force to address the concerns raised in the Neighbourhood Policing Survey.

Phased Recruitment in 2020/21

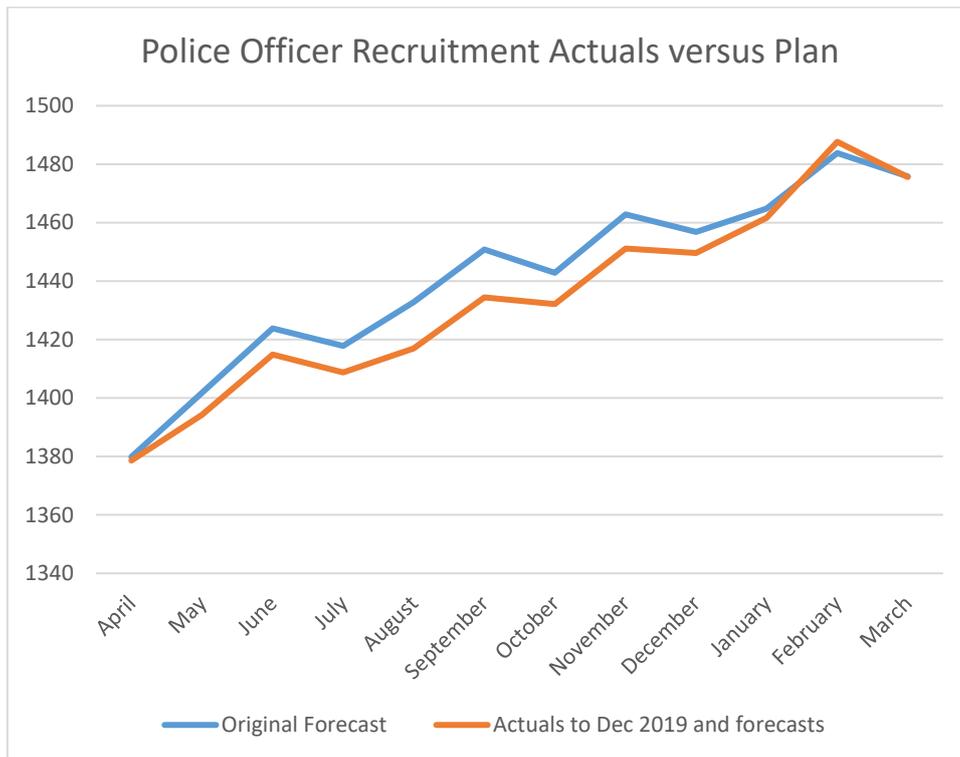
It was agreed that the funding would only be released to the Force as the Officers and PCSOs were specifically appointed to the 74.5 FTE roles that are set out within the proposal. Funding would also be made available in 2019/20 to enable recruitment of these additional resources and for the additional uniforms and equipment that would be needed. With the indicative budget set out below:

Projected Cost of Investment in Neighbourhood Policing				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Spend Area	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Salary Costs	2,530	3,280	3,425	3,495
Training Costs	325	35		
Uniform and Equipment Costs	220			
Total Investment Cost	3,075	3,315	3,425	3,495

The overall recruitment plans from the Force, for Police Officers, was based on 8 recruitments during 2019/20 as per the below, which was planned to result in an average of circa 1,439 FTE Officers 'employed' during 2019/20 and a year-end total of circa 1,465 FTEs.

Police Officer Recruitment Plan	Number in intake	Date of Intake
Transferees	28	May-19
Student Officers	28	Jun-19
Transferees	20	Aug-19
Student Officers	28	Sep-19
Student Officers	28	Nov-19
Transferees	14	Jan-20
Student Officers	14	Feb-20
Total	160	

The overall recruitment of Police Officers, in comparison to the original plan, has been excellent from the Force as shown in the graph below.



The above numbers do not include an additional 28 FTE recruits that are expecting to start at the end of March 2020 as these are part of the National Uplift programme and would have therefore made the graphs inconsistent.

If all remaining recruitment goes to plan then the Force is forecast to have just over 1,500 FTE Police Officers at the end of this current financial year.

In terms of PCSOs the recruitment plan to deliver these additional resources was initially more simple – there would be an additional recruitment in September 2019 to deliver these additional resources. This took place and 27 FTEs were recruited. These were in addition to 11 FTEs that were recruited in June 2019. This was expected to have resulted in the Force being almost at full strength on PCSOs with a further recruitment planned for January 2020 to ensure that any leavers could be replaced.

However PCSO's 'leavers' throughout the year have been higher than expected, with 25 FTE leavers taking place from April to Dec 2019 – this equates to just over 12% of the initial PCSO establishment.

This has resulted in only 197 FTE PCSOs being employed by the Force as the end of December 2019. As a result of this a recruitment of 28 FTEs is planned for both January and March which, if delivered, will put the Force around 20 FTEs above establishment at the end of the Financial Year. This should ensure that overall PCSO numbers can be maintained in 2020/21, especially given the trend of PCSOs transferring to become Police Officers, which is likely to continue given the increases in Police Officer numbers being planned for in 2020/21 and beyond.

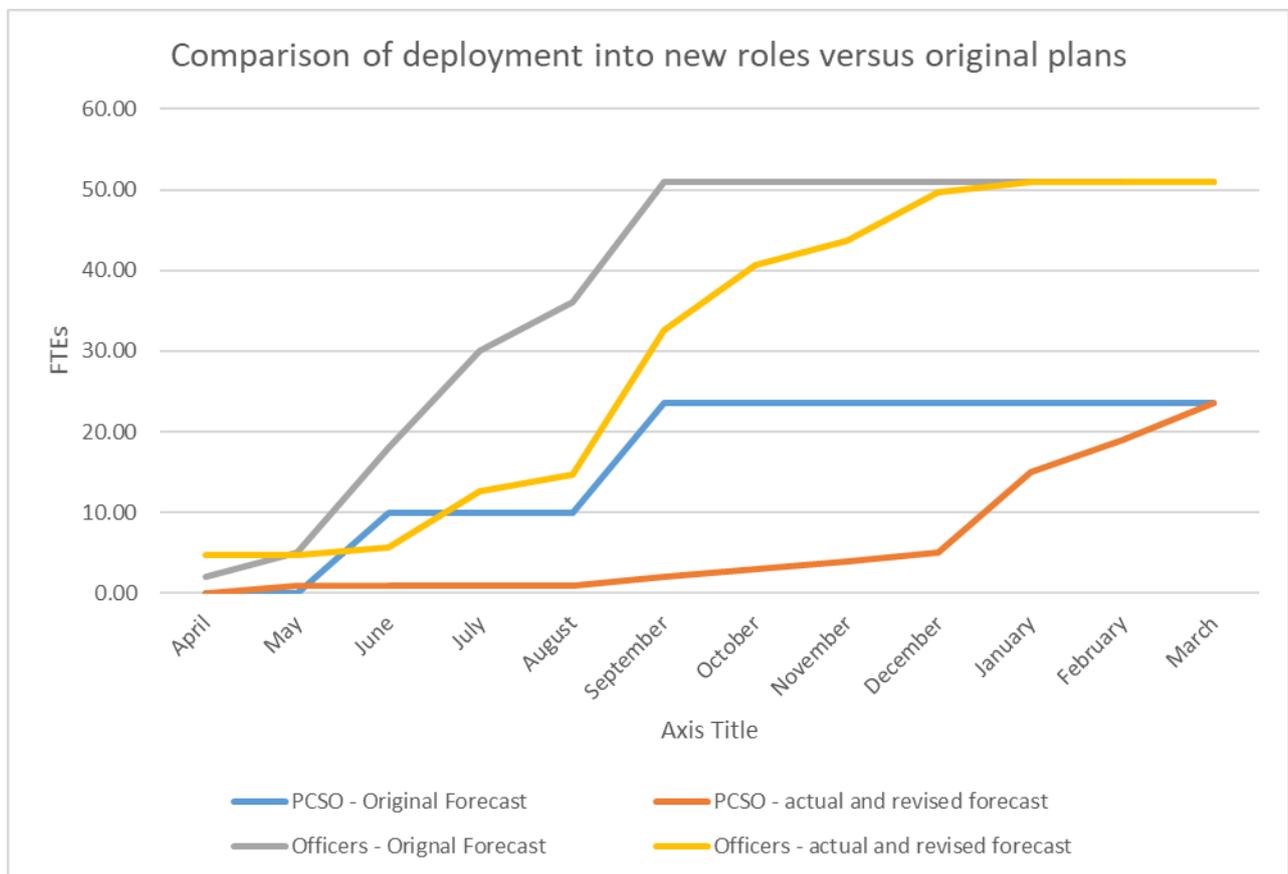
What does this mean in terms of Finances?

Given that Police Officer recruitment is being delivered in line with the original plan it would have been expected that the posting of Police Officers into the newly created 'precept' posts would have also occurred in line with the original plans. This has not however happened.

The primary reason, and an oversight in the original communication of the plans, is that it takes a significant amount of time for a 'new police officer' to be available for independent patrol – this is currently 25 weeks.

This is important because although the newly funded Police Officer roles are not being filled by new recruits, the new recruits are needed to fill the posts that the Police Officers are transferring out of, otherwise gaps would have developed elsewhere in the Force.

The graph below demonstrates the impact that this has had on Police Officer deployment into these new roles and at the same time shows the impact on the lower overall number of PCSOs on the ability of the Force to fill the new roles against their original plan.



The financial impact of these delays is that approximately £600k of the funds raised from the higher precept, specifically for this additional investment, will be unspent in 2019/20.

What will happen to this underspend?

To ensure that the additional Precept funds would not 'simply' be absorbed into the wider finances of the organisation, the PFCC committed to ring fence any remaining funds and proposed that they would be spent across the following areas:

- Prevention activities which the Community Safety Partnerships can bid into.
- Road safety
- Commissioning (for example an expansion of the NYFRS Life courses and other such activities)
- Responding to the rural domestic abuse research

A forecast underspend of £600k is significantly more than was expected and therefore a significant amount of the public's money that needs to be spent wisely. With this in mind plans are being drawn up to invest this money, in line with the above areas, however it is expected that this will be spent over a number of financial years and will therefore be earmarked to be spent in future years in line with the plans that are being developed.

Conclusion

The overall recruitment of Police Officers has been a significant success story during 2019/20 and one that it is expected will continue into 2020/21 and beyond to deliver more Police Officer growth within North Yorkshire. While PCSO recruitment has been more challenging the Force should be in a very strong position by the end of March 2020 providing the 2 planned recruitments are delivered.

The deployment into the newly created precept funded roles has however been slower than both expected and hoped. Some one of which should have been predicted and better communicated, given the length of time require for Police Officers to become sufficiently trained for independent patrol. In terms of managing expectations, it is perhaps important to recognise the time lag between the 'employment' of Police Officers, and therefore their inclusion in Force FTE numbers, and their availability for independent patrol as the Force looks to increase the overall number of Police Officers in future years.

It is expected that the new posts will all be deployed into by the end of the current financial year, and where funding has not been spent in 2019/20 it will be earmarked and spent in line with the areas set out in this report.

Clearly it is too early, at this stage, to determine whether or not the additional resources have improved the areas highlighted as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Survey but once all the resources are in place it will be important to revisit the concerns raised by the public to determine the impact of this significant investment.