

Commissioner

The Town Council's Police Liaison Group welcome the opportunity to comment on your draft Budget for 2017/2018.

Please see below Bewdley Town Council's comments.

1. Police officer pay seems to have reduced by £800,000. Does this mean that the force will have fewer police officers?
2. Police staff and PCSO costs are rising by £3.1m. This implies that the force will employ more civilian staff and fewer officers. Is this the case?
3. Third party payments are increasing by £760,000. What is the breakdown of these payments and could this money be better spent on police officers?
4. The cost of premises is rising by £429,000. This runs contrary to your priority to reduce costs in this area by combining premises with other agencies and blue light services. However, this would be welcomed if the money was being spent on improving and updating custody suites for example, or replacing local policing centres in places like Bewdley which no longer has a police station. The detail is not clear on this.
5. One of your priorities is "re-assuring the people of West Mercia". Why, then, are budgets for Operations and Specialist Operations being reduced?
6. It is welcoming to see new expenditure to tackle Business, Rural and Cyber Crime.
7. It is welcoming to see reserves being used to limit the burden on the Council Tax and that spending overall is increased from 2016/17.
8. Budget savings have been made via police officer "Mobile Working". What does this mean?

A general comment is that communities would likely support modest increases in council tax if this meant more visible policing in towns like Bewdley, which rarely sees "beat officers" on patrol.

Regards

Nick Farress  
Town Clerk