

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND POLICE AND CRIME
PANEL – 4 FEBRUARY 2026****PROPOSED PRECEPT 2026/27 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL
PLAN**

Following its meeting on 4 February 2026, the Panel resolved by the requisite statutory majority to veto the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed policing precept for 2026/27 on the grounds that the proposed precept is too low. The Panel therefore requires the Commissioner, in accordance with Regulation 5(3)(b) of the Police and Crime Panels (Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012, to submit a revised precept that is higher than the proposal considered. The Panel's reasoning and non-binding recommendations are set out in the minutes and summarised below. (*Statutory timeline: revised precept by 15 February; Panel second report by 22 February; Commissioner's final response by 1 March.*)

The Police and Crime Commissioner proposed to increase the 2026-27 precept by £11.00 per annum for policing purposes to £311.2302 (3.66%) for a Band D property.

A meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will take place on 12 February 2026 in order to consider the PCC's response to the Panel and a revised precept. The PCC intends to submit a report setting out the PCC's response and the revised precept by 10 February 2026, within the statutory timescales.

The Minute of the discussion on this item is set out below:

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) concerning the Proposed Precept for 2026/27 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the budget and precept proposals the PCC outlined the process for setting the 2026/27 policing budget. He emphasised that he was not cutting the police budget, as he suggested had been reported elsewhere, but was increasing it by £13.5million. He explained the need to balance police funding requests with the financial pressures faced by local residents and suggested that a consultation undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) showed that 31% of the public did not want any increase in the precept. The PCC stated that throughout the budget setting process, he and the Temporary Chief Constable had not been in agreement with regards to the budget nor the precept proposal. He then outlined the detail of these discussions. The PCC stated that the proposed £11 precept increase, was responsible, fair, and proportionate. He maintained that he had followed all statutory requirements, had consulted appropriately, and had acted in the best interests of residents by avoiding tax burdens whilst still increasing police funding. He advised that a copy of his full statement would be published on the OPCC's website.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) The Panel raised strong concern regarding the length of the statement provided by the PCC and that this had been provided at the meeting, rather than prior to the meeting. Concern was also raised regarding the detail included which related to disagreement between the PCC and the Temporary Chief Constable. The PCC stated that he believed his comments were relevant and reiterated that whilst disagreements between him and the Temporary Chief Constable were unusual, the detail had been provided in order to present the differing views on the precept and budget. The PCC stated he retained a professional relationship with the Temporary Chief Constable and believed disagreements were ultimately matters of judgement. The Panel remained concerned regarding the content of the statement provided, in particular the points made in relation to the Temporary Chief Constable.
- (ii) The Panel were concerned about the cumulative long-term impact of setting the proposed £11 precept increase, and that not raising the precept to the maximum would have consequences for service delivery, including strain on call handling, safeguarding responsibilities, frontline visibility, and pressure on reserves. The PCC acknowledged these points but stated that budgetary growth had exceeded inflation in previous years and that savings could still be made without compromising public safety. The Panel remained concerned and warned that reduced funding risked undermining services which supported the public, in particular the most vulnerable.
- (iii) A member of the Panel stated that the PCC had previously made statements relating to central government funding, the adequacy of police equipment, and concerns about community safety, and suggested that his current position had contradicted these concerns. The PCC responded to say that he believed that central government funding formulas were flawed but stated that he believed that local taxpayers should not be required to compensate for national funding shortcomings.
- (iv) Concern was raised regarding the shift in police funding between 2017 and 2024, during which central government's contribution fell from 66% to 58%, placing a greater burden on local taxpayers. It was noted that in previous years, the PCC and the Panel had jointly written to the Government to advocate for fairer funding. The Force remained the seventh worst-funded police force nationally. A member of the Panel suggested that fairer national funding would remove the need for council tax increases. The PCC acknowledged the shift in funding proportions and stated that he believed that this strengthened his position that the public should not be asked to pay the maximum increase permitted by government each year. The Panel were concerned that the PCC had not used the opportunity in his statement to advocate for fairer funding.
- (v) Strong concerns were raised relating to community safety and the potential impact on frontline policing as a result of reduced funds. It was suggested that suggesting that the proposals could equate to the loss of significant numbers of posts and policing hours, and impact visible neighbourhood policing. The PCC stated his budget proposals had not outlined reductions in staff, would not risk public safety and that the Force budget would increase above inflation, though not by as much as the Temporary Chief Constable had requested. He

emphasised that his duty was to balance service needs against taxpayer affordability. The Panel remained concerned that the PCC had shown insufficient regard for public safety and the views of councillors representing local communities.

- (vi) Concern was raised regarding forecast deficits, efficiency savings and the long-term sustainability of the force's finances. The PCC explained that updated collection fund figures had reduced the previously forecasted £1.2m gap to approximately £750k. The PCC suggested that requested savings were modest when compared with historic reductions which had been voluntarily delivered by previous Chief Constables. The Panel remained concerned that setting a £11 precept would have long-term cumulative impact on the Force's financial stability and on frontline services.
- (vii) A question was raised relating to the distinction between percentage changes applied to the OPCC's budget and those applied to the overall police force budget. The PCC confirmed that the PCC's 3% internal saving represented approximately £161,000 and could not be added to the 5.1% increase to the force budget, as the base figures differed significantly in scale.
- (viii) Concerns were also raised that the results of the public consultation had been interpreted selectively by the PCC. The PCC stated he had chosen an intermediate position which he considered to be balanced. With regards to how the survey had been undertaken, approximately 1,500 responses had been received, and demographic balancing had been undertaken. Of those surveyed, 31% opposed any increase, 38% supported the maximum permitted rise, 18% supported matching the increase from 2025/26, 4% supporting paying more to contribute to the costs of the pay award, and 9% supported paying more to contribute to the costs of inflation. The Panel remained concerned with the PCC's explanation regarding his interpretation of the outcome of the public consultation. A member of the Panel suggested that although 31% opposed an increase, the combined total of all options higher than the PCC's proposal amounted to 69%, and that this indicated greater public support for a larger rise than the PCC had proposed.
- (ix) With regards to concern that the PCC's position conflicted with the priorities outlined within his Police and Crime Plan with regards to the sustainability of the Force, the PCC stated that financial sustainability did not require setting the maximum precept. He outlined that he sought to balance affordability for residents with operational needs. The Panel remained concerned that setting a £11 precept would impact the Force's sustainability and have an impact on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.
- (x) The Panel remained concerned that the PCC's position appeared to disadvantage the Force at a time when additional officers and resources were required. The Panel felt that public opinion with regards concerns for public safety were clear and remained concerned about the PCC's resistance to maximising funding. The Panel were in agreement that the PCC's position risked harming the Force's future in terms of financial sustainability, would put pressure on frontline services, and risked public safety.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Temporary Chief Constable David Sandall delivered his operational assessment. He emphasised significant and rising demands on the force, including increases in 999 and 101 calls, arrests, missing persons, domestic incidents and safeguarding referrals. The Temporary Chief Constable recommended increasing the 2026-27 precept by £15 per annum for policing purposes for a Band D property. He stated that the difference between an £11 and £15 precept equated to approximately £1.4m annually. He warned that the medium-term financial plan showed a £9m deficit by 2027/28 and £16.4million within four years. He stated that lower precept levels would inevitably result in reductions in staffing and service levels, pressure on the contact centre, and a need to prioritise statutory functions over neighbourhood visibility. He stated that the Force was already among the lowest-funded forces and that he expected many other forces, in particular those within the region, to set the maximum precept.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) With regards to concerns raised regarding the financial projections as a result of the proposed budget and precept for the forthcoming year, the Temporary Chief Constable stated that the long-term impact of the decision would not secure the maintenance of the Force, would not ensure that the police force was efficient and effective, and would impact upon his ability to be able to deliver an effective and efficient service. He explained that further reductions of £1 million in staff budgets would intensify pressures. He stated that the Force had already initiated a target operating model review in order to address the required changes while attempting to protect public-facing services.
- (ii) A member of the Panel asked how the proposed £11 precept would affect neighbourhood policing and safeguarding, and key priorities such as protecting women and girls. The Temporary Chief Constable stated that whilst the force would seek to protect frontline neighbourhood services, the most immediate impact would fall on the contact centre, where an additional £1 million had recently been invested to improve call handling. He emphasised that any reduction in capacity risked slower response times and increased difficulty in meeting national targets. He added that pressures were also exacerbated by high levels of vulnerability-related demand, including work linked to safeguarding and hidden harm.
- (i) The Panel were concerned regarding the links between poverty, mental health, safeguarding workloads and crime. It was noted that the Police continued to respond to substantial non-crime related demand, particularly where other public services lacked capacity, including mental health incidents and domestic abuse-related safeguarding. The Temporary Chief Constable acknowledged these pressures and confirmed that the volume of vulnerable children requiring intervention was a significant and growing concern.
- (ii) A question was raised regarding whether the PCC or the OPCC had issued any direction on where savings should fall in order to compensate for a funding shortfall. The Temporary Chief Constable advised that no specific instructions had been given, and that operational leaders would develop proposals for

consideration. He noted that statutory functions could take precedence where the lower precept restricted the ability to fund wider priorities.

- (iii) Concern was raised that no detailed business cases or accountability mechanisms had yet been presented for how a £3.7 million prevention reserve held by the OPCC, would be used. The Temporary Chief Constable confirmed that he had not been consulted on specific proposals. Members of the Panel requested that the use of this reserve be subject to appropriate scrutiny and accountability through existing joint governance arrangements, such as an existing prevention fund held jointly by the OPCC and the Police.
- (iv) The Panel were concerned about historic reductions in policing capacity since 2010 and emphasised that although the Force had now reached the statutory establishment of 2,242 officers, this did not match pre-austerity levels of total policing resources when police staff and PCSOs were considered. The Temporary Chief Constable stated that demand had grown significantly since that period, including in areas of vulnerability, which had made service delivery increasingly difficult within the current budget.
- (v) In response to a question asked, it was noted that the statutory role of the Section 151 Officer of the OPCC was to outline the financial risks of the proposals rather than to approve the budget itself. The Section 151 Officer of the OPCC outlined that not maximising the precept increased financial risk across the medium-term plan, created a greater reliance on savings, and necessitated additional use of reserves. It was noted that whilst the 2026/27 budget could be balanced, the outlook beyond this period remained highly challenging under any precept scenario. The medium-term financial plan carried a “very high” risk rating, as it had in previous years, due to the scale of uncertainty and future deficits.

RESOLVED:

Police and Crime Commissioner’s Proposed Policing Precept for [2026/27] Motion (statutory veto under Schedule 5 PRSRA 2011 and the 2012 Regulations).

That this Panel, having reviewed the Police and Crime Commissioner’s proposed policing precept for the financial year [2026/27], RESOLVES to VETO the proposal on the grounds that the proposed precept is *too low*.

In making this decision, the Panel noted its statutory duty to issue a report on the proposed precept and that a veto requires the support of at least two-thirds of the Panel’s total membership. The Panel further notes that, following a veto because the precept is too low, the Commissioner must submit a revised precept that is higher than the proposal considered today, within the statutory timescales.

Reasons:

- The proposed level would not provide sufficient, sustainable resources to maintain and improve core services (including neighbourhood policing, call

handling and safeguarding demand) in line with public expectations and the Police & Crime Plan.

- The proposal would require disproportionate in-year use of reserves and/or service reductions, risking degradation in service quality and public confidence.
- Demand pressures are rising (e.g., 999/101 calls, missing persons, domestic incidents and safeguarding referrals) and are forecast to continue; a higher precept is necessary to ensure operational resilience and value for money across the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- The Temporary Chief Constable advised that the gap between an £11 and £15 Band D increase is approximately £1.4m annually, with the MTFP showing a deficit of £9m by 2027/28 and £16.4m within four years; lower precept levels would likely reduce staffing and service levels, pressure the contact centre, and reduce neighbourhood visibility.
- The Section 151 Officer highlighted that not maximising the precept increases medium-term risk, raises reliance on savings and reserves, and that while 2026/27 can be balanced, the outlook remains very high risk due to uncertainty and future deficits; a higher precept would mitigate (not remove) these risks.

Recorded vote:

In accordance with statute, a recorded vote was taken. 12 members (being at least two-thirds of the Panel's membership) voted unanimously FOR the veto; none against. The motion was CARRIED and the proposed precept is vetoed.