

## POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Report of	<b>Chief Constable</b>
Subject	<b>Police and Crime Panel Request for Reports</b>
Date	<b>09/02/2026</b>
Author	<b>Chief Constable</b>

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This report provides a response to the request for Leicestershire Police to provide the Police and Crime Panel members access to the relevant documentation relating to the Police and Crime Commissioner's public statement, made in the Police and Crime Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026, which contains reference to correspondence and reports completed by Leicestershire Police.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 As outlined by the Police and Crime Commissioner in the statement to the Panel several meetings were held, and reports completed as part of the budget build and budget allocation process.
- 2.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner's statement raised several specific points and there are key documents that cover the areas referenced. It is important to highlight that some of the broader material could be operationally sensitive in regard deployment of resources and some data is more effectively accessed through the systems we hold due to the nature of the presentation, such as financial spreadsheets. It will also be recognised that there is a sensitivity required when any organisation is facing significant budget deficits due to the impact on the committed and hard-working individuals serving the public, especially when 81% of the police budget is invested in people.
- 2.3 The Chief Constable is also mindful of public trust and confidence, as they expect the public really want us focused on our core mission as an emergency service, protecting their communities through maintaining order and preventing and detecting crime. Therefore, whilst wider access will be supported and can be facilitated as required to address the Panel's needs, the actual the reports shared are directly linked to the statement provided at the panel.

2.4 The reports shared demonstrate the professional, transparent and detailed approach taken by Leicestershire Police to ensure the Police and Crime Commissioner was/is well informed on all matters relating to the 2026/27 budget requirement for the Force, and illustrates the collaborative aims of the Force and clear focus on public service and safety.

2.5 The Key dates are as follows.

- Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 Financial Scrutiny and Oversight Board (FSOB). Part of the budget build process, including full access provided to all financial data held by the force and detailed operational deployment information.
- Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 Financial Scrutiny and Oversight Board (FSOB). The continued process of the budget build with reports submitted on the force plans, capital investment and response to the 60+ questions posed by Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 National Settlement received, including confirmation that the maximum precept increase level has been increased to £15. This is the first time that the actual budget settlement was known. At this stage the jointly agreed precept increase planning assumption remains at £14, combined with the force's strategic plans to close the anticipated budget deficit the budget is balanced.
- Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 – FSOB only attended by PCC, Deputy PCC and OPCC S151 Officer. This resulted in PCC emailing the Chief Constable on the same day confirming his budget allocation decision to the force which created an additional, unexpected, and unforeseen £4.8 million deficit on top of the originally identified £4 million deficit prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> December. This included the creation of a new £3.7 million OPCC prevention reserve.
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – 55-page report presented by the Chief Constable to address the concerns and implications of the PCC's approach regarding his allocated budget decision, and to propose alternative solutions to that decision.
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – Additional report shared in response to the PCC's question around policing services, called 'taxpayers and service benefits report'. Further new written response provided to revised budget allocation that still identified a £16.4 million deficit through the medium term financial plan by 2029/30, had positively removed the £4.8 million additional deficit created, but £11 precept increase remained- creating an in-year £1.2 million deficit still to be closed. The creation of a new £3.7 million OPCC prevention reserve fund remained, to funded through the Budget Equalisation Reserve and 2025/26 Force revenue budget underspend, again with no supporting rationale.

- Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January Final budget allocation provided to the force confirming an £11 precept increase and £1.2m funding shortfall in 2026/27 rising to £16.4m by 2029/30.
- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 Police and Crime Panel. Chief Constable Operational Context Report shared.

3. **Key reports**

3.1 The following reports are shared with the Police and Crime Panel.

- FSOB Chief Constable Response January 2026 - attached

The 55-page report of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026 referenced by the PCC in response to the budget allocation provided to the Chief Constable on the 22nd December. (It should be noted that this report is at a point in time and resulted in some positive change in regard the initial budget allocation decision made on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December by the PCC. A new budget allocation was provided which continued to be developed with further reports provided by the force, before the final budget allocation was submitted to the Police and Crime Panel).

- The Taxpayer Services and Benefits Report - attached

3.2 In recognising the fact, the reports are detailed and to support the Panel regarding the specific elements raised in the PCC's statement, the following areas are specifically referenced. All the references are from the 55-page report titled Financial Scrutiny Oversight Board Chief Constable response January 2026 unless stated.

- Email 5th November: reference 4.12 page 8 and 9.5 page 18  
Covers approach taken by Chief Constable in support of PCC statement.
- 11% OPCC reduction: reference 18.1 page 39  
Clarifies the actual position.
- Expansion of force - reference 19 page 40  
Clarifies the actual position, including neighbourhood uplift funding.
- NPCC- reference 27 page 48  
Provides clarity of the benefits of the NPCC to keeping our communities safe
- Canteen – reference 10.31 page 27  
Acknowledges financial position.

- Police Race Action Plan –DEI reference 28 page 51 / IAG reference 29 page 53  
Clarifies main Independent Advisory Groups and the broader Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) considerations.
- Operational Independence and top slicing of force for crime prevention funds reference 6.5 page 12, reference 6.9 page 13, reference 26 to 26.5 pages 47 / 48.
- Force expenditure – see full 55 page report, (further material NOT currently shared as contains potential operational sensitive material on deployments and numbers but would privately brief panel), see report titled summary of services and benefits to tax payers from Leicestershire Police report.
- OPCC reference cuts – reference 4.30 page 10  
See Police and Crime Panel 4<sup>th</sup> February Chief Constable Operational report.
- Public Consultation –reference 8.2 page 18  
See Police and Crime Panel 4<sup>th</sup> February Chief Constable Operational report.
- Reference to following statute-reference 1.2 page 1 / reference 4 page 6-11  
An alternative position is outlined.

#### 4. **Conclusion**

- 4.1 As you would have heard in the Police and Crime Commissioner's statement and in the documents submitted to the Panel, Leicestershire Police have worked hard to meet the requirements that were set during the budget build process, have provided full and transparent access to all relevant financial information, and responded in a timely manner to support the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 4.2 The process has involved significant investment and I hope that the documentation shared demonstrates to the Police and Crime Panel members the professional and informed approach undertaken by Leicestershire Police. The Chief Constable will continue to endeavour to support the requirements of the Panel as required.

**Implications**

**Financial:** Significant

**Legal:** Significant

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Potentially significant dependent on outcome of budget decisions

**Risks and Impact:** Significant to public safety and service, delivery of Police and Crime Plan, HMIC inspections

**Community Safety Impact:** Potentially significant dependent on outcome of budget decisions.

**Link to Police and Crime Plan:** The budget has a direct correlation with the police and crime plan delivery

**Person to Contact**

T/Chief Constable David Sandall

S151 Finance Director Paul Dawkins

This page is intentionally left blank

# POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

PAPER MARKED

## FINANCIAL SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT BOARD

Report of	<b>Chief Constable</b>
Subject	<b>Chief Constable Response to PCC Budget Allocation</b>
Date	<b>09/01/26</b>
Author	<b>Chief Constable</b>

### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to address the specific questions and observations of the Police and Crime Commissioner following the receipt of the proposed budget allocation to Leicestershire Police, in accordance with the statutory responsibilities of the Chief Constable.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 This report is structured as follows:

- At the outset, the report sets out the Chief Constable's overarching concerns about the budget-setting process, and some of the statutory obligations underpinning the process. For ease, the Chief Constable's key recommendations in relation to the proposed budget allocation have also been summarised in this section.
- **Section A** then provides a timeline of the present budget-setting process, and outlines some of the Chief Constable's concerns that the process adopted by the Police and Crime Commissioner in setting this budget (including the failure to properly consult the Chief Constable) risks being unlawful in public law terms and may/are likely to leave him in breach of his statutory obligations. It also makes detailed comments on the real-world impact of the proposed budget on policing operations.

---

<sup>1</sup> While the allocation was previously referred to in previous correspondence as being “already made”, we welcome the Police and Crime Commissioner’s clarification on 7 January 2026 that no firm decisions have been made yet, and that the allocation process is still ongoing. We are working on that basis.

- Section B then addresses the specific areas referenced by the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the budget allocation sent to the Chief Constable on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2025.

1.3 Although he has been invited to provide his views on the proposed budget (which we refer to hereinafter either as the “proposed budget allocation” or the “budget allocation”), the Chief Constable currently has limited information about the rationale and advice underpinning the current proposals. His overall view, however, is that the Police and Crime Commissioner should reassess the proposed budget allocation to Leicestershire Police and ensure that the statutory duties of both the Police and Crime Commissioner and Leicestershire Police can be achieved in practice. The proposed budget allocation, in the Chief Constable’s view, significantly impacts the Police’s ability to meet its duties (and may also leave the Police and Crime Commissioner in breach of his statutory duty to deliver an effective and efficient service). In simple terms, the budget allocation means that the service to the public will be substantially reduced and is creating a risk to the public because of the budget deficit created by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

1.4 Further, in setting this budget in this manner (and in light of the restrictions and directions in the budget), the Police and Crime Commissioner appears to be encroaching on the operational independence of the Chief Constable.

1.5 Viable alternatives are available, and the Police and Crime Commissioner is invited to work with the Chief Constable to carefully consider the solutions he proposes that would achieve a similar outcome but do not impact on public safety and service to the public.

1.6 The Chief Constable remains on hand to agree a way forward with the budget that aligns with his discussions with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the FSOB prior to 22 December 2025, and hopes that this paper can act as a constructive starting point for further discussion.

## 2. Legal Responsibilities

It may be helpful at the outset to set out a very brief overview of the key legal responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

### 2.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner’s legal duties

The Police and Crime Commissioner has an overall duty to “secure the maintenance of the police force” and “secure that the police force is efficient and effective”.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> S1(6), Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

This is achieved through setting the force's budget, in conjunction with the Chief Constable.

## 2.2 Chief Constable's legal duties.

The Chief Constable has a statutory responsibility for the control, direction, and delivery of operational policing services. Chief Constables are established in law as corporations sole and have operational independence. They are expected to provide professional advice and recommendations on budgetary matters and on local crime plans to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## 2.3 S151 Officer's duties

The S151 Officer's duties focus on the proper administration of finances – a key component of which is its advisory function. This, in our view, includes providing advice to the decision-maker on key risks, including risks to service delivery and risks to operational capability.

In addition to these statutory obligations, the S151 Officer may also have their own independent professional obligations.

## 2.4 The Policing Protocol Order 2023

The Protocol sets out the relationship between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, and how their functions will be exercised in relation to each other. It calls for an effective, constructive working relationship, and a mutual understanding of and respect for each party's statutory functions.

In practice:

- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility 2011 Act does not impinge on the common law legal authority of the Chief Constable, or the Chief Constable's duty to maintain the King's Peace without fear or favour. It is explicitly clarified that it is the will of Parliament and Government that the office of constable "*shall not be open to improper political interference*" (para 12).
- The Police and Crime Commissioner's allocation of money it receives must be carried out in consultation with the Chief Constable, or in accordance with any grant terms. The Chief Constable will provide professional advice and recommendations (para 16).
- Police and Crime Commissioners can decide the budget, allocating assets and funds to the Chief Constable; and set the precept for the force area using local schemes of governance, although the schemes should not

“fetter the effective financial management of forces” and must “enable the Chief Constable to deliver their role efficiently and effectively” (para 17(d))

- The Police and Crime Commissioners “must not fetter the operational independence” of the police force and the Chief Constable who leads it (para 18).

The Chief Constable’s roles and responsibilities are similarly outlined in the Protocol:

- In particular, “they have day to day responsibility for financial management of the force within the framework of the agreed budget allocation and levels of authorisation issued by the PCC within the local schemes of governance. Such schemes should facilitate the PCC’s strategic direction of the force but should not fetter the operational independence of Chief Constables and should enable Chief Constables to deliver their role efficiently and effectively” (para 23(m)).

Overall, the Protocol highlights both the independence of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable but stresses the need to work together in key aspects – and specifically, to enable each other to deliver their respective roles efficiently and effectively.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 In the Chief Constable’s view, there are certain clear steps that could be taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner to allay the concerns raised in this report:
  - A. The Police and Crime Commissioner should retain the agreed precept assumption at least at £14 given the significant present and future implications of the PCC’s derogation from the agreed precept levy assumptions built into the budget plans at the Police and Crime Commissioners Financial Boards.
  - B. The Police and Crime Commissioner should maximise the opportunity provided by Government and inconsideration of the budget assumptions through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to help address the recognised underfunding of Leicestershire Police by setting the precept levy at £15 and supporting the approach to sustainability.
  - C. The Police and Crime Commissioner should revise the budget allocation to ensure the safety of the public is maintained- based on the fact that beyond the precept reduction of £11 that equates to £1,065 million less (£14 precept) or £1.4 million per year less (£15 precept), is the withdrawal of £0.6m funding, and top slicing of £2.8m grant funding, creating a further £4.8 million deficit to the force.

- D. In any event, the S151 officers and Monitoring Officer should provide a statement of confirmation of whether the proposed Police and Crime Commissioner budget does or does not deliver the statutory requirements and if they consider, in their judgment, that it delivers an efficient and effective police service.
- 3.2 The Chief Constable is also mindful of the fact that in view of the timing of the Police Crime Commissioners budget proposals which pivot from previously agreed assumptions, the force's financial team is not going to be in a position to reforecast and redesign the budget by the 31 March 2026, and that any attempt to do so is likely to be more costly in the midterm.
- 3.3 The Chief Constable remains ready and willing to assist the Police and Crime Commissioner and properly feed into the budget to ensure that the police force is efficient and effective, and to ensure that all involved can meet their statutory duties, and which aim to achieve cost savings without impacting on public safety.

**SECTION A****4. Outline timeline of budget process and concerns over the lawfulness of the process**

- 4.1 The Chief Constable recognises the challenge that the current and previous Government's approach to one-year funding creates and has written to the Policing Minister and engaged with local Members of Parliament to highlight these concerns. The Chief Constable fully recognises the difficulty in setting the budget and implementing the steps required when there is uncertainty around the budget settlement and the fact the national policing funding formula has disadvantaged Leicestershire Police over many years.
- 4.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable recognised that the public finances were unlikely to improve, and a budget deficit was expected for 2026/2027. The force had developed a sustainability plan that has delivered and overcome all the recent budget deficits (£23million in last three years) and received positive independent assessment by 'Forvis Mazars' the internal auditors. The National Police Chief Council (NPCC) have also shared data with the force that reaffirms the positive financial approach the force has taken to sustainability, which in the context of a future White Paper on policing in 2026 is a positive position to be in.
- 4.3 Leicestershire Police recognises the real benefits of having good financial planning, recognising that any significant change has direct implications on the operational viability and the actual policing operating model. This takes time, investment, and effective planning to ensure that the changes can achieve the desired aims and mitigate the impact on our service to the public, and on the police core role as an emergency service, keeping communities safe by maintaining order and preventing and detecting crime.
- 4.4 The Police and Crime Commissioner receives all the funding into the force, which is then split into an allocation for the force to deliver policing services and to the OPCC. The Chief Constable has provided full transparency regarding the budget build process, providing open access to the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Monitoring Officer, and the S151 Officer to all the budget build data, working papers and has tried to respond to the Police and Crime Commissioner's additional requests for financial and organisational information.
- 4.5 As part of the approach developed last year and receiving positive feedback from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the force and the OPCC have tried to work collaboratively and consider the budget from a holistic perspective. This also helps the statutory functions of the S151 officers be discharged. It should be noted that the budget management and provisions are audited holistically and not in isolation.

4.6 The approach has included considering the finances throughout the period of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) rather than focussing simply on the one-year settlements received from central government. The joint approach also enables a greater understanding to be developed between the Police and Crime Plan, commissioned services, national policing requirements and the core duty of the force as an emergency service, there to maintain order and prevent and detect crime.

4.7 In October 2024 the Police and Crime Commissioner requested changes to the budget build timeline and how the budget is presented. The force and OPCC implemented the changes requested. At the time the force was subject to routine external auditing, which placed a strain on the lean finance team, but the changes were still delivered as requested. The timeline and approach to the presentation continued to be in place for the 2025/26 budget year.

4.8 As part of the budget build, the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner consider and agree a number of financial assumptions, as the actual financial details will be unknown. For example, the precept levy, the grant settlement, the additional specific grants, the council tax base, and collection fund allocations are not known when building the budget. The force and OPCC cannot wait until the budget decisions are made or communicated as this gives insufficient time to prepare for the outcome, which could mean the force grows its capability/capacity or as in recent years continually decreases the level of resources available. The force needs time to understand the implications, interdependencies and identify mitigation and methods to reduce the impact on the service provided to the public.

4.9 The overarching collaborative approach was to agree between the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner the assumptions that the force and OPCC would utilise that would inform the budget build. It was recognised that there could be changes or volatility, but the overarching strategic approach would ensure the force and OPCC is well placed and can demonstrate strong competent financial management.

4.10 The assumptions are important and the more accurate they are, the greater certainty there is in the planning. The assumptions are built and based on an assessment of the information known at the time, the contextual financial picture nationally and locally, and guidance from the Home Office. They are reviewed regularly and from February 2025 right through to the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025, this included a jointly agreed £14 precept assumption.

4.11 In the summer of 2025, the Police and Crime Commissioner introduced a fresh approach to the budget through a Financial Scrutiny and Oversight Board (FSOB). This moved the finance discussions previously held in the Corporate Governance Board (CGB) into a bespoke finance-focussed board. It was felt that CGB could be dominated by the financial papers. Therefore, a bespoke meeting was preferred by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.12 On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Police and Crime Commissioner set out his approach to budget planning, highlighting the need for transparency and accountability in the process.

4.13 The Chief Constable, in response, agreed with the overall aims and noted the particularly strong record of the force in financial management and in delivering value for money. The email outlined the Chief Constable's desire to:

- Adopt a collaborative approach to build the budget.
- But also flagged the significant implications if mutually agreed assumptions such as the precept assumption of £14 were to change.

4.14 Following a meeting of the FSOB on 20<sup>th</sup> November, the Police and Crime Commissioner raised a number of questions for the Chief Constable's attention on 26<sup>th</sup> November and a response to each of the questions with appropriate detail was provided on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

4.15 The Police and Crime Commissioner acknowledged the response on 10<sup>th</sup> December and confirmed that it would be taken into due consideration. For completeness, beyond the details and papers of the FSOB meetings the Police and Crime Commissioner had not shared any alternative proposed budget allocation, changed any proposed joint assumptions, and had not received any operational policing advice on any alternative budget allocations from the Chief Constable.

4.16 At a meeting of the FSOB on 16<sup>th</sup> December, the issue of budget reductions was once again raised, and the Chief Constable reiterated the measures taken by the force to deliver savings. Between the November and December FSOB meetings, the force had already taken significant steps implementing plans that were in place. A further £1m of resource (people) had also been identified for removal by the 31 March 2026. Decisions around police officer recruitment (that enables the overall national uplift to be achieved without hitting financial penalties) were implemented to achieve further savings.

4.17 On 18<sup>th</sup> December the Budget Settlement was received. The settlement for the first time in many years was fairer to the communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, with a higher level of grant shared in the provisional allocation data than had been anticipated.

4.18 On the morning of Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, the force, based on the budget settlement and a £14 agreed precept assumption, had closed the budget deficits and had plans in place to fund the investments required to improve efficiency, improve service and/or performance.

4.19 On 22<sup>nd</sup> December, the Chief Constable received a further email from the Commissioner setting out the budget details and allocations. This was following an FSOB meeting - attended only by the Police and Crime Commissioner, a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) S151 Officer.

4.20 There were a number of elements in this email that came as a surprise to the Chief Constable:

- The decision to set the precept at £11. This was (and remains) a particular concern, especially given the Chief Constable's opinion that there would be significant implications if mutually agreed assumptions such as the precept assumption of £14 were to change; and
- The decision to withhold £0.6 million of funding from the Chief Constable, without any operational policing advice on the implications to public safety, organisational risk, or assessment in regard achievability; and
- The decision to top slice an additional 2.8 million of grant funding; and
- The decision not reflecting the force had delivered £23 million efficiency savings in the last three years and had already developed and implemented plans to close the budget build £4 million deficit for 2026/27; and
- The decision to impose a further £4.8 million deficit onto the force as a direct result of the decisions and create a £3.4 million growth for the OPCC budget, which is in addition to the £1.9 million already held in OPCC reserves.
- The decision regarding a 4.2% cash increase that appears contrary to the “zero based” budgeting approach undertaken that shows the actual costs to be 6.3%.
- The reference to wider political issues that would not ordinarily be relevant to the budget-setting process – the Commissioner appears to take these into account when setting the budget. It further appears to prescribe a series of options that the Chief Constable may wish to take up. There was also a suggestion that individuals from the Commissioner's political party could come in to help Leicestershire Police *“to reduce waste, improve efficiency and save taxpayer money”*.
- The decisions contradicting the collaborative approach adopted by all, and elements of the decisions being based on a potential misinterpretation of the information available or being based on incomplete information.

4.21 The Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer have not yet provided any advice, rationale or evidence base for the decision – and the meeting of 22 December was seemingly not formally minuted (or if it was, the minutes have not been shared). No further papers appear to have been produced ahead of that 22 December meeting. It was also suggested on 30 December that the Commissioner’s position was that “*we are still only part through the process, and that there was likely to be some variation on the present proposal dependent of our responses on the 9th*”.

4.22 As such, the Chief Constable and his team simply do not have sufficient information to enable them to properly discharge their statutory responsibilities, and to make an informed submission.

4.23 To compound matters, on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026, the Commissioner suggested (contrary to what was said on 30<sup>th</sup> December) that he expected the Chief Constable to submit revised budgets ahead of a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January “*that will work within the allocations already made*” i.e., confirming that in fact the final decision on allocations had been made by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.24 On the 7<sup>th</sup> of January following the Chief Constable’s prior requests for further information to support the development of a professional and informed response to the Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation, the Police and Crime Commissioner sent an email that now stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be open to consultation and discussion and that no firm decisions had been made.

4.25 Taking those things together, the change in approach is welcomed as the Chief Constable’s view is that the proposed budget allocation appears to have been prepared a) without proper consultation with the Chief Constable; b) without considering if and how the proposed budget will undermine the PCC and Chief Constable’s legal duties; c) without a clear evidence base; and d) most crucially, appears to be at odds with the collaborative discussions and agreed assumptions the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable had worked on together before 22 December. To finalise the budget on that basis would, in our view, be legally flawed on a number of grounds.

4.26 There are a number of further linked concerns:

- It is unclear to the Chief Constable what advice has been provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner by his S151 officer, and the rationale and evidence base to support the decisions taken. If any such advice has been provided, it would be helpful to see a copy.

- We are further concerned that in setting the precept at £11, there has been no proper consideration of the public's views. While we are aware of the public consultation exercise, the Chief Constable has not yet formally seen the results of this consultation as they have not been published or shared. In particular, the public's views on the precept may be something that should be given due regard.

4.27 The direct impact of the OPCC not contributing to the budget deficit is that the force will have to shrink again, which will have a direct impact on the service we provide to the public, with £1million more resources already removed to close the initial £4 million deficit. This is before the further £4.8 million budget deficit created by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.28 In summary, there is a concern that the Commissioner may be acting in breach of his statutory duties and public law duties to act fairly and rationally in exercising his public duties.

**5. External and Internal Auditors**

5.1 It is important to highlight that Leicestershire Police is subject to an annual external audit of its financial statements and value for money (Grant Thornton ISA260). These are statutory requirements and provide a clear assessment of the strategic financial planning and operational delivery, as well as a national comparator.

5.2 The internal auditors (Forvis Mazars) audited the force's core financials, payroll, sustainability, savings plan and budgetary control. All areas have received the highest levels of assurance.

5.3 In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner invited the Home Office in October 2021 and an external consultant in 2024 to conduct an additional external assessment of the force's financial management. The former Minister of State and Policing Rt Hon. Kit Malthouse confirmed that there was a strong focus on financial management in the force, that financial planning assumptions were consistent with those used by similar forces and was reassured on the financial position. The value for money report commissioned in 2024 has never been shared with the Chief Constable, no concerns were identified to the force and no recommendations for improvement were made.

5.4 The latest audit reports on Core Financials, Sustainability and Payroll all have the highest levels of assurance achieved, with the force being shown with the highest performing in the sector. Reports are attached in Appendix A.

5.5 These reports have been shared and reviewed within the JARAP (Joint Audit and Risk Assurance Panel), who have provided further independent scrutiny and have also provided positive feedback on the approach, jointly agreed

(force and Police and Crime Commissioner) financial assumptions, and external audit findings received by Leicestershire Police in regard the sustainability plans and financial management.

#### **6. Budget Allocation: Deficit Created for Leicestershire Police**

6.1 The budget allocation outlined by the Police and Crime Commissioner means that the force would need to overcome an additional £4.8 million deficit, on top of a £4 million deficit that already has current clear deliverable plans.

6.2 To close the initial £4 million budget deficit the following were already to be delivered by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2026

- Police staff reduction £1.03m
- Police pay reduction £0.45m
- Debt Charges reduction £0.46m
- Non pay savings £0.15m
- Use of equipment reserve £0.038m
- Custody CCTV £0.11m

6.3 The force then had plans around investment of the strategically developed 2025/6 underspend, changing the vacancy rate, and covering any gap through an in-year efficiency target. However, the additional grant funding was positive providing an additional £1.4m. This closed the budget deficit with a jointly agreed £14 precept assumption, and the other savings would enable the required investments (in addition to the initial £4 million deficit) to be funded.

6.4 The decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to the funding envelope being provided to the force communicated on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and reaffirmed on the 5<sup>th</sup> January have not been previously communicated or included in the papers for FSOB or consulted upon and there does not appear to be any acknowledgement or consideration in the budget allocation that the force has overcome £23 million of budget deficits in the last three years and has the plan outlined above to deliver a further £4 million in 2026/27.

6.5 The key decisions creating the additional deficit are as follows.

- Precept reduction from £14 to £11 / £15 £1.065m/£1.4m
- Top slice force budget for a prevention fund £1.6m
- Remove funding for DEI £0.26m
- Remove Funding for NPCC £0.35m
- Prevention reserve – created as 4.2% doesn't cover actual costs £1.17m

6.6 The budget allocation provides the force with a 4.2% cash increase, despite the FSOB papers in November and December showing the force required a

6.3% increase (between 2025/26 net revenue budget £254.5m to 2026/27 £270.6m (before funding gap), increase £16.1m or 6.3% not 4.2%).

- 6.7 The budget allocation does not provide a clear rationale when the FSOB papers provided the detail of why the costs have increased and there could be a misconception of the factors affecting the rise in costs. The costs are built through 'zero based' budgeting where every person and everything is costed. Therefore, the costs in the budget papers are precise rather than simply a percentage increase.
- 6.8 The pay award was also 4.2% but this is not the overall cost, the costs rise further due to increased pension costs, national insurance and/or the pay scale increments for officers and staff.
- 6.9 The Police and Crime Commissioner provides an opportunity to regain part of the funding through delivery of specific prevention initiatives, up to an amount of £1.1million only (from £1.6 million top sliced). The challenge with this is that some of these activities would require additional investment rather than be from current resources, therefore actually require a reduction in resource elsewhere to deliver.
- 6.10 The approach taken is not the one considered in FSOB as the funding has been removed from the force, rather than offering the force to undertake a collaborative approach whereby a commissioned service is delivered to gain an income that could support close the budget deficit.
- 6.11 The removal of services already budgeted for within the budget build also appears unreasonable and unfair. This is due to the impact and the fact the force had already covered all these costs in the budget planning shared in FSOB. The decision to remove NPCC funding which is against the Chief Constable operational advice is irrational and unreasonable, placing the public at risk and is not actually achievable in-year due to the S22 legal agreement.
- 6.12 The impact of the allocation affects the operational independence of the Chief Constable to deploy operational resources contrary to the Policing Protocol.
- 6.13 The force has worked hard taking a longer-term view to delivering efficiencies and as 81% of the budget is invested in people, the force has currently managed to prevent the high costs that targeted redundancy incur. This additional imposed budget deficit will require further cuts in resource but without the ability to manage the reduction as effectively and efficiently as it has been achieved in the past. The budget cuts without a clear evidence base are unreasonable with a real impact on the public service and operational capability of the force in the short, medium, and long term. The budget allocation places the public at risk as the operational capacity and

capability of the force will have to reduce significantly and requires time and planning.

6.14 It should be noted that several of the grant allocations or decisions by Government remain outstanding and could create a further deficit if they are not forthcoming, and the settlement remains provisional at this stage. The uplift grant, pension grant, national insurance grant, council tax support and council tax freeze grants are also provided at a flat cash rate. The force income in real terms has not kept terms with inflation. The force will cost more now than before and will cost more through the period of the MTFP at the same time that national policing funding assumptions show that future grant allocations through the period of the MTFP will create a further deficit.

## **7. OPCC Significant Budget Increase**

7.1 At lunchtime on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December the force and OPCC had a balanced budget, by later afternoon the budget allocation has placed an additional £4.8 million budget deficit onto the force whilst at the same time creating an additional £3.4 million in OPCC funding.

7.2 This budget allocation places a greater burden onto the force with a direct impact on public safety and service, as the capacity and capability of the force will need to reduce further to overcome the imposed and unnecessary further budget deficit.

7.3 The significant increase to the OPCC budget and reserves is set within a context where this is the last term of the role of Police and Crime Commissioner and there will be legal requirements in regard the timelines of any commissioned services. It should be expected that there would be public interest into decisions to create additional reserves above the £1.9 million already held by the OPCC, that are created at the expense of the operational capacity and capability of the police service without consultation, or a clear rationale, advice, or evidence base being shared with the Chief Constable.

7.4 The plans to increase the OPCC budget were not discussed or explored in the FSOB meetings, and the minutes could be seen to have an imbalance in regard the approach and scrutiny applied to the different budgets.

## **8. Precept**

8.1 The provisional settlement announcement also provided the Police and Crime Commissioner the opportunity to increase the precept levy to £15. This would be an opportunity welcomed as Leicestershire Police is underfunded compared to other forces and it helps address the funding challenges continually being addressed in recent years and supports the force remain

sustainable through the MTFP. It is expected Leicestershire would be an outlier for not going for the maximum precept when considering the national funding and current underfunding and numbers of policing resources protecting Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

- 8.2 The financial planning timeline and associated papers show that the agreed financial assumptions throughout and even up to the 16<sup>th</sup> of December were for a precept of £14. The Police and Crime Commissioner has been regularly briefed and will no doubt understand the implications of creating a further budget deficit.
- 8.3 It is important to highlight if the Police and Crime Commissioner chose not to take a maximum precept increase, did not top slice the force for a reserve fund and restrict the force funding, but remained at £14 as included as part of the budget preparations, the force would have a balanced budget for 2026/27.
- 8.4 It should be noted though that this positive position still requires the force to overcome the initial £4 million deficit. This would still create significant cost pressures within the period of the MTFP and still requires the force to deliver the £1million reduction in police staff by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2025. This is in a context where Leicestershire Police is experiencing greater complexity of demand, higher need for investments in technology and specialisms, but with real terms cut in budget and a further year on year realignment of the workforce.
- 8.5 In the past the precept has led to growth and investment, but the reality is that this year, as with recent years, the precept will be mitigating the number of cuts required and the potential severe impact on public service.
- 8.6 In reality, an £11 precept would mean a further and additional significant reduction to the force resources, which would predominantly be met due to the government uplift penalties by police staff reductions, from PCSO and Police staff redundancy and reverse modernisation of officers moving from frontline roles into back-office functions, reducing the force's ability to deliver core functions as the force already has one of the leanest back offices in the country, as evidenced in the HMICFRS value for money profiles.
- 8.7 With a £11 precept, it is the force's view that the transformation and service to the public will need to be significantly reduced or withdrawn. It will also impact on the investments we have, and continue to make in our people, in local neighbourhood policing, technology and prevention which are designed to improve service, reduce extraneous demand, and find savings and efficiencies in the medium-term. All contributing directly to the force's effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy.
- 8.8 Using precept, the force will be able to protect the investment in those service areas we know are important to local communities and those outlined in the

Police and Crime Plan. For example, it would enable us to maintain our focus on neighbourhood policing, rural crime and high harm crime whilst maintaining the current operating model but with less people.

- 8.9 A £15 precept will enable the force to continue to maintain the improved call handling performance for emergency 999 calls, which without the maintenance of the investment, despite introducing new ways working, using right care right agency best practice, refurbishing the facility, and introducing new digital technology will reduce the service to the public and impact on public safety.
- 8.10 A £15 precept will support the force approach and collaborative partnership with the OPCC, to develop and maximise the benefits of the new Prevention Directorate, in particular with external partners develop and optimise new diversionary programmes to prevent crime, provide tailored and targeted support and intervention, to both those victims and offenders who display additional risk of becoming a victim again, or of further offending.
- 8.11 The Chief Constable has due regard to the Police and Crime Plan and supports a focus on prevention activity, and a £15 precept would support the Police and Crime Commissioner ambition.
- 8.12 Precept at £15 will also allow us to continue to move forward at pace to deliver the next phase of transformation linked with IT and digital restructuring to enable greater use of AI and automation to create both cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.
- 8.13 If £15 is agreed, it would enable the force to maintain the uplift in police officer numbers in neighbourhoods and maintain the plan to increase in 2026 the number of PCSOs into rural communities or enable the Police and Crime Commissioner proposed Prevention initiatives be funded.
- 8.14 Precept is the decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and it isn't just a decision for today but also a decision for the future that creates a real legacy impact through the period of the MTFP and beyond.
- 8.15 The decision to have a £11 precept and not to support a £15 increase needs to be informed in light of the assumptions of the future grant allocations and MTFP and have due regard to the statutory role of the Police and Crime Commissioner to *secure the maintenance of the police force* and *"secure that the police force is efficient and effective"*.
- 8.16 The Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation to the force does not refer to the public consultation. The email refers to the strain on the public and personal finances which the force is very sensitive to and recognises this within its own workforce. There is though no reference to the broader cost of crime to the economy and the benefits policing provide and there is no

reference to the consultation outcome. The consultation approach was not shared with the force to support how it was created or worded and the details of the outcome have not been formally shared with the force.

- 8.17 It is the Chief Constable's understanding that the consultation may show the highest individual return from the public was for an increase in funding above £14, which would be contrary to the decision to ask the public for £11. A decision that will have a permanent year on year detrimental impact, especially when combined with the increased deficit created by the Police and Crime Commissioner and expected to be closed by the force. If this is the outcome the public consultation would show a recognition of the financial challenges the force faces despite the public financial context.
- 8.18 The Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner have been raising the unfair funding of Leicestershire Police to the Policing Minister and local elected members of Parliament. It then seems perverse that if the precept funding allocation is not changed, that it is local decisions that will impose unnecessary further budget strain, risk and pressures on the force, with an impact on public safety and service.
- 8.19 The Police and Crime Commissioner should understand that a £11 precept will affect the policing service for the people of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland in the short, medium and long term. This cannot be supported by the Chief Constable when considering the Police and Crime Commissioners force budget allocation for 2026/27.

#### **9. Sustainability**

- 9.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner has held the force to account in regard the sustainability plans. The predominant driver for the budget deficits has been the imposed unfunded pay awards, which have been overcome, and over £23m efficiency savings being delivered in the last 3 years. Despite the budget deficits being overcome and both the internal and external auditors highlighting the effectiveness of the approach, it appears that in the current Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation this is not effectively taken into consideration when creating further pressures on the force.
- 9.2 It should be noted that from the effectiveness of the force approach there was a balanced MTFP based on the jointly agreed assumptions with the Police and Crime Commissioner as recently as in June 2025.
- 9.3 Throughout the year financial papers have been submitted with the agreed assumptions and there was no planning to top slice the force or withhold funding during the budget build and planning stages. This includes in the November and December FSOB. It is therefore of concern that without consultation or dialogue or operational policing advice and despite the Chief

Constable highlighting the importance of the precept decisions a substantial and significant change is being made.

- 9.4 The budget allocation decision informs the force of an intention to reduce the precept and agreed assumption to £11, to top slice the force by £2.8m and withhold £0.6m funding for areas already budgeted for by the force, with a deadline to submit financial plans for the 9<sup>th</sup> of January.
- 9.5 This approach does appear to be the opposite to the Police and Crime Commissioner communication to the Chief Constable on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November regarding budget planning and transparency, stating budgets need to be reduced in a planned and sustainable way whilst not compromising service delivery and public safety. It is also unfair and unrealistic to expect the force to be able to provide a professional and informed response to close an additional £4.8 million within the timelines set.
- 9.6 The decision to reduce the precept from £15 to £11 will have a cumulative effect and within the period of the 4 years of the MTFP mean the force and public will lose the opportunity for £5.6 million of funding, with £1.4million reoccurring every year thereafter.
- 9.7 An important aspect to consider is what is known, and the implications of decisions today will have on sustainability in the future and through the period of the MTFP. The Chief Constable has not been shared the advice and impact assessment that this reduction would have on the policing services, or the considerations made by the Police and Crime Commissioner in managing the future impact of the decision.
- 9.8 As part of the strategic planning, we have to recognise and take into account the force currently spends less on our police officers compared to other forces (HMIC Value for money profiles) due to a lower management profile, but predominantly due to the level of service of our workforce. Currently a new in-service Police Constable with on-costs is £45k, this rises with each year of service to £72k within 7 years. Therefore, the cost of our police officer establishment will increase year on year for the same amount of actual deployable resource. This must be considered with a clear strategic view to the future when making decisions around funding. If this is not funded the number of Police Officers in the future would need to reduce to remain within the same budget.
- 9.9 The decision around precept is a decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner but the Chief Constable highlights the impact that this will have in year but also the cumulative impact on sustainability each year of the MTFP. The current approach would undermine the Police and Crime Commissioners aim to be sustainable through their term of office and will not support the Police and Crime Commissioner discharge their statutory responsibilities.

9.10 This is also likely to lead to the force financial situation being left in a worse position than when the Police and Crime Commissioner started, which would be potentially explainable to the public from externally imposed budget settlements, but more difficult when based on internal decisions.

9.11 The following data evidences and clearly illustrates the impact and necessity to make the right decisions now and for the future.

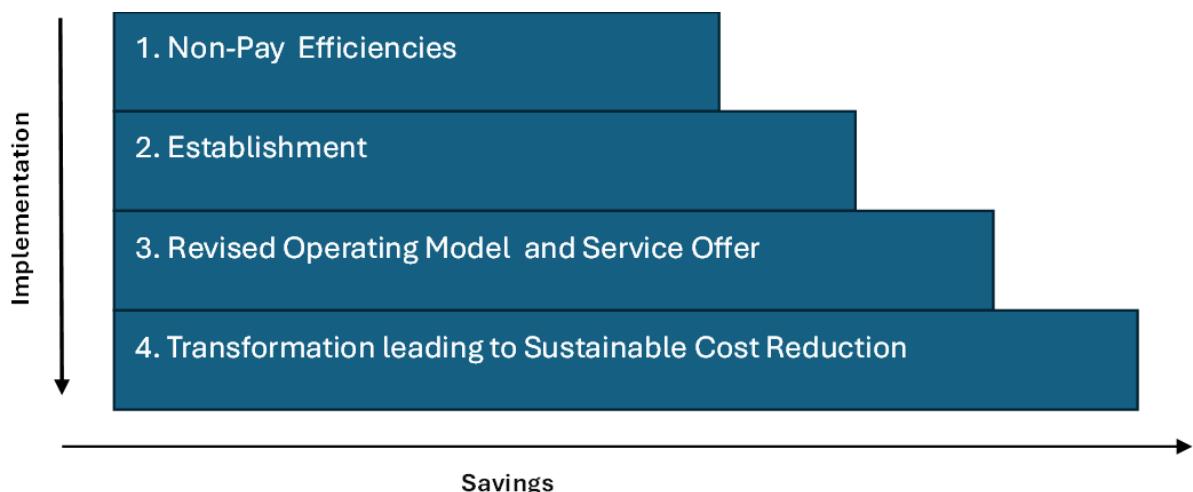
Leicestershire Police	16 Dec 2025	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
2026/27 Headline deficit & Closing the Gap	£14 (extra £1 inc. below)	£11, inc. PCC top slicing	£15, No PCC top slicing	£11, No PCC top slicing
<b>Headline Deficit</b>	<b>3,917,713</b>	<b>2,147,657</b>	<b>2,147,657</b>	<b>2,147,657</b>
OPCC / Commissioning Increase	72,499			
Reduce Precept Funding to £11		1,420,985		
Prevention Initiatives		1,600,000		
Transfer to Prevention Reserve		1,173,218		
Add Back DEI and NPCC		610,000		
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>3,990,212</b>	<b>6,951,860</b>	<b>2,147,657</b>	<b>3,568,642</b>
<b>Closing the Gap</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Head of Change / IT	- 139,665	- 139,665	- 139,665	- 139,665
Head of Fleet	- 70,500	- 70,500	- 70,500	- 70,500
Police Pay Model - restated December payroll data	- 453,574	- 453,574	- 453,574	- 453,574
Police Staff Vacancies identified	- 821,477	- 821,477	- 821,477	- 821,477
Increase vacancy factor above current level, to be considered once vacancies finalised				
Reduction in Debt Charges by making £1.5m contribution to Capital in 2025/26	- 464,000	- 464,000	- 464,000	- 464,000
<b>Non-pay</b>				
Telephones - reduction as result of moving from analogue to SIPP ( <i>there is scope for this to increase in year</i> )	- 100,000	- 100,000	- 100,000	- 100,000
Mobile Telephones - following new Vodafone contract ( <i>standing charge reduced from £3.00 to £1.50 per month</i> )	- 50,000	- 50,000	- 50,000	- 50,000
Fund Year 3 of Op Olympus (Recharge from Met for Post Office investigation) from either BER or 25/26 underspend	- 123,000	- 123,000	- 123,000	- 123,000
<b>Use of Op Equipment Reserve</b>				
Motorcycle Uniform / PPE	- 38,000	- 38,000	- 38,000	- 38,000
<b>Use of Budget Equalisation Reserve</b>				
Contribution to Prevention Hub trial (continuation of 25/26 funding)	- 300,000	- 300,000	- 300,000	- 300,000
Fund Custody CCTV contract for 1 year whilst system is replaced	- 108,012	- 108,012	- 108,012	- 108,012
<b>Additional Funding</b>				
Additional Grant as per draft settlement	- 1,401,572			
Additional precept if £15 agreed, and if tax bases are confirmed at £355,245.54	- 368,299			
<b>Ongoing costs of 26/27 Investments</b>				
Ongoing 26/27 - this would reduce further if the OPCC is agreeable to funding the Diversion Hub and OOCR Digitalisation Business Case of £159,916, this would leave a residual balance of £235,500	395,416	395,416	395,416	395,416
<b>Residual Funding Gap / (Surplus)</b>	<b>- 52,471</b>	<b>4,679,048</b>	<b>- 125,155</b>	<b>1,295,830</b>
Investment decisions not included above :				
One off costs 26/27 - consider BER funding	729,750	729,750	729,750	729,750

**10. Operational and practical impact of the proposed budget allocation**

- 10.1 Leicestershire Police had already identified and implemented the plans to close a £4 million budget deficit by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2026. The balanced budget already achieved with collaboration and negotiation based on rational and reasonable assumptions and decision making could still be developed further to meet the aims of the police and crime plan in light of the budget settlement outcome.
- 10.2 In its current form the Chief Constable's assessment is that the budget created and proposed is unreasonable and not fair, and it is not an efficient or effective use of funds. The Chief Constable and force's S151 officer do not believe the current budget allocation will deliver best value for the public, will adversely affect the operational capability of the force, and reduce the service to the public and impact public safety.
- 10.3 The Chief Constable continues to want to achieve a fair budget for the public and for policing and has a legal duty to ensure there is an effective and efficient police force and gives due regard to the police and crime plan. This will be compromised and is not achievable with the current budget allocation. Given the Commissioner's position now that the budget is still up for discussion, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the implications of the proposed allocation, and instead urge the Commissioner to make an informed and effective budget allocation that can maintain public service and safety.
- 10.4 An additional £4.8 million gap in addition to the £4 million already planned for would require an operating model change. This cannot be delivered by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March as it will require legal processes relating to HR to be managed and it will need detailed planning and a full business case to understand the implications and actual costs.
- 10.5 This is important as the required redundancy costs would need to be built in. It is likely based on the information gathered when exploring voluntary redundancies in previous deficit plans, that it would take a number of years for a saving to actually be realised. This is due to the level of service and age of many police staff in the workforce and the risk of pension strain costs for those above 55 years old.
- 10.6 The Chief Constable has considered and explored the potential different options but does not want to take these unnecessary steps and at this stage cannot agree the budget in its current form or commit to a decision as there has been insufficient time or planning to understand the impact on the operational viability of the force, the operating model, on public service and public safety and whether a change is deliverable or cost efficient.

10.7 The force sustainability plans aim to achieve the balance between the budget requirements and ensuring the force remains operationally viable. The plans have focussed concurrently on the

- Non – Pay efficiencies (including non-cashable)
- Income Generation
- Pay budget efficiencies – Establishment reduction and redeployment of Police officers, PCSO and Police staff.
- Impact and adjustment to the operating model and service offer based on necessary changes to the establishment (stabilisation)
- Transformation to achieve sustainable cost reduction.



### **Non-Pay Efficiencies**

10.8 The force has reduced the force non pay costs with further cuts made to close the initial £4 million deficit. In addition, the force has delivered 200,000 hours of measured efficiencies to support and mitigate the reduction in resources and maintain the service to the public.

10.9 The “zero based” budgeting approach builds the whole budget each year on the actual costs, therefore due to the amount of fixed costs, inflation rises, and the scrutiny applied already any further efficiency savings will be minimal. There has to be a balance in regard the investment made for the potential efficiency saved, especially with a reduction in resources to invest into making the savings. This means the greater opportunities for efficiency need to be prioritised.

10.10 The main area of focus would be to re-review the capital strategy investments to see if a revenue saving can be made. The reality is that this has been done in previous deficit plans and there is risk for example by delaying IT technology changes or Fleet changes that retain technology or vehicles for even longer. This may deliver short term small savings but is likely it will in the

longer term have greater cost implications and could adversely impact on officer and PCSO safety.

10.11 The force also has identified areas it needs to invest; this is important as many of the investments will have significant benefits for the future service, especially with the pace of technology.

### **External Income / funding**

10.12 There are a number of safeguards in place around policing services being funded and the force already utilises special police service provisions and regularly reviews policing services that are provided to ensure they remain fit for purpose and an efficient use of resources.

10.13 As part of the closure of the previous budget deficits the costs of police activity where applicable have been raised to ensure they offer a more cost-effective provision for the force. This remains an area the Police and Crime Commissioner can continue to raise. For example, despite the uplift in costs in the management processing of firearms licencing it still is not cost neutral or creating an income for the force for the investment made.

10.14 The force has stated it will consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal around commissioned services. But that proposal can only be properly considered when it is clear they will be an efficient and effective use of police resources, that they do not create additional costs, and that they will support operational delivery or service to the public. Any proposal around commissioned services also need to be balanced with the operational independence of the Chief Constable not being compromised.

### **Pay Budget Efficiencies: Police Officer**

10.15 Police Officer numbers are largely restricted by the incentivisation, and penalties imposed by Central Government. The Police Officer uplift requirements impose a penalty for not achieving the headcount of 2298, plus an additional headcount of 23 to meet the Neighbourhood grant requirements, resulting in a total requirement of 2321.

10.16 This headcount is different to the FTE numbers with the force having an establishment of 2220 officers, PLUS 23 the neighbourhood uplift grant funded officers making an FTE of 2243 police officers. Due to part time working, career breaks and the Home Office methodologies and requirements of what counts in the headcount target the force tracks the police officer establishment very carefully.

10.17 The actual numbers do need to be managed with the operational capability of the force to ensure public service and safety is not undermined. The force has invested in recruiting officers earlier at the end of the 2025/26 financial year due to the recognised potential increases in demand from events in the summer of 2026 and based on the significant demand during the Spring of 2025. The approach should release more officers to be operational from the training academy at an earlier stage, and this has been funded and covered in the budget build.

10.18 The force has though also reduced the level of resilience it has between the FTE and the headcount to realise savings (6 police officers) whilst balancing the risk of the penalties. This includes a decision not to recruit additional transferee officers as planned. This is a balance as we benefit from trained and skilled officers, but the costs are significant in that a new recruit with on costs is £45k compared to 7 years in service PC at 72K.

10.19 In addition, the force has reduced a Superintendent rank and combined with the other steps over £0.45 million has already been saved to close the initial £4 million gap.

10.20 Therefore, the main way forward to gain a further contribution to close a further budget deficit from the Police Officer funding would be:

- Stop Recruitment of Police Officers, lose grant funding in short term and receive penalties, but in longer term enables police staff to be recruited at a reduced cost. Significant risk in meeting national policing requirements and authorised professional practice standards to deliver the saving, as well as incurring significant penalty costs outweighing the financial benefit. If the penalties are removed the force would review the position as there are further opportunities that cannot currently be delivered due to the finances preventing the recruitment of police staff to enable officers to be released into more frontline roles. The budget allocation email also indicates or implies that the Police and Crime Commissioner does not support police staff being employed to release police officers from back-office functions.
- Delay recruitment of police officers. This is an approach that the force has taken to meet budget deficits but again requires careful management with the operational delivery and actual deployable numbers. This provides an in-year saving rather than a longer sustainable saving as the officer numbers still have to be achieved at set points in the year.
- Reduce rank structure further – There are real operational risks due to the requirement to have post holders with specific statutory powers and specialist skills such as public order and firearms. The national data already shows the force is lean compared to other forces. This is an area that remains under regularly review.

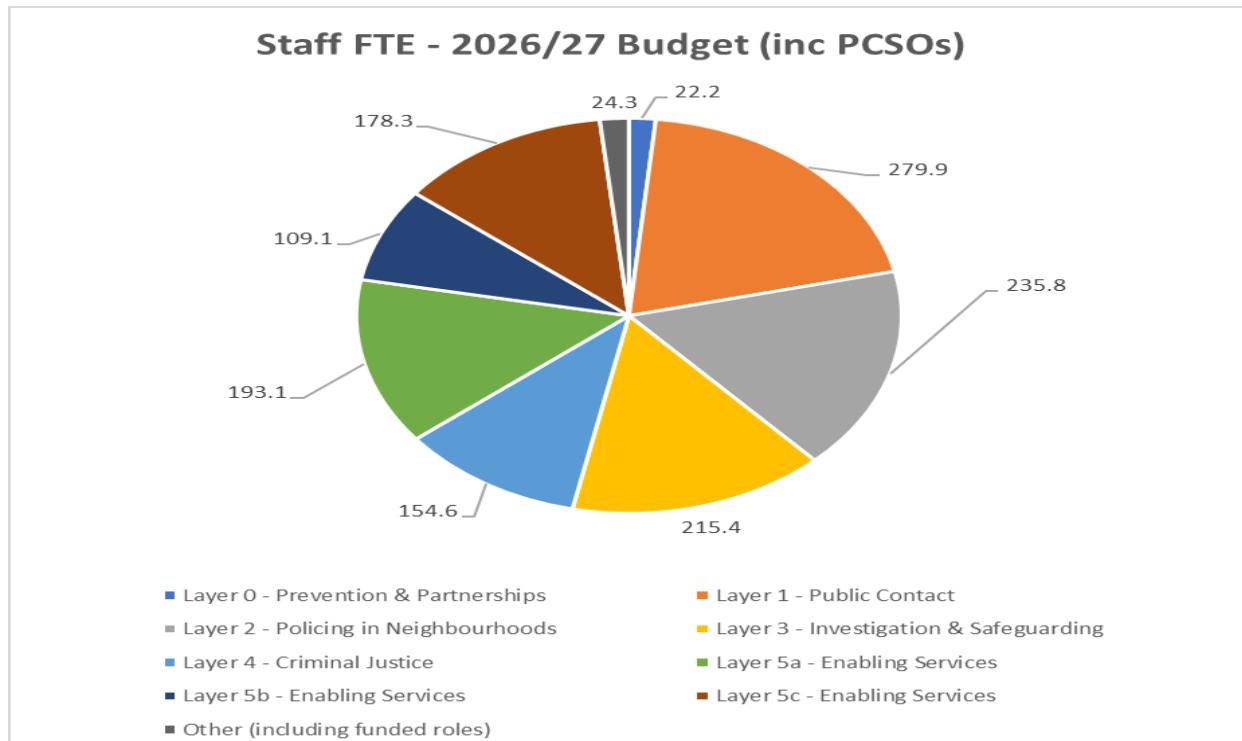
- Utilise police officers to take police staff roles. If the penalties remain for dropping officer numbers and there is a budget deficit to overcome, the perverse result is that police officers have to be placed into police staff roles, usually at a greater cost for the same level of output. The challenge is that the Neighbourhood uplift requirements also restrict where officers can be deployed and fundamentally the force and the public want police officers focused on the core role as an emergency service, maintaining order, preventing, and detecting crime. This is an option that would need to be seriously considered but would affect the service expectation of the public in regard response times and the service that can be provided.

10.21 There is also a risk that the force is reliant on the neighbourhood uplift grant for 23 police officers and 11 PCSO. If this is withdrawn in addition to the budget deficit being imposed the capability of the force is seriously undermined and will impact public service and safety. This must be considered in the budget decisions. It should also be highlighted that the Nottingham Public Inquiry, in which the force is engaged and will give evidence at in March 2026, has also been provided with evidence in regard the frontline challenges and resourcing.

### **Police Staff and PCSO**

10.22 Police staff deliver a broad range of services from statutory functions to operational frontline duties, to direct public contact or in services that enable the force to be an effective and efficient service. In recent years the budget deficits have primarily been overcome through a reduction in police staff. This is not sustainable as often the work being undertaken cannot be transferred or not completed and it has placed a strain and pressures on the organisation in terms of service delivery. This has to be balanced as the force has to prioritise the resources and the force has to accept that certain areas have had a reduction in service as a result of the budget cuts either directly impacting an area or indirectly as vacancies have to be held or growth cannot be delivered. The force has tried to mitigate the impact through innovation, digital investment and change of practice or policy.

10.23 For transparency the graph below shows the police staff and PCSO FTE for each layer of the organisation.



10.24 Layer 0 has 22 people, an area that the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner recognise as a key element of the police and crime plan if the funding was there to continue to invest into.

10.25 Layer 1 is the largest investment in police staff. This encompasses 279 people based in the control room, providing a 365-day 24/7 direct service to the public in answering 999 and 101 calls, and providing digital based and initial contact response to the public engaging with police services. The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner wanted to improve the call handling performance and have invested 26 additional resources into this area (despite changes in practice, potential digital investment, refurbishment, right care right agency best practice implemented) the level of additional resource on top of the core resourcing needs to be retained, otherwise there is a direct impact on the service to the public. This needs to be considered in the budget allocation as the funding ends in 2027/28 and despite changes in practice the calls for service demand have continued to be high necessitating the investment. The value for money profiles from HMIC also show the control room establishment remains lower than peers.

10.26 Layer 2 includes the front enquiry office, licensing staff and 161 PCSO posts, an area the force has invested to increase the capability and the legal powers of the PCSO, recognising a reduction in resources elsewhere could impact on public service without this investment. The force had to reduce PCSO numbers from 200 to 150 but has then managed to gain neighbourhood uplift funding for an additional 11 PCSO which the Chief Constable will deploy the majority into rural areas to increase the connectivity with Parish councils on the larger beat areas. The force has also recently reviewed the front enquiry

service to remove £400k from the operating budget and therefore this layer has already been subject to significant budget reductions, and any reductions will have a direct impact on public service and visibility.

10.27 Layer 3 includes provides investigative support, sexual offender management, forensic and digital investigators and adult/child safeguarding staff that work to protect vulnerable people. Investment in efficiencies has reduced vulnerable adult reports by around 200 a month but child protection referrals continue to identify over 1000 vulnerable children a month. The police staff investigation capacity has reduced through each budget deficit plan in recent years, resulting in timeliness of investigations remaining largely static with efficiencies delivered rather than reducing to the levels that the force would aspire to achieve.

10.28 Layer 4 relates to the Criminal Justice provisions and with the focus and uplift in detecting crime, with a sustainable increase evident this is creating additional demands on the team who process all crime and road traffic prosecutions. The force has been unable to invest further in the teams due to the financial restrictions and as backlogs are created the teams have to be really flexible to keep on top of the demand, with the external court back logs creating additional pressures. The force is already exploring further AI and digital solutions to help reduce the pressures on the teams.

10.29 Layer 5 relates to all enabling services and this is a broad spectrum ranging from HR to Procurement to Finance to Estates to Fleet to IT to Information Management to Health and Safety. This layer undertakes a number of statutory functions as well as business requirements. The value for money profiles from the HMICFRS provide clear evidence of the under investment in these areas compared to other policing services and the force has already taken significant number of posts from this layer to protect the frontline public facing services. The force has identified a further £1million of resources to remove from the establishment from across the force by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2025.

10.30 The Chief Constable has considered the budget implications and the implications of having to make further cuts. Any plans need to be thought through and considered fully as there is a direct risk to public service and public safety and to officer, PCSO and staff safety. The approach would follow the previous successful sustainability plan approach highlighted positively in internal and external audit. The reality is that the efficiency savings required if the further imposed budget cuts are made would need a force operating model review and significant time to deliver due to the planning required and the likely costs of implementation.

10.31 Areas for consideration could include:

- Investigative Support – Already reviewing current approach as the force has already had to reduce resource in this area and recognised would be an area to seek further potential savings through service offer change. Impact expected to be in regard length of investigation and processing outstanding suspects, mitigated by centralised functionality to support highest harm incidents requiring greater abstraction of officers and PCSO to gather and secure evidence.

Potentially 12 roles x £40k before redundancy costs £0.47 million

- Police Community Support Officer- This would potentially lose the grant payment for the neighbourhood uplift and there would be redundancy costs. This would remove a direct and visible service to the public, a service that also supports scene preservations, CCTV collection, basic statement taking and problem solving. The reality is deployment decisions would be based on threat and risk and there would then be a greater impact on rural communities and would be the opposite to the intended investment being made by the Chief Constable in these areas and be contrary to the prevention focus and elements of the police and crime plan.

Potentially 161 PCSO roles x £38k before redundancy costs and loss of NHP grant £6 million.

- Enquiry Offices – retain three primary sites based on footfall and demand and provide digital technology in all other sites to access support. This would be contrary to the policing pledge and police and crime plan aims but is data led as these services are underutilised and the force is utilising technology to maximise the resource investment. This area has only just been reviewed to take out £400k from the cost whilst trying to maintain a provisions and bring greater consistency to the service.

Reduce weekends opening to 1 location but retain weekday service at each £0.1m

Large towns only and consolidated service £0.2m

Resource only the three busiest locations in the City Area £0.5m

- Canteen – Need to understand cost impact in terms of services currently provided to operational deployments but this may be mitigated by force subsidy being removed. It would be expected that redundancy costs would be high and the cultural impact as this is the only remaining canteen that provides a force wide service in support of operations, critical incidents, and events. The net cost is £0.084 million so therefore maximum saving is £0.084 million.

Potentially 7 FTE £0.084 million before redundancy costs and costs of alternative provision.

- Police Officers - move officers into police staff posts to then release the police staff posts as a saving. Due to the levels that would be required there would be an operational and service delivery impact to the public. Even with safeguards around placements and principles linked to maximising deployments relating to the use of police powers, skills or knowledge such as desk-based investigation, control room etc. Likely to save £40k per officer removed from frontline services but realistically with demand levels and the current performance around response times, crime investigation and outcomes there would need to be a service level change to the public and an expectation of a drop in force performance as warranted officers are abstracted. The level of the reverse modernisation will impact on force capability, capacity, and public safety. There is also a risk to officers themselves from reduced capability and capacity.

10.32 The Chief Constable needs to understand the broader implications of any budget allocation decision, the interdependencies and impact which with 10.5 working days to assess is not achievable, realistic, or reasonable when considering the risk to the public, policing resources and trust and confidence.

**11. Police and Crime Plan**

11.1 The Chief Constable has due regard for the police and crime plan and there is consistent evidence of the force's contribution to the delivery of the plan. The current budget allocation has a direct impact on the resources of Chief Constable and therefore restrict the ability to deliver against the plan as resources will need to be focussed on statutory requirements and to be focussed on the core policing mission as an emergency service, maintaining order, preventing and detecting crime.

**12. Operational and Organisational Implications, threat, and risk**

12.1 It is important for the Chief Constable to highlight the implications of the budget and place them in the context of current operational demand, threat, and risk in Leicestershire.

12.2 The strategic challenges outlined for 2025/26 in the previous operational budget report of January 2025, remain largely the same as we enter 2026/27, but with the unenviable and unnecessary requirement for a further reduction in people and resource to address these challenges in 2026/27 as a result of a further imposed £4.8 million budget deficit. This is above and beyond the £4 million of efficiencies, including £1million police staff reduction already planned to be delivered.

12.3 The Chief Constable has set out his strategic plan for addressing these strategic challenges and delivering both the force priorities and

ambitions of the Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan in 'BluePrint 2030 and beyond'.

12.4 Leicestershire Police remains resolutely committed to delivering consistently good public service with high standards and despite the underfunding (lowest 8 in country of 43 forces) building further on our ranking (top 8 in country of 43) as a leading force in the UK, as we support the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and deliver our core role as an emergency service and protecting our communities by maintaining the peace and preventing and detecting crime.

12.5 In 2025, the force has dealt with an average of 1700—1800 calls for service a day, which amounted to 5,243 additional 999 calls and 17,902 more non-emergency calls than last year.

12.6 Policing pressures in 2025 have been consistently high across the year, with our officers making over 15,000 arrests, investigating 94,000 crimes, looking for 4000 missing people and sharing over 30,000 referrals to partners identifying potentially vulnerable adults and children.

12.7 In 2025 the force launched 11 homicide investigations, of which 2 have resulted in convictions, 5 have been charged and awaiting conclusion at court and 4 remain under investigation.

12.8 We also attended 665 deaths in the community and completed enquiries on behalf of His Majesty's Coroner.

12.9 There were 17 critical incidents which required Gold Group oversight, covering a broad range of operational issues from IT and Cyber events, missing people, community tension and criminal justice pressures.

12.10 The force undertook 225 Firearms deployments across the year, of which 178 were dynamic incidents presenting immediate risks to the public, 44 were planned operations requiring a coordinated Command response and 2 were mutual aid deployments to support national firearms threats.

12.11 Furthermore, the Force experienced additional demands from the prison sentence changes and early release of prisoners and around policing protests in the summer and autumn linked to international conflicts, community tensions and immigration policies. There were 70 full Public Order deployments by the force in 2025, 53 being in response to public safety events in our force area, and 17 being in support of national public order events.

12.12 In May this year, the Terms of Reference for the Nottingham Inquiry were published and confirmed that it would take account of reviews and actions relating to activities, policies, and processes within Leicestershire Police. The force was therefore given core participant status in the Inquiry, which will

take place between February and May 2026. This has necessitated a team being stood up to ensure preparedness and compliance with directions issued by the Inquiry, with over 22,000 documents having been received and reviewed by the dedicated disclosure officer so far. This is in addition to the ongoing Undercover Policing Public Inquiry and supporting the national response to the COVID19 Public inquiry.

12.13 We have supported numerous national community safety campaigns this year, including the Safer Summer and Safer Winter initiatives. This has resulted in 105 events have taken place across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland including beat surgeries, patch walks, and public gatherings. 37 business-focused events were conducted across each of the neighbourhood policing areas and over 1,370 additional patrol hours were delivered in September, including 673 hours in Leicester City Centre, beyond grant-funded hotspot patrols.

12.14 The force covers an area which is rightly proud of its rich diversity and range of emerging and established communities, including large scale new housing estates being built in our rural and metropolitan areas. This provides both challenges and opportunities for the force in delivering the service we believe all members of our communities deserve.

12.15 In line with consistent trends over previous years, our population has grown by over 100,000, compared nationally household deprivation and the male population is higher, with a significantly lower female population.

12.16 Force data for 2025 indicates that the force arrests 1200-1300 people each month, 20% of those arrested are foreign nationals and 43% have a mental health need, 30% of detainees declare self-harm and 14.5% require an appropriate adult, increasing the resources and time to manage, process and increasing our interpreter and medical provision costs.

12.17 The levels of investment and engagement necessary to reassure and support victims, communities and sustain and maintain good order continues to far exceed what we have experienced in recent years. This has required the force to invest further in local neighbourhood policing and manage a sustained demand on specialist public order and safety officers.

12.18 Policing continues to become more complex; there are ever increasing imposed expectations on recording, checking, and processing demand and with the rapidly changing nature of crime, sharp rises in high-harm crimes, cross-border criminality and the interconnected nature of physical and digital evidence that needs to be captured and interpreted.

12.19 There remains sustained improved confidence to report complex high harm crimes like rape, child exploitation and abuse, domestic violence, stalking and harassment. They all require continued significant investment as part of

the violence against women and girls' strategy (VAWG) and 'Operation Soteria' initiative (Home Office supported approach to rape investigation), strengthened by the introduction of the National Policing Centre for Public Protection, opened at the College of Policing this year.

12.20 The reality is with further additional cuts the force will continue to shrink and therefore the service offer and timeliness in regard non-emergency calls, non-statutory functions, firearms licensing, freedom of information, Data disclosure, complaints handling and vetting, are some of areas that will require a service review. Due to the statutory functions and requirements placed onto the force the reality is further cuts will have a direct impact on frontline service to the public.

12.21 It is also important that the force continues to focus on areas of high harm and invests in areas of transformation. The decisions made in the past have placed the force in a stronger position to manage the challenges of today. Therefore, the investment decisions made this year, and subsequent years will help the force in 2030 and beyond.

12.22 The 2025/26 Force Management Statement is currently being finalised, with the timeline for information collection and risk assessment being adapted to better support the budget planning cycle. The current draft before further budget cuts are imposed identifies 22 business areas across the force which have been assessed as a high priority due to anticipated increased demand, threats and pressures, skills and resourcing challenges and ability to mobilise mitigation activity.

12.23 As previously, the force has prioritised, implemented, and continues to develop plans that are aligned with managing the budget and reducing the threat, risk and harm identified through our strategic and operational planning processes.

12.24 Leicestershire Police has been robust in identifying and implementing savings to address budget deficits over previous years. The majority of these savings having come from reduction in police staff numbers as we seek to avoid penalties and maximise external funding opportunities. This does, however, have an impact on the reduced number of staff left within the organisation seeking to meet the ever-increasing demands.

12.25 To mitigate those impacts, the Force has sought to maximise every opportunity to identify and implement productivity improvements and create capacity for our staff, use technology to support colleagues in delivering their duties and strengthened our health, well-being and employee incentive schemes.

12.26 In June 2025 the Force stood up an Operational Productivity forum, co-chaired by the ACCs to identify and introduce business focussed innovation

opportunities that delivered immediate time saving to front line staff. To date, we have been able to evidence over 200k hours of time given back to officers and staff through making good decisions about how we manage our admin and processes.

12.27 Specific examples of innovation and bold decision making introduced this year to increase productivity and liberate staff from unnecessary administrative tasks include:

- Reducing the admin required around Public Protection Notice's saving at least 225 front-line officer hours per month.
- The Assessment and Investigation Unit (AIU) has been introduced to take more pressure off our emergency response teams and enhance our service offer and efficiency through a new victim video calling service.
- Introducing in 2026 a role-specific approach to personal safety training, reducing the number of days officers are required to train across a 24-month period.
- Introduction of AI to our policing business to improve efficiency, including around supervisory crime management functions.
- Reviewing Use of Force form requirements and reducing officer completion time

12.28 Our wellbeing team have introduced bespoke health, wellbeing and fitness appointments available to all employees this year, including delivering clinics and offering appointments at police premises across LLR to maximise the opportunity and reduce the abstractions for all staff to receive well-being support.

12.29 The existing offer around member funded gym membership, exercise and recreational classes, financial and debt advice, mental health and addiction services have been enhanced this year in recognition that to achieve our mission of protecting communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland with an ever-shrinking work-force and increased demands, we need to ensure those who are working for us are fit, healthy, present and fully engaged in service delivery.

12.30 There remains enduring pressure points and business areas of particular concern regarding health, wellbeing and attendance, such as the performance of the control room, caused by the turnover of resources and the sustained increase in demand and calls for service. The force has continued to invest in uplifting the resources in the control room this year delivering significant improvements in call handling times and being at the forefront nationally of performance for 999 calls. This has included repurposing a Chief Superintendent post to specifically Lead Force Contact and Operations and enable greater focus and support on people and performance.

12.31 The force recognises and really values the benefits of a mixed police workforce in terms of public service delivery, skills, and specialisms. However, the current government conditions on the budget such as the PUP uplift penalties for police officer numbers are restricting the force. It is currently still unknown what the government approach will be in regard the Neighbourhood policing grant included in the overall budget to the force. This is a very important consideration in the budget build process as officer and PCSO numbers are supplemented from this neighbourhood uplift funding (2420 to 2243 FTE officers and 150 to 161 PCSO FTE).

12.32 It is worth noting that many Police Staff have an integral role in addressing the strategic and contextual risks as they have specific skills and specialisms not held within our PCSO and Police Officer establishment. Our staff consistently go above and beyond and have engaged in the transformation. The continued reduction in resources is not sustainable, especially if imposed unnecessary without the time to plan to help mitigate the impact on public service and public safety, as well as ensuring the capacity and capability of the force can achieve the national policing requirements.

12.33 Leicestershire Police cannot in isolation reduce its workforce further, deliver a good service and high standards without further transformation, investment and by retaining the right workforce mix.

12.34 Especially in a context that £23 million has already been delivered in efficiencies in the last three years and demand, complexity and expectation are increasing.

### **13. Summary**

13.1 The internal and external audits showcase the professional approach to financial management undertaken by the force.

13.2 We do not think it is a fair or reasonable process to then expect the Chief Constable within such a short period (from an email sent on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, and reaffirmed in an email on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026), to prepare a revised budget that is detailed, planned, reasonable and achievable within the allocations made. The force has only been given 10.5 normal working days over Christmas and New Year to review the proposal resulting in leave being cancelled and rostered rest days worked to enable the force to consider the budget allocation, to understand the implications and provide an informed response.

13.3 To support this, the force requested additional information on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, this included a request to share the minutes of the meeting held in isolation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and any advice, rationales or evidence

base received by the Police and Crime Commissioner to inform the budget decisions. This was followed up again on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January.

- 13.4 The budget allocation cannot be supported by the Chief Constable when the starting position from the FSOB meetings was a balanced budget for 2026/27 and then an additional £4.8 million deficit is created, on top of a planned £4 million deficit, whilst creating a £3.4 million surplus for the OPCC on top of £1.9 million of current OPCC reserves, and not appearing to have taken into account the £23 million already delivered in the last three years.
- 13.5 The budget allocation only gives a 4.2% uplift to the force, which would result in more resources and reduction in capability and capacity with no clear rationale provided and a potential misunderstanding of the 'zero based' budgeting approach and of all the financial papers that have been shared as part of FSOB that show the costs at 6.3%.
- 13.6 It could be interpreted that there is a gap in the effective strategic planning by not notifying a potential reduction of the precept levy far earlier in advance, despite regular meetings up to the 16<sup>th</sup> of December having this built as a core jointly agreed component. The decision to reduce the planning assumption of £14 to £11 and not going for the maximum £15 will have a significant impact and has a year-on year impact, reducing funding by £5.6 million over the 4 years of MTFP and £1.4 million per year after and impacting on the force sustainability and the Police and Crime Commissioner responsibility to have an efficient and effective police force.
- 13.7 The budget allocation top slices the force by £3.4 million, above the £4 million already identified for cuts and built into the plans. This was not included in any of the pre-budget plans or any discussion. This places an unfair and unreasonable burden on the force and will have a direct impact on services already being given to the public, rather than additional services that could be provided.
- 13.8 The operational threat harm and risk and service implications are severe as it will need to be reductions in frontline front facing services that the force has worked tirelessly to try and protect. This is contrary to the Neighbourhood focus of the current Government, undermines Neighbourhood policing a bedrock for Leicestershire Police and is likely to have a disproportionate impact on rural communities, an area of importance for the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Police and Crime Plan and the Chief Constable.
- 13.9 It may be perceived that the budget allocation is trying to set the force up to fail, placing the force in a position it cannot deliver the savings required and therefore making the force operationally unviable, creating risk to public safety and if the budget deficits cannot be achieved then S114 is also a risk but a legal requirement on the S151 officer to address.

13.10 The implications of unplanned budget cuts, withholding budget allocations with operational implications, having to remove resources at additional cost (due to the redundancy costs), the reduction in the operational capacity and capability will impact on the Chief Constable's ability to have due regard and support the delivery of the police and crime plan, the ability to meet the national policing requirements and encroaches on the Chief Constable operational Independence.

13.11 The Chief Constable cannot give a commitment or make an informed decision on the Police and Crime Commissioner's specific preventative commissioned services as the broader budget decisions impact on these, especially when some will incur additional cost to deliver rather than help close an imposed budget deficit.

13.12 The Chief Constable has tried to address all the areas raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner in the email of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, as it is important to ensure there is clarity with regard to the position and on the grounds for decisions that inform the budget allocation. It is also important the Chief Constable is clear in regard the feedback and the implications to the budget allocation and the reality of the imposed budget deficit placed onto the force.

13.13 The Chief Constable wants to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to identify a way forward that can deliver for the public, ensure service and public safety can be maintained at the current levels.

#### **14. Proposed Solution and Way Forward**

14.1 The Chief Constable aim remains to develop a collaborative approach and offer solutions to the current challenge. The following suggested steps would help mitigate the operational impact and the risk of safety to the public, ensure service to the public can be maintained and have due regard to the police and crime plan and the Police and Crime Commissioner areas of investment.

14.2 To address some of the fundamental issues identified that undermine the budget allocation made by the Police and Crime Commissioner the budget position should revert to the position that was in place by midday on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December following the settlement outcome. The budget build process, details had been shared and reviewed through the FSOB meetings and it takes into account the force has already closed a £4 million budget deficit for 2026/27 with the strategic approach taken.

14.3 This approach ensures that the force and the OPCC both start with a balanced budget and current services are maintained. We can then work together to try to fulfil the Police and Crime Commissioner aims. The following are shared and suggested to support this endeavour.

14.4 The current OPCC reserve of £1.9 million should be ear marked as a contingency for the transfer from the current Police and Crime Commissioner to a new police accountability structure. If this needs to be increased in the future then the BER reserve fund is available, but on the current evidence and through effective forward planning any potential costs could be calculated to inform the potential reserve amount that would be required. The force has details of the costs of the transfer from a Police Authority to the Police and Crime Commissioner oversight if this would be helpful to share. If the Police and Crime Commissioner is seeking a greater reserve, then the BER could be utilised as that removes the burden placed onto the force and if a lesser reserve is needed this can be utilised to support the prevention initiatives.

14.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner proposed to top slice the force by a further £1.6 million with only £1.1 million being made available to the force. The Chief Constable proposes that £0.5 million is provided from the force underspend in 2025/26 to show due regard to the police and crime plan and achieve the plans aims and meet the community fund initiatives the PCC wants to support.

14.6 In line with the public consultation the Precept Levy is maintained at least at £14, and the Police and Crime Commissioner then utilises the Precept increase from £14 to £15 to support the commissioning of the additional prevention activity that can be delivered by the force and/or to support increase the reserves as proposed.

14.7 The Precept levy at £15 also prevents the force losing £5.6 million of funding through the four-year MTFP and £1.4million per year beyond, supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner aim to be sustainable and deliver an efficient and effective police service. This also takes into consideration the national funding assumptions through the period of the MTFP.

14.8 The Budget Equalisation Reserve (BER) could be utilised to further top up and support the Police and Crime Commissioner prevention reserve aims whilst then not imposing cuts to services to the public.

14.9 It should also be noted that the government recognises the financial strains on police forces and had created an opportunity to apply for an increase in precept above £15. Whilst a considerable increase above this would solve a number of challenges and strengthen the capability of the force significantly and could even return it to the level of resourcing of the past, the Chief Constable has not sought to request this is considered having taken into account the local impact on taxpayers and balanced this with the plans for the force can achieve with a £15 precept.

14.10 If the precept despite the operational advice and impact on the force and public safety is not maintained at £14 then all efficiencies delivered by the

force need to be invested to support the force maintain service and reduce the revenue costs in-year 2026/27. The force cannot achieve the further budget deficits imposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner without investing the efficiencies made to support the force achieve a balanced budget in 2026/27, but this will not address all the implications or the impact through the MTFP.

14.11 The proposal does not include any of the efficiency savings identified by the OPCC and there is no contribution from the OPCC to support the force close the initial £4 million budget deficit. Therefore, these efficiency savings could be reinvested into the Police and Crime Commissioner prevention fund or reserves.

14.12 For transparency this approach means that those areas built into the budget remain, as they are already included in the force plans and savings have already been made to ensure the force delivers a balanced budget. The operational risks are also too high to remove the funding, but the Chief Constable is willing to engage in discussion to understand the Police and Crime Commissioner aims.

14.13 If the budget allocation to the force does not change, the Chief Constable cannot support it in its current form due to the impact and implications already outlined in this report that can be built upon further as required. He looks forward to the discussion in the FSOB meeting and sincerely hopes that a collaborative approach can be developed, and positive decisions made to ensure Leicestershire Police can continue to be an effective and efficient police service, maintain service levels, remain operationally viable and keep the public safe.

## SECTION B: ADDRESSING SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE PCC

### **15. Areas of Police and Crime Commissioner focus**

15.1 The budget email sent by the Police and Crime Commissioner on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December proposed a budget allocation to the force, in isolation of formal consultation or operational policing advice, but made a number of specific observations and statements that we address below in turn.

### **16. Budget Deficit Plan**

16.1 In the email on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December the Police and Crime Commissioner refers to the direction from an email on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November that the force should start to think about how expenditure could be reduced but that the force response fails to address this point. It should be highlighted that the force had responded to this, and it was included in papers of the 16<sup>th</sup> of December FSOB meeting.

16.2 The force was already well ahead of the budget deficit issues having made decisions in the early summer of 2025 due to the uncertainty around the pay awards in-year, but more importantly through the next financial year and MTFP. The financial papers show the impact of this with an in-year underspend created that with strategic foresight would assist reducing the predicted future budget deficit in 2026/27.

16.3 The force provided the details of what is referred to as 'belt tightening' in the budget papers for FSOB. There was a clear section titled 'closing the gap' and no further details were requested but they remain accessible. This section outlined the non-pay reduction and importantly in excess of £1million of police staff resources that had been identified and would be removed by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. In addition, the force had commenced the next steps in case the settlement was more adverse than expected, but it was assessed the current plans would close the £4 million gap identified and the plans would support the force with an in-year efficiency target or help prepare a year ahead in 2027/28.

16.4 As a result of the settlement and the work undertaken by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December the force had closed the budget deficit based on the budget build shared with the Police and Crime Commissioner and in the FSOB meetings.

### **17. Inflation**

17.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner in his email to the Chief Constable describes the force budget increasing by 6.2% when inflation is set at 3.2% from £270 to £287 million. The current email wording could be misleading in terms of how this can be interpreted or perceived. The force has shared all the financial details with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the OPCC S151

Officer in regard the cost increases. The current rationale doesn't appear to consider or to take into account that the forces use 'zero based' budgeting and therefore the budget is built on the actual costs. It also appears insufficient account has been taken to the fact that the cost of the same resources increases due for example to the pay award, pension costs, national insurance costs and the incremental pay scale ladder.

17.2 Therefore, the same level of resource costs more year-on year, and this is especially so with the police officer uplift. This has a significant overall impact as 81% of the total force budget is invested on people.

17.3 In addition, the rise in costs linked to IT and other services have significantly exceeded the 3.2% level of inflation, as did the pay awards at 4.2%.

#### **18. OPCC Contribution to Deficit**

18.1 The Chief Constable has not asked directly for 11% - this percentage was introduced by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Chief Constable has suggested or asked for it to be considered that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner help limit the impact of the budget cuts on the force by supporting a contribution of £500k to the in-year deficit.

18.2 It should also be noted in reference to the Chief Constable refusing to model an equivalent 11% reduction, that clarity was sought by the Chief Constable in the afternoon session of the FSOB meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, where it was made clear that this was not an ask of the force.

18.3 Although the Commissioner's approach to reviewing the cost of the OPCC is appreciated, to date no additional contribution has been recorded following the FSOB meetings and it is the force that has identified the potential savings to close the initial £4 million budget deficit. This is in despite of the fact that the OPCC appeared to find potential savings, but these were not allocated to help with the overall budget deficit and limit the impact on the public from the force cuts. In addition, there was a clear disparity in regard the focus on the force and that of the OPCC budget on December 16<sup>th</sup> FSOB meetings as the minutes of the meetings will illustrate.

18.4 It is important to set the discussion within the operating context that appears to have been overlooked in regard the year-on-year savings the force has achieved and the fact that the Police and Crime Commissioner offered the force the opportunity at short notice to bid into a pot of potential funding of up to £0.5million. This was appreciated as the force wants to ensure an integrated and effective approach for the public. The force specifically asked that the allocation and decisions on this funding be considered holistically as part of the overarching discussions on the budget to ensure effective prioritisation, value for money for the public and to support delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

18.5 It is also set within the context that the OPCC appeared to be holding an additional £1.9 million in reserves, which is on top of the General fund reserve discharging the statutory requirements and the Budget Equalisation Reserve (BER). The Chief Constable, as highlighted by the Police and Crime Commissioner also wants to ensure the best outcome for the public and the most efficient and effective use of resources.

18.6 This is also set within a context that the OPCC has spent money in areas that have not added direct value or have not evidenced the value of the spend to the public. There are also areas that are funded that cost more than they cost under previous Police and Crime Commissioners.

18.7 It should also be clarified that the force suggested that the OPCC contributed to the overall budget deficit, but this was never included in the budget deficit closure plans and in fact the allocated budget from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December increases the OPCC held budgets significantly, by £3.4 million whilst the force deficit is increased by £4.8 million. This is at the direct detriment to the force operating budget and could be considered to be to the detriment of the public.

**19. Growth already funded.**

19.1 The FSOB on December 16<sup>th</sup> provided the details of the police staff resources and therefore it is disappointing that the approach taken to the budget is that the force should implement internal savings to pay for these posts, as this makes it appear that the implications and position is not understood.

19.2 The force budget build had already encompassed all these roles in achieving a balanced budget on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and had been included in the financial plans shared in FSOB on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December. Therefore, cuts had been made and alternative funding identified has already been achieved. Therefore, to find the funding again for the same posts appears irrational, unreasonable, and unfair. This also does not reflect authorised increases in the control room resource and neighbourhood teams.

19.3 There is no clear recognition that the force will have taken out another £1million of police staff resources in 2025/26 to support overcome the budget deficit of 2026/27. There also appears to be no consideration of the impact and the reality of how this further budget deficit would be achieved before the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2026. It is then surprising that the Police and Crime Commissioner approach includes investing in areas the force has had to cut and reduce to meet budget deficit requirements.

19.4 It will be helpful to breakdown what are described as the growth areas to ensure the clarity is clear and the implications are understood, especially as some of the posts if removed will lose an income to the force, as they are in the main as a result of financial incentivisation, or investment related to

specific grants or areas directly linked to releasing officers from back office functions or improving the service to the public.

- 19.5 The assertions made in the budget allocation are incorrect and the grounds for the decision cannot be relied upon.
- 19.6 12 police staff posts are funded by the Neighbourhood Uplift to release 12 police officers from desk top investigations. If the funded police staff posts are removed this will result in 12 officers being taken away from neighbourhood policing where they are deployed and off the street. The funding is lost if we do not employ the additional staff as we have to demonstrate and report to the Home Office the actual deployable commitment of the officers released from desk top investigations into Neighbourhoods. The police staff also provide a direct service to the public in the Assessment and Investigation Unit, which is a desk-based team that has direct contact with the public through a variety of methods including digital interaction.
- 19.7 Police staff posts have been invested to supplement the 20 additional staff in the control room. The data showed that the public was directly impacted when we dropped below the 26 additional police staff to 20. This was undertaken to save money but the 6 on top of the additional 20 needed to be returned. If these are not funded, then there is a direct impact on the service provided to the public as we will not be able to answer the 101 calls within the current service performance times and it may have an impact on 999 performance of answering calls within 10 seconds and endangering the public.
- 19.8 5 police staff posts are being invested to enable the release of police officers to the frontline. If not supported the officers will remain in back-office roles which is not cost effective but would need to be retained as the police officers uplift programme prevents officers' numbers dropping without penalties being incurred. The force had managed the budget and closed the deficit while enabling officer posts to be placed back into the frontline and the proposed Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation would reverse this decision as the force could not afford to continue to do this.
- 19.9 5.5 police staff posts relate to the Prevention Directorate and the joint approach between the force and the OPCC. This is an area suggested for investment by the Police and Crime Commissioner and appears to be included in the funding allocation (to be confirmed in FSOB).
- 19.10 3.6 Police staff posts have already had alternative funding identified as part of the budget build.

19.111 staff post relates to national accreditation requirements. These are imposed external standards placed onto a broad range of policing services that are unfunded by the Government but required to maintain current operational capability as previously briefed.

19.121.66 posts relate to a department re structure and test of concept for delivering services.

19.132.26 police staff posts relate to the front enquiry office and the necessity to release PCSO, who are maintaining the current service, back onto neighbourhoods and reduce abstractions. This is a result of approx.£400k having been taken from the front enquiry service costs as a result of reducing resources to meet the budget deficits. If not approved then based on the data it would result in the closure of front enquiry offices or a move to more digital only accessibility, contrary to the forces policing pledge commitment and the Police and Crime Plan aims.

19.14The force had ensured that all these costs were built into the budget for 2026/27 and at midday on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December the force based on all the agreed assumptions and the budget build details had closed the budget deficit whilst still managing to continue to maintain service to the public. The force has already covered all the staff posts as the Police and Crime Commissioner specifically requests in the new budget allocation. Therefore, it is unreasonable and irrational to have to find the funding again or to lose external funding.

19.15The Police and Crime Commissioner suggests there are alternative options to pay for the police staff from the police budget, but these are not clarified explicitly outside of the DEI, HR and NPCC observations.

## **20. Paragraphs to the public**

20.1 It is disappointing that the Police and Crime Commissioner's reflection was that the Chief Constable had declined to support providing a case for taxpayer's money when the budget proposal had not been shared, the settlement had not been received and the Police and Crime Commissioner had failed to consult on a budget allocation or give decisions on a number of key areas. The fact shared that the Chief Constable suggested a joint collaborative approach as a way forward when the budget was known was correct, and the alternative mature and joined up approach was not disputed at the time.

20.2 It is also disappointing that despite a second term in office, access to all the financial papers, the audit reports, the sustainability plans and the force performance in delivering against the budget deficits, the Police and Crime Commissioner feels they are not in a place to work with the Chief Constable

to address the impact on services. It is hoped that this report can be a supportive step to help address.

**21. Estates, Fleet and IT attendance at FSOB.**

- 21.1 The email on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December states that the Police and Crime Commissioner felt that the Capital Programme could not be fully explored as the persons were not present in the meeting. One individual was in hospital, one was on leave, and one was available if required. Irrespective of this the team had provided prior notification of this and they have engaged and been accessible throughout with continued dialogue in these areas. The strategic lead for these areas of business was present in FSOB, the relevant financial working papers for these areas were shared in advance and accessible in the meeting. An opportunity to explore the capital programme was not provided in the meeting and no questions were asked at all on the capital strategy, despite the revenue implications in relation to funding the capital programme.
- 21.2 If there are further areas of clarification required, the force will continue to address these in a proportionate and timely manner. It should be highlighted that all capital spends linked to the current and proposed strategies would be reviewed in light of the budget deficits created by the Police and Crime Commissioners budget allocation decision.

**22. Value for money profiles**

- 22.1 There appears to be some misunderstanding in terms of what a value for money profile is. The force works hard to ensure it delivers the best value for investment and services, eliminates waste, and reduces bureaucracy in order to deliver on behalf and for the public.
- 22.2 The force aims to minimise the cost of resources whilst maintaining quality, maximising the outputs for the level of inputs and ensure the outputs are aligned to the intended outcomes. The force has been shrinking and realigning its resources, and to help mitigate the impact and maintain the service to the public it has delivered 200,000 hours of efficiency savings last year and has a target to repeat this again through changes in policy and procedure, digital investment, and innovation.
- 22.3 The efficiency savings are tracked, and business benefits measured. The force has also conducted “lightening reviews” into areas under pressure as identified through the Force Management Statement (FMS). The force has not been able to invest additional resources but wanted to release pressure on services or improve or maintain service by bringing together specialists and fresh eyes and ideas to assess, examine and identify solutions to an ongoing issue.

22.4 The force is also using and introducing automation, analytics, bots and AI to deliver efficiencies and in the planned investments shared with FSOB want to invest more into this area to help manage demand more effectively and efficiently. The Chief Constable also shared the methodology and approach to the allocation and deployment of resources as part of the FSOB budget build process that shows how data is used in decision making around resources.

22.5 There is also a value for money requirement already built into and embedded into the procurement and contract management practice, as aligned with national policy and frameworks. These require public bodies to deliver value for money in all procurement activities, maximise public benefit, act with integrity and transparency. The force complies with the government Green Book guidance, the force tracks business benefits and/or performance from business cases and the external audits demonstrate value for money in comparison with the sector and the force can evidence continuous improvement initiatives.

22.6 One challenge faced in policing is that we have many services that we cannot stop or cannot change without statutory or policy regulation / change. The force has engaged in considering the cost of different aspects of the business and we do utilise the HMICFRS value for money profiles.

22.7 These profiles break down most of the areas of policing, including the back-office functions and compare the force nationally. This enables the force to have a more holistic approach and where we are an outlier compared to peers this can be explored to ensure an informed approach.

22.8 The force continues to cut police staff roles and we do not have the resources to do value for money profiles for every area. There is also a gap in the talent available as evidenced through the OPCC being unable to recruit an additional member of staff to support them around value for money profiles.

22.9 The force thanks the Police and Crime Commissioner for the offer of additional support and is aware Leicestershire County Council has taken a fresh approach to the budget using external consultants and an efficiency-focussed approach, so it would be good if any learning can be shared in writing so we can consider the approach and whether there are any learnings for the force. The force would welcome copies of the value for money profiles undertaken by the OPCC to see if they are transferrable.

22.10 The force has utilised external consultants historically, but this is balanced with the cost v reward considerations and have welcomed previous support when the Home Office was invited in by the Commissioner. This provided positive feedback on the force approach which is reaffirmed more recently in the internal and external audits and JRAP scrutiny. It is also understood that the Police and Crime Commissioner invested approx. £10,000 on an external

consultant to look at the force's value for money. We would welcome any findings made by that consultant although we note that the Chief Constable has not been interviewed by the external consultant as part of any information-gathering exercise and the consultant may therefore not have the full operational picture.

### **23. Human Resources**

23.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner email references gold plated HR policies and quotes the 'Academy of innovation' in Human Resources. This was not an academy that was known to our HR leads and it would be helpful to clarify if this relates to a Dutch organisation offering a range of HR training skills and elements of consultancy (which of course may operate in a different context / not have a full understanding of how resourcing in a British force operates).

23.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner email refers to a proportion of 3x HR staff to every 200 employees and the Dutch academy highlights a ratio of 1x HR staff for 50 employees. They also appear to be very clear that this is a "benchmark and not a universal standard, as the ideal number varies significantly based on organisational needs and other factors."

23.3 The current FTE in HR (defined as staff reporting through the Head of HR excluding resource planning, plus half of the joint Derbyshire/Leicestershire service centre personnel) is 47.26FTE. If the resource planners are included who are not actually HR practitioners but manage the shift and duty changes, annual leave, court duties and manage all our operational orders and deployments this number is 72.63 FTE.

23.4 It is therefore difficult to understand the assertion that Leicestershire Police is 'gold plated' and not efficient in this area with 2243 Officers, 161 PCSO and 1283 Police Staff (including 31 in OPCC) equates to 3,687. This is a ratio of 1x HR to 50 FTE including resource planners and if resource planners as non-HR practitioners are excluded this equates to 1x HR to 78 FTE.

23.5 We respectfully disagree with the suggestion that there are too many HR staff. To decrease the ratio of HR staff further would result in less support to line managers and greater reliance on self-service and technology. That is of course possible but would come with an opportunity cost for other staff in the organisation including those in front line positions, together with other concerns and risks. The HMICFRS value for money tables, and indeed the Academy of Innovation, would suggest the force have got the ratios right and in recent years, the force has needed to invest in this area due to the risks and implications identified.

23.6 The force is always open for discussion on different areas to increase understanding and ensuring optimum balance for our circumstances and ambition and there will be a balance in regard the risk appetite and the merits

of any specific 'HR' initiative, policy, or procedure. The Police and Crime Commissioner references but does not clearly define 'gold plating' but the Police and Crime Plan 24-29 states 'I want to ensure that we are looking after our workforce and that we are an employer of choice.' The force is operating as a British public sector employer tied to nationally agreed terms and conditions and for Officers to regulations that are prescribed in primary legislation. If the force tried to move away from this to a pure compliance and statutory minimum framework the key savings would be seen through withdrawing from all pension provision above National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) government schemes, removal of company sick pay, and retrenchment to statutory minimum holiday pay. Doing so would no doubt lead to legal challenge, industrial action, and seriously affect any ambition to be an employer of choice, create costs, risk and isn't legally possible in a number of public sector areas.

23.7 Overall, there does not appear to be an evidence base to show the investment in HR, especially when 81% of our budget is invested in people is gold plated and the force is within the expected tolerances of the ratios quoted.

#### **24. Rank Profile**

24.1 The Chief Constable has highlighted the fact the force remains in the lower spend on its management costs as evidenced by the National data. It is unclear in regard the Police and crime Commissioner observation as this was shared and highlighted by the OPCC Chief Executive in February this year. It was not clear that the same evidence was requested to be seen again. Please see Appendix C.

24.2 It should be noted that in being lean, we have to balance this as the national Superintendents' Association has recently shared data and raised wellbeing concerns nationally in regard Superintendent ranks. This rank carries a broad range of legal powers requiring 24/7 365-day coverage on top of day duties. We have to manage this very carefully to ensure there is force resilience in protecting the public. Many of our people due to the size of the force carry different responsibilities and multiple responsibilities in addition to their core role such as negotiators, authorising officers, firearms commanders and public order and safety commanders. Please see appendix D.

24.3 Despite this the force as part of its approach to overcoming the initial £4 million budget deficit still took the difficult decision to reduce the Superintendent rank by one person in order to reduce costs and make a saving. The data sheet doesn't include the further reduction being implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

## **25. Operational Deployments**

- 25.1 The email on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December refers to the operational deployment paper that was included with the FSOB papers. This report submitted to FSOB was to again try and explain the methods that the force has taken to inform operational deployment decisions that are the sole responsibility of the Chief Constable.
- 25.2 There appears to be an implied criticism that the report fails to consider the deployment from the perspective of the public despite the report articulating decisions are linked to threat and risk, public safety, demand, crime numbers and crime harm. The report was not written with the purpose of explaining to the public the decisions around deployment but to demonstrate to the Police and Crime Commissioner the approach that is taken in support of the budgetary decisions. The report shows that Leicestershire Police has a clear operating model and resourcing is informed by the Force Management Statement, data, internal and external insight. The model and approach are regularly reviewed and continuously improved with a real focus on frontline policing services and the support to deliver these efficiently and effectively. This is supported by the force governance model ensuring alignment between resourcing decisions and the budgetary requirements.
- 25.3 The HMICFRS PEEL framework and value for money profiles also provide an assessment of the force approach and the operational context paper usually supports the budget papers.

## **26. Prevention of Crime**

- 26.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner highlights concerns about progress on Prevention, but the Chief Constable and the chairs of the joint OPCC and Force Prevention Board are not aware of statement around being unhappy with the speed of progress. This comes as a surprise when the HMICFRS and evidence base on the impact and results of the work of the Prevention directorate have been praised and is award-winning. It should be highlighted that the Police and Crime Commissioner against advice withdrew funding for drug testing on arrest which is now proposed is funded again, but from the £1.6 million top slice of the force budget which will potentially incur growth costs that the current budget allocation cannot sustain.
- 26.2 This should be an opportunity to collaboratively build upon the good work between the force and the OPCC to deliver for the public and meet the aims of the police and crime plan.
- 26.3 It is noted the Police and Crime Commissioner intends to top slice force funding and remove £0.5million to re-invest into prevention activity, which the force cannot access. The force has had no details shared in regard how

these fits into the broader prevention strategy, the evidence base that it is built upon for the amounts of funding available and how this will be effective, when considering the impact the funding cut on the force will create.

- 26.4 The commissioned projects suggested have not previously been shared with the Chief Constable. The PCSO and car boot idea was shared verbally in the FSOB meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December and the Chief Constable was receptive to a collaborative approach, recognising the force still had a budget deficit to close. The proposed budget allocation appears to take additional funding from a balanced budget and then expect the force to deliver additional services, of which some of the proposals will require investment and cost the force more, rather than provide a solution to close the budget deficit, a deficit that has doubled as a result of the Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation.
- 26.5 The approach is constraining the finances and therefore impacting on the operational independence of the Chief Constable, contrary to the policing protocol.

## 27. NPCC

- 27.1 As raised in the FSOB meeting on the 16th of December where it was explained that the NPCC funding does include a centralised function coordinating national activity, but the majority of the funding relates to a broad range of nationally held services that benefit the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- 27.2 For reassurance there are areas of the NPCC Budget that the Chief Constable has questioned and challenged. As part of the collective approach by Chief Constables this has reduced the costs that were initially expected. The NPCC budget requirements were already budgeted for in the plans shared at FSOB on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December.
- 27.3 There are several different specific areas for funding that are managed through the NPCC. If the force disengaged or did not contribute to the NPCC then we would lose access to vital services that help protect the public of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
- 27.4 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable without any operational experience or understanding of the risks to withdraw, with the penalty that if the advice is not taken the funding is removed and will need to be found by the force. This is irrational and unreasonable with potential significant consequences to the force's operational capability, its compliance with the national policing requirements and on public safety.
- 27.5 For illustration some of the areas in which the funding withdrawal would impact.

- The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable to withdraw from the National Policing Coordination Centre (NPOC): This centre manages all the national intelligence relating to protest, event and public order activity as well as coordinating all national mutual aid.

27.6 Leicestershire Police manages a broad range of different protest and processions across the force area. This includes specific locations such as Elbit Systems on the Meridian which has caused regular disruption to local businesses and residents to the area and is linked nationally to other premises and incidents. The Police and Crime Commissioners withdrawal of funding would mean the force would potentially lose access to the coordination of intelligence and information that enables the force to effectively assess, respond and resource these events. There would be a direct impact on local areas, in particular rural communities as we would need to abstract greater numbers from their core role if the intelligence assessment is not accurate.

27.7 In regard to the coordination of all mutual aid resourcing across the country, the Police and Crime Commissioner has requested reports and reassurance that the force is able to respond to serious events such as the East Leicester Disorder. The Police and Crime Commissioner is briefed and aware that the force has received significant support from mutual aid and our current approach (as with all forces) has mutual aid built into the local escalation response, as it provides significant immediate support. This is set within a context where the force continues to manage numerous protests and processions, provides a policing response to large events that can have over 100,000 persons in attendance, regular football matches with over 30,000 in attendance, has many crowded places designated for an enhanced response due to the counter Terrorism risk and does not have a number of specialist capabilities as it is more efficient to pay for the specialism for a specific intelligence led or operational reason. For example, it may impact on our ability to secure mounted policing support, specialist dogs' capability, marine and underwater policing capability, or additional public order officers or close protection firearms officers.

27.8 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable to withdraw from the collaboration with the motor car industry. There is a centralised policing function part funded by industry. The successes of the partnership are clearly evident to the public. In the past volume crimes including TWOC and theft of radios from vehicles have both been significantly reduced and even designed out in partnership with industry. The current challenge around keyless theft and the move to driverless vehicles in the future necessitates the police to work with industry to prevent crime. Leicestershire police do not have the capacity or reach to do this in isolation

in terms of the resource requirement and the ability to deliver changes to protect the public.

- 27.9 The Police and crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable to withdraw from the National Wildlife Crime Unit, despite wildlife and rural crime being an important aspect of the police and crime plan.
- 27.10 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable to withdraw from the national pension team, pay and awards team and the national freedom of information collaboration. To undertake this work in isolation is likely to cost more money as specific experts will need to be utilised or employed when it surely is better to have a small central national team to coordinate this for us all to prevent duplication, deliver a consistent approach, and prevent each force incurring additional costs.
- 27.11 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the Chief Constable to withdraw from the national approach to the undercover policing enquiry despite being aware of the potential implications. The force would incur significant costs in terms of resources and be managing enhanced levels of risk by not engaging in one process that acts on behalf of all police forces. The force does not have the capacity or the capability in force in this specialist area to fulfil the required disclosure requirements and its important a consistent approach is provided on behalf the potential victims but also the operatives who have undertaken this difficult role.
- 27.12 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the force to withdraw from the national forensic collaboration despite being aware and fully briefed on the forensic market instability. Policing relies heavily on forensic evidence and the forensic capabilities continue to be enhanced to the benefit of the public and bringing offenders to justice. This is not an area where the force has the capability or capacity to act in isolation.
- 27.13 The Police and Crime Commissioner is advising the force to withdraw from the custody medical advisory service, less lethal weapons, Taser, Firearms and Officer Protections licensing collaboration that gives us access to national infrastructure, guidance, development and best practice. This creates a risk to the force to become an outlier in regard professional practice potentially endangering the public and officers.
- 27.14 The advice is to withdraw from the national criminal records office (ACRO) that provides data and information on foreign national offending, despite the force area engaging significant numbers of foreign nationals in custody and investigations. This would mean that decisions that affect the safety of victims and the public could be ill-informed as this information is accessible through a national platform funded by all forces.

27.15 To withdraw and not receive the funding for the different NPCC initiatives impacts on our ability to meet the national policing requirements, the force has not got the capability or capacity or funding to fill the gaps created. A risk to the force and those deploying on the frontline is created. The decision also affects the operational independence of the Chief Constable.

27.16 There is also the important practical aspect that the NPCC functionality is subject to a S22 legal agreement, which from my understanding requires 12 months' notice of an intention to leave and this needs to be agreed by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable. Therefore, the force cannot withdraw the funding in 2026/27, and it would be irrational when the Police and Crime Commissioner is also bound by the agreement to withhold funding for something that is not achievable.

## **28. DEI**

28.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner budget allocation proposes withholding the funding from Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. The force focus has a practical and pragmatic approach that is aimed to support operational delivery and discharge our legal responsibilities.

28.2 Leicestershire Police is policing one of the most diverse areas in the country we need to ensure that we are an attractive career, with officers and staff with cultural understanding, language skills and representative of the communities served, as this supports the force deliver policing services and build legitimacy, trust, and confidence.

28.3 Effective Operational delivery is intrinsically linked to the force's understanding and discharging its responsibilities under the Equality Act. The Force is cognisant of its legislative responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the specific Public Sector Equality Duty requiring all public authorities to consider how policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the Act.

28.4 To support us in meeting the Equality Act obligations, Equality Impact Assessments are completed for all operational orders, policy changes and significant change programmes. This can often require specialist advice, guidance, or experience to understand the impact. In addition, by having efficient effective organisational arrangements and experts in place that educate and support all staff in delivering services that are fair, respectful, and compliant with our statutory responsibilities. This includes those experts supporting Senior Leaders in developing strategy and policy and having audit and quality assurance processes embedded, so we can demonstrate that we are meeting our legal responsibilities in ensuring that these are being complied with by our staff in their interactions with the public and one another.

28.5 The National Code of Ethics ([Code of Ethics launched | College of Policing](#)) and Police Standards of Professional Behaviours ([Standards of Professional Behaviour](#)) set the frameworks and responsibilities for staff and officers with regards to ethical, inclusive and empathetic behaviours. Leicestershire Police Service strongly reflects and reinforces these expectations. In addition, the Code of Practice for Ethical Policing published in December 2023 is a statutory code of practice issued under S39A Police Act 1996.

28.6 The removal of the 4 resources working in this area would create a greater risk, as breaches of the statutory duty would likely be subject to litigation and adverse coverage due being a police force. There is a potential greater risk of employment tribunals if policies, processes, and the culture are applied incorrectly. There is also the risk that the force does not continue the positive trajectory in regard being representative of the communities it serves at an operational level but also in regard police legitimacy, trust, and confidence.

28.7 Academic research, public feedback and evidence-based activity by the College of Policing identifies that trust in policing is significantly impacted by cases and high-profile events. These include situations where organisations and individual officers have been both found or perceived to have acted in a discriminatory, exclusionary, or unfair way. We therefore continually seek to reduce costs, and staff time, linked to litigation and complaints resulting from breaches of our Public Sector Equality duty.

28.8 Moreover, with a significant proportion of our employees being police staff and members of staff associations, failure to comply (or be perceived to comply) with equality or employment duties or to value and be fair to our staff could result in withdrawal of service, industrial action, or reduction in flexibility. This would have a hugely detrimental impact on service delivery and operational effectiveness.

28.9 The importance of being a force that attracts, develops and retains its workforce and creates a diverse and inclusive workplace is well recognised as being a core requirement for Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL). This is a dedicated question within the 2025-2027 HMICFRS PEEL framework and therefore the force will be assessed for its performance in this area in our next PEEL inspection. Further details can be found at: [PEEL assessment framework \(PAF\) 2025–2027 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

28.10 The current force approach is a cross-cutting consideration embedded across all Force strategies, policies and activities and the removal of the funding creates a risk to the operational effectiveness of the force, to trust and confidence, to the forces legal obligations, could increase risk of litigation and to any future inspection outcome.

## 29. Independent Advisory Groups

- 29.1 The force has an approach to engage local communities within local geographic areas and as part of our engagement we listen to community feedback and also share our approaches to different areas of policing for feedback. We recognise the value from this investment, especially in challenging times when we find community voices can help build trust and confidence in policing.
- 29.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner raises the costs of this engagement, the force has said that the costs are minimal as they are held in policing or community partner locations for around two hours.
- 29.3 There is a resource cost to the cost to the investment, but as the Chief Constable explained the main person attending is salaried and as the Chief Constable does, they usually attend the community meeting in addition to their main duty, usually in the evening so the actual cost per se is minimal. Therefore, scrutinising this activity will not bring about the savings the budget allocation would require, the balance between investment to bring efficiencies is not proportionate or cost effective and importantly it would draw the force away from community engagement.

## 30. Section B Conclusion

- 30.1 The Chief Constable has tried to address all the areas in the email shared by the Police and Crime Commissioner - with significant investment made to try and meet the requirements and deadlines set.
- 30.2 The Chief Constable's main aim now is to develop a collaborative approach with the Police and Crime Commissioner to build a budget that can keep the public safe, maintain service, mitigate the impact of the cuts already identified, have due regard to the police and crime plan whilst delivering an efficient and effective police service.
- 30.3 The Chief Constable requests that the Police and Crime Commissioner work with the Chief Constable to address the current and future challenges, as a joined-up and informed approach and partnership can deliver the best outcomes for all parties and is in the best interests of the public and those serving the public.

## Implications

**Financial:** Significant

**Legal:** Significant

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Potentially significant dependent on outcome of budget decisions

**Risks** and Impact: Significant to public safety and service, delivery of Police and Crime Plan, HMIC inspections

**Community Safety Impact** -Potentially significant dependent on outcome of budget decisions.

**Link to Police and Crime Plan:** The budget has a direct correlation with the police and crime plan delivery

**Communications:** Through FSOB

**Person to Contact**

T/Chief Constable David Sandall

S151 Finance Director Paul Dawkins

# POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

## Financial Scrutiny and Oversight Board

Report of	<b>CHIEF CONSTABLE</b>
Subject	<b>Summary of Services and Benefits to Taxpayers from Leicestershire Police</b>
Date	<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b>
Author	<b>Chief Officer Team</b>

### 1. Purpose

1.1 To provide the Police and Crime Commissioner with details on the policing services funded by, and benefits provided to, taxpayers across LLR.

It aims to answer the question of why the PCC should be asking taxpayers to be funding services in addition to statutory policing responsibilities.

1.2 This report specifically seeks to provide information on the following key issues:

- What taxpayers get for their money from Leicestershire Police.
- How we can reassure taxpayers that they receive Value for Money from Leicestershire Police.
- The cost to the taxpayer of the services delivered by Leicestershire Police.

### 2. Overview

2.1 Leicestershire Police is funded through three key funding streams:

- General taxation (Central Government Grant).
- The policing element Council Tax (the “precept”), this is set locally each year to help keep services running 24/7 across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
- National thematic funding streams (e.g. Hot Spot Policing Grants).

2.2 Funding Leicestershire Police is not like paying for a subscription; it's paying into a system that provides universal protection, safety, and order for everyone in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, regardless of where they live or what they earn 24/7, 365 days a year.

2.3 In Leicestershire Police, approximately 81% of our entire budget is spent on people, officers, PCSOs and staff because policing is fundamentally a people-driven business delivered around the clock.

### 3. What Do Taxpayers Get for their Money (in LLR)?

3.1 Below are the core services taxpayers' contribution funds locally, with additional data and insights around the scale of what we deliver:

#### A) Emergency Response (999 and 101)

Taxpayers get:

- Immediate response to life-threatening emergencies.
- Attendance at collisions, crimes in progress, missing persons, and domestic incidents.
- Close coordination with Ambulance and Fire Services, 24/7, 365 days a year.

#### Leicestershire facts:

- In 2025 we handled around 1,700–1,800 calls for service every day, with 5,243 more 999 calls and 17,902 more non-emergency calls than the previous year, demand we must be resourced to handle at all times.
- We've invested in our Force Contact & Operations Room to improve 999/101 performance, including refurbishing facilities, strengthening staffing capacity, and deploying new digital tools because answering the phone quickly and effectively is fundamental to public protection, harm prevention and saving lives.

#### B) Crime Prevention and Deterrence

A significant part of our policing approach is preventing harm before it occurs. As a result, residents, students, businesses, and visitors across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland benefit from the following prevention activity:

- Visible neighbourhood policing that deters crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Licensing and safety checks for venues, events and public spaces.
- Prevention and partnership work with OPCC, councils, schools, and charities.
- Intelligence led disruption of organised crime and high-harm offenders.

#### Leicestershire facts:

- Our operating model is a neighbourhood policing approach: where local teams own local problems and work alongside specialist units to tackle more complex crime. This model was strengthened through Operation Forefront, enhancing both problem solving and visibility.
- We run a joint Prevention Directorate with the OPCC to scale evidence-based prevention across communities.

#### C) Investigation of Crime

Taxpayers' funding pays for the people and technology to:

- Investigate crime – including violence, sexual offences and VAWG, burglary, vehicle crime, rural crime, retail and business crime, fraud, online crime, hate crime, cybercrime, and all crimes under the Home Office National Crime Recording Standards.
- Secure evidence, arrest and interview suspects, safeguard victims, and support prosecutions.

**Leicestershire facts:**

- In 2025 we investigated 94,000 crimes, made over 15,000 arrests, and actively managed over 30,000 safeguarding referrals to protect vulnerable adults and children.
- We launched 11 homicide investigations (2 convictions secured; 5 charged and in the courts; 4 ongoing).
- We created an Assessment & Investigation Unit (AIU) that handles significant volumes efficiently (including video appointments for victims) so frontline responders can stay out in communities.

**D) Protection of Vulnerable People**

We deliver services that allow us to safeguard those most at risk:

- People affected by domestic abuse, children at risk, exploited adults, missing people.
- People in mental health crisis (often requiring longer officer time and specialist partners).

**Leicestershire facts:**

- In custody each month we have 1200-1300 detainees, 43% of detainees present a mental health need; 30% report self-harm; 14.5% require an Appropriate Adult, all of which lengthens safe processing and care time.
- We make 1,000+ child protection referrals per month which we deliver through dedicated safeguarding teams and joint working with partners.

**E) Counter Terrorism, Firearms & National Security**

Taxpayers in LLR receive support and protection from dedicated Counter Terrorism, Firearms and Serious and Organised Crime Teams.

Much of this work is not visible, and that's by design. However, they protect local communities by the:

- Disruption of extremist threats and organised networks
- Protection of crowded places and critical infrastructure
- Coordination with regional and national policing units
- Response to public safety incidents and crimes

**Leicestershire facts:**

- In 2025 we mounted 225 firearms deployments (178 dynamic incidents and 44 planned operations), plus mutual aid for national threats. Maintaining trained firearms and public order capabilities is a legal and operational requirement that protects LLR.

**F) Public Order & Safety at Events**

Leicestershire Police provide public order and public safety services across LLR and beyond and ensures our communities can safely enjoy events throughout the year. The services we provide include policing:

- Protests and marches
- Football matches, concerts, festivals, and major community events
- VIP and royal protection

**Leicestershire facts:**

- We delivered 70 full public order deployments in 2025 (53 locally and 17 in national support) to keep people safe and minimise disruption.

## G) Roads Policing

Taxpayer funding supports:

- Serious collision response and investigations
- Tackling dangerous and uninsured driving
- Disrupting criminals who use the road network

### Leicestershire facts:

- Our roads policing and tactical teams are structured and staffed to meet 24/7 coverage standards and national capability requirements, staffing levels are set against risk, call patterns and shift models.

## H) Partnership Work That Saves Society Money

Leicestershire Police have statutory responsibilities that it legally must deliver and supports other locally based partners in protecting our communities.

We work with:

- NHS & Mental Health Services, Local Councils, and Social Care
- Probation, Prisons, and Charities
- Regional and national policing collaborations for specialist capabilities and services

### Leicestershire facts:

- We participate in national collaborations (e.g., specialist forensics, wildlife crime, ACRO checks, protest intelligence coordination) that would be costly or impossible to reproduce alone, this keeps people in LLR safer, more efficiently.

## 4. Do Leicestershire Police provide Good Value to local Taxpayers?

4.1 Independent scrutiny says we run a lean, value for money service.

- External and internal auditors have given the highest levels of assurance on our financial management and sustainability.
- HMICFRS Value for Money profiles show Leicestershire has very lean “back office” functions compared to peers, with proportionally higher investment in frontline delivery.

## 5. As a force the demand that we managed in 2025 included:

- 1,700–1,800 calls for service every day (more 999s and 101s than last year)
- 15,000 arrests, ~94,000 crimes investigated, ~4,000 missing people located
- 30,000 safeguarding referrals shared with partners to protect vulnerable people
- 11 homicide investigations, 225 firearms deployments, 70 public order deployments

## 6. How we stretch the taxpayers’ pound in LLR:

- We have delivered £23m of efficiency savings in the last three years, redesigned processes and introduced technology (incl. automation and AI) that gave 200,000 staff hours back to frontline work without compromising safety.
- Our operating model prioritises local neighbourhood policing supported by specialists, so issues are owned and solved where they occur.

## **7. What Happens if Funding Falls Behind Local Need?**

7.1 We plan meticulously to protect the essentials; i.e. public safety, emergency response, and local neighbourhood policing. However, some functions, particularly, non -statutory ones, may have to be scaled back or delivered differently if funding reduces while demand and complexity continue to rise.

That is why we:

- Adopt a medium-term view of finances.
- Continue to reform how we work, including the use of digital tools, automation, artificial intelligence, and process redesign.
- Maximise collaborations where a national or regional solution offer safer, more efficient, and more cost-effective outcomes for residents across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

7.2 A reduction in the support provided by taxpayers will have a significant impact on public service delivery, community safety, and operational capability of the force in the short, medium, and long term.

Such reductions could place the public at risk as the operational capacity and capability of the force would have to reduce significantly, requiring time and planning.

## **8. Summary**

8.1 For every pound put into policing locally, it funds:

- A 24/7 emergency service that attends when it is needed the most
- Visible neighbourhood policing that keeps streets, towns, and villages safe
- Skilled investigators and specialists team equipped to tackle today's complex and high-harm crimes
- Protection for the most vulnerable of our communities
- Behind the scenes enabling teams and national collaborations that ensure services operate efficiently and effectively behind the scenes

8.2 Leicestershire Police remain committed to delivering consistent, good public service with high standards, and we'll continue to demonstrate how taxpayers' money is translated into safety, justice and protection for the people of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

This page is intentionally left blank