Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 22 September 2025.

PRESENT

Cllr. Les Phillimore (in the Chair)

Cllr. Liz Blackshaw
Cllr. Stuart Bray
Cllr Sharon Butcher
Parisha Chavda
Cllr. Elly Cutkelvin
Cllr. Mohammed Dawood
Mr. D. Harrison CC
Cllr. Kevin Loydall
Cllr. Christine Wise
Cllr. Darren Woodiwiss
Cllr. Andrew Woodman

In attendance

Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner
Charlotte Chirico - Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Claire Trewartha – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

24. Public Question Time.

There were no questions submitted.

25. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

26. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

27. Questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner relating to recent change in political affiliation.

On 2 May 2024, Mr Rupert Matthews was elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as a member of the Conservative Party. On 4 August 2025, Mr. Matthews announced that he had joined Reform UK. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel had invited the Mr. Matthews to this meeting in order to answer questions relating to this decision, as it appeared necessary in order for the Panel to carry out its functions.

The Panel questioned the PCC regarding his decision. Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

(i). Regarding what had prompted the decision to change political allegiance, the PCC stated that he had become dissatisfied with the Conservative Party at a national level, particularly in relation to the Shadow Home Secretary, and that he felt that Reform UK had been moving in the right direction. Since the General Election in

May 2024, the political landscape of the country had changed and there had been a growth in support for Reform UK and reduction in support for the Conservative Party. The PCC had hoped that the national Conservative Party would have reacted to the change in political landscape in a more positive and dynamic way than had been the case. He also stated that although Reform UK only had five sitting MPs, they often set the news agenda.

(ii). Concern was raised that swapping of political allegiance could affect the policies which formed the basis of the PCC's election manifesto. The PCC stated that the policies which formed the basis for his election manifesto had been converted into the Police and Crime Plan and that he was committed to delivering that Plan. He stated that the change in political allegiance would not impact the delivery of the Plan.

(iii). Further concern was raised that change in political allegiance represented a change in personal values and that the PCC may no longer have a mandate from the public. The PCC provided assurance that his personal values had not changed and stated that there was distinction between his role as PCC in delivering the Police and Crime Plan and work undertaken outside of this capacity as a member of Reform UK. The Panel remained concerned that it would be difficult for the PCC to disassociate his personal and political values from those exercised within his professional capacity as the PCC.

(iv). It was noted that several media releases had suggested that the PCC should call a by-election as a result of his decision. However, the PCC understood that there was no constitutional requirement for a by-election to be called.

(v). In response to a question, the PCC confirmed that he did not anticipate any shifts in commitments, priorities, resource allocation, or community engagement strategies. However, he highlighted that changes in national policy or financial allocation could impact the work which he, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and the Force would deliver.

(vi). Within the Police and Crime Plan, the PCC committed to working towards increased environmental sustainability of the police estate. A question was asked as to whether the PCC anticipated any changes to this commitment, given that Reform UK was committed to removing the UK's net zero commitments and had criticised renewable subsidies and green energy policy. The PCC stated that commitments he had made through his Police and Crime Plan would be delivered and that Reform UK's policy position would not impact those particular commitments. The PCC emphasised that he was committed to sustainability and reducing costs but had never made net-zero commitments. He highlighted that sustainability efforts would be included within a broader review of the sustainability of the force estate. In response to a question asked regarding whether Reform UK's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) would undertake this review, he responded to say that the review would be undertaken internally by the Chief Constable and the OPCC.

(vii). The Panel sought assurance from the PCC regarding his commitment to prioritising the safeguarding of women and girls. The Police and Crime Plan outlined a commitment for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland to be a place where women and girls feel safe, that incidents of stalking and harassment would be dealt with quickly and effectively, and that the PCC would continue to undertake

work in order to stop VAWG (violence against women and girls). The Panel member suggested that Reform UK had been criticised for having no clear policy on tackling these crimes and that the party had endorsed a controversial figure accused of violence against women. The PCC stated that he remained committed to prioritising the safeguarding of women and girls and would deliver on his commitments to stopping VAWG. He went on to say that he would continue to invite scrutiny on the way in which victims were supported, and how crimes were pursued.

(viii). Concern was raised regarding a statement made by the PCC regarding lawlessness across the country and how the statement could impact both trust and confidence from the public, as well as staff morale within the Force. It was noted that the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners outlined a responsibility for PCCs to ensure that community needs were met effectively and local relationships improved through building confidence and restoring trust. The PCC stated that he was committed to delivering the Police and Crime Plan through working with communities, the Force and partner agencies. A member of the Panel suggested that some members of the public could be less inclined to approach the PCC due to Reform UK's divisive policies. The PCC stated that he continued to encourage all members of the public to approach him, regardless of political affiliation.

(ix). The Chairman asked whether the decision to change political allegiance had impacted on the delay in the recruitment of a Chief Constable. In April 2025, David Sandall commenced the role of Temporary Chief Constable, following the retirement of Rob Nixon. To date, a recruitment exercise had not been conducted. The PCC advised that the delay was not a result of his decision but of guidance and recommendations set out by the Policing College in relation to the recruitment of a Chief Constable. The Chairman emphasised that a permanent Chief Constable contribute towards ensuring the sustainability of the Force.

(x). The Panel sought assurances from the PCC relating to commitments relating to diversity. The question was asked in context of Reform UK's position to scrap all Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) roles and regulations. The PCC provided assurances regarding his commitment to all communities. In terms of DEI, he stated that he believed it was reasonable to debate the tactics used in achieving objectives.

(xi). A question was asked regarding a statement made by the PCC relating to removing wokeness from policing and comments regarding two-tier policing, and how this would be achieved. The PCC stated that his comments related to the Police Race Action Plan. The Plan aimed to make policing anti-racist, improve outcomes for black people, and address disparities and lower trust in police. The PCC suggested that the Plan was too narrow in terms of not outlining the same assurances for other communities. He stated that he aimed to improve trust and confidence amongst the black population and other communities more widely. However, he disagreed with the tactics outlined within the Race Action Plan for achieving these outcomes.

(xii). A question was asked relating to a Leicestershire police investigation undertaken with regards to the conduct of the former Reform UK Deputy Leader of the County Council. The PCC was asked to provide assurances that he had not discussed the case with operational police officers involved with the case and his view on

whether the investigation should have been undertaken by an alternative police force. He confirmed that he had not discussed the matter with any operational police staff. He also stated that he had full confidence of the Force to undertake investigations with integrity and impartiality.

(xiii). Concern was raised regarding the PCC utilising a personal social media account to suggest that Reform UK had tackled lawlessness across the country and made reference to a reduction in crime in Rutland. The PCC stated that he posted this on his personal account as it related to his personal views. It was suggested that the PCC should exercise caution in the type of content posted on personal social media accounts so that the public were clear whether a post had been published within a personal or professional capacity. The PCC stated that posts on his personal media accounts related to his personal views and posts on his professional accounts, and the OPCC website, related to work undertaken through his capacity as PCC.

(xiv). A question was asked regarding how the PCC would be transparent with the public about any changes in policy or funding priorities resulting from the change in political allegiance. The PCC stated that he did not anticipate any such changes. The Chairman reminded members that any change in policy or funding priorities would be considered by the Panel as it would be necessary in order for the Panel to carry out its functions in holding him to account.

(xv). In response to a question asked, the PCC confirmed that he would ensure that his decisions continue to reflect the needs of all communities, regardless of political affiliation.

(xvi). The PCC also confirmed that he did not foresee any changes in how he would engage with the Panel or respond to its recommendations.

The Panel then questioned the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) regarding whether the decision taken by the PCC to change political allegiance had impacted their work in delivering aspects of the Police and Crime Plan. In response to the question, the following points were made:

(xvii). The Chief Executive of the OPCC stated that she and all staff within the Office would continue to be committed to delivering the Police and Crime Plan, of which they were involved in the development of. The OPCC had received assurances from the PCC that the plan would not change.

(xviii). The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner stated that she had also received assurances that the Police and Crime Plan would not change. The DPCC emphasised that she would continue to be responsible for two portfolio areas, the criminal justice system and victims and witnesses, which were non-political areas of focus. She stated that she would continue to prioritise improving the criminal justice system and improving outcomes to victims of crime.

RESOLVED:

That the points made in response to questions relating to the Police and Crime Commissioners change in political affiliation, be noted.

28. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel would be held on 27 October at 14:00.

2.00 - 3.43 pm CHAIRMAN
22 September 2025