

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



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Police and Crime Commissioner's introduction

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How the money works

Making sure that your money is spent wisely and well is a top priority for me. As your Police and Crime Commissioner it is my task to ensure value for money from all the services that I commission on your behalf, be it the Leicestershire Police Force or a youth diversionary football club.

Each year I review and agree a medium-term financial plan (MTFP). This plan is built on a number of assumptions such as known investments, costs of pay increments for officers and staff and fuel costs. This year has seen a number of those predicted costs increase and therefore there has been a significant challenge with the Force to balance this budget, even after raising the council tax precept.

The funding grant for Leicestershire is unfair and the government urgently needs to review the outdated, disproportionate funding formula. I have repeatedly raised with the last Government and will continue to lobby the new one, that the funding formula in place for policing needs urgent review. Unfortunately, that has not been forthcoming. Leicestershire Police works hard to ensure that the best service is delivered within the funding that is received. However, that is getting harder and harder to do each year without fundamental reform. If this is not forthcoming from the national government then local action may be required.

Budget for 2024/25

The budget for 2024-25 has been designed to enable the Chief Constable to manage existing commitments against growing demand and sustain the increases in officer numbers, including maintaining the neighbourhood policing teams that are vital for boosting police visibility in communities.

For the reasons outlined above, there has been great pressure on the overall budget. In the financial year 2024/25 I chose to prioritise supporting the Police force with additional help. This has included diverting funding to the force to assist with the budget deficit. This funding amounts to over £630,000 and includes a £400k contribution towards the force's new Prevention Directorate and over £230k to provide offender management services.

This additional funding provided to the force supplements the additional £230k already provided on an annual basis for safeguarding boards and domestic homicide reviews. This action is not sustainable in the long run as there are many other demands on the budget that I control. You will read about some of these in this Annual Report and each must be treated fairly when it comes to setting future budgets.

Through the work of my office, I have also secured an additional income for the force area totalling £5.4 million for 2023-24, £5.6 million for 24/25 and £0.4 million for 25/26

In setting this budget I considered the feedback I received from local people across the City and Two Counties. That is why I sought opinions from residents across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland through an independent body. There was an increased response to the consultation which had a particular reference to trust, confidence and funding and I must also say how grateful I am to everyone who responded on both the policing priorities and the amount of council tax paid towards policing. The responses have shown overwhelming support for an increase in the amount of council tax that is paid towards policing with 58% of people asked indicating that they felt police funding should be increased.

For more financial information please see the Finance section of my website.

Commissioning

The commissioning of services through my office is targeted towards the prevention of crime or the support of victims and witnesses. Over the past year services have been commissioned and grants have been issued that focus on crime prevention, diversionary activity, real support for victims of crime and working to change perpetrator behaviour.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, I commissioned 59 support services that supports victims, perpetrators, witnesses and vulnerable individuals across different thematic areas through long/medium term contracts, partnership funding arrangements and short-term grants.

My commissioning budget for 2023-24 was £7.8m, this included £4.6m core commissioning and additional funding of £3.2m that had been secured through bids and applications. This is broken down further in the table below:

<commissioning budget table>

Commissioning to support victims:

As PCC, I have a statutory responsibility to deliver a service that provides support to victims and witnesses of crime. For this service, I receive money from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to the value of £2.4million.

Locally I commission these services out and the offer to victims is currently being delivered through a variety of different means such as Victim First, helpline services, target hardening, Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors (ISVA and IDVA), sexual abuse referral centres and therapy and support services. I also include an additional £20k to provide services for victims of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) who are often neglected.

Victim First:

This year I have awarded a new £2.5m 5-year contract to provide enhanced support to victims of crime across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (£500,000 across 5 years). The new Victim First contract has been awarded to Catch22 and includes a host of new and improved services to help victims, including children and young people, recover from their experience by working with the Force as the first line of support following a crime taking place. This service will work alongside other separately commissioned specialist services for which victims will be referred or signposted, if appropriate, upon initial contact with Victim First. Launched from April 2024, the new service will run until March 2027 and will benefit more than 70,000 victims and witnesses of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) every year.

Over the year, my Victim Support service received nearly 19,000 referrals across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, of which 98.9% of victims said that their support from Victim First increased their feelings of safety or stayed at the same level.

Case study text box:

A 15yr old victim was referred to the support service following a report of assault. On initial contact the victim was scared to leave his home and did not feel safe at home. The victim was provided a personal alarm and emotional support and started to feel safer eventually reintegrating in school. After receiving support, the victim felt more positive. "Thank you, again for your help throughout this process I can see light at the end of this long tunnel, and I wouldn't have gotten here without your dedication for your job. I appreciate your kindness and help."

Additional Victim Services:

Further to this I have managed to secure an additional £438,000 from the MoJ this year to provide enhanced support to victims of domestic violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to reduce their risk of harm by developing the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) operating across the force area. IDVAs work closely with domestic abuse victims who are at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to protect their safety and the safety of their children.

Over the course of the year this additional funding, has supported over 15,000 victims including 9289 Domestic Abuse Victims, 3698 victims of violent crime, 2780 victims of sexual violence and 156 victims of Child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation.

These services are vital for supporting domestic abuse victims to cope, build resilience and move forward with daily life. The services I commission have so far enabled over 6,300 victims to feel just that. In addition to this, receiving the right support is fundamental to protecting and supporting victims and over 4,500 victims seen through this service have received an onward referral to other specialist support services.

Crime Prevention commissioning:

Working closely with the Force, Community Safety Partnerships, partner agencies and internal networks such as the Violence Reduction Network, I also commission services and interventions to prevent crime and re-offending.

The OPCC contributes to multiple partnership activities which support the work of the OPCC, the force or the local criminal justice activity. These include; Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards, Troubled Families programmes in the city, county, and Rutland, Integrated Offender Management, Youth Offending Services, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Domestic Homicide Reviews and Crimestoppers.

Road Safety

Road safety is one of the most commonly raised crime types raised with me when consulting with the public and as such this year I have funded £29,290 towards a pre-test safety course for young drivers in a bid to reduce the volume of fatalities and serious casualties and improve the safety for all on our roads.

This scheme targets young drivers who are most at risk and aims to create a new generation of safer minded and better trained drivers. In addition to this I have funded an array of proactive activities to keep road users safe including providing 30mph bin stickers for residential streets.

Throughout the year I have supported partners and promoted 'Fatal4' operations across the City and two Counties tackling the fatal four offences (speeding, using a mobile phone, not wearing a seatbelt and drink/drug driving) and funded several community projects including one providing virtual reality education for motorists who fall short of safe driving behaviour.

Violence Against Women and Girls:

Protecting women and girls at home, on our streets and online should be a priority for every police force across England and Wales. The inclusion of VAWG in the Strategic Policing

Requirement is an important step in restoring hope to women and girls who have been, or fear that they may become, victims of these crimes. The move gives reassurance to victims and survivors that these offences are now of urgent national importance and with this in mind this year I have designed and launched a partnership Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, which outlines the key ways in which public sector agencies will work together to prevent and respond to these awful crimes.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with survivors with lived experience of VAWG crimes, young people and stakeholders. The voice of victims will remain critical to the delivery of the strategy, alongside the provision of funding to tackle these offences.

The full strategy can be found here: [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Partnership VAWG Strategy - 2024-2026 \(pcc.police.uk\)](https://pcc.police.uk/leicester-leicestershire-and-rutland-partnership-vawg-strategy-2024-2026)

‘I am delighted that the partnership is working together to deliver this strategy to tackle violence against women and girls. I welcome the focus on a whole community approach to tackle these intolerable, unacceptable and deeply distressing crimes that disproportionately impact on women and girls and take place in every locality across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The partnership Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy sets out our shared vision and actions to create a place where women and girls can be safe, secure and free from violence. Working together across the partnership we can champion this vision as well as bring perpetrators to justice and increase the support available to victims and survivors.’

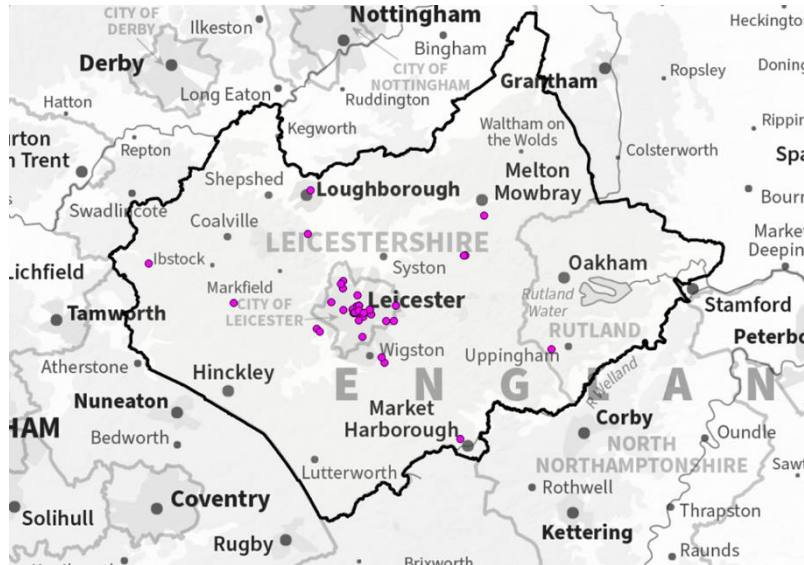
Jane Moore, Director of Children and Family Services, Leicestershire County Council and Chair of the Strategic Partnership Board Executive.

Supporting Communities Directly

I have invested in a wide range of community-led projects designed to support the priorities of my police and crime plan and this has resulted in 3 grants rounds and over £390,000 of funding being provided to community organisations. Over the year we received 130 applications with 34 successful in securing funding. The below map shows the spread of funding across the City and two Counties.

These projects have supported the delivery of specialist services such as a boosted provision for young people, funding sports and leisure activities to create positive outlets for their energy and develop their skills and confidence. This includes St Matthew’s Big Local which received support for its ‘Supporting A Safer City Through Sports Engagement’ and ‘That Football Thing After School’ projects and LMA Youth and Community Development for its Lives not Knives project. Rutland First CIC secured funding for the Uppingham Youth Space and the Somali Community Parents Association received funding for its Keeping Young People Safe project.

In addressing the risk of domestic abuse, I have supported the Zinthiya Ganeshpanchan Trust with funding for a part-time multi-lingual domestic abuse support/outreach worker and provided several grants to help tackle speeding including Twyford and Thorpe Satchville Parish Councils which received funding for innovative speed warning signs that also collect data.



Case study:

St Matthews Big Local – supporting a safer city through sports engagement

In Round 1 of my Commissioners Safety Fund in 2023/24 I awarded £9,973.70 to St Matthews Big Local to provide structured diversionary sports activities to young people, led by young people to reduce ASB and to provide a safe and structured environment for young people to build relationships and increase trust.

Since awarding this grant the provider has seen 1,175 young people engage from various backgrounds, two of which had the following to say about the provision.

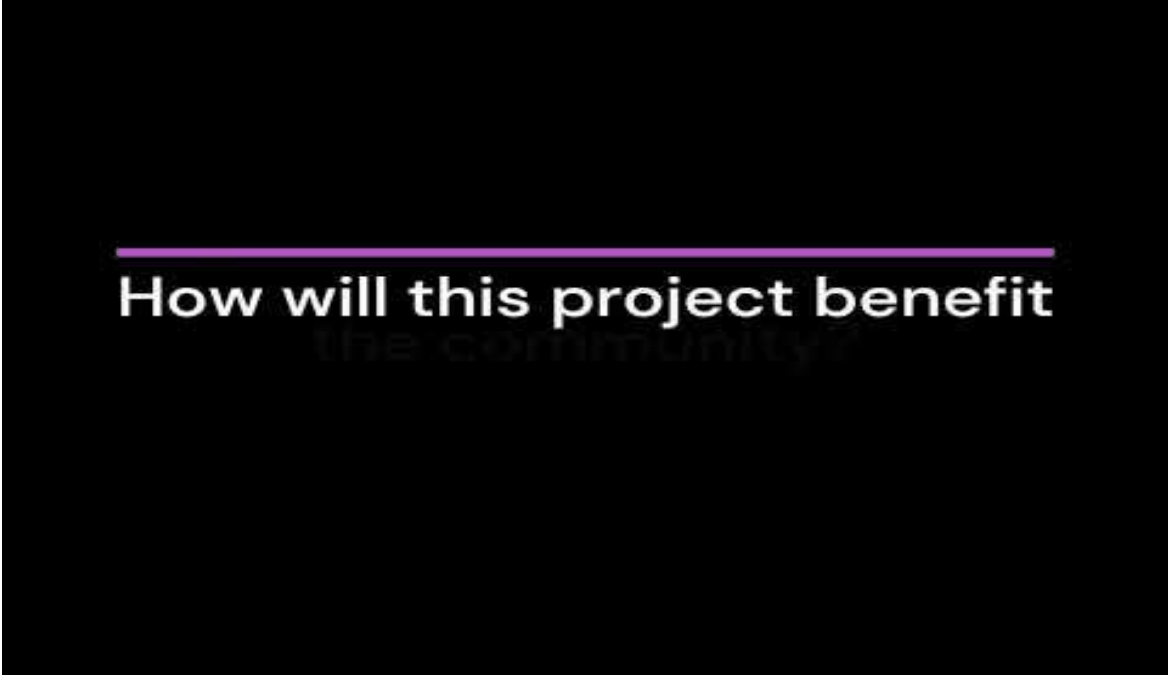
"The workshops have changed how I see the police. I really didn't use to like them and used to think they just wanted to harass us when we weren't doing anything. The workshops were good because we got to talk to them honestly about how we felt and how they made us feel, when they explained things from the Police perspective now I know why they do what they do and that they're here to help. I love playing football and I really like the sessions, since iv been coming, I'm thinking about volunteering more."

- Age 17

"I used to hang out with my friends after school and sometimes get into trouble because there wasn't really anything to do. Since joining the Big Local football sessions, I have something to look forward to, and it keeps me out of trouble. It's helped me think about my future differently. I've learned a lot from the sessions, not just football but life skills too. It's cool to know I have a chance at getting a job here one day."

- Age 15

If you would like to find out more about these sessions, please see this video on the project <https://youtu.be/79GyO5WludU>



How will this project benefit
the community?

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Working with partners

No one organisation can tackle the complex problems and also meet the significant safety challenges that each community faces. Partnership working is at the heart of my Police and Crime Plan and together we will work towards ensuring the safety of the public, protecting local communities, and focusing on local issues.

Community Safety Partnerships

There are nine Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across the area, the CSPs provide an incredibly valuable mechanism to deliver my police and crime plan and to enable this I provide approximately £640,000 to help fund a number of activities.

The funding for each area is based on a formula that was devised to ensure a fair and even distribution of resources based on need. This funding is then used to help deliver against priorities by the locality based CSPs, who provide the expertise, knowledge and experience of staff across multiple partner organisations.

The Community Safety partnerships enable issues to be targeted and tackled at a local level often enabling a much more direct approach.

One example of a project funded through our CSPs in 2023/24 that is the introduction of a diversionary offer to young people at risk of committing anti-social behaviour in Hinckley and Bosworth. As such the partnership initiated a youth diversionary provision, known to be an effective early intervention tool to target this issue through use of a purpose-built youth bus and 3 youth workers which was designed to be responsive to ASB hotspots and trends within the data.

Not only has this provision provided a safe space for over 550 young people over 25 sessions but has also seen a reduction in police recorded ASB incidents of nearly 2%.

"The bus sessions mean a lot to me. They have helped me build my confidence in talking to new people which have led to new friendships being formed. I feel safe when I'm on the bus and I feel I can talk to the youth workers on the bus if I ever need to have a chat with them. I turn up to the bus if I can on the days it comes and I always get a warm welcome from them and I have such a laugh and a good time. It makes me happy. They are so understanding of me being autistic and having ADHD" Young person following a Street Vibe session.

A further example of the community safety funding having a visible, dedicated local presence is the funding of a community safety van to connect police and safety officers with local residents in Harborough. The van will allow police officers to host beat surgeries in rural locations with no village hall and enhance the work of the community safety teams as they patrol anti-social behaviour hotspots.

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Cllr Darren Woodiwiss, Harborough District Council’s portfolio holder for Community Safety Partnerships, said:
“This is a welcome community resource, and we are grateful to the Commissioner for his funding and support with this project. The Community Safety Partnership vehicle will support the efforts of a whole host of safety organisations and partners working together to prevent crime and reduce harm across the Harborough district. With the benefit of mobile meeting space, police officers will be able to spend more time getting to know local people and understanding their concerns. They will also be able to reach many of the smaller, more remote villages and communities, ensuring our rural residents feel listened to and supported.”
 ”

This is the first year of the new model for CSP funding and due to the improved monitoring throughout the year, I have managed to re-purpose over £140,000 of predicted underspends that have been used to tackle force wide themes. This year the re-purposed funds have contributed towards these Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland jointly agreed issues;

- A Hate Crime Hub to be developed with partners, supporting victims of hate crime
- Better data profiles to support the CSPs in their priorities to be launched in 2025
- ASB training for the enable staff to effectively use powers to address ASB issues in their districts

The remaining money was subsequently split across all CSP areas using the formula previously referenced, this is in addition to the yearly CSP budget provided, ultimately meaning that the Community partnerships are receiving more funding to tackle and respond to local issues.

In Summer 2023, I supported the CSPs further by successfully bidding for three Safer Streets grants to tackle Neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour and Violence against Women and Girls(VAWG). The agreed proposals will see these areas receiving additional funding for specific projects, work has already commenced and will continue over the next financial year to prevent and reduce neighbourhood crimes and ASB and raise awareness of the bystander approach to target VAWG.

The total amount of additional funding awarded to these three areas within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland exceeded £950,000.

Key delivery points from each bid being delivered with the additional funding:

VAWG – coproduction events with children and young people, behavioural change campaign, age-appropriate resources, bystander change programme

ASB – Melton - interventions including tools to support de-escalation techniques and ASB awareness, target hardening, CCTV, fly tipping camera, redeploy able help drone camera, increased lighting and practitioner training

Neighbourhood Crime – Oadby and Wigston - neighbourhood crime campaign, target hardening, redeployable cctv, cocooning packs for victims/vulnerable people

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Violence Reduction Network

I have continued to support our highly successful Violence Reduction Network (VRN), and we are now seeing the tangible impact the invaluable work of the VRN is having at a local level being highlighted by the national performance group for the reduction of hospital admissions and police offences linking to serious violence.

The latest figures suggest that we have seen a decrease in serious violence by 6% and a reduction in hospital admissions by 4%. Throughout the year we have received three letters from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners highlighting Leicestershire as having a significant decrease in serious violence and related hospital admissions, demonstrating that our Violence Reduction Network is playing a leading role nationally in reducing violent crime.

The VRN have invested in a number of evidence-informed interventions that reach children and young people affected by violence in reachable spaces. The VRN have held events for young people in the community including Hope Hack events that empower young people to lead on the solutions to violence prevention. In year one (January 2023-December 2023), 12 community groups reached over 800 children and young people, providing them with diversionary activities. The Phoenix Programme has engaged with 56 identified local individuals to February 2024.

The VRN have not only received validation from an independent body through a national readiness assessment for the new serious violence duty. The team received the highest rating, 'Mature, Demonstrating Best Practice' but has also secured over £7 million in external funding since April 2021 due to its work to identify and secure resources to advance the local partnership response. This is 14 times the annual cost of the team and additional income brought into the force area to create greater coherence and help to develop a longer-term strategy to reduce violence and enable our collective, collaborative efforts to protect people from harm.

Serious Violence Duty

Over the past year the VRN and Serious Violence Duty team have been diligently focused on meeting the requirements of the new Serious Violence Duty which came into effect on the 31st of January 2023 as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Duty requires specified agencies, including police, local authorities, education and health to work together to share data and knowledge and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Locally we have taken the approach to expand the definition of serious violence of the VRN and incorporate the duty requirements. The partnership has successfully met all the requirements of the duty before the deadline and have ensured a collaborative approach with partners through briefings, a self-assessment toolkit and co-design workshops.

The VRN has had several other notable achievements including:

- Co-produced and launched a five-year Preventing Serious Violence Strategy
- Reached nearly 600 young people through targeted interventions
- Established a new Community Oversight Group (COG)
- Hosted the first Serious Violence Research and Evaluation Conference in collaboration with the Home Office and the University of Leicester
- Attracted over 1.6 million impressions through social media campaigns

- Reached over 1600 young people through community grants
- Extended the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme into Primary Schools
- Strengthened partnerships with the Sports Sector by collaborating with StreetGames and Active Together
- Held a Trauma-Informed Conference with over 130 attendees

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People Zones

The People Zones project encompasses the work across my police and crime plan with an ambition to empowers communities to believe that they are the building blocks to positive change. communities need investment to build relevant knowledge, skills, and capacity.

Proactive partnership is just one example of where the community and partners working together can make a real difference and spread the support available to the community. Some of the key achievements from developing these partnerships include:

- The introduction of the Trauma Informed Officer to the network of head teachers across the three People Zone areas which has resulted in one school receiving close to £10k funding to develop a wellbeing hub through the People Zone Grant fund
- The development of a “Connecting Communities” event - for the local communities to meet and learn about the services within their area.

Some other examples of key achievements across the People Zones throughout the year area also include; the development of a new communication strategy; People Zone website and Facebook posts published; and over 410 public events organised and attended by People Zone team in 2023. 11 OPCC members of staff have been trained in an Asset Based Community Development approach and methods.

An evaluation of the People Zones project to understand how People Zones is progressing towards it's long-term objectives has commenced with positive early findings for example:

“The first twelve months have built strong foundations from which to grow in the coming years, with trust and connections having been developed. The evaluation report dedicates the success of the project to the sustained enthusiasm and capacity of community leaders in all three zones, and staff from the OPCC People Zone team that are supporting it.”

Virtual Reality Headsets

My Office and the VRN have collaborated on a project developing a virtual reality headset video ‘First Phone: Keeping Children Safe Online’ to reduce children and young people’s vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence by teaching them safer online practice. The project was presented to industry specialists in VR and Community Safety across the UK at an event in October 2023 before it’s official launch in December 2023.

On Safer Internet Day 2024, the team visited three people zone schools delivering the film to over 200 students.

A 6-session PSHE Toolkit was launched directly to 20 primary schools on Monday 5th February 2024 as part of a pilot to determine impact. 10 schools experienced the film in VR, the other 10 accessed in in 2D.

Community Payback Scheme

The Community Payback scheme within the people zones areas is also delivering results for the community. This scheme identifies projects formed from the partnership with the Community Payback team and are actioned by local ex-offenders which provides opportunities to support ex-offenders as well as the local community including business owners and residents.

The partnership between the OPCC and Probation in Leicestershire is being used as a way of best practice in the Community Payback department across the region and over 1,717hrs have been logged in community payback across the three zones. This scheme not only empowers the local community to take pride in their communities but increases public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system.

I'm enthused about the developments within the People Zones area, evaluation evidence shows that there are improved relationships and connections in all three People Zones, between local organisations schools, Community Payback and statutory services, this is further supported by reductions in local crime statistics - the number of victims of crime has fallen in each of the three People Zone areas by over a quarter according to the comparison between 2022 data and 2023 data. New Parks 30% decrease, Thringstone & Whitwick 31% decrease and Bell Foundry 26% decrease.

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"People Zones has been a catalyst for fostering new partnerships between organisations, which has ultimately led to a reduced reliance on services such as the Police"

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Community Leadership Programme

This year we have evaluated the impact of the three successful community leadership cohorts, and as a result recently recruited a fourth cohort of 18 individuals. I continue to believe, and now evidenced by the evaluation, that this programme identifies, develops and supports a network of community leaders to make a real sustainable impact on the quality of life in communities.

The impact of all 66 community leaders is now being seen in tangible results by the communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. For example: increased collaborative working to provide targeted youth provisions, young people created and produced mini-documentaries around topics of importance to them, such as Mindset, Wellbeing and Sports etc, increased engagement with local services with previously unreachable young people and increased awareness of the importance of youth voice - 430 young people reached in a youth project that is co-designed and youth led to ensure maximum engagement.

Connecting with local people

I pledged to be an accessible Commissioner, to listen and act and keep the views of residents at the forefront of my strategic planning. Over the past year I have been available throughout our City and two Counties and I have continued to undertake a wide variety of targeted, public and community engagement and events.

I have consistently prioritised community engagement to enable the residents of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to give me their views on policing in their area.

Parish Council Liaison scheme

Improving communication with local residents features strongly in my police and crime plan and recognising that Parish Councils represent a large proportion of the population across the two counties, I introduced a platform for constructive communication with Parish Councils.

This last year my Deputy, Rani met with 42 parish councils across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and discussed local community safety issues, this feedback will be invaluable to shaping my new Police and Crime plan.

“These surgeries give me the opportunity to hear first-hand about the community safety issues that affect local communities. We totally understand that while some problems are universal, every area has different, and sometimes unique, issues.” Rani Mahal, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

The key concerns raised which will be taking into account when formulating my 2025-2029 Police and Crime plan were Road Safety with a particular emphasis on speeding, Police visibility and Anti-social behaviour.

Keeping in Touch with Communities

I have continued with my 'Community Days', whereby I visit towns, parishes and wards across the area to meet elected representatives, local residents, community representatives and businesses. I listen to their views, feeding my findings back as appropriate and keep those I have met informed of progress.

Over the past 12 months I have undertaken 43 community days across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, ensuring I visit each council area at least twice in the year, the coverage of my community visits is shown in the map. In total within these days I have met with over 140 different community groups, councillors, residents and local organisations.

Following concerns from residents in Kegworth telling me about their concerns regarding car-cruising and boy racing, I convened a public meeting to discuss the issues along with

community safety managers and the police area commander, over 50 members of the public joined us to discuss and work together to find a way forward. Since this meeting, a new three-year order has recently been approved to tackle the issues causing significant distress to residents.

All the outcomes of my community days are shared with the communities through social media, my website and included in the newsletters produced by my office.

This year I held a total of 6 public meetings which enabled local community members to raise and discuss local community safety issues with me and the Chief Constable on a face-to-face basis. The candid reflections of the local public enabled the Chief Constable and I to directly hear from the public on their policing priorities. I have also attended a number of independently organised public meetings to enable me to be directly accountable to the public I was elected to serve.

The Written Word

I have continued to provide a written and accessible offer to the public through my office. In the 12-month period I have distributed 13 newsletters, updating the public on issues, opportunities, and activity across the area.

I have also issued over 103 press releases, statements and responses which have received significant coverage, to keep you informed of how the force and I are working to keep you safe.

Social Media

The main social media channels utilised by my office are Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, social media is key to facilitating a two-way engagement and timely, accessible updates regarding the work of myself, my deputy and the work of the office. [<link to social media>](#)

Throughout the year I have posted nearly 2,500 updates continuing to increase year on year. I have posted over 1,000 update tweets to the public, which is a substantial increase on previous years. I am seeing more engagement with our social media posts with a particular focus on some of the invaluable interventions funded by myself and the office which will help spread the awareness of such services to support victims and vulnerable people.

Responding to Contact

The right to query the work of any public body or figure and receive a response is pivotal to our democracy.

In the past year, I have undertaken 145 thorough Complaint Reviews, providing initial learning if applicable directly back to the force in a timely manner. Of those reviews, 139 were not upheld and six were upheld cases (4.1%)

I have responded to 22 Freedom of Information requests, which is comparable to previous years of these over 75% have been responded to within 21 days.

I have also responded directly, in written format, to 310 contacts from local residents and stakeholders.

Transparency and accountability

Governance Arrangements:

The Joint Annual Governance Statement, reflects the established governance framework and it is published alongside the annual accounts of the PCC. A joint corporate governance framework also sets out how governance operates for both the Chief Constable and the PCC. In addition, I continued with the established arrangements for holding the force to account, adhering to the detail set out in the Policing Protocol 2011.

The Police and Social Reform Act 2012 places a statutory responsibility on the PCC to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the force, which is summarised below. Locally, the main methods of discharging this duty are; 1-2-1's with the Chief Constable, the formal Corporate Governance Board, HMICFRS reports, and independent scrutiny in the forms of; the Joint Audit and Assurance Panel (JARAP), the Ethics and Transparency Panel and Independent Custody Visiting scheme.

Corporate Governance Board

The Corporate Governance Board supports me in holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance and setting the strategic direction of Leicestershire Police. It meets on a bi-monthly basis, of which the minutes and reports are made public and provides a clear and transparent way for the public to see me performing my duties as PCC.

It has now been over two years since I introduced the new accountability strategy and governance arrangements relating to my statutory duty to hold the Chief Constable to account. Since April 2022, I have held 9 Corporate Governance Board meetings with the Chief Constable and his senior Chief Officer Team to scrutinise and review police performance. The role of the Board is to help me to deliver the priorities that the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland elected me to deliver. We have many challenges over the coming years and the Board brings a wealth of experience that will help me to deliver upon the public's priorities, to prevent, tackle and reduce crime. The minutes of these meetings is published on my website [LINK](#) and I regularly report on this to the Police and Crime Panel to ensure transparency around how the Force is held to account.

A concern was raised to me by the community regarding response times in rural areas, this was subsequently addressed in the Corporate Governance Board, in which the Force outlined their approach to improving performance in this area.

I meet with the Chief Constable and senior officers and staff on a weekly basis throughout the year to maintain the strong working relationships between the PCC and force. The meetings cover a wide ranging topics relating to current strategic and operational matters.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

There is of course, independent scrutiny of the force and Section 55 (5) of the 1996 Police Act requires all Police and Crime Commissioners to prepare comments on any published HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary or HMIC) reports that relate to their force, to forward these to the Home Office and then publish in the manner they see fit.

The independent assessments made by HMICFRS of different areas of the force go a long way to boost trust and confidence in policing locally and nationally and provide the workforce motivation to succeed. Throughout the 23/24 fiscal year, I continued to ensure responses were published within the 56 day time period as outlined by HMICFRS. A total of 7 responses were made to HMICFRS publications in the 23/24 fiscal year.

These include responses to:

- A report on the Criminal Justice Alliance's super-complaint – Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and independent community scrutiny of stop and search
- An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales
- Race and Policing: A review of the police service's leadership and governance arrangements for race-related matters
- An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide
- An inspection of how effective police forces are in the deployment of firearms
- Police performance – Getting a Grip (PEEL recommendations follow up)
- An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children

7 of the 7 responses in the 2023/2024 fiscal year (100%) were published on the OPCC website and sent to Roy Wilsher OBE within the 56-day statutory time frame, an improvement from 86% in the previous year.

I can also confirm that the topics of the HMICFRS inspections appeared in our corporate governance structure, and/or at my Ethics and Transparency Panel to provide increased governance and oversight to hold the Force to account. For example, we requested a deep-dive report on firearms licencing in May 2023 which was received, and we continue to review the representation of the workforce to ensure it is representative of the communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in a recurring item on Recruitment and Retention. Leicestershire Police are also committed to tackling CSE and Modern Day Slavery as a pledge for 2024, and Stop and Search is regularly scrutinised in our Ethics and Transparency Panel. Full details of the Corporate Governance Board and Ethics and Transparency Panel can be found on our website.

My approach taken for responding to HMICFRS publications continues to go beyond my statutory obligations which requires me to publish a response within 56 days, outlining how I will hold the Chief Constable to account. I also continue to gather immediate reassurance from the Force that they can deliver all recommendations raised within timelines given, and I provide the significant amount of information gathered on our local position to HMICFRS and incorporate this into my governance arrangements to provide a rigorous scrutiny process of the force on behalf of the public.

My office have also ensured to keep up to date with Engage, a programme from the APCC which supports Forces and PCCs in the Engage process.

I look forward to working closely with Leicestershire Police and HMICFRS in 2024 in preparation for the PEEL inspection and will be attending the de-brief sessions facilitated by HMICFRS.

Enhanced independent scrutiny of the Force

As per the Peelian principles, “The police are the people, and the people are the police.”, therefore who better to provide independent advice and assurance to both myself and the Chief Constable on the legitimacy and ethicalness’ of the force and my Office than independent members of the public

First launched in September 2022, the Ethics and Transparency Panel has continued to provide independent evaluation and scrutiny of Leicestershire Police and the OPCC. Over the past 12 months the scrutiny undertaken by the panel has been enhanced by the implementation of a new structure, including the creation of a new Hate Crime Scrutiny panel.

The panel said it had been granted ‘unprecedented access’ of Body Worn Video (BWV) footage undertaken by police as part of its ongoing Stop and Search scrutiny work in 2023. Members reviewed six samples of BWV footage over the 12 months and were satisfied the force is using best practice in deploying the powers and recording arrests.

Members also undertook familiarisation and insight visits at nine key departments last year including contact management, custody, Safeguarding Hub, Tactical Support and others and was given the opportunity to dip-sample closed complaint files as part of its scrutiny work.

Vipal Karavadra, chair of the Ethics and Transparency Panel, said in the letter:

“We can confirm that any information required, or questions asked, have been forthcoming and any follow up always completed. Thus far we have found that all visits have demonstrated best practices being adhered to and in many departments, we have found the force to be utilising modern ways of operation and collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders.

“As a panel with access and information provided thus far, we are assured that the force operating well as an organisation, employing best practice in many areas and continues to improve in others. Over the next year we will continually push the boundaries of our scrutiny work and report back accordingly.”

The Ethics and Transparency Panel raised their concerns with the findings from the March 2024 panel, and subsequently received assurances from the Force in July that a significant amount of work has been undertaken since March regarding Out of Court Resolutions. OOCR has been embedded into Layer 0 – Prevention and Partnerships and this has seen a significant overhaul to the approach to OOCRs and monitoring of their success. The team have been embedding a streamlined process to OOCRs since July 2024, training for which including the correct use of the OOCR gravity matrix has been circulated and already showing positive change. The Force are also in the process of creating a new Dashboard to provide real time data in relation to OOCRs. The next OOCR annual report is due to the Ethics and Transparency Panel in Summer 2025.

JARAP

The Joint Audit Committee provides independent assurance on the governance, risk management and internal control frameworks through its oversight and scrutiny of the work of Internal Audit, External Audit, inspectorate reports and risk registers. It provides this service to both the Chief Constable and myself.

Quote from Chair of JARAP.

Further assurances are obtained via the Annual Governance Statement, the Statement of Accounts and review of the Scheme of Governance. The Joint Audit Committee meets in

public and the Chair of the Joint Audit Committee produces an annual report of the panels findings.

Independent Custody Visitors

I am responsible for the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme and have a team of 18 volunteers who conduct these visits on my behalf – a number of which received long service awards this year, with one volunteer volunteering on the scheme for an impressive 24 years.

Throughout the year a total of 101 visits were carried out, with over 440 hours of time volunteered on visits and 365 number of detainees receiving a welfare check.

The scheme continues to be held in the highest regard nationally and continues to be accredited. This year we have achieved the Investing in Volunteers Award for the fourth consecutive time an award which has been held since 2012. The Scheme has this year also been awarded the platinum quality assurance framework (QAF) award, one of only 6 schemes in the country to be awarded this level of accreditation from ICVA (Independent Custody Visitor Association).

Over the course of the year, the scheme has seen many measures to improve detainee dignity. The scheme operates an effective scrutiny mechanism, including panel meetings to ensure any issues can be raised directly with us and the force.

Animal Welfare Scheme

I launched the Animal Welfare Scheme (AWS) on 1 April 2022. Once a month, AWS visitors make an unannounced visit in pairs to the Leicestershire Police Dog Unit. They check the conditions in which the dogs are housed, trained and transported. They also observe dog training in progression and will provide feedback on all visits via an electronic visit report form.

This year the volunteers have completed 12 visits. Overall, the team have been impressed with the conditions for the observed dogs.

Local Criminal Justice Board

I believe the role of Police and Crime Commissioner is to be a strong advocate for justice on behalf of our communities and as such I made the decision to establish a Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) which will continue discussions with colleagues to explore how together we can achieve more in order to improve public trust, confidence within the criminal justice system.

The LCJB is outcomes focussed and distinct due to its work is in relation to problem solving and sharing best practice. The Board works collectively to identify local matters and resolve them, whilst endeavouring to remove barriers for witnesses and victims, as well as reducing crime and re-offending.

The Chief Constable continues to be the chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) due to his national portfolio in criminal justice, which is a group of senior criminal justice leaders from across the region.

Force Performance:

The year ending 31st of March 2024 saw a decrease of 4.3% in overall crime. There were decreases in crime types such as violence against the person offences, public disorder offences and criminal damage & arson offences. There were however slight increases in theft offences compared to the previous year to date.

Rape offences have decreased a further 11.6% over the past year, and sexual offences have also seen a reduction of 6.9%. This particular area has been a focus at a number of Corporate Governance Boards throughout the year and I am confident that the Force are making positive steps to not only reducing the volume of rape and sexual offences committed but also improving the outcomes for victims.

Criminal damage and arson offences have also seen a decrease of 6.1%. These are all positive figures, and are a reflection of the hard work undertaken by Leicestershire Police throughout the past year.

Some offence types have seen significant increases over the past year. However, like previous years, some of these changes can be attributed to changes in recording practices such as violence against the person offences whereby all common assaults are reviewed and often re-classified as actual bodily harm.

Shoplifting offences have seen a 29.1% increase over the past year, which can be attributed to the cost of living crisis. This could also be attributed to Leicestershire Police's emphasis to encourage reporting of such offences. Nationally this crime type has seen a significant increase, I will continue to push forward improvements in relation to business crime offences.

There has been positive impacts through proactive and consistent police work in the areas of Burglary, theft offences and vehicle crime which are all recording a reduction. This area of focus will continue to be supported by partnership working such as the safer streets fund, which targeted areas that were disproportionately affected by these types of neighbourhood crimes.

Strategic Policing Requirement

The strategic policing requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view are the biggest threat to national public safety which helps the myself as PCC and Chief Constable plan and respond to them.

A revised version of the SPR was published in Feb 23 sets out seven identified national threats: Serious and Organised Crime (SOC); Terrorism; Cyber; Child Sexual Abuse; Public Disorder; Civil Emergencies and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

I am confident that these priorities are included within my Police and Crime plan and that the Chief Constable has the capacity and capability to respond to national policing threats, either through joint working with other Forces and agencies, or as part of a collaboration.

Collaboration between police forces and PCCs requires investment in the mechanisms for joint working. My Office and I continue to work with the four other OPCCs in the region, on areas of joint working and collaboration. As a result, we have increased scrutiny of areas such as counter-terrorism policing, serious and organised crime, and the National Police Air Service (NPAS).

These regional collaborative workstreams are overseen by the five Police and Crime Commissioners through a regional meeting, which meets quarterly with the five Chief Constables and Chief Executives, to scrutinise collaborative activity. Heads of the Counter-Terrorism Unit and Regional Organised Crime Unit also attend to provide performance, management and financial information and the regional workstreams are supported by a small support team.

All PCCs in the region also have local briefings and visits with the Counter-Terrorism, ROCU leads and Serious Operations unit, to ensure effectiveness at the local level. This is crucial because it informs the joint scrutiny by PCCs at a regional level.

The Peelian principles

When Sir Robert Peel founded the modern British police force in 1829, he set out the basic principles of policing that have endured to the present day. These are:

- To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment
- To recognise always that the power of the police to fulfill their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect
- To recognise always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws
- To recognise always that the extent to which the co-operation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving police objectives
- To seek and preserve public favour, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws, by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour, and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life
- To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence
- To recognise always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the State, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty
- To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective
- To recognise always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them

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