



Lincolnshire POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

SAFER TOGETHER

Deepdale Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LT
Telephone (01522) 947192 Fax (01522) 558739
E-Mail: lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk Website: www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk

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Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

By Email c/o: policeresourcespolicy@homeoffice.gov.uk

Dear Home Secretary and Minister

POLICE FUNDING FOR 2023/24

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2022 in which you invite comment on the Provisional Police Grant Report 2023/24.

The government's commitment to grant PCCs the flexibility to increase funding in 2023/24 with a £15 council tax referendum limit is welcome. As a point of principle, directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners are accountable to their electorate for their decisions on the local funding of the policing services in their area and their flexibility should not be unduly constrained by government. However, precept flexibility must be accompanied by a fair distribution of government grant to ensure that the burden on local taxpayers is proportionate, particularly when households are subject to other financial pressures, something which is currently not the case.

Notwithstanding additional funding from precept and planned savings of £3m pa which will undoubtedly impact upon service delivery, Lincolnshire is facing a budget deficit of c. £10m pa over the medium term as a result of inflationary and service pressures. The conclusion, from 1 April 2022, of our 10 year Strategic Partnership with G4S covering 18 core services including custody and the force control room has unavoidably also contributed to these cost pressures. Lincolnshire continues to be the lowest funded force per head of population, something which has driven efficient working over a number of years but can only stretch so far. For too long, the distribution of Police Grant has been based upon historical allocations, rather than being based upon evidence reflecting demand; this approach cannot be justified and is unsustainable. I welcome your commitment to address the Core Grant Distribution Review during the remainder of this Parliament and confirm that I will continue to support the review in my role as a member of the Steering Group. However, in

the meantime, I continue to urge you to introduce short term measures to ensure that forces, like Lincolnshire, which are particularly disadvantaged by the current methodology, can continue to provide the level of policing services that local people should expect until a new methodology is introduced. Without such transitional arrangements being put in place we will undoubtedly be making decisions shortly that will have far reaching consequences that a new, more appropriate funding formula will seek to address. This would not be in the interests of Lincolnshire nor would it assist our mission as part of the wider policing system regionally or nationally.

Whilst I welcome your continued commitment to the Police Uplift Programme (PUP), your proposal to increase significantly the ringfenced proportion of core grant to support the PUP is problematic, given the lack of certainty surrounding both the conditions that will be attached to the grant in 2023/24 together with the approach to be taken beyond 2023/24. Whilst I intend to support the budget deficit for 2023/24 by drawing upon our very limited reserves, over the medium term our reserves will be exhausted. The scale of the budget deficit in Lincolnshire is such that savings will need to be found by reducing police officer numbers; the alternative would be to introduce a programme of reverse civilianisation leading to poor value for money. Lincolnshire's budget deficit is the equivalent of 200 police officers; reducing officer numbers on this scale implies an immediate pause in recruitment. This may mean that Lincolnshire's Police Grant will be further reduced, exacerbating our financial challenge and leading to even further officer reductions. I urge you to ensure that the grant conditions are sufficiently flexible to ensure that Lincolnshire is not further penalised through no lack of commitment to meeting its PUP target.

During 2022/23, the Force has conducted an extensive Priority Based Budgeting exercise as part of our ongoing commitment to delivering Value for Money for the people of Lincolnshire; we would welcome the opportunity to share the outcomes of that exercise with your Review of Operational Productivity in due course.

Yours sincerely



Marc Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire