

**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
22 September 2023**

**ITEM 9 – Police and Crime Commissioner Annual Report
2022-2023**

Q1. Regarding the Introduction to the Annual Report: You describe one of the greatest successes has been a significant breakthrough in reviewing government funding. Page 26 seems to contradict this. Can you clarify please?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – I agree that it was disappointing that funding was to be phased over a number of years, but it would not be realistic to impose cliff-edge reductions elsewhere in order to equalise our new funding formula without time being given to adjust. It is not unusual for Government changes to be brought in on a damping mechanism in this way.

Another way that it can work is if they guarantee a no-loser situation by putting in significant amounts of additional funding. Prior to the 20,000 Officer Uplift, we were urging them to complete the funding formula first so that all those in the system could benefit. Unfortunately, because of the pace they wanted to deliver the 20,000 at was based on the old funding formula, this widened the gap between those who do and do not benefit.

It is without question that we have all benefited from the additionality of that funding coming in. The funding formula work has been signed off and is now waiting to be released from Number 10 so that it can go out to consultation.

Whist there are concerns about running out of time, and considering all the work that has been done, it is a very good piece of work which has been robust in every way.

Issues are evident on how funding is distributed and the disproportionality of the bidding process. In the example of the Safer Streets funding, we successfully argued that rather than having open bidding processes we should have an amount that is allocated per area that you can bid against. This meant that Lincolnshire now has the same amount of financial expectation for its bids as anywhere else. It is a huge step forward for smaller forces such as ours for a fairer and more equal bidding process,

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especially to ensure no-one is disadvantaged. A million pounds of Safer Streets funding can make a huge difference in our area.

It is pleasing that we have made some good strides with government generally, and with funding formulas, however having the fewest number of officers and staff per head of population anywhere in the country we do still need that funding formula.

Q2. In relation to the Sexual violence coordinator on page 16: A Grant of £78,000 was successfully secured from NHS England to secure a dedicated co-ordinator. Is the post sustainable?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response - This type of funding must be time limited and then we must resubmit the bids subject to the money being available. History would tell us that they do keep providing funding for these bids.

When all of policing is on short-term funding, the short answer is that it is only sustainable for the long term with a continuation of funding from the Government. On our part, we need to keep the pressure on the Government to make sure funding is available and that there is clear evidence that these roles make a huge difference.

Q3. In relation to HMI on page 29: At best 4 areas are adequate, six areas require improvement. What are your plans for overseeing improvement? Also, Serious and Organised Crime for Lincolnshire requires improvement.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response - There are a couple of areas to comment on in relation to overseeing improvement. We have included a link to the public accountability meeting where this was discussed with the Chief Constable, and there is a narrative available so that people can hear directly from operational leadership.

It is part and parcel of my role to do the holding to account and we must respond to HMICFRS to directly respond to any appeal reports. We are working with the Force to see that improvement and the more substantive operational answer is available for people to hear.

After looking at the headline areas from the hot debriefs meeting with HMICFRS who delivered the inspection, they were exceedingly clear that they have come a year early. The changes that affect the areas to be examined in the report noted that the force had already identified new leadership.

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The new leadership had reacted and understood the complexity of an 18-month transition from the G4S contract to bringing everything back in-house, and how certain other areas had to be paused while the transition took place.

HMICFRS saw positive signs and said they were coming a year early because we are doing the right things and going in the right direction. I will be making sure that direction continues.

In the current leadership of Lincolnshire Police, I believe they are doing everything correctly to deliver a good force, which has already been evidenced. With huge amounts of work going on, it is gratifying that there has been recognition from HMICFRS in the context of the funding that we are provided.

Everyone is judged by the same standard regardless of funding situation, and there is no differentiation of standards or ambitions between different forces. This also must be reflected in our ambitions, for example if the Chief Constable has to make operational choices between gathering data or putting officers into investigating crimes against vulnerable children, I am fully supportive of those tough operational choices being made on behalf of residents.

There is a clear plan which we publicise on the website, including the meetings and conversations for both public and private meetings, and I have every confidence in current leadership and its direction of travel.

Q3. (a) Supplementary Question - Can we anticipate gradings will improve in 2024?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response - It will depend on whether they are testing the same things or if they move the goal posts. Inspectorates report directly to the Home Secretary and a different Home Secretary may have different priorities.

Priorities might include looking at where the rules are changing, such as crime recording data where the rules have gone too far by over recording. The differences in police recorded crime is significantly higher than the national reporting that is the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and the gap has grown because of these differences. Now that this has been recognised nationally, some of it has changed and we will see a reduction in the areas that were over recording.

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There are still some pieces of work which will come into effect in April next year. Improvements will need to be evidenced for the people of Lincolnshire even if the goal posts move and they start looking at different priorities.

Q4. Supplementary Question - Would you be willing to comment on how we stand with Lincolnshire Police getting qualified detectives?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response - This is centred around how we work at a regional level as a small force, particularly around serious and organised crime. There is a Regional Organised Crime Unit that is working across the five and everyone across the country works slightly differently with no standard model. Smaller forces such as ours have a heavy reliance on organised crime being managed through the Regional Organised Crime Unit which has a larger footprint within their county area. It is a different footprint in Lincolnshire to what you would have in Nottingham City Centre.

We have an internal process for the recruitment of detectives where people can transfer across or recruit from other forces, and with an attractive quality of life in Lincolnshire we do attract people from other forces with specialisms. In addition, we have our direct entry detective programmes. We are using various approaches to ensure we've got the strength and depth needed for recruitment.

Q5. What direct work are you doing/funding to educate and reassure parents regarding the misuse of illegal drugs? In West Lindsey there are serious problems and whilst we understand there is always a bigger picture, local people need reassurances that things are happening locally.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response - Various strategies are being discussed and a date in the diary is to be agreed to engage with West Lindsey District Council. It is a partnership space which means Lincolnshire County Council are involved and commission a lot of those services. The education elements are also done in partnership, so we fund the activities and work together to make sure that the education and prevention measures work in harmony.

For instance, with the new rules coming in around nitrous oxide usage, we are keen to work with partners on how to highlight the

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dangers and get those messages out to young people. All that we do is in partnership and not something that the PCC does alone.

Q6. At the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, you talked about what you described as the 'substantial increase in officer numbers in Lincolnshire': In your introduction in your Annual Report, you say '...additional funding from Government has enabled recruitment of 199 officers...' and in an online article in the Lincolnite last month you are quoted saying "The government's drive to put more police officers on the streets has made a significant difference to the policing service of residents in Lincolnshire. However, the same article reports that the Home Office data shows that last year rather than increasing, the number of police officers in Lincolnshire Police actually fell. Could you please clarify the position?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response – Before the uplift happened, the projections of the budgetary position were that we would be moving to 1020 Police Officers in Lincolnshire. We now have an establishment of holding 1186 Officers. Currently the number changes on a daily basis. The last number was 1206, but we are not trying to maintain that level because we are recruiting 30 and it will go above establishment level. As people retire or leave it comes back down and then the next recruitment cycle occurs.

Intakes in September and March mean that numbers fluctuate. The Home Office data sometimes refers to full-time equivalents or headcount which can lead to significant variation. If specific clarity on numbers is needed, we can report back on that. It is without question that there are more Police Officers now than there were as a result of the uplift.

Q6. (a) Supplementary Question - When was the starting point for more officers than there were previously? If you look back at 2010, Lincolnshire had 1223 police officers, so we have now got fewer than that at present, which relates to the remark about having the lowest per head in the country. Presumably, it is lower now that it was in 2010 because of the growth in population?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response – I do not dispute that, I have never said that we had more than we had in 2010 and that has not been my measure. There has been an arbitrary date which these aspects are measured by. For example, at the end of April you could have twenty fewer officers than you

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had at the end of March. As the numbers can suddenly change, it is quite difficult to compare years with years. What matters is whether the operating model that the Chief Constable puts in place is actually able to deliver the safety levels required. Over time, it must become more efficient to fill the rotas and to deliver the specialisms, in order to deliver the community policing we need. This has a positive effect on crime and is what should be focused on more than numbers.

Q6. (b) Supplementary Question - What is the Commissioner's ideal number of Police Officers and if it is higher than we have currently, what measures has he put in place to try and achieve those higher numbers?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response – If you look at emerging crime types that did not exist decades ago, policing needed to respond in a very different way. Fraud and scams account for over forty percent of all crimes, and the vast majority are online crimes which have had a huge increase. Considering approximately three quarters of a million men are looking at indecent images of children online across our country, you can see the problem that law enforcement is trying to tackle. These certain crime types were not always explicitly covered in law before, or new laws are being introduced.

If you consider the estimated 17,000 reported incidents of domestic abuse in Lincolnshire alone on an annual basis, I suggest that policing is doing a much better job to better serve those victims of crime than it has ever done before, but when changes occur this is added on to the complexity of going through the court system. The negative impacts of this are not always in the interests of the public or the victims of a crime, and it takes up officer time when they are wanting to be out in our communities. There are a huge number of challenges that policing faces and debating numbers is a tiny part of the wider questions of is policing being asked to do the right things, are the expectations reasonable, and how does that compare to all the other complexities?

A huge amount of work is being done through the College of Policing and with the National Police Chiefs' Council and others to change the training regimes and provide accredited training. This means we can have confidence in professionalising, but it changes the question around what the right number is.

As a non-operational person and when considering the level of complexity and change, it is not possible to say what the future

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holds and to give a specific number. Irrespective of the numbers, we are fighting for resources in a lot of different places to try to keep residents safe and build overall safety.

Q7. Supplementary Question - Given the reports of assaults and verbal abuse towards members of the public with disabilities increasing nationally, are any statistics available, are they being collected and is there any plan in the works to develop a key strategy similar to that for violence against women and girls?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response – The two are not in competition, it is not just a policing issue as there needs to be a societal change around acceptable behaviours mainly by men and boys towards women and girls. We need to work in partnership and support the national effort.

Separately, there is a problem with under reporting of crime and hate crime against people with disability. I am keen to get the Safer Together Team across Lincolnshire engaging with community groups and to really try and understand what the profile of the issues are. We are aware that crime happens and is not reported, and it is a question of how to accurately increase awareness and put financing in the right place to make a real difference.

Understanding is also very important, and we have taken forward local and national training of police officers on how to engage with communities, and how best to help and support individual needs. Whilst there might not yet be any effective data on where we are at and where we should be, I believe at a local level Lincolnshire is improving and we can always do more.

We have a small group of four people out in the community engaging with people to build up trust and confidence, and I want to make sure we continue to have that positive effect. We can also achieve more by educating young people to change their attitudes to people in their community.

Q8. Supplementary Question - In relation to outreach and communications to the wider public, are you making allowances for people with different sensory and communication needs in the formats that you are using such as the web-based text?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) response – Yes, that should be taken into account on every level. For example, the

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colours that are used, the fonts and the descriptors around photographs. The website reacts and will change language to be intuitive and reactive to support the users. If there are any issues, we are pleased to learn about them so that we can rectify them.