



Lincolnshire
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

SAFER TOGETHER

Annex B

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Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Home Secretary
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Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire
Home Office
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By Email c/o: policeresourcespolicy@homeoffice.gov.uk

Dear Home Secretary and Minister

POLICE FUNDING FOR 2024/25

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2023 in which you invite comment on the Provisional Police Grant Report 2024/25.

The Government's commitment to grant PCCs the flexibility to increase funding in 2024/25 with a £13 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. The Government itself has acknowledged that the current funding formula is out of date meaning that the Government grant is not distributed fairly.

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 deliver at the margin rather than address the fundamental disparity in funding. Lincolnshire's police officers are disadvantaged by a system that asks them to deal with more crime than similar forces whilst giving them less resources. Lincolnshire's frontline officers deal with an average of 53 crimes a year compared with an average of 39 for similar forces. Meanwhile our funding is £196 per head in 2023/24 compared with an average of £222 per head for similar forces. This means that, compared with the average of our most similar forces, Lincolnshire's officers have a 35% bigger workload to meet from a 13% smaller budget. Lincolnshire has the lowest number of officers per 100,000 residents at 155 compared with an average of 203 for similar forces; the same ratio for Lincolnshire would provide an additional 370 officers.

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; as you know, I have continued to support the review in my role as a member of the Steering Group. However, time is slipping away, and I continue to urge you, in the meantime, 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 further the ringfenced proportion of core grant to support the PUP is problematic. Whilst I intend to support the budget deficit for 2024/25 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 more than 200 police officers; reducing officer numbers on this scale implies a 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.

Notwithstanding additional funding from precept and recurrent savings of £3m pa, with a consequent impact on service delivery, Lincolnshire is facing a budget deficit of £10m+ pa over the medium term as a result of inflationary and service pressures.

Additional financial support of £20m a year would mean that Lincolnshire would be funded at the average level for similar forces; additional financial support of £7m a year would bring our spending to roughly the same level as the next lowest funded similar force but still 8% below the average of our most similar forces.

There has long been such underfunding of the Force. It has been the continued support of the residents of Lincolnshire through the council tax that has enabled police officer numbers to be protected and some key investments to be made. The willingness of Lincolnshire residents to support policing in their communities with their own money has been very strong. Our 2022 survey of more than 3,000 people showed overwhelming support for an increase in council tax precept in excess of the 5.41 per cent increase that was levied for 2023/24. That strength of support may not continue if council tax increases are accompanied by reductions in service.

I look forward to discussing Lincolnshire's funding further when the Policing Minister, the Chief Constable and I meet later this month.

Yours sincerely



Marc Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire