

# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

## Police & Crime Panel

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5 February 2024 at 2:00pm at County Hall**

### **Members present**

Christine Goldstraw (Chair)	Independent co-opted member
Councillor David Ellis (Vice-Chair)	Gedling Borough Council
Executive Mayor Andy Abrahams	Mansfield District Council
Councillor Teresa Cullen	Broxtowe Borough Council
Lesley Dalby	Independent co-opted member
Councillor Boyd Elliott	Nottinghamshire County Council
Suma Harding	Independent co-opted member
Councillor Rob Inglis	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Councillor Mike Introna	Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Sajid Mohammed	Nottingham City Council
Councillor Madelaine Richardson	Bassetlaw District Council
Councillor Paul Taylor	Newark & Sherwood District Council
Bob Vaughan-Newton	Independent co-opted member
Councillor John Wilmott	Ashfield District Council
Councillor Linda Woodings	Nottingham City Council

### **Officers present**

Jo Toomey, Democratic Services	Nottinghamshire County Council
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### **Others present**

- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Caroline Henry

### ***From the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner***

- Gillian Holder – Chief Financial Officer
- Dan Howitt – Head of Strategy and Performance
- Nicola Wade – Head of Commissioning and Partnerships

### ***From Nottinghamshire Police***

- Chief Constable Kate Meynell
- Mark Kimberley – Head of Finance

**1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023**

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

**2. Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held on 8 January 2024**

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the Confirmation Hearing meeting held on 8 January 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

**3. Apologies for absence**

None.

**4. Declarations of interest**

No interests were disclosed.

**5. Work programme**

Members noted the contents of the Panel's work programme.

**6. Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Precept and Budget 2024-25**

The Chair thanked the Commissioner and her team for the information they had provided to Panel members in advance of the meeting. A budget workshop and answers to written questions (Appendix A) had provided members with greater detail in advance of the meeting.

In introducing the proposed precept and Budget for 2024-25, Members of the Panel received a brief presentation, which covered:

- Anticipated draft income for 2024/25
- Anticipated draft expenditure for 2024/25 by both the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable
- An overview of budget pressures for 2024/25 totalling £35m
- An overview of savings and efficiencies included within the proposed budget totalling £5.2m
- Public consultation showed a majority of people supported an increase in the precept for policing in 2024
- The impact of a £12.96 increase on Council Tax for a Band D property and its impact on other bands

The Panel then asked questions of the Commissioner and discussed the proposed budget and precept.

Members noted that the Government had increased the precept limit from £10 on a Band D property to £13; the Commissioner had proposed an increase of £12.96. The additional £700k that a £12.96 increase would generate would reduce the amount from reserves needed to achieve a balanced budget.

Panel members noted the feedback from consultation, in which common feedback from residents who supported an increased precept, did so on the basis that there would be visible improvements in policing.

Restructuring of resources within the force to help improve police visibility in communities meant teams that worked on Operation Reacher moved into neighbourhood policing. This increased the number of officers working in this area and broadened the available skillset. Members also noted an ongoing commitment to retaining 150 Police Community Support Officers. The number of response officers was increasing, and the Chief Constable's budget also included extra resource for tackling fraud and cybercrime, and anti-social behaviour.

Panel members asked for clarification about additional officers brought in through the Police Uplift Programme. In addition to the Uplift target, the force had taken on 50 additional officers in two tranches. 30 of those additional officers would be maintained for the next year and would remain so long as Government funding continued. Where funding for the additional officers ceased, they would be subsumed into the core headcount allowing the force to maintain officer numbers as natural turnover occurred. Members noted that to receive the Uplift grant, the Force needed to meet its Uplift target; taking on the additional officers helped protect it from falling below the threshold. It also maximised levels of experience in the force before longer serving officers left the organisation.

The proposed budget also provided for investment to improve policing services in Nottinghamshire. This included the introduction of rapid video response, work around IT systems and increases in police staff.

Members challenged the Commissioner about whether she could reduce the Council Tax impact to £10 on a Band D property and make up the shortfall through reserves in the context of the current economic climate. Several members said that it was an exceptional time and expressed concern about the impact of the proposed increase on people who were struggling financially. They also indicated that in the context of the total value of reserves, the amount that the Commissioner needed to fill the funding gap was small.

The Panel noted that those areas where a majority of respondents did not support the proposed increase were from the council areas with the greatest levels of deprivation.

The Commissioner stated she had considered limiting the precept increase but was concerned about the impact of using reserves at this point. She highlighted time-limited grants that were due to end in March 2025, about which there was no future certainty. Reference was also made to the projected financial impact of the force's investigation into maternity cases in Nottingham's hospitals.

*15:02 - Mayor Abrahams left the meeting and did not return.*

Members asked whether a failure to maximise precept income would impact opportunities to attract additional funding. The Commissioner stated that not taking advantage of the full increase would make it difficult for her to negotiate for

additional funding. Specific reference was made to applications for a special grant to cover some of the cost of the Nottingham maternity investigation and how this could be affected if the Commissioner did not optimise precept income.

Further discussion ensued about the level and use of reserves, including the funding gap if the Police's portion of Council Tax increased by £10 rather than the proposed £12.96. Members considered this in the context of the levels and uses of earmarked reserves. Reference was also made to the preparation of the Reserves Strategy, which was being reviewed and would be finalised in conjunction with the Commissioner's budget. Until that time the Commissioner's published Reserves Strategy remained valid and was in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan. It was suggested that an increased focus on reserves at future budget workshops would support the Panel's understanding of precept and budget proposals.

A question was raised about whether previous efficiency targets had been achieved. Members noted that there was a strong history of meeting targets, with budget holders setting out opportunities for efficiency savings at an early stage. The OPCC's Chief Finance Officer gave assurance that in her view the efficiency savings that were being proposed were deliverable. Members also asked questions about the increase to the budgeted vacancy rate. The Panel noted that during 2023/24, the rate of vacancies had been running at a level higher than the target for 2024/25. A majority of the underspend created by vacancies from the current financial year would be used to directly fund the capital programme. This would reduce revenue funding pressures in future years by reducing the need for borrowing.

Discussion turned to the funding formula, under which Nottinghamshire was classed and funded as a rural force, which, the Commissioner stated, did not reflect the demands of policing Nottingham city. While there was no confirmed timeline for the implementation of the fairer funding review, the medium term financial plan did not reflect any increased funding for Nottingham until 2026/27. The Commissioner's medium term financial plan showed an increase in funding as part of the implementation of the review, which would be phased over several years.

It was proposed and seconded that the Panel supported the Commissioner's proposed precept increase of £12.96 for a Band D property for 2024/25. On being put to the vote, this was agreed with 13 members voting in favour and one voting against.

### **Resolved 2024/03**

- That the Panel supports the Commissioner's proposed precept and Budget including an increase in Council Tax of £12.96 on a Band D property.

## **7. Police and Crime Commissioner's update report**

The Commissioner began by informing the Panel that she had commissioned the College of Policing to undertake an independent learning review of the force's handling of matters around the Nottingham attacks on 13 June 2023.

The Commissioner then introduced her update report, highlighting:

- Safer streets projects being delivered in different council areas
- Detached youth work activity
- Measures to tackle rural crime including the arrival of 4x4 vehicles, target-hardening and diesel dying
- High profile fraud awareness and prevention campaigns that would run in February 2024
- The launch of the immediate justice programme, including a case study
- An update on the Restorative Nottinghamshire programme

Members of the Panel were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Commissioner. A summary of the Panel's discussion and answers to questions is included below:

- Numbers engaging in Restorative Nottinghamshire were estimated at around 30; experience of other forces was of slow take up in the first instance followed by substantial increases as the programme became embedded. Members requested a further update once the programme was fully embedded.
- A request was made for further information on scam phone calls.
- Members noted that the fraud prevention campaign would be delivered across a range of different media to help reach the widest possible audience. Different engagement methods would be evaluated to help understand which were the most effective for future use.
- The honour-based abuse team had been integrated with safeguarding. There had been an increase in specialist staff and a large campaign was being launched: 'Know it, stop it, spot it'. Officers conducting work around child sexual exploitation were increasingly taking advantage of artificial intelligence.
- Further work was underway on the action related to 'scrutiny of compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims across the Criminal Justice System', which had an amber status. The Ministry of Justice was finalising a national template for Victim Code of Practice compliance, to help identify what constituted 'good'.
- The Commissioner gave assurance that Nottinghamshire Police continued to offer visits to homes that were subject to domestic burglary.
- The only action in the Commissioner's delivery plan that was rated red was 'work with partners to implement the Sexual Violence Pathfinder programme'. This had been delayed because of the need to co-ordinate with multiple partner agencies. A project manager was in place with substantial progress expected in the following 3-month period.

## Action points

- Confirmation of number of participants engaged in Immediate Justice and restorative Nottinghamshire to be emailed to Panel members
- A report on Immediate Justice to be added to the Panel's work programme to be scheduled once the programme has been embedded
- Members to be provided with an update around scam phone calls
- A response to be provided on the following question on honour-based violence:

*Reference is made to scrutiny of hidden harm and supporting victims of honour-based violence and Female Genital Mutilation as part of the Accountability Board.*

- *Please can you provide the Panel with an overview of your conversation with the Chief Constable – what assurances were you given and where do you feel more work needs to be done?*

## Resolved 2024/04

The Commissioner's update report was noted.

### 8. Independent community scrutiny activity

In discussing the Commissioner's report on independent community scrutiny activity, Panel members asked about the process for selecting cases to review and the sample size. The independent community scrutiny panel (ICSP) looked at three key areas: stop and search, use of force and hate crime. Panel members had access to a dashboard and agreed three cases to review from each strand of work. The small number of cases allowed them to carry out a full deep dive. Members of the Panel were interested in the proportion of activity the sample represented.

Questions were raised around stop and search and the proportion of the randomly selected samples where the ICSP could not find evidence that GOWISELY was used correctly, and body worn videos were not switched on until later in the interaction. Assurance was sought that this was coincidental rather than a common occurrence.

Members were advised that examples of excellent practice were being highlighted as well as areas for improvement. Both positive and negative feedback was provided to the force, with key messages being filtered through training materials, briefings, and updates to officers. Feedback from the Force was then shared with the ICSP, which was also able to request chief officer attendance to ask follow-up questions should it be considered necessary.

Given the historic practice and concerns regarding stop and search and its impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and issues around trust and confidence, members indicated that they would like further information to be brought to a future meeting.

### **Action points**

- The Panel to be provided with information on the sample size as a proportion of each of the types of activities reviewed by the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel
- A report to be brought to a future meeting of the Panel setting out greater detail on the activity of the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel

### **Resolved 2024/05**

The Panel noted the Commissioner's report on independent community scrutiny activity.

The meeting was closed at 4:11pm