



## **Norfolk Police and Crime Panel**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 11am at County Hall, Norwich**

#### **Panel Members Present:**

Air Commodore Kevin Pellatt (Chairman)	Co-opted Independent Member
Cllr Brian Long (Vice-Chair)	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Sue Catchpole	Broadland District Council
Cllr Jade Martin	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Alexandra Ware	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Cllr Graham Carpenter	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Stuart Dark	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mike Sands	Norwich City Council
Cllr Kieran Murphy	South Norfolk Council
Mr Peter Hill	Co-opted Independent Member

#### **Officers Present:**

Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance, Norfolk County Council (NCC)
Peter Jasper	Assistant Chief Officer, Norfolk Constabulary
Nicola Ledain	Committee Officer, NCC
Sharon Lister	Director of Performance and Scrutiny, Office for Police and Crime commissioner Norfolk (OPCCN)
Jo Martin	Scrutiny Support Manager, NCC
Giles Orpen-Smellie	Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC)
Jill Penn	Chief Finance Officer, OPCCN
Paul Sanford	Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary
Mark Stokes	Chief Executive, OPCCN
Gavin Thompson	Director of Policy and Commissioning, OPCCN

#### **1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr John Toye, Cllr Tristan Ashby and his substitute Cllr Alison Webb.

#### **2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3. Members to Declare any Interests**

3.1 There were no interests declared.

**4. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency**

4.1 The Chairman invited the PCC to make a statement regarding the recent events in Costessey which had been widely reported in the media and this is attached at Appendix A.

**5. Public Questions**

5.1 No public questions were received.

**6. Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Norfolk's proposed police precept for 2024-25**

6.1 The Panel received the report which set out the PCC's 2024/25 precept proposal and outlined its budgetary and financial impact. It also set out the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2023/24, the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28, and the funding and financial strategies that must be published by the PCC. The Panel also received the precept consultation results for 2024/25.

6.2 The Chairman thanked the PCC for providing the information outlined in the agenda and invited the PCC to introduce the report. The PCC introduced the report (Appendix B of these minutes) and confirmed that he proposed to increase the precept by 4.28% per annum at Band D (£12.96). He then asked the Chief Constable to report to the Panel.

6.3 The Chief Constable gave further information to introduce the precept funding report (Appendix C).

6.4 The Chairman thanked the PCC and the Chief Constable for their introductions. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

6.4.1 The Panel questioned if there was ever an opportunity to put funds back into the reserves. The PCC explained that the adopted reserve strategy was based on maintaining sufficient levels and whilst he always hoped to be able to rebuild reserves, this had to be balanced against the pressure to put funding into frontline policing. If reserves fell to the minimum, either that minimum level would have to be accepted or frontline policing savings would have to be realised. The PCC explained that until long term financial planning was possible, for example with forces receiving multi-year funding settlements for the duration of the term of the Government, it would be difficult to adjust the strategy. The Chief Constable added that the reserves needed to be kept at a good level as an unplanned, significant operational incident could require those reserves to be drawn upon at any time.

6.4.2 In response to a question regarding the auditors and the increasing costs associated, the PCC referred to his Chief Finance Officer who reported that they

were facing similar challenges to those faced by local authorities. The audit fees for both the OPCCN and Norfolk Constabulary were increasing, and previous years' audits had also not been completed. The results of the consultation were being awaited to identify how it was going to be resolved.

- 6.4.3 The Chief Finance Officer explained that safe and risk averse investments had to be used to protect taxpayers money, so higher rate, riskier investments couldn't be used.
- 6.4.4 The PCC explained that budgeting was a matter of balancing priorities. Anything within the operational remit would be a matter for the Chief Constable and his chief officer team who would identify the shortfalls and how to mitigate those. If there had been a significant incident in one crime type, resources could be pulled from one area to focus on another.
- 6.4.5 Members of the Panel expressed their gratitude for police officers covering the Bowthorpe area. The PCC acknowledged that officers were delivering a good service countywide, and it was always beneficial to promote what the Constabulary did well as unfortunately this was not always portrayed in the public often enough. He encouraged all members to promote their local officers as much as they could.
- 6.4.6 The Panel asked where the PCC thought the 'frontline' was. The PCC explained that he would label the frontline as visible policing, but that meant different things to different sectors of the community. The older demographic in the county understood visible policing as officers patrolling the streets, whereas others wanted to see an officer immediately when they needed one. The bedrock of policing was community policing, and the College of Policing was giving guidance on that. Policing in this country was by public consent and police forces were not used as an enforcement arm of the Government. Essentially it was about keeping the county safe and defeating crime. The Chief Constable added that the term 'frontline' was considered too narrow. He considered officers who were sat in an office investigating complex crimes such as child abuse to be frontline. They were responsible for protecting countless children and bringing some of the vilest offenders to justice. He also mentioned those officers who were preventing rape, fraud and those who were answering the thousands of calls into the control room to be frontline. Policing was becoming more complex than the uniformed presence.
- 6.4.7 The Panel acknowledged the detail in the report regarding the difference that a 1% precept increase could make to the budget. It was noted by Panel members that an increase in the tax base was needed but was being partly prohibited by nutrient neutrality supressing the building of new houses across parts of the county. They also noted that there were variances in the levels of council tax benefits given and surcharges for those with second homes across the district councils. Taking these factors into account, the Panel asked the PCC how much dialogue there had been with the district councils. The PCC confirmed that there was regular dialogue between OPCCN and the local authorities and there had been several questions asked whilst budget setting had been ongoing.
- 6.4.8 Having considered the report and the request to endorse the precept increase, members of the Panel noted that the extra funding achieved through a precept increase would enable officers to do a very difficult job daily and essentially the job which was expected of them. It was acknowledged that there were similar

pressures across Children's Services, Adult Services, NHS and the Court system, and although approving the increase was not something that was easy to do, it would enable those difficult jobs to be carried out. The Panel thanked those officers who compiled the report.

- 6.4.9 The Panel asked if there had been any thought to reintroducing the police community support officer (PCSO) posts. Uniformed officer presence could be helpful and send a strong message to a victim of the crime but there had been reports to district councillors that uniformed police officers had not always been able to attend to a victim of crime. The PCC explained that in 2010, there were 281 PCSO's, and 1812 officers. By the end of 2017, the decision was made to have no PCSO's and have 1500 police officers. To date, there were 1840 officers and no PCSO's. He reported that to reinstate 150 PCSO's, it would cost the Constabulary £6 million, which was not possible. The Police Uplift Programme had increased officers by 250, but it would always be a case of prioritisation where those officers were deployed. Out of the 1800 officers, there would be approximately 300 on duty delivering a 24/7 service and officers would need to be resourced where there was significant need. The Chief Constable added that each 999 call is individually assessed to determine the appropriate response. Not all 999 calls were attended and not all attendance was immediate. For some calls, attendance or a video call was scheduled, when the caller was happy to do so. For certain victims, this had been preferred, for example in the cases of domestic abuse, where a remote situation avoided a police car at the house and the potential stigma that could be associated. For the Constabulary, this also mitigated the cost of fuel, transport and the time of physically visiting. The Constabulary had moved from a default position of attending everything to using the technology and the tools appropriate for the situation. The Chief Constable added that he did, however, support the ambition to have more visible police officers and it was always a challenge when an officer had to be removed from such a post. In explaining the balances that they had to face daily, the Chief Constable reported that approximately 1200 sex offenders were being supervised in the county which was carried out by non-uniformed officers. That number would rise as the Constabulary was more successful in prosecuting, requiring more resource to carry out this activity which is vital to public protection.
- 6.4.10 In responding to a question regarding the Constabulary being 'woke' as referred to on page 110 and 111, the PCC assured the Panel that Norfolk Constabulary was not 'woke' and there was no evidence to suggest it. The Constabulary had respect for diversity, tolerance and equalities legislation, and were working hard every day to make communities safe.
- 6.4.11 Appendix C of the report informed the Panel that the Government funding for the OPCCN budget had remained static since 2015. The Panel questioned if the services commissioned by the OPCCN could be affected by the static figure. Although the PCC shared the concern, he emphasised that his office ran on the same amount of the funding and was delivering outcomes. The Ministry of Justice funding provided the core funding but his office was also able to access additional funding for services. He would welcome long term certainty through the Government's comprehensive spending review which would give charities clarity how long their services would be commissioned for. The Director of Policy and Commissioning added that short term additional funding received for victims of domestic abuse would expire in March 2025 so future political developments were being awaited. Where short term funding was received, expectations were

managed with the commissioned service, and they were embedded within the current set up.

- 6.4.12 The PCC explained that the implementation of the nationally rolled out programme Right Care, Right Person had been paused in Norfolk due to the recent tragic events in Costessey. The length of the pause was an operational decision for the Chief Constable. The activity savings that would be accrued from the delivery of this programme would still be realised when the programme became live. The Chief Constable added that the Constabulary would still attend mental health calls, but they would be more specific to ensure that the right provision attends those incidences, the right resource was deployed, and the correct intervention was put in place. Those calls which involved children would be carefully considered. The Chief Constable stated that there had been regular dialogue regarding Right Care, Right Person with all the partners involved and the aim was not to jeopardise the welfare of any individual.
- 6.4.13 Members of the Panel were disappointed to read on page 31 of the agenda that the increase nationally of £922m in government funding announced for the 2024/25 police settlement, while welcome, was dependent on all PCCs precepting by the maximum of £13 per annum.
- 6.4.14 In responding to a question about the 20% of police officers who were struggling with mental health issues, the PCC explained that officers were making sacrifices daily by what they witnessed and experienced. The Chief Constable explained that this was increasing due to the level of trauma that officers were exposed to. The constabulary had a 24/7 phone line which included an occupational health team. He added that he would like to put more resource into this and offer more mandatory counselling, but it was a challenge to find a provider as well as the funding. There was supportive management and leadership and the culture in policing had changed and improved that it was now acceptable for officers to take time out if they needed too which was as important as medical intervention.
- 6.4.15 The Panel expressed their appreciation for the police officers covering the Great Yarmouth area who were known to the local schools and attended community events. In despite of the challenges, it was obvious that they were doing the best that they could.
- 6.5 Having considered the precept proposal, it was proposed by Cllr Dark and seconded by Cllr Sands to endorse the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed precept increase of 4.28% per annum at Band D (£12.96) for 2024/25.
- 6.6 The Panel:
- **NOTED** the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2023/24, the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28 and the funding and financial strategies;
  - **VOTED** (by 9 votes for, 0 against and 0 abstention) to endorse the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed precept increase of 4.28% per annum at Band D (£12.96) for 2024/25;
  - **AGREED** that the Chairman should write to the Commissioner to formally report the outcome of the Panel's consideration of the precept proposal. In doing so, it was also **AGREED** that the letter should say the Panel viewed the precept increase as being a necessary investment in wellbeing for the entire community.

**At this point in the meeting, there was a 5 minute break.**

**7. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24 performance monitoring**

- 7.1 The Panel received the report which provided a quarterly update of the PCC's performance to the Panel and set out an overview of progress made against delivering on the objectives set out within the six strategic priorities (pillars) contained within the Plan.
- 7.2 The Chairman thanked the PCC for the report and asked him to introduce the report.
- 7.2.1 In introducing the report, the PCC highlighted that despite national pressures, Norfolk Constabulary were doing a good job in keeping the county safe. Under pillar 2 (visible and trusted policing), the PCC highlighted that through public perception surveys, the residents of Norfolk thought that the Constabulary were doing a good job and there were figures on page 123 of the agenda pack which referred to this. With regards to pillar 3 (tackling crime), the PCC highlighted that on page 131 of the agenda pack there had been a 15% reduction in domestic abuse related crimes, and on page 135 hare coursing crimes had decreased by 46%. The PCC reminded the Panel to note the positives from the report and to understand the hard work delivered by the Constabulary every hour to keep the county safe.
- 7.3 During the discussion the following points were noted;
- 7.3.1 With reference to page 119, point 3.10 of the agenda, the Panel questioned what was being done to improve the requires improvement gradings that had been identified in the HMICFRS Peel Inspection report, specifically treatment of the public and serious and organised crimes. The PCC explained that having received that report, the Constabulary immediately started work in addressing those highlighted issues, and a re-inspection was due shortly. The PCC reported that the gradings had been changed in the next report which would make it difficult to compare year on year. The Chief Constable added that the last report was published in October 2022, and they were now in the next reporting year which gave little time to make the changes that were needed and to ensure they were embedded. The grading of 'treatment of the public' had been focused on the Constabulary's use of stop and search. The inspectors were not satisfied that when the officers were stopping people, they were adequately recording their grounds on the relevant forms well enough. Since then, more training and revised the forms had been implemented. The Chief Constable was confident that when this was re-inspected it would be concluded as satisfactory. With regards to the gradings of serious and organised crimes, the inspection had reported that Norfolk was not making enough disruptions, however the Chief Constable highlighted that Norfolk was a low crime county and our number of disruptions was likely to be lower than higher crime areas due to a lower threat profile. It was also noted that the inspection did not consider county lines criminality as constituting serious and organised crime, whereas the Chief Constable did. The Constabulary had prioritised its serious crime resources into tackling County Lines and The Chief Constable maintained that this was the right thing to do.
- 7.3.2 The Panel asked, with reference to page 119 of the agenda, if serious consideration was being taken with buying fleet vehicles and the difficulties that

some manufacturers had expressed when sourcing parts. The PCC explained that the Government's target was to go 'green' by 2030 which had now been put back to 2035 however many manufacturers were aiming for 2027/2028 so there was a disconnect. The second issue was finding a vehicle that would meet the Constabulary's needs as the biggest issue with electric vehicles was their reach. Blue Light Commercial which was set up originally by Association of Police and Crime Commissioners had the lead for placing contracts for vehicles. They were aware of local consultancy taking place and along with other consultancy initiative around the country, the resource was being pooled. Once an answer was known, decisions about the estate and the requirements of charging and fuelling facilities. The Chief Constable reported he had conversations with the Home Office regarding this under his National Finance portfolio and it was estimated that to completely electrify England and Wales it would cost £800 million which was funding that was not available. He also added that the current fleet were the last generation vehicles, and they were running out of suitable, deployable vehicles and the complexity of the fleet was not being met by the current market. Engagement with the consultancy firm would ensure that the correct investment decisions were made.

- 7.3.3 Although the Panel were pleased to see that complaints as reference on page 124 and 125 of the agenda had reduced in the last 12 months compared to the last 12 months, they did question the reason that conduct complaints had risen from approximately 50 to 90. The PCC explained that the figures were a consequence of a change of culture resulting from Officer incidences in other forces which hit national headlines. He explained that issues which may have been previously tolerated were now being investigated due to the increased confidence of officers. The Chief Constable added that the number of conduct complaints cases being investigated would increase before they fell. He emphasised that the overwhelmingly majority of staff went into work every day to do a good job and were weary with their colleagues letting them down. Internal reporting was the main reason behind the increase which reflected the positive culture within the Constabulary and reflected the wider society. He added that the number of complaints were reducing, and individuals were being removed. It was emphasised that the bar had not been lowered and officers remained to be judged by the same oath that had been taken since policing started.
- 7.3.4 Page 135 of the agenda referenced an emerging threat of a substance called nitazene, and the Panel asked what number the threat would be on a scale of 1-100. The Chief Constable explained that the current threat was relatively low but had the potential to rise year on year. The Constabulary were identifying that drug supply changed in line with global, economic, and political factors and synthetic drugs often replaced the dry out of other drugs such as opioids but unfortunately could cause greater levels of harm. Where there had been an emergence of the synthetic drug market in the county, efforts had been focused on the countylines that encouraged it. The threat was acknowledged and was being monitored incredibly closely. A repeat of those events in America were not welcomed.
- 7.3.5 The Panel noted in the report under the category of pillar 6, that the long term average number of killed and seriously injured in relation to road incidents had increased by nearly 8% and the vulnerable killed or seriously injured had increased by 17%. In answering why that was happening, the PCC acknowledged that whilst the majority of those involved in road traffic accidents did not intend to do so, there were still a proportion that caused accidents by being one of the fatal four, (drugs, drink, distracted or by not wearing a seatbelt). It was an area that would always

require more resource, and it if were not for the quality of vehicles, response times of first responder and hospitals, the figures could be higher. The area was continually reviewed by the Constabulary in an aim to reduce the figure.

- 7.3.6 The Panel asked with reference to page 151, what impact designing out crime had on the effectiveness of policing as urban development had occurred across the county. The PCC explained that designing out crime was a method by which the design of new housing developments could minimise several crimes by the way it was designed, and the houses were designed. By preventing crime in this way, the calls to the Constabulary were not received and therefore it couldn't be stated how much had been saved, as resources were not deployed. By following this method, it could make developments safer and more pleasant environments for people to live.
- 7.3.7 In referring to page 152 and 153 of the agenda, the PCC confirmed that the impact of volunteers such as Norfolk Cadets and special constables had a significant impact on the effectiveness of policing, and all carried out a phenomenal job. Policing was a community role, and all the volunteers contributed in various ways from spreading the word, engagement and supporting events alongside officers. The PCC stated that the Constabulary could use more volunteers and they provided a major contribution.
- 7.3.8 The Panel questioned the vetting form that was required by volunteers and if there could be a simpler, more relevant version for volunteers. The Chief Constable explained that the form was nationally set, and he was unable to change it. He emphasised that a balance needed to be reached between retrieving the correct information but also to not deter good people. He also added that there was also an associated cost of the deployment of the volunteers, research into the answers, training, uniform, and therefore a minimum hour's threshold for a special constable had been introduced.
- 7.4 Having considered the summary of progress towards delivering the six strategic priorities, the Panel **NOTED** the report.

## **8. Information Bulletin – questions arising to the PCC**

- 8.1 The Panel received the report summarising both the decisions taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC) and the range of his activity since the last Panel meeting.
- 8.2 The Panel **NOTED** the report.

## **9. Police (Fire) and Crime Panel Conference 2023**

- 9.1 The Panel received the report summarising the events of the Police (Fire) and Crime Panel Conference which took place in November 2023 and was attended by three members of the Panel and the Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager.
- 9.2 The Chairman explained that the conference was an excellent opportunity to network with other Panel members from across the country, understand how their panels worked and to share good practice.



9.3 The Panel **NOTED** the report.

## 10. Work Programme

10.1 The Panel received the work programme for the period March 2024 to February 2025.

10.2 The Chairman announced that Peter Hill had resigned from the position of co-opted Independent Member of the Police and Crime Panel with effect from 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The Chair thanked him for his support and valuable contribution over the seven years he had been a member and wished him success for his future endeavours. The Chairman added that a recruitment exercise would take place for both co-opted independent member positions shortly.

10.3 The Panel **AGREED** the work programme.

Meeting ended at 1.49pm.

**Air Commodore Kevin Pellatt, Chairman,  
Norfolk Police and Crime Panel**



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## **COSTESSY STATEMENT**

The Panel is obviously aware of the terrible incident that took place in Allan Bedford Crescent, Costessey on Friday 19 January.

My heart, and I'm sure all our hearts, goes out to everyone who has been affected by this tragedy and particularly to the four people who lost their lives

- Bartlomiej – or Bart – Kuczynski.
- Kanticha Sukpengoanao.
- Jasmine Kuczynski.
- Natasha Kuczynski.

I hope I have pronounced their names correctly.

What took place has been widely reported in the media with the Constabulary being as open and transparent as they can be in issuing statements and answering questions.

It is a matter that lies in the Constabulary's operational arena so I will not summarise events or speculate on matters arising.

I said in my statement at the time that I would be holding the Chief Constable to account for the actions of his officers and staff.

That is a statutory function of my role.

I can assure the Panel that the Chief Constable and his team have responded positively to my scrutiny.

However, the matter has been referred to the Independent Office of Police Conduct. There will also be a Coroner's Court.

Therefore it would be inappropriate, and possibly prejudicial, to say more at this stage.

**POLICE PRECEPT - FY 24-25**

Thank you

I'll take a little time over this.

I think it's right that I should explain in some detail to both the Panel and the public eye beyond these four walls, what I propose to do and why.

In doing so, I'll present the financial case and then, if I may, I'll ask the Chief Constable to give his perspective of the operational implications.

\* \* \*

My key message up front is that I'm recommending a 4.28% increase of the police precept for financial year 2024-25.

This translates to an increase for a band D property of £12.96, or 25p per week, increasing the total bill for the year to £315.90.

The Panel will be aware that the precept is measured at band D but, should you require them, the figures for each band are given in the papers at page 101.

\* \* \*

So, how have I arrived at this recommendation.

Three factors have been particular influences in my recommendation.

First, the Government's announcements about policing budgets.

Second, Norfolk Constabulary's funding need.

And third, the views of the public, as expressed through the consultation exercise conducted in the autumn of last year.

I have also considered a fourth factor: a look forward to where police funding might be going in financial year 2025-26 and beyond.

\* \* \*

The Government announced the provisional police budget settlement for financial year 2024-25 on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The final settlements was laid before the house on 31<sup>st</sup> January and there were no changes from the provisional.

Norfolk's core policing budget is expected to increase by £14m to £221.7m, a 6.7% increase.

That announcement was in line with the indicative figures

Given in the 2021 comprehensive spending review settlement and additions as detailed in the report, and is made up of two parts:

- An increase in Government funding, the Home Office grant, of £9.3m.
- And the second part is an assumption that I will increase the precept by up to £13 at band D to generate the other £4.7m.

You will immediately recognise that a third of the additional money announced by the Government is predicated on me going for a £13 increase.

And, as I will explain, the Government has not left me much room for manoeuvre.

\* \* \*

That brings me to the state of Norfolk Constabulary's funding.

The Government's austerity programme, which ran from 2010 until 2019, resulted in Norfolk's annual policing budget being cut by £42m or 20%.

In addition, over that period, the budget had to absorb a further £178m in aggregated inflation and other cost pressures.

The impact of these financial hits on police effectiveness could be measured in terms including reduced officer numbers, the reduction and then axing of police community support officers and the closure of a number of police stations.

The net effect was reduced police visibility.

There was a concern that policing in Norfolk was heading towards becoming a response only service.

Notwithstanding austerity, that situation was checked in 2017 by the Constabulary's 'Norfolk 2020' initiative. Norfolk 2020 was a deliberate, Norfolk Constabulary designed, shift back towards visible community policing. This laid the foundations for the current policing service, which the Chief Constable and I are trying to take forward under my Police and Crime Plan and the Chief's Force Management Strategy, because we both understand that community policing is the bedrock of the business.

The end of austerity was announced by the then Chancellor, Sajid Javid, in September 2019. He stated that "no department will be cut next year. Every single department has had its budget for day to day spending increased at least in line with inflation...that's what I meant by the end of austerity"

However, in October 2021, Rishi Sunak as Chancellor announced the three year settlement of his comprehensive spending review. That settlement was based on the assumption that inflation was a touch high at 3.1%, might just get to 4%, but would quickly fall back below the Bank of England's target of 2%.

Instead, we are all aware, inflation has been a much bigger issue than was expected.

Inflation hit 11.1% at its peak in October 2022, only falling below 5% in November 2023 and today stands at 4%. Inflation is not expected to fall below 2% until toward the end of financial year 2024-25.

Meanwhile, the Comprehensive Spending Review Settlement, we're in year two going into year 3 of that settlement. The CSR settlement announced in October 2021 has not been adjusted to mitigate the effect of inflation.

Citing Sajid Javid's view of what the end of austerity should look like, I would suggest that policing is in effect in year 2 – going into year 3 – of a new period of inflation driven austerity.

The result is that the inflationary pressure that has had to be absorbed since 2010 now aggregates to £257m.

\* \* \*

There are then other unfunded cost pressures, three quick examples:

The first is pay:

Police pay is set nationally but is, in part, funded locally.

The assumption in the CSR settlement was that, across the three years of the settlement, Commissioners would find 3%, 2% and 2% of whatever pay award was made with the Government making up the balance. Instead, Commissioners have been required to find 4%, 3.5% and we expect to have to find at least 2.5% this year.

In Norfolk's case, each additional one percent I have to find represents a cost pressure of around £1.5m.

The unfunded cost pressure in the coming financial year arising from the full year impact of last year's 7% pay award is £10.8m.

The unfunded cost pressure in the coming financial year arising from the part year impact of this year's pay award – which we assume would be at least 2.5%, would be another £2.6m. Pay awards come into effect in September hence the description as a part year impact.

Meanwhile, non-pay inflation is then £1.6m, making a total of £15m, including the pay pressure I have just described.

A second cost pressure is the increased cost of regulation.

One example, the forensic regulator has increased the technical requirements for Norfolk's Sexual Assault Referral Centre. This has created an unfunded cost pressure of £750k if Norfolk is to maintain the SARC capability. It would be difficult to look the public in the eye and say we're taking the whole subject of violence against women and girls, the worst form of which is rape and sexual assault, and then close the SARC.

We have to find the money.

The third example is the constant dripping tap of unfunded tasks and training requirements:

- Every time new legislation or Government policy is introduced
- Every time the Inspectors, the College of Policing or the Independent Office of Police Conduct issues a report.
- Every time a Government commissioned review is published.

Additional tasks are laid on policing.

Many of these tasks, or the training associated with them, come with additional costs. These additional costs add up, are usually unfunded and so must be absorbed.

In short, the effect of austerity, the CSR settlement, inflation and the constant demands to absorb additional costs mean that Norfolk Constabulary is probably as lean an organisation as it could be.

I would argue, and I said this last year, that the Constabulary is under resourced. And, as you will hear, that under resourcing is now acute and is beginning to have an impact on the policing service the Constabulary is able to deliver.

The third key influence was the voice of Norfolk's public, particularly as expressed during the consultation exercise last Autumn.

The consultation ran over twelve weeks from the 4<sup>th</sup> of September to the 24<sup>th</sup> November.

The outcomes of the consultation are included in your papers beginning at page 102.

There were 665 responses to the online survey, although 34 could not be used reducing the total analysed to 631.

I accept that's a small sample, but the responses also reflect feedback I got from audiences I spoke to across the County.

The response to the online survey was convincingly in support of paying more to sustain the police

- 56% supported an increase of the precept
- and 44% opposed.

The fourth factor is a need to anticipate and position for financial pressures ahead.

I would suggest that we may face a period of financial uncertainty.  
The current CSR settlement ends on the 31 March 2025.

Work on the next CSR should take place during this year with the settlement being announced in the Chancellor's autumn statement in October or November.

However, the expectation is that there will be a general election in the Autumn. Current polling suggests that there would be a new Government.

Therefore, we may have to await the outcome of the election, and then allow time after the election for a new Government to work up its policies before we know what the overall Government funding position look like, and before we know what the next CSR might look like.

In the meantime, the mid term financial plan, based on the assumptions given on page 54 of the papers is forecasting a budget shortfall increasing over time to £7.6m by 2027-28.

\* \* \*

So, turning to the budget for 2024-25

If you distil my statutory responsibilities as Commissioner down to a single line, it's the line in the police reform and social responsibilities Act of 2011 that requires me to ensure that Norfolk Constabulary is effective and efficient.

Clearly, resources – money – enable effectiveness, while efficiency allows finite resources to be stretched – to maximise the effectiveness that can be gleaned from every penny.

The core policing budget for the current financial year 2023-24 is £207.7m.

Of this, 55%, comes from the Treasury via the Home Office Grant. The balance, 45%, comes from the households of Norfolk via the precept.

The cost of continuing to provide the current level of policing service through 2024-25 is forecast to be 3214.2m

The Home Secretary, through the Home Office grant and the Council Tax Legacy Grant of £9.3m will provide the £111.7m. The precept, including a £13 increase would provide £99.7m.

This would represent a percentage breakdown of 53% Government funding and 47% precept funding.

Meanwhile, to balance the budget I must ask the Chief Constable to find savings of £2.8M.

I am required by law to run a balanced budget, so I must balance the budget.

I have three levers available for me to do so:

First, ask the Chief Constable to make further efficiencies

Second, to use reserves to plug the gap.

- And third, to ask the households of Norfolk to pay more.

Let me expand further efficiencies.

I make the point again that the Constabulary is already lean.

The savings the Constabulary might offer would come with penalties to the policing service that could be provided. In the past the penalties have been largely transparent to the public. This time, it is likely that the penalties would be more obvious.

I have looked at the savings the Chief Constable is offering and the penalties involved. None of them are palatable. What is being offered is a package of the least worst option.

The question for me is how far I would need to ask the Chief Constable to reach down his list of unpalatable options and the impact on delivering an efficient and effective police service these savings would have.

I could use reserves.

- When I was elected in 2021 reserves stood at £20m or 11.4% of the net revenue budget. I felt that this level of reserves was too high.

- By the end of the current financial year reserves will stand at £17.7m or 8.4% of the NRB.

- My current strategy sees reserves reducing in 2024-25 to £15.8m or 7.6% of NRB. This level of reserves supports the capital programme, invest to save opportunities, insurance liabilities and unforeseen operational requirements. It also includes a reserve of last resort of £5.2m.

- However, I'm already reducing reserves and only holding what I calculate I need. My minimum reserve should be not less than £12.4m or 6% of NRB, and I would get into difficulties if my reserves should fall below 6%.

So, yes in theory, I could cover the £2.8m funding gap from reserves.

However, this would not offer a year on year solution. The use of reserves would only cover that part of the gap for one year and so would only defer the need to grasp the nettle to this time next year.

It follows that it would not be sensible to commit reserves to plug the remaining gap for just one year.

Therefore I must look at the third lever:

Asking the households of Norfolk to pay £10 more at band D would raise an additional £3m. This would leave £4.9m to find. I would suggest that the penalties of doing so would be unacceptable to the residents of Norfolk.



Asking the households of Norfolk to pay £13 more at band D would raise an additional £4.6m. This would still leave £2.8m for the Constabulary to find. Not easy – doable, just – but with penalties.

\* \* \*

Bringing everything together: I'm placing before the Panel a recommendation of a precept increase of £12.96 – 4.28% - at band D, or 29p per week.

Chair, may I suggest that I bring in the Chief Constable at this point to describe the implications of finding the savings he must find if we are to balance the budget, and I'll then take questions after Paul has spoken.

## Appendix C

My aim as your Chief Constable is to reduce crime, make our communities safer and improve standards throughout policing. Our County deserves an exceptional police service with a focus on providing the core services that are most important to the public we serve – answering calls promptly, investigating crime well and supporting victims. Crime is a tax on the entire economy: it deters investment and weakens economic growth, makes the workforce less productive and undermines broader confidence. Equally, it impacts the wellbeing and living standards of those we serve. The cost of not adequately funding policing is arguably greater than the cost of doing so.

In addition to my role as Norfolk's Chief Constable, I am the National Policing Lead for Finance. This role finds me in regular dialogue with Home Office Ministers and officials making the case for sustainable funding for policing. I hold this role at a challenging time.

Policing has a £3bn deficit. Borrowing levels are rising, reserves are dwindling, and forces are yet to deliver £1bn of planned efficiency savings. This is set against a total force level spend of c£15bn pa. Between 2010 and 2022, police funding increased by 20% compared to a 36% increase in inflation. In the same period, officer numbers have increased by 2.5% while recorded crime has increased by 25%. Rapid population growth has caused officer numbers per head of population to reduce in the last ten years and consequently, in many forces, service is suffering. That must not happen here.

Demand is outstripping supply and Chief Constables face making difficult service cuts to balance their budgets. This leads to the risk of short and intermediate term decision making, and stifles medium to long term investment in critical areas such as technology, sustainability and workforce development.

In December, I wrote to the Home Secretary setting out my concerns regarding police funding. I have also used my national role to highlight the limitations of our current funding directly to the Policing Minister on several occasions. I made these representations in my capacity as national lead for police finance, but all the concerns that I raised are live issues here in Norfolk.

We face significant and unavoidable cost pressures resulting from high inflation rates and police officer and staff pay awards. Our inspectorates and regulators are producing growing volumes of standards we are compelled to meet, leading to the threat of reduced productivity and increasing unit costs. And demand is increasing, with policing remaining the service of last resort – crime typically makes up just 15% of calls to our control room.

Our total gross budget is £223m. 51% of that budget is spent on police officer pay. The Home Office have ring-fenced that funding so that if I were to reduce officer numbers, my budget would reduce by a commensurate amount. So that is 51% of my budget that I have no control over. Roughly a quarter of my budget is spent on contracted third party spend for services such as utilities and maintenance. Under contract, I cannot reduce these overheads. Therefore, it is only roughly a quarter of my budget from where I can make savings and it is the same quarter that I turn to year after year. This is not sustainable.

By the end of the medium term financial plan, our reserves are forecast to be at the minimum appropriate level.

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Our contractors are passing on inflationary pressures. The Home Office has increased the charges to police forces for centrally administered ICT systems by 19%. Fees for auditing have increased 151%. We have seen cost increases across fleet, fuel, energy, ICT and accreditation.

Since 2010, Norfolk Constabulary has saved £42 or 20% from its annual policing budget.

I have made the Government aware of these pressures. Policing secured a headline £922m 'additional' funding in the December Settlement. For Norfolk, our slice was £9.3m. However...

- £1.7m was money already announced in the 2021 CSR
- £2.1m was a partial contribution to the costs of the Home Office announced pay award
- £3.9m funds additional employer contributions to the police pension scheme
- £1.6m is temporary funding to support Norfolk offer to over-recruit for one year so that the national target of 20,000 additional police officers is achieved

In short, no new money to assist with inflationary pressures or do deal with growing demand, expectation and regulation.

To balance the books, I have identified £2.8m of savings. These will not be easy savings to make and will result in reductions in vital police staff posts and rationalisation of service.

I have not been able to find the money to allow investment into areas of the service where demand is exceeding capacity.

We are currently undergoing an inspection by HMICFRS. I have no doubt that once again, they will identify areas where further resources are required. They will not tell me where the funding should come from to allow those investments to take place.

As your papers pleasingly highlight, we are performing well as a force:

- Crime down 9.6%
- Second fastest in the country for answering 999 calls
- High detection rates
- Low burglary rates
- Higher arrest rates
- ...and the highest confidence rate in the Country

Compromising any of that is not an option.

But Norfolk is no different to any other force in that we are seeing increases in complex areas of demand:

- More missing people
  - More sex crimes
  - More child abuse
  - More fraud
-

These crimes are often hidden and not typically resolved through the deployment of uniformed officers. Highly skilled staff, supported by technology are required to address these threats.

There are no alternatives to the PCCs proposal which do not result in a reduction in service.

Even if the PCCs proposal is accepted, there are areas of our organisation short of the funding they need.

I am determined to reduce crime, make our communities safer and improve standards throughout policing. That can only be done with adequate financial support. I have not and will not ask for funding that my organisation does not need, and I do recognise the financial backdrop against which this request is being made. However, it is my job to provide an effective policing response and to keep our residents safe. I have therefore requested that the PCC provides the funding to enable me to do just that.

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