



**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25**

FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel Annual Report for 2024/25 and reflect on the Panel's oversight, scrutiny and support of the activities and decisions undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Panel whilst carrying out its statutory duties and outlines a programme of continuous development.

The two key strategic issues that have been and remain challenging for both the Commissioner and Chief Constable during the last year focus on the important areas of finance and performance.

Since he was first elected, the PCC has continuously made the case for a fairer funding allocation for Lincolnshire and even now in his third term of office he continues to campaign for a long- term sustainable outcome.

We do acknowledge that the policing minister has recognised the Force's unique position and has agreed an initial financial support package of £5.7 million. However, this is only a short- term solution and it continues to be a matter of concern for the Panel.

The other key area of performance is one being addressed by both the PCC and Chief Constable following an inspection by HMICFRS. The inspection highlighted a number of areas that required improvement or were inadequate. This outcome, together with a shortfall in proper funding, creates some significant challenges and the Panel fully support the PCC in his quest for a fairer financial settlement for the benefit of our local communities. Whilst these challenges remain on our radar we are committed to work with the Commissioner to support him to resolve these matters.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of the Panel over the last year for their commitment and contributions and to the Police and Crime Commissioner and his staff who have continued to provide important information and data to allow the Panel to fulfil its role.

Chris Cook

Chair - Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The establishment of Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 marked a significant shift in police governance in England and Wales. Replacing the previous Police Authorities, directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) were introduced to ensure greater accountability and public involvement in policing. Correspondingly, each policing area was required to establish a PCP to scrutinise the actions and decisions of the PCC.

The Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account while supporting the effective discharge of their statutory duties. The Panel does not hold operational powers over policing, nor does it scrutinise the Chief Constable directly. Instead, it focuses on reviewing the PCC's performance and strategic decisions, ensuring that the actions taken align with the priorities and needs of Lincolnshire's communities.

The Panel is empowered to exercise a range of statutory functions. These include: reviewing the PCC's precept and having the power of veto by a two-thirds majority, assessing the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, requiring the PCC to attend meetings or provide reports, and scrutinising the draft Police and Crime Plan and Annual Report. In cases involving the potential dismissal of a Chief Constable, the Panel may seek independent advice from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. Additionally, it is responsible for handling non-serious complaints made against the PCC.

The Chief Constable remains operationally independent. While the Panel may raise questions involving operational matters, the Chief Constable may only be invited to provide factual clarification. Accountability for policing operations remains the sole responsibility of the PCC.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Lincolnshire PCP represents all eight local authorities within the Lincolnshire Police Force area: Boston Borough Council, City of Lincoln Council, East Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, South Kesteven District Council, and West Lindsey District Council.

The composition of the Panel ensures both political balance and a diversity of expertise. It comprises twelve members: two councillors from Lincolnshire County Council, one councillor from each of the eight district councils, and two independent members who are co-opted by the Panel. All members possess equal voting rights.

During the period covered by this report, the Panel included councillors and independent members with a range of experience and perspectives. Chris Cook served as Chair, and Graham Marsh as Vice-Chair. In May 2024, administrative responsibility for supporting the Panel transitioned from East Lindsey District Council to Lincolnshire County Council, which now provides professional and administrative support within the approved budget. The Panel wishes to record its thanks to East Lindsey District Council for its support from 2011 to 2024.

Further details relating to the Panel including the Panel Arrangements and its Rules of Procedure can be found on the Lincolnshire County Council website by following this [LINK](#).

PANEL MEETINGS AND CORE BUSINESS

Between February 2024 and May 2025, the Panel convened on five occasions in addition to maintaining ongoing communication and engagement between meetings. Each meeting followed a consistent structure, focusing on updates from the PCC regarding the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, the Panel's forward work programme, and reports from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The Panel began the reporting period in February 2024 by scrutinising the PCC's proposed police precept for the 2024/25 fiscal year. A thematic report on substance abuse was also discussed, prompting significant questions regarding local treatment services and enforcement efforts.

In June 2024 the Panel turned its attention to increasing independent representation, discussing the value of additional co-opted members. Shortly thereafter, in August 2024 the Panel held a confirmation hearing for the appointment of a new Deputy PCC.

At the meeting in September 2024 the Panel conducted its annual review of the PCC's Annual Report, offering feedback on the transparency and clarity of performance reporting. In November, the Panel examined progress on initiatives tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and considered a proposal for the Panel to publish its own Annual Report, a recommendation that led to the creation of this document.

The final two meetings of the period, in February and March 2025, dealt with the 2025/26 precept proposal, the results of a member skills audit, updates to the complaints process, and a review of Lincolnshire's Safer Communities Plan.

Detailed minutes and supporting documents for PCP meetings throughout the year can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website by following this [LINK](#)

KEY ACTIVITIES AND THEMES

For detailed insight into the discussions and decisions taken by the Panel you can find minutes and supporting papers for all PCP meetings on the [Lincolnshire County Council website](#). In addition video recordings of the PCP meetings can be viewed on the [Lincolnshire County Council YouTube channel](#).

The following paragraphs provide a summary of some of the key issues raised during Panel meetings over the past year.

GOVERNANCE

One of the most significant administrative changes during the year was the transition of host authority status from East Lindsey District Council to Lincolnshire County Council. This change ensured continuity of support while offering new opportunities for closer integration with county-wide strategic planning.

Recognising the evolving complexity of policing issues the Panel initiated a skills audit to evaluate its own capabilities. The results identified that additional financial and budgetary expertise would be valuable. This informed the Panel's decision to recommend expanding the number of independent co-opted members from two to four, with recruitment scheduled for mid-2025.

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN SCRUTINY

Throughout the year, the Panel examined the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. Members expressed a desire for clearer performance measures and outcomes. While the PCC pointed to the challenge of quantifying success he committed to incorporating more measurable elements into future reporting.

The Panel also scrutinised several community safety initiatives including the *Happening Centre* in Sleaford, designed to prevent knife crime through education. Panel members visited the centre and emphasised the need for long-term impact data to justify ongoing funding.

Other concerns raised included the visibility of police officers following station closures, particularly in rural areas. Members expressed unease over the reduction of PCSOs and the centralisation of personnel in towns like Gainsborough. In response, the PCC explained that operational decisions were based on needs assessments and pointed to the redeployment of specialist officers in rural communities.

Public concerns around shoplifting, antisocial behaviour, homelessness, and early prisoner releases were also discussed. The PCC reported on efforts to manage high-risk individuals and enhance community safety using tools such as CCTV, Criminal Behaviour Orders, and targeted patrols.

BUDGET AND FUNDING CHALLENGES

The Panel conducted a detailed review of the proposed precepts for both 2024/25 and 2025/26. In 2024 the PCC proposed an increase of £12.96 for Band D properties which the Panel approved. A public consultation revealed strong support for increased police funding with over 80% of respondents in favour.

The 2025/26 proposal involved a £13.95 increase to address a growing budget gap, projected to rise to £20 million in future years. Members expressed concern about the potential reduction of 200 officers if the budget shortfall was not addressed. The PCC assured the Panel that any reductions would be managed through natural attrition.

Questions were also raised regarding Lincolnshire's disproportionately low share of national police funding - less than 1%. The PCC reported that he was exploring a potential judicial review of the funding formula though some Panel members urged caution and cost-benefit analysis before proceeding.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The Panel showed interest in new policing technologies, particularly facial recognition and the use of artificial intelligence. While generally supportive, members stressed the importance of ethical oversight. Rural crime, including fuel theft, prompted discussions about the strategic deployment of mobile CCTV units, and the PCC assured the Panel that intelligence-led surveillance was underway.

Members also inquired about the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS), expected to launch in 2026, seeking clarity on the operational improvements it would deliver.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VWAG)

At the November 2024 meeting the Panel assessed the PCC's efforts to reduce incidents of VAWG. Members requested greater data transparency, including the presentation of domestic abuse figures as percentages to provide context. The issue of drink spiking was raised, as was the long-term effectiveness of educational programmes like those offered by The Happening Centre.

Panel members also advocated for inclusivity, emphasising the importance of ensuring that initiatives address the safety and wellbeing of all genders, including the trans community.

COMPLAINTS AND OVERSIGHT

Although few formal complaints about the PCC were received the Panel identified room for improvement in oversight processes. A working group was established to review the complaints procedure and to assess the code of conduct complaints process.

REPORTING, REPRESENTATION AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The suggestion to produce this Annual Report emerged from discussions about transparency and accountability. A task and finish group was created to shape its content and presentation, ensuring the report reflects the breadth and depth of the Panel's work.

In response to the skills audit, several development sessions were planned for Panel members, covering topics such as budget scrutiny, the role of technology in policing, and legislative updates.

Some members also stressed the importance of representing Lincolnshire's interests at national meetings of Police and Crime Panels. There was a collective desire to ensure the Panel remained non-political and focused on its core mission of constructive scrutiny.

In addition to its scheduled regular meetings the panel also benefitted from additional sessions including budget briefings from the Force and OPCC finance directors in advance of scrutiny of the precept proposals, a briefing from HMICFRC on inspection processes and outcomes, and a training session on the role remit of PCs.

HMICFRS INSPECTION AND SPECIAL MEASURES

During the reporting period, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its latest inspection findings on Lincolnshire Police, resulting in the force being placed under the HMICFRS 'Engage' process - commonly referred to as special measures. The inspection identified a number of significant areas requiring urgent improvement, particularly concerning the force's effectiveness in protecting vulnerable people and its approach to investigating crime. Placement in the Engage process reflects HMICFRS's concerns about the force's ability to consistently deliver an acceptable standard of service to the public. In response, Lincolnshire Police, under scrutiny from HMICFRS and with support from the Police and Crime Commissioner, has initiated a comprehensive improvement plan to address the areas of concern. The Police and Crime Panel will monitor progress closely and ensure that robust governance and accountability mechanisms are in place to support the force's recovery and improvement.

CONCLUSION

In this, the first annual report of the work of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel we have aimed to demonstrate how the panel applies active, effective and constructive scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner. During meetings members have sought to challenge assumptions, demanded transparency, and maintain a consistent focus on improving policing outcomes for residents across the county.

Looking to the future Lincolnshire Police will continue to face challenges of matching limited resources to ever increasing demands and the Panel will work closely with the Commissioner in supporting his endeavours to ensure that Policing across Lincolnshire is delivered efficiently and effectively in meeting the needs and expectations of its communities. To that end the Panel will ensure that its work programme will be closely aligned with its statutory duties and local strategic policing priorities and issues with particular focus on work resulting from the outcome of the HMICFRS report. That work programme will be clearly set out in future meetings and details will be available on the Lincolnshire County Council website.

