



**POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**  
for Leicester,  
Leicestershire & Rutland  
Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Date: 01 October 2024

Dear Minister Johnson

I write to you after your very kind offer in the summer to build constructive relationships with Police and Crime Commissioners across the country. My office has reached out to try to arrange a meeting. Unfortunately, they have not received a response, so I am writing instead.

I wrote to the previous Government to set out my points below about the unsatisfactory situation we find ourselves in financially and the annual struggle that we are having across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to maintain the levels of service that the people of our city and two counties deserve. Now you have settled into your new role, I would like to draw the situation to your attention also.

We came into 2024/2025 after years of unfunded or only part funded pay awards and pensions grants that did not meet the increases that the Force was required to pay. In 2022/23 Government agreed a pay increase of £1,900 per annum for all police officers and staff. However, the Government grant issued only provided funding for half of the officer increase and none of the staff increase. This created a funding deficit of £4.8 million in 2023/24 rising by £300k year-on-year thereafter. The pay award in 2023/24 was also not fully funded by the Government and the grant towards the centrally set 7% pay rise only covers 77% of the actual cost for both Police Officers and Staff creating a further deficit of £2.3m. This means that we moved into 2024/25 with an £8.6m budget deficit which was mostly driven by insufficient pay award grant funding.

I welcomed the news this week that this Government was funding the pay award for Police Officers. I hope the same will follow for Police Staff, who are also essential to the efficient working of a modern Police Force. I am afraid that it still won't be enough for the long term.

We are now looking beyond to try and establish a sustainable picture for our medium-term financial plan to take us through to 2029. The deficits that the archaic funding formula is causing are making this task near on impossible.



I have so many positive examples of policing activity, crime prevention and victim support across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Our proactive policing activity meant that we were able to avoid seeing any of the widespread civil unrest that many other areas did this summer. Our Violence Reduction Network is celebrating five years, with a solid reduction in incidences of serious violence across our area due to their work and the collaboration of the partnership approach they have taken. I have a real concern that without urgent reform of funding into policing, this good work will be undone.

The previous Government committed to a review of the police funding formula eight years ago. We still have not seen the outcome in relation to that activity. Characteristics of an area, that are known to increase crime, are not even taken into consideration when a Force area is allocated funding. For example, it is well known that the presence of a prison increases crime, which must be policed, within its local geography. Leicestershire is home to one of those new prisons. Your office states, within one Department, that this is essential to meet the demand of the ever-growing prison population. However, it does not recognise in another Department the impact such an institution has on the local area, nor does it fund that impact.

In addition, policing across England and Wales is being impacted by the introduction of legislation in-year, which lays extra burdens on forces without any addition to funding provided from central government to pay for them. For example, the ban on the XL Bully breed of dog means that we have had to allocate a vastly increased budget to this area of work, it has more than doubled the funding needed for our region. That work, and many other examples, are not reflected in the funding formula. Neither does the formula give recognition to those areas who have seen greatly increased demonstration activity due to global events, Leicestershire Police have had to respond to multiple demonstrations, all have increased budget pressures.

Here in Leicestershire and Rutland, the Chief Constable and his team have worked extremely hard over the past few years to try and keep the Force on a financially secure footing, while maintaining an effective policing service to the public.

Within our funding envelope we also deliver a great deal of crime prevention activity. Our Community Safety Partnerships, People Zones and Commissioners Safety Fund delivers projects all over the city and two counties providing diversionary activity or preventative measures. These are integral to enabling communities to be empowered to embed the solutions that they, and we, know will work. However, we are having to think very carefully each year as to the split of funding between front line policing and our preventative work. I fear, that without increased levels of funding, these valuable programmes will become increasingly difficult to maintain.



However, as we are forced to dip into our reserves each year, to close what feels like an ever-growing gap between the grant provided by the Government and the cost of the service we need to deliver for the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, I felt I must write and put on record my concern about the level of funding that we receive from central government and put forward some solutions.

One, this Government must fulfil the commitment to review the funding formula this coming year to ensure that we are being fairly funded for the demand in our area.

Two, I would also strongly suggest that the Government looks to relax the PUP grant rules to enable Forces to become sustainable. So much of the work in a police force is carried out by police staff. It is an unhealthy position to be forced to have to look at organisational shrinkage with one area wholly untouchable due to the financial penalties you would enforce.

Three, many people are still finding daily life financially challenging and the last thing I want to do is raise precept and make that even harder for them. However, without significant increases in central funding, which I fear will not come, I will have to do that to ensure the policing service we have is maintained. Therefore, I would ask that as much flexibility as possible is given to Police and Crime Commissioners to enable local decisions that benefit local communities.

Four, the deficits that we are being forced to plan for are felt all the more when we have no choice but to borrow funds to ensure that we can keep pace with evolving digital criminality. Your Office needs to consider resurrecting the capital grant or introduce targeted funding streams for this purpose.

Five, grant funding for the important work of the Violence Reduction Units must be maintained. Where it is working well, and serious violence is seeing real reductions changing the model now risks derailing that success.

If your office does not take some decisive action this year, I fear that we will end up in the same financial position as many of our Local Authorities and we will be forced into a some very challenging decisions for our local area.

I would like to meet with you at the earliest opportunity to discuss what you can do to rectify this situation for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and I would welcome your office sending dates that you are available.



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rupert Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue stroke.

**Rupert Matthews**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland**

CC: Chief Constable for Leicestershire Police, all Members of Parliament for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Leaders of Rutland County Council and Leicestershire County Council and the City Mayor, Leicester City Council. Released as an open letter on 2 October 2024.