



Cheshire
Constabulary



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2025 IN THE OPCC MEETING ROOM, CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY HQ, CLEMONDS HEY, OAKMERE ROAD, WINSFORD, CW7 2UA

Present: D Price, Police & Crime Commissioner
C Armitt, Deputy Chief Constable

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

D Taylor, Chief Executive
C Hodgson, Chief Finance Officer (OPCC)
M Walton, Principal Governance & Compliance Officer

Cheshire Constabulary

D Bryan, Chief Legal Officer
W Bebbington, Chief Finance Officer (Constabulary)
B Malloy, Chief Finance Officer (Constabulary) (*as of 3 March 2025*)
N Bailey, Chief People Officer
P Woods, Head of Planning & Performance
V McMahon, Sergeant (Staff Officer)

No members of the public observed Part 1 of the meeting.

Part 1 - Public items

The Joint Management Board noted that the meeting would be the last attended by the Chief Finance Officer (Constabulary) in advance of her retirement from the Force on Friday 31 January 2025.

The Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable wished to thank Ms Bebbington for her many years of service to Cheshire Constabulary and offered her their best wishes for the future.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2024 were approved.

2. MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

The Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable noted that following the Joint Management Board on 4 December 2024, two Management Decisions had been approved by the Police & Crime Commissioner outside of the formal Joint Management Board.

Decision Number 2025/01: Request for Utilisation of POCA Funding

Decision Number 2025/02: Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner Branding and Logo

3. FINANCIAL POSITION REPORT 2024/25: THIRD QUARTER REVIEW

The report provided the Commissioner with the forecast financial outturn for 2024/25 as at the end of December 2024.

On 24 January 2024, the Commissioner approved a gross revenue budget of £288.7m (net £249.8m) together with a capital programme of £10.5m. At the Joint Management Board meeting on 3 July 2024, the Commissioner approved carry forward requests of £1.7m and capital slippage of £5.4m of which £1.6m was confirmed after the original programme was set.

At the end of December 2024, there was a balanced budget forecast on revenue, together with a forecast capital overspend of £0.46m (3.7%).

The Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable approved the following recommendation:

- (1) The forecast revenue and capital outturn positions be noted together with the approval of the proposed capital financing as set out in Table 4, subject to outturn.

The rationale was that the third quarter review provided a forecast financial position and details of forecast performance against agreed financial health targets. The report demonstrated prudent management of the 2024/25 budget to date, with a balanced revenue budget position forecast for the financial year end. The capital overspend will be monitored with mitigating actions taken as necessary.

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

The report presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 for approval, including the associated prudential indicators, annual investment strategy and minimum revenue provision statement.

The Police & Crime Commissioner approved the following recommendation:

- (1) That approval be given to the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 1) for 2025/26 including:
 - The Liability Benchmark (Appendix 1, paragraph 4.5);
 - The Ratio of financing costs to net revenue funding (Appendix 1, paragraph 4.7.1);
 - the Authorised External Debt Limits (Appendix 1, paragraph 5.3.7);
 - the Interest Limits and Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing (Appendix 1, paragraph 5.8.1);
 - the Annual Investment Strategy (Appendix 1, paragraph 6); and
 - the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix 1, paragraph 7).

The rationale was that the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy supports the Commissioner's commitment to ensure effective stewardship and the efficient use of public funds.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2030

The report explained that the Commissioner was required to set an annual balanced budget and precept (the Commissioner's share of Council Tax) taking into account Government funding, precept regulations and organisational demands. This requirement was supported by the production of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with the annual budget forming the first year of the Strategy. The creation and maintenance of the MTFS was fundamental in promoting good financial planning and delivery of value for money.

The MTFS is supported by the Reserves Strategy which highlights the reserves held, their usage in support of delivering both the Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan and the Chief Constable's Plan on a Page, and the appropriateness of the amounts held.

Based on the Provisional Grant Settlement announced on 17 December 2024 setting out the funding and precept flexibility for 2025/26, the MTFS had been updated accordingly.

The Police & Crime Commissioner approved the following recommendation:

- (1) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025-2030 be approved.

The rationale was that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-2030 is fundamental in promoting good financial planning, the delivery of value for money, ensuring operational threats and risks are addressed and managed to protect front line policing and make Cheshire's communities even safer.

6. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT 2025/26

The report explained that the Commissioner was required by law, to set an annual budget and issue a precept (the Commissioner's element of council tax), taking into account Government grant funding, operational demands and the economic inflationary pressures. Full details of the 2025/26 budget were presented in Appendix 1.

The Police & Crime Commissioner approved the following recommendations submitted by the Deputy Chief Constable:

- (1) the Police & Crime Panel be notified that it is proposed to increase the police element of council tax by 5.3% (£14 p.a. for an average Band D equivalent property for 2025/26; an uplift from £262.94 to £276.94; i.e., by 27p per week);
- (2) the net budget requirement for the financial year commencing 1 April 2025 be set at £262.527m;
- (3) the proposed 2025/26 precepts be as follows:

	Number of Band D equivalent houses	Precept on Collection Fund £
Cheshire East	163,261.10	45,213,529
Cheshire West and Chester	131,666.40	36,463,693
Halton	36,936.00	10,229,056
Warrington	72,262.00	20,012,238
Total	404,125.50	111,918,516

Band	Proposed 2025/26 £	Actual 2024/25 £	Change per year £	Change per week £p
A	184.63	175.29	9.34	0.18
B	215.40	204.51	10.89	0.21
C	246.17	233.72	12.45	0.24
D	276.94	262.94	14.00	0.27
E	338.48	321.37	17.11	0.33
F	400.02	379.80	20.22	0.39
G	461.57	438.23	23.34	0.45
H	553.88	525.88	28.00	0.54

- (4) the deficit of collection funds allocated to the Commissioner of £72k included in the budget and its funding from reserves, be noted;
- (5) the Legal & Unavoidable Commitments of £5.804m and Operational demands and pressures of £1.719m as set out in tables 3 and 4 of the report, be approved;
- (6) the savings proposals totalling £6.288m, as set out in table 5 in the budget report, be approved;
- (7) the financial health targets for monitoring purposes as set out below, be approved:
 - (i) *Reserves*
That the level of general reserves, after allowing for potential financial risks be maintained, at no lower than 3% of the net budget and that this be monitored by the Commissioner on a quarterly basis.

(ii) *Revenue Spending*

That the Chief Constable maintains revenue spending within 1% of the net budget and that this is monitored by the Commissioner on a quarterly basis.

(iii) *Capital Programme Management*

That the Chief Constable maintains the projected capital outturn at a level that does not vary from the original capital programme by more than 20%. The total capital programme includes the new schemes and those schemes brought forward from previous years. This target is to be monitored by the Commissioner on a quarterly basis.

(iv) *Debt*

That the Chief Constable collects at least 50% of debtor income within one month of the invoice being raised.

(v) *Prudential Indicators*

That the actual prudential indicators be monitored by the Commissioner on an annual basis against the indicators set in the budget.

(8) the Capital Strategy and Reserves Strategy as set out in appendices 5 and 6 be approved.

The rationale was that agreeing the 2025/26 budget will allow the Chief Constable to deliver the priorities contained within the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and provide the appropriate level of resources for Cheshire Constabulary for the next financial year.

7. FEES AND CHARGES HANDBOOK 2025

The report explained that the Fees and Charges Handbook was last approved in April 2024 to cover charges for the 2024/25 period.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) publish national guidelines on charging for police services which were historically provided annually in advance of the financial year. However, the latest review had been brought forward to enable revised fees and charges to be published by calendar year, thereby providing an earlier opportunity to reflect the impact of September pay awards.

Subsequently, the revised Fees and Charges Handbook relates to services provided between 1st January to 31st December 2025 and had been updated to reflect the NPCC's statutory and recommended fees and charges. In addition, a review of local discretionary fees and charges had been conducted by the Constabulary.

The Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable approved the following recommendation:

(1) That the revised fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

The rationale was that the updated handbook was in-line with the nationally agreed charging structure and reflects the annual review of fees and charges, which now takes place based on calendar year running from 1 January to 31st December.

8. SUBMISSION OF DRAFT POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2024-2028 TO THE POLICE & CRIME PANEL

The report considered the Police & Crime Commissioner's draft Police & Crime Plan 2024-2028. In accordance with the provisions of the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan should be submitted to the Police & Crime Panel in draft for consideration.

The Commissioner approved the following recommendation:

(1) That the draft Police & Crime Plan 2024-2028 be submitted to the Police & Crime Panel for consideration at the Police & Crime Panel meeting on 7 February 2025.

The rationale was that the submission of the draft Police & Crime Plan 2024-2028 to the Police & Crime Panel would fulfil the Commissioner's statutory duty.

9. JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD FORWARD PLAN

The Joint Management Board Forward Plan was noted.

Part 2 - Private items

10. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Strategic Risk Register was presented for consideration and approval.

The Police & Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable approved the following recommendation:

(1) The Strategic Risk Register, risk analysis and action overview, be noted.

The rationale was that the decision will ensure that the effective management of strategic risk supports the delivery of high-quality policing services.

11. JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD ACTION LOG

The Joint Management Board Action Log was noted.