



**NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES**

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**Title**

Business Meeting

**Date**

27 February 2025

**Location**

Teams/MEL

**Duration**

3pm-3.45pm

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**Present:**

Susan Dungworth – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Clare Penny Evans – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Vanessa Jardine – Chief Constable (CC)  
Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC  
Kevin Laing – Joint Chief Finance Officer  
Gail Thompson – Deputy Head of Finance (NP)  
Sarah Robson – Chief Inspector Staff Officer (NP)  
Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)  
Andrew Hill – ACC for Communities (NP)  
Steve Wykes – ACC for Force Coordination (NP)  
Laura Burbridge – Finance Lead – Corporate Finance and Governance (Item 3 and 4)  
Claire Mellons – External Auditor – Ernst & Young LLP (Item 3 and 4)  
Vicki Wilson – Minute Taker (OPCC)

**Apologies:**

Jayne Meir – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

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**OPEN SESSION**

**1. HMICFRS: An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 1**

The ACC for Force Coordination highlighted the main points from the report.

There were three national recommendations. The force had responded to each recommendation and had implemented relevant changes. These included revising the terms of reference for the Major Incident and Business Continuity Board, developing a specialist Capabilities Strategy, carrying out a review of the POPS STRA, engaged in discussions regarding the RICC, and concluding a Recovery Review following the disorder in the summer.

Following a query from the PCC, the force felt that the recommendations were fair given they were for a national audience. The CC advised that further attention would be given to the foreseeability of these events including community tension, and intelligence gathering.



## **2. Approval of the Council Tax Precept and Revenue Budget 2024/25**

The CFO highlighted the main points from the report.

On 4 February 2025, the Police and Crime Panel agreed the Commissioner's proposals to increase the council tax precept for 2025/26 by £14.00 per year for a Band D property. For most residents in Northumbria, those in a Band A property, the actual increase would be £9.33 per year.

The total grant increase for Northumbria was £19.714m. A breakdown of this had been supplied within the report.

The former Commissioner approved the original Capital Budget of £29.940m for 2024/25. At Q1 the budget was revised at £36.705m to account for:

- The Northumbria Police Estates Strategy 2024 – 2030 approved in April 2024.
- Revised estimates and phasing of capital spend, including slippage from the 2023/24 financial year.

The Commissioner's Group revenue budget for 2024/25 was £378.104m. The Q3 revenue monitoring report showed a projected underspend of £4.338m as at 31 December 2024.

For the financial year 2025/26, the proposed Group revenue budget was £405.444m. A breakdown of this had been supplied within the report.

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Joint Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to undertake an assessment of the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Joint CFO confirmed that, after taking account of these issues, the revenue and capital estimates contained in the report were considered robust and that the level of reserves was considered adequate to cover the financial risks faced by the Commissioner in 2025/26.

Regulations came into effect from March 2008 with regard to preparing an Annual Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) Statement. MRP was the amount that needed to be set aside to reflect the depreciation of capital assets and provide funds for the principal repayment of borrowing. There were no proposed changes to the method used to calculate MRP and the Annual MRP statement for 2025/26 was attached within the report.

The recommendation within the Key Decision was for the PCC to formally approve the Precept and the Revenue Budget as outlined. The PCC approved the Key Decision.

## **3. Annual Governance Statements and Final 2023/24 Financial Accounts**

The Deputy Head of Finance highlighted the main points from the report.



The external auditor had confirmed that the audit report opinions on the Chief Constable, PCC Single Entity and Group's financial statements would be unmodified, concluding that the financial statements:

- gave a true and fair view of the financial position and the expenditure and income for the year
- had been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the UK 2023/24
- had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

The Audit Results Report had been outlined in detail covering both the Chief Constable Accounts, and the Police and Crime Commissioner accounts. Adjustments across both accounts had been explained however it was noted that none of these adjustments would have an impact on the level of funding available for police services, as they were technical accounting adjustments. The full narrative of adjustments would be published on the OPCC website.

There was one control deficiency identified in respect of the external audit for 2023/24, which related to an existing testing issue. The testing carried out by the auditor examined assets totalling £100 million out of £149 million of total assets.

The auditor was unable to physically verify £0.723m of those assets. These related primarily to large scale purchases of accessories and cabling under IT capital hardware refresh schemes. Due to individual low asset value for items such as keyboards, mice, docking stations, laptop cases, cabling etc. those items were not identified individually in asset management systems and therefore could not be tracked for the purpose of existence testing. The force had an asset register used for accounting purposes and separate asset management systems to record and manage different types of assets. These systems did not hold the detail of every single item purchased under the major capital refresh schemes. Low value items such as accessories and cabling were not separately identified, and the asset management systems did not necessarily hold the original invoice and cost information to enable a simple reconciliation with the asset register that was used for accounting purposes. This was an unadjusted error, however going forward, it was recommended a solution was found for this issue to ensure low cost items being purchased were also logged and accounted for.

Another unadjusted error in the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund accounts was identified by the auditor of the Pension Fund. The £1.500m reflected an estimated share of that error which would be attributable to the Chief Constable. The value was not material and had no impact on the General Fund. Adjustment for this item would be reflected in the 2024/25 financial statements.

The external auditor was required to consider whether the PCC and Chief Constable had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources. They were required to consider whether there were any risks of significant weakness in those arrangements and report their commentary under specified



criteria in the Auditors Annual Report (AAR). The external auditors work on the AAR 2023/24 was being finalised and the report would be issued by 31 March 2025.

The External Auditor, the Finance Lead and the wider team were thanked for their extremely hard work and support with the audit process.

The following documents were approved for publication by both the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner, with physical signatures:

- Statements of Account 2023/24
- Annual Governance Statement 2023/24
- Letters of representation 2023/24

These documents would be made available on the OPCC website by 28 February 2025.