

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2026

Present: Cllrs Alasdair Keddie (Chair), Louise Bown (Vice-Chair), Patrick Canavan, David Flagg, Simon Gibson, Louie O'Leary, Karen Rampton, Peter Sidaway and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs B Sargeaunt and Sarah Williams

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Simon Bullock (Chief Executive, OPCC), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Adam Harrold (OPCC Director of Operations), Julie Strange (OPCC Chief Finance Officer), David Sidwick (Police and Crime Commissioner), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer) and Susan Dallison (Democratic & Governance Services Team Leader)

79. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

80. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

81. Public Participation

A question had been received from Mr Mark Ellis. The Manager for Assurance read out the question on behalf of Mr Ellis. The question and response are appended to these minutes. The Chairman thanked Mr Ellis for submitting his question.

No further questions had been received.

82. Budget Precept Financial Year 2026/2027 (00:14:32 on recording)

Following the late receipt of a full set of financial figures to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) the Chairman commended the Chief Finance Officer, Julie Strange, for preparing the budget report in such challenging circumstances. The Chairman reminded members of the panel of the statutory rules regarding the decision to be taken; the panel could either support the precept proposal, support the precept and request further information for the July panel

meeting precept, support the precept proposal with the additional option to veto the proposal (which would require 8 members to vote against the proposed precept and the panel would meet again on 19th February 2026).

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced the budget which was seeking an increase in the precept of £15 per annum, it had been a difficult budget setting period and there was a need to balance the need to keep people in Dorset safe against not wanting to ask for additional funding. The PCC paid tribute to his staff for all of the hard work that had gone into producing the budget. To provide the panel with all of the salient information required to make a decision on the budget the PCC asked Amanda Pearson, Chief Constable, Julie Strange, Chief Finance Officer and Adam Harrold, Director of Operations to make presentations to the panel.

(00:22:12 on recording)

The Chief Constable, Amanda Pearson, provided a comprehensive oversight in respect of the operation aspect of policing, the achievements of the previous year, the reductions in budget already achieved and the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and seeking further opportunities through the use of technology, income generation, reductions in staff posts, utility costs, vehicle running costs and software. However, it had got to the point where the workforce could not be asked to do more, their resilience had been stretched to the limit and there was a need to stabilise workforce and maintain the level of policing; the service to the public could not be maintained without the increase of £15 to the precept.

(00:58:56 on recording)

The Chief Finance Officer, (CFO) Julie Strange, provided an overview of the budget provided to the Panel and confirmed that since the publication of the report no further information had been received so the report remained accurate and was up to date. The CFO confirmed that the budget being put forward to the panel was a balanced budget and provided assurance that the budget was robust and that the overall level of reserves was adequate.

(01:02:28 on recording)

The Director of Operations, Adam Harrold, providing a presentation to the panel on the public consultation exercise that had been undertaken between 27th November 2025 and 26th January 2026, details of which were set out in the budget paper.

At that point the PCC invited questions from members of the panel; the questions and responses are attached at Appendix 2 to these minutes.

The Chairman closed the question and answer session at 11.45am. Cllr Rampton asked a question on process for clarification, in response Simon Bullock, Chief Executive confirmed that the decision of the panel was to support or not support the budget; further clarification on the budget proposals could be provided at the next panel meeting in July. Cllr Canavan expressed his concerns in respect of not understanding the consequences and not knowing the full impact of the decision on communities. Jonathan Mair, Dorset Council Monitoring Officer advised the panel that they had to make a decision based on the information provided with the

agenda papers, if the panel did not support the budget the panel would need to meet again to consider an alternative precept.

The budget recommendation was put to the vote: -

Decision

That the PCC's proposal to increase the precept for 2026/27 to £102,014,893, equivalent to a Band D charge of £322.58, an increase of £15 per annum or £1.25 per month (4.88%), as set out in Appendix 5 of the report be approved.

Following the vote the PCC asked the panel to write to the Home Secretary in support of a review of the national funding formula as the current formula for police funding did not work for rural police forces. The PCC was seeking support from all partner organisations to request a national review of funding and to address the issues of seasonal pressures and rurality.

Members of the Panel discussed whether to write a letter in support of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) lobbying of the Government for a fairer funding formula for Dorset. Members expressed the view that it was important to secure cross-party support on the issue and to pursue a review to ensure that rural police forces were properly funded under any revised model.

Councillor S. Gibson proposed that a recorded vote be taken. This proposal was supported by a majority of the Panel. The Chair noted that securing a fair deal for Dorset had been a recurring theme for the Panel.

The Chair recognised and noted the efforts of Dorset Members of Parliament in supporting the PCC's lobbying of the Home Office.

The Chair also noted that the Panel had previously agreed on the need to write a letter of support from the Panel to the Home Office regarding securing a fair funding settlement for Dorset.

On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

Decision

That the panel write to the Home Secretary in support of the PCC's lobbying to review the national funding formula to achieve a fairer deal for Dorset.

The Chairman asked for volunteers from the panel to form an informal working group to draft the letter; Cllr Keddie, Cllr Gibson and Cllr Woode put themselves forward.

To lobby the Government for a fair deal for Dorset (Resolution)	
Councillor Alasdair Keddie	For
Councillor Louise Bown	For
Councillor Patrick Canavan	Against
Councillor David Flagg	For
Councillor Simon Gibson	For

Councillor Louie O'Leary	For
Councillor Karen Rampton	For
Councillor Peter Sidaway	For
Councillor Carl Woode	For
Carried	

At that point (12.27pm) the panel took a short 10-minute comfort break.

83. Q3 Monitoring Report (time on recording 02:44:09)

The panel was provided with an update of progress against the Police and Crime Plan to enable members of the panel to scrutinise activity and assess the achievement of outcomes. The PCC made a statement in respect of each of the priorities and took questions at the end. The questions and responses are appended to these minutes.

Following the response to the final question from Cllr Canavan on the risks associated with the White Paper the Chairman invited the PCC to give his views on the White Paper reforms. The PCC agreed that some aspects of policing such as IT, commercial and forensics could benefit from economies of scale. In respect of mergers, creating large forces, the PCC did not believe that bigger was better, some of the safest and cost effective forces were the smallest forces. Issues such as ASB, rural, shoplifting and drugs could be deprioritised and a focus on the cities instead of a focus of everybody. The PCC was also concerned about the centralisation of power, if dictated from the centre then there would be a move to the politicisation of the Police. Most important going forward was to have robust local governance, if there was Southwest police force it wouldn't be overseen by a Dorset committee.

84. Complaints Update

The Service Manager for Assurance advised the panel that 1 complaint had been received an investigated and had been appealed. A meeting of the Complaints Sub-committee was being held following the budget meeting to consider the appeal.

85. Forward Workplan

It was noted that hate crimes and hate incidents, RISE/out of court disposals had been put forward as items for the July meeting. The Chairman suggested that an additional item be added to the July agenda on the Evolve project to get a deeper understanding of the transformation programme. The Chairman also suggested that a further review of the budget be undertaken in July or September, depending on when the PCC had the additional information from Government.

86. Urgent items

There were no urgent items of business.

87. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.32 pm

Chairman

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