



**Cheshire
Constabulary**



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD

Notes of the Joint Management Board held on Wednesday 28 January 2026 which was held online via Teams and at Constabulary Headquarters, Winsford.

PRESENT: Dan Price, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Mike Evans, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner

G Southern, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
D Taylor, Chief Executive
C Hodgson, Chief Finance Officer
J Hare, Head of Communications and Engagement
A Murphy, Governance Officer

Cheshire Constabulary

J Norton, Deputy Chief Legal Officer
B Malloy, Chief Finance Officer
N Bailey, Chief People Officer
P Woods, Head of Planning and Performance

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

Part 1 - Public items

1. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 11 November 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 November 2025 were approved.

2. Management Decisions

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable noted that following the Joint Management Board, a Management Decision had been approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner outside of the formal Joint Management Board.

Decision Number 2025/09: POCA Funding - Phone Pouches

It was resolved that the Police and Crime Commissioner approves an amount of £150,000 be set aside from POCA for the period up to 31st March 2027 to cover the cost of phone pouches for children on free school meals.

3. Financial Position Report 2025/26: Third Quarter Review

The report provided the Commissioner with the forecast financial outturn for 2025/26 as at the end of December 2025.

On 29 January 2025, the Commissioner approved a gross revenue budget of £305.3m (net £262.5m) together with a capital programme of £13.4m. At the Joint Management Board meeting on 2 July 2025, the Commissioner approved carry forward requests of £1.1m and

capital slippage of £3.6m of which £1.8m was confirmed after the original programme was set.

At the end of December 2025, there is a forecast revenue overspend of £1.4m (0.52%), together with a forecast capital underspend of £0.3m (2.4%).

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

(1) That the forecast revenue and capital outturn positions be noted.

The rationale was that the third quarter review provides a forecast financial position and details of forecast performance against agreed financial health targets. It reflects cost pressures known at the time of writing and shows a reduction in the forecast overspend position of £0.8m. The position will be monitored regularly with mitigating actions being taken, as necessary.

4. Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

The report presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 for approval including the associated prudential indicators, annual investment strategy, and minimum revenue provision statement.

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

(1) That approval be given to the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 1) for 2026/27 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 2026-2031: Mid-year Review

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is affected by the Budget and Council Tax Precept 2026/27. As embargoed Home Office information was contained therein, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026-2031 was made available for discussion in part 2 of the meeting after a short adjournment.

6. Budget and Council Tax Precept 2026/27

As embargoed Home Office information was contained therein, the Budget and Council Tax Precept 2026/27 and appendices were made available for discussion in part 2 of the meeting after a short adjournment.

7. Fees and Charges Handbook 2026

The Fees and Charges Handbook was last approved in January 2025 to cover charges for the 2025 period. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) have recently published national guidelines on charging for police services in 2026 and subsequently the Fees and Charges Handbook has been updated to reflect the NPCC's statutory and recommended fees and charges. In addition, a review of local discretionary fees and charges has been conducted by the Constabulary.

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

8. Scheme of Corporate Governance

In February 2025, the Scheme of Corporate Governance underwent a substantial review, including the inclusion of the Procurement Act 2023. This periodic review of the Scheme of Corporate focuses on changes to write-off amounts and minor corrections.

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

(1) That the revised Scheme of Corporate Governance be approved.

The revisions to the Scheme of Corporate Governance will support good governance and financial management, as well as ensuring that the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable can exercise their respective functions both efficiently and effectively, in compliance with relevant legislation.

9. Joint Management Board Forward Plan

The Joint Management Board Forward Plan was noted with the AI Enablement Programme business case added for review at April's meeting.

Part 2 – Private items

10. Estates Strategy Update – Sale of New Winsford New Police Station

Terms for the disposal of Winsford New Police Station were approved at the Joint Management Board on 4 December 2024 (Decision No. 2024/32). A survey of the building prior to purchase has revealed some areas for remediation and the purchaser Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has asked to negotiate on sale price.

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

- (1) That a new sale price is set for the disposal of Winsford New Police Station to reflect survey finding and CFRS request.

The rationale was that the approval of the new sale price will allow the sale (and release of funds) to proceed without further delay; that the sale is to a public sector partner who has agreed to cover two out of the three items that have come up at survey; and that the sale price negotiation is proportionate to the survey finding.

11. AI Enablement Programme

The AI Enablement Programme, launched in October 2025, aims to modernise Cheshire Constabulary through responsible AI adoption—driving efficiency, improving data management, and enhancing victim support while upholding ethics and public trust.

- (1) That progress on the AI Enablement Programme be noted.

The rationale was that aligning with the Police and Crime Plan, the AI Enablement programme allows for:

- Embracing technology and innovation to ensure the service is well-equipped to deal with current and emerging threats
- Driving efficiencies and investigative capacity by using technology such as AI and data analytics
- Exploiting innovative new ways of working to maximise intelligence led policing, so police are present when and where they are needed most

12. Joint Strategic Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register was presented for consideration and approval.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable approved the following recommendations:

- (1) Risk SR-Joint 1.6 (WAN Installation / Transition Delay) has been escalated to the Joint Strategic Risk Register.
- (2) The overall score for SR-Constabulary 2.2 (Data Quality in Shared Niche Platform) has been increased from 16 to 20.
- (3) A new risk has been added in part 3 (OPCC Risks) of the Joint Strategic Risk Register in relation to the removal of Police and Crime Commissioners and reforms to the governance of policing.

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

13. Joint Management Board Action Log

The Joint Management Board Action Log was noted.

The meeting adjourned at 1.40pm. Janet Hare left the meeting.

The meeting recommenced at 2.00pm.

Part 2 – Private items (continued)

14. Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026-2031: Mid-year Review

The Commissioner is 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 is 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 is 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 the Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan and the Chief Constable's Plan on a Page, and the appropriateness of the amounts held.

The MTFS reflects the Final Grant Settlement published on 28 January 2026. It incorporates the Government's confirmation of precept flexibility for 2026/27, including the decision in January 2026 granting Cheshire exceptional flexibility to increase the Band D precept by £18.50 without a referendum, enabling the Commissioner to protect frontline policing and address the budget gap. Home Office have confirmed the precept in writing however, final council tax levels will be confirmed in MHCLG's council tax report in February.

These updates, alongside revised funding assumptions for future years, are reflected in the financial tables set out in Appendix 1.

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

(1) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-2031 be approved.

The rationale was that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026-2031 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.

15. Budget and Council Tax Precept 2026/27

The Commissioner is 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 2026/27 budget are presented in Appendix 1.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Constable approved the following recommendations that:

- (1) the Police & Crime Panel be notified that it is proposed to increase the police element of council tax by 6.68% (£18.50 p.a. for an average Band D equivalent property for 2026/27; an uplift from £276.94 to £295.44; i.e., by £1.54 per month);
- (2) the net budget requirement for the financial year commencing 1 April 2026 be set at £292.91m.
- (3) This budget is based on the one-off exceptional flexibility granted to Cheshire for 2026/27, allowing the Police and Crime Commissioner to increase the Band D police precept by £18.50. The Home Office has confirmed this uplift in writing; however, final council tax levels for 2026/27 will be formally confirmed through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC/MHCLG) Council Tax Report, which is laid before Parliament in February 2026. The proposed 2026/27 precepts to be as follows:

	Number of Band D equivalent houses	Precept on Collection Fund £
Cheshire East	165,549.87	48,910,054
Cheshire West and Chester	132,128.50	39,036,044
Halton	37,115.00	10,965,256
Warrington	73,439.00	21,696,818
Total	408,232.37	120,608,172

Band	Proposed 2026/27 £	Actual 2025/26 £	Change per year £	Change per month £
A	196.96	184.63	12.33	1.03
B	229.79	215.40	14.39	1.20
C	262.61	246.17	16.44	1.37
D	295.44	276.94	18.50	1.54
E	361.09	338.48	22.61	1.88
F	426.75	400.02	26.73	2.23
G	492.40	461.57	30.83	2.57
H	590.88	553.88	37.00	3.08

- (4) the surplus of collection funds allocated to the Commissioner of £307k included in the budget be noted;
- (5) the Legal & Unavoidable Commitments of £3.141m and Operational demands and pressures of £6.289m as set out in tables 3 and 4 of the report, be approved;
- (6) the savings proposals totalling £4.949m and funding & accounting measures of £1.796m, as set out in tables 5 and 6 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 2026/27 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.

The meeting concluded at 2.15pm.