

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

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Alan Hardwick
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary

Provisional Police Funding Announcement

Thank you for your letter of 18 December 2013 in which you invite comment on the Provisional Police Grant Report 2014/15 setting out force-level allocations of central Government funding for 2014/15.

The Government's proposals are a disappointment and unhelpful to the delivery of police and crime services in Lincolnshire.

The scale of the reduction in Police Grant available for local priorities is particularly deplorable. By giving priority to national initiatives over basic local policing needs the Government is exacerbating an already difficult financial challenge.

A budget increase of some 70% for the overhead of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is wasteful and particularly galling in view of the 4.8% reduction for direct service provision. I note from the *HMIC Business Plan 2013/14* that more than 20% of their resources are allocated to "the HMIC Board and private office support". HMIC should be encouraged to become more efficient rather than seeking additional resources at the expense of local policing.

Additional funding to prop up the poorly performing Independent Police Complaints Commission again diverts some of the limited funding available out of policing and appears to be rewarding failure. It was concerning that at a meeting with Police and Crime Commissioners this week, IPCC were unable to articulate any firm plans for how these additional funds will be spent.

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The Innovation Fund is a further unnecessary and wasteful use of the limited funding available. It is incomprehensible that the Government should target additional funding to local areas where there is acknowledged inefficiency. Local policing bodies should, and do, invest local funds to improve performance and achieve savings. Lincolnshire, for example, invested substantially in order to establish its strategic partnership with G4S without the need for government support. We continue to invest in improving performance, productivity and value for money. Police and Crime Commissioners will invest where there are convincing business cases without the need for central intervention. This is a poor use of police funding, leading to an inefficient allocation of resources, and should not continue into 2015/16.

The absence from the Announcement of council tax referendum criteria – preferably removing central control over locally elected Police and Crime Commissioners - and indicative grant allocations for 2015/16 is unhelpful.

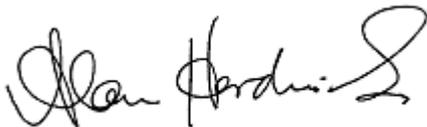
The basis of the grant distribution between local force areas fails to address the disparities in police funding. All areas will face the same percentage grant reduction irrespective of their current funding levels. Lincolnshire already spends the least per head of population on policing – if other forces spent at the same level up to £1billion could be saved. Addressing this disparity is the right way to deliver public expenditure reductions.

There is an increasing need to protect a small number of vulnerable forces where there is a potential risk of service failure. This will need to be addressed seriously for 2015/16 when further funding reductions will give some small forces unprecedented service and performance issues.

The more fundamental grant review should also be progressed more urgently as the existing, deeply flawed allocation system, based as it is on perpetuating historical spending allocations in support of inefficiency, clearly needs to be replaced with a better way of funding police services.

Overall, there is nothing in the Announcement which supports local policing and crime prevention – quite the contrary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Hardwick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Hardwick
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire