

Report reference number: 110-24

Classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report: Acceptance of 2024/25 Police Officer Maintenance Grant Agreement with the Home Office

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

Report by: Janet Perry Chief Financial Officer and Strategic Head of Performance and Resources

Date of report: 26 June 2024

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval from the PFCC to accept the Maintenance Grant of £9,553,147 from the Home Office to provide access to the ringfenced officer maintenance grant, allocated at the Police Funding Settlement for 2024/25, for the maintenance of our officer numbers. Maintenance here is defined as our force's PUP baseline, plus uplift allocation of officers, plus share of the 2023/24 Batch 1 additional recruitment allocation where appropriate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The PFCC assigns authority to Richard Leicester to act as the scheme manager for the Maintenance Grant (maintenance of officer numbers at their baseline plus full uplift allocation).
- 2.2 The PFCC authorises that the Maintenance Grant Agreement is accepted and signed by the Scheme Manager and the PFCC's Chief Financial Officer.

3. Background to the Proposal

- 3.1 Having invested significantly in policing over the past four years, the Home Office are ensuring that we maintain the number of officers which we were allocated as part of the Police Uplift Programme.
- 3.2 As was the case throughout the Police Uplift Programme (PUP), for 2023/24 most of the funding will continue via the core grant.
- 3.3 The Grant Agreement that we are being asked to sign is a twelve-month funding arrangement. It provides access to the ringfenced grant, allocated at the Police Settlement, for the maintenance of officer numbers. Maintenance is defined as our baseline plus uplift allocation of officers and will be measured in headcount. Where this number is met or exceeded, full funding will be released.
- 3.4 The maintenance grant will be split evenly over the year, and paid according to officer headcount on 30 September 2024, and 31 March 2025. To qualify for the full funding amount available, the force will need to be at or above our maintenance level of **3,810 officers** at the points of the year stated above. Funding will be released in February and August upon supply of information required. If the force is below our allocation at either point (September or March), then the Home Office will withhold £40,000 per officer below maintenance at that point. The figure of £40,000 per officer below maintenance will be withheld up to a threshold of 30 officers or 1.5% of total officer headcount (baseline plus uplift allocation), whichever is higher. Should the force be more than 30 officers or 1.5% of total officer headcount below maintenance (again whichever is higher), then we will not be eligible for any of the grant available at this point.
- 3.5 This compares to last year whereby the withholding agreement was £40,000 per officer below maintenance up to 20 Officers and 1% of total officer headcount.
- 3.6 Funding will not be rolled over from September to March, therefore if maintenance is not achieved in September, we will not be eligible for the funding withheld at this point at the end of the financial year. The grant agreement does allow for consideration of extenuating circumstances, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.7 Payment of these monies is subject to our acceptance of this offer and the terms and conditions of the Maintenance Grant Agreement.
- Additional Recruitment top up Grant.**
- 3.8 Forces who volunteered to recruit above their uplift target have been allocated £48,000 per officer, to be paid out in two equal instalments in April and October, with no set conditions. (see letter attached)

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

4.1 The Maintenance Grant enables the PFCC to have access to the funding to enable the maintenance of officer numbers at their baseline plus full uplift allocation.

5. Options Analysis

5.1 The PFCC could decide not to sign the Maintenance Grant Agreement, but this would mean reducing officer numbers or overspending against the agreed budget.

5.2 The PFCC could assign another officer as the Scheme Manager, however Richard Leicester is the lead for the force on the Police Uplift Programme and is best placed to monitor and manage officer numbers.

6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1 The PFCC has referred to the Police Uplift Programme in a number of PFCC publications, including the Police and Crime Plan. Although there has been no specific engagement regarding this Maintenance Grant Agreement.

7. Strategic Links

7.1 This Maintenance Grant Agreement will provide the funding to help support the PFCC in fulfilling the commitments within the Police and Crime Plan, in particular commitments relating to the priority around prevention.

8. Police operational implications

8.1 By accepting the Maintenance Grant, we will have sufficient funding to be able to maintain our officer numbers, thereby safeguarding the operational availability of those officers.

9. Financial implications

9.1 The PFCC will receive £9,553,147; funding from the Home Office to provide the required funding to assist in the maintenance of officer numbers at their baseline plus full uplift allocation.

9.2 Funding will be released in January and July, when the workforce data for 30 September and 31 March are published, respectively. If the force is below our allocation at either point (September or March), then the Home Office will withhold £40,000 per officer below maintenance at that point. The figure of £40,000 per officer below maintenance will be withheld up to a threshold of 30 officers or 1.5% of total officer headcount (baseline plus uplift allocation), whichever is higher. Should the force be more than 30 officers or 1.5% (57) of total officer headcount below maintenance (again whichever is higher), then we will not be eligible for any of the grant available at this point.

10. Legal implications

10.1 The PFCC agrees to the terms of the Home Office Maintenance Grant agreement.

11. Staffing implications

11.1 The PFCC will be expected to manage and monitor the number of officers and report back to the Home Office monthly.

11.2 The KPIs to be monitored and reported on are:

- the force officer headcount figure at 30 September 2024 to the total of 3,810 which is comprised of the force Police Uplift Programme (PUP) baseline, plus PUP allocation of officers plus share of FY23/24 Batch 1 additional recruitment allocation.
- the force officer headcount figure at 31 March 2025 to be 3,810 which is comprised of the force Police Uplift Programme (PUP) baseline, plus PUP allocation of officers plus share of FY23/24 Batch 1 additional recruitment allocation (45).

11.3 Progress reports on officer numbers must be reported to the NPCC workforce data group by the tenth day of the month following the period under review. These data will then be shared with the Home Office. These will be Monthly as follows:

Period 1 (Apr 2024) by 15 May 2024
Period 2 (May 2024) by 14 Jun 2024
Period 3 (Jun 2024) by 10 Jul 2024
Period 4 (July 2024) by 10 Aug 2024
Period 5 (Aug 2024) by 10 Sept 2024
Period 6 (Sept 2024) by 10 Oct 2024
Period 7 (Oct 2024) by 10 Nov 2024
Period 8 (Nov 2024) by 10 Dec 2024
Period 9 (Dec 2024) by 10 Jan 2025
Period 10 (Jan 2025) by 10 Feb 2025
Period 11 (Feb 2025) by 10 Mar 2025
Period 12 (Mar 2025) by 10 Apr 2025

11.4 The frequency of these progress reporting requirements will be reviewed.

12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion implications

- 12.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from the decision to sign the Maintenance Grant Agreement report.

13. Risks and Mitigations

- 13.1 The funding in this Maintenance grant is already accounted for within the 2024/25 budget and if we have not maintained the numbers at these two points of the year, we will lose funding and will not be able to recover it at the end of the financial year.
- 13.2 Without this funding the PFCC has insufficient funding to cover the officer establishment within the 2024/25 budget.

14. Governance Boards

- 14.1 This Maintenance Grant Agreement has been discussed at the P&R Board on 25 June 2024.

15. Links to Future Plans

- 15.1 This funding supports delivery of the PFCC's Police and Crime Plan

16. Background Papers and Appendices

- 16.1 Appendix A Home Office Police Officer Maintenance for the Period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 16.2 Appendix A ii Home Office Grant Agreement (V0.2)
- 16.3 Appendix Bi Home Office letter to PCCs and Chief Constables of 14 December 2023.
- 16.4 Appendix Bii Home Office letter to Essex PFCC and CC

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

N/A

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

I note that the grant agreement covered by this decision sheet does not address the funding of the additional 10 officers awarded under Batch 2 of the Additional Police Uplift Programme, for which we are eligible for additional funding as referenced on page 4 of Appendix Bi – Letter to PCCs and CCs from Home Secretary and Policing Minister of 14 December 2023.

Sign: 

PFCC

Print: Roger Hirst

Date signed: 28/06/2024

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: