



Rupert Matthews

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire
OPCC - Leicestershire Police FHQ

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Andy Spence, Branch Chair – Leicestershire Police Federation

Paul Gurney Branch Chair - UNISON Leicestershire Police

On behalf of the Leicestershire Police Federation Branch Board & UNISON
Leicestershire Police

Friday 29th May 2026

Subject: Investment Priorities for Safer Communities in Leicestershire

Dear Mr Matthews,

We write jointly on behalf of the Leicestershire Police Federation Branch Board and UNISON Leicestershire Police to express our significant concern regarding the recent decision to allocate approximately **£2 million of public funding towards SIA-registered street wardens.**

We recognise and support the overarching aim of improving community safety, visibility, and public reassurance. These are goals shared by both organisations and the workforce we represent. However, we feel compelled to highlight that this approach risks **diverting valuable resources away from established, accountable, and operationally effective neighbourhood policing.**

Neighbourhood policing—delivered by warranted police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)—remains the cornerstone of public confidence, crime prevention, and community engagement. These roles are not only visible but are embedded within communities, trained to respond appropriately to incidents, and held to rigorous professional and ethical standards.

By contrast, while SIA-registered wardens may provide a degree of presence, they **do not possess policing powers**, nor do they operate within the same framework of accountability, training, or operational capability. As such, there is a real risk that this investment may **create a perception of increased presence without delivering the substantive outcomes that communities expect and deserve.**

At a time when policing resources remain stretched, and demand continues to grow in both complexity and volume, it is essential that funding decisions are carefully aligned with **evidence-based policing models**. Investment in neighbourhood policing has consistently demonstrated its value in:

- Preventing and detecting crime
- Building trust and legitimacy within communities
- Supporting early intervention and safeguarding
- Reducing long-term demand on policing services

Both the Police Federation and UNISON Leicestershire Police strongly believe that **public funds should prioritise strengthening these proven capabilities**, rather than introducing parallel structures which may duplicate, dilute, or confuse the delivery of community safety.

We also have concerns regarding workforce implications. The introduction of non-policing roles, funded at scale, risks **undermining morale among existing staff** who are already delivering vital services under significant pressure. It is crucial that any initiatives complement—not replace or appear to replace—the professional roles of officers and staff.

We wish to be clear that our position is not oppositional for its own sake. Rather, it is rooted in a shared commitment to:

- Effective and accountable policing
- Value for taxpayer money
- The safety and confidence of Leicestershire's communities
- The welfare and professional integrity of the policing workforce

In that spirit, we would welcome the opportunity to engage constructively with your office to explore how this funding could be **redirected or supplemented** to strengthen neighbourhood policing capacity, including support for both officers and PCSOs.

We believe that by working collaboratively, we can ensure that investment decisions deliver **tangible, long-term benefits** for the communities we all serve.

We look forward to your response and continuing dialogue on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Spence

Leicestershire Police Federation Branch Chair

Paul Gurney

UNISON Leicestershire Police Branch Chair