



Summary of consultation responses

The Draft Police and Crime Plan was widely publicised in January. It was made available on the PCC's website and a press release was issued encouraging comments on the Plan by the end of February 2013.

Tim Passmore would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation. Respondents will also receive a personal response. The final Police and Crime Plan can be found on his website www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk

The Plan was also circulated directly to over 170 partner organisations, including:

- Businesses;
- Community safety partnerships;
- Criminal justice partners;
- Health;
- Housing associations;
- Further/higher education;
- Local authorities;
- Police and Crime Commissioners;
- Representatives of voluntary, community and social bodies;
- Representatives of the workforce (e.g. Police Federation, Superintendents Association and Unison);
- Suffolk Members of Parliament;
- Victim Support.

Further consultation was also conducted and is described below.

- Victim Support also circulated a flyer raising awareness of the release of the draft Plan and inviting comments, or to attend a focus group to share their views and experiences directly.
- Victims of crime who had given prior permission for the PCC (through their interaction with the Constabulary) to consult them on the Plan.
- Individual meetings took place to consult responsible authorities¹ and key community safety partners on the proposed police and crime objectives.
- 15 representatives of businesses and trades.
- Bespoke consultation meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, the Country Landowners Association, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Ipswich and Suffolk Small Business Association and the National Farmers Union. These business representatives were also invited to consult their members.

¹ Responsible authorities – probation, health, local authorities, police and fire as defined by Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The draft Plan has been, on the whole, very well received and the PCC is very grateful to those who took the time to respond. Over 100 consultation responses were received covering a variety of issues. Every response was considered and a number of changes and refinements were made to the Plan.

Of the comments received some related directly to the plan (e.g. presentation/format, content, clarity, etc.) and others related to operational policing, national issues or government policy. Every response was given full consideration with a view to reaching a view on the next steps that needed to be taken. As a consequence of the feedback a number of amendments were made to the plan. A number of comments related to specific operational, policy or other similar issues that did not directly relate to the content of the plan. These comments have been considered and any necessary action taken. All respondents received an initial acknowledgement of their comments and each respondent will receive a personal response following publication of the plan.

A summary of the range of comments are as follows:

Operational Policing

There were a variety of comments about Safer Neighbourhood Teams, most of which were very positive. Generally partners and the public were very supportive of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and of the policing philosophy for their preservation in the heart of communities. SNTs are seen as vital to support the Constabulary and partners to address local priorities. There were mixed views about the effectiveness of SNTs.

One respondent particularly welcomed the commitment to neighbourhood policing but noted that it relies upon with enthusiastic leadership from sergeants. One respondent suggested SNTs are over-resourced and that shift patterns did not fit with demand, but there was also a view that more uniformed officers should be involved in community policing to encourage residents to communicate their concerns and information. PCSOs were considered to do a good job although one respondent suggested that their role should be reviewed.

A number of issues were raised about resourcing operational policing, for example having more officers on duty in times of greater demand, managing the resourcing of officers taking offenders to custody, concerns about the use of Volume Crime Scene Investigators and whether they will improve attendance levels.

Some respondents commented on the need for every officer from the top down to be aware that their role is to serve the people of Suffolk. There was a perception that front line policing is served by newer officers while more experienced officers take on specialist roles, and it was argued the relationship with the community would improve if this were more balanced.

A few respondents focussed on effects of reduced police staff levels and the need to avoid this leading to officers undertaking more support related duties. Some respondents wanted a commitment that there is no reduction in front-line services and suggested a metric to show that police visibility is not being cut. Other comments were received about the need to reduce bureaucracy and paperwork, with the view that officers needed to be freed up to deal with serious crime matters. Conversely the view was expressed that matters which seem minor to the police were important to the public.

A view was expressed that if police stations were open longer it would be more supportive to victims of crime, particularly domestic abuse to be able to have face to face contact. Allied to this, there was a suggestion that Station Clerks could relieve the workload on officers.

Crime Prevention

A number of respondents were supportive about Neighbourhood Watch, Pubwatch, Farmwatch and Shopwatch schemes, with a strong feeling that levels of support should be maintained as these were important to both crime prevention and people supporting their communities.

Several respondents urged the PCC to fight wildlife crime by ensuring the policing strategy outlines how the Constabulary will enforce wildlife crime legislation.

Roads Policing and Road Safety

There were various comments about road safety, many stressing the importance of traffic issues and speeding in rural communities. Community Speedwatch attracted both positive and negative comments ranging from speed enforcement being a priority, to it being something the police should undertake. Enforcement activity was considered vital to punish criminal behaviour.

In relation to roads policing, a view was that many of the force's most experienced officers are involved in keeping Suffolk's roads safe. This work was felt to warrant more resources because collisions on major routes result in road closures and diversions which result in significant lost revenue to businesses.

Speed limits also attracted several comments, while speed limits are not a decision for the PCC, there was a strong feeling that the 20mph speed limits should be considered.

There were some concerns that pedestrians and vulnerable road users such as cyclists should be better protected, and that only victims of dangerous driving are eligible for support. There is an increasing trend of people being convicted of careless rather than dangerous driving which prevents access to support for victims.

In general, the commitment to a safer environment for road users was very welcome and the police and partner organisations (such as Fire and Rescue) needed to continue to work together to keep Suffolk's roads safe, and prevent deaths and injuries.

Finances, Budget and Council Tax

There were some views about where the money should be spent, for example some suggestions were more on intelligence, more on roads policing and more on community safety (crime and disorder grants).

A few suggestions were received about how to illustrate the budget, with the suggestion a graph might make it easier to read and that larger areas of budget could be better understood by a more detailed breakdown.

The PCCs decision to freeze the policing part of the council tax precept was welcomed by some respondents who considered it would be especially welcomed by those on average incomes and low wages. Others felt a small rise would have supported the force to maintain service delivery or increase activity in certain areas. There was a word of caution from partners about the impact of policing cuts on other public services. Some respondents were concerned that charging for certain police services could result in events which have a positive impact on a community being cancelled.

There was some criticism about the small amount of money provided by the government for Crime and Disorder Grants; a few respondents felt £0.6 million was insufficient. Generally

there was support for the commitment to fight for a greater share of the police budget for Suffolk.

Comment was also made about police pensions and the fact that reform was needed. The same respondent also suggested that the present rank structure needed reviewing and was it is excessive and largely invisible to the general public

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Three respondents wanted the Plan to a greater focus on Equality or Human Rights, holding the Chief Constable to account and whether the commissioning process for Crime and Disorder Grant allocations would be equality assessed. There was a view that Suffolk's diverse and changing population should be reflected differently, there should be greater mention of black and minority groups and the Plan should remain flexible responding to population changes and associated needs for services. One query related to how positive action would be used to improve the numbers of women and BME officers. There was a request for translation of the Plan into other languages. One view was expressed that the Plan should reflect the fact that Suffolk is made up of different places with different needs.

Shared resources and collaborative ventures

Partners reaffirmed their commitment to sharing estate and facilities, examples being shared Police and Fire Stations. There was some support for recent collaborative ventures, for example use of shared resources with Norfolk Constabulary.

Use of Special Constabulary

The Plan attracted support for the idea of innovative use of Specials (and to undertake specialist roles), providing they had the appropriate resources, equipment and support to do the job. There were positive comments about Special Constabulary supporting policing in the County.

Crime and Disorder Grants and the Commissioning Process

The clear statements on Crime and Disorder Grants were welcomed as a key way to support innovative projects that meet local needs and PCC objectives, although it was stressed that the commissioning process should consider the sustainability of projects and exit strategies. Allied to this, there was a query about commissioning responsibilities which remain after April 2013.

There were some requests as to who could apply for grants (e.g. community groups) and clarification about the application process and parameters.

There was a suggestion that an interim arrangement could be to allocate the majority of the funds to Community Safety Partnerships with an undertaking that they adopt a commissioning process with clear measurable and transparent outcomes as a pre-requisite.

Performance Management and Governance Arrangements

There were differing perceptions regarding the level of detail the performance management framework should include. The framework proposes improvements to performance either by 'improving' or 'reducing' the average performance over the previous three years. Detailed explicit, supporting information such as performance statistics relating to operational policing, finance, human resources, etc. will be included in the performance monitoring arrangements rather than the plan itself.

A number of respondents were unclear of the baseline against which improvement would be measured. They considered that there should be specific target measures which should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted). It was also suggested that the baseline figures against which output and outcomes will be judged should be more specific and greater clarity how partnership performance will be assessed. It was also suggested that there might be merit in monitoring performance at the correct geographical level.

There was support for monitoring and publishing information on performance. Respondents also expressed an interest in the governance arrangements which the PCC will utilise to monitor performance against the plan, as included in the performance monitoring arrangements. Some respondents wanted a stronger indication of how measures relating to the workforce would be monitored through the performance monitoring arrangements, such as sickness and restricted duties, compliance with equality, human rights and complaints.

Suggestions were made for a range of wording changes to support the areas identified which could be supported by Crime and Disorder Grants under objective 3 and 4, for example, to consider parenting initiatives under supporting families. The key areas of work under objective 3 and 4 were supported but it was felt that prioritisation would be helpful and the Plan should be clear that the amount of funding is less than was available in previous years.

Businesses

Respondents were supportive of the on-going liaison with the business community and the review of how the police record business crime. Cross border collaboration is seen as particularly relevant to farming businesses close to the border. Respondents from the haulage industry advised that lorry and cargo theft, fuel theft and metal theft are major issues and they were concerned about attacks on trucks and drivers and trucks being used for crime and terrorist activity. More interaction with other forces and law enforcement agencies was requested along with better recording of freight crime linked in with Truckpol.

National Requirements

Respondents were concerned that national requirements could cause deployment of specialist resources out of Suffolk which will be difficult to resource.

Partnership Working

Many partner organisations were positive about the Plan and generally supportive of the plan itself and the measures. Respondents also described it as comprehensive and easy to read.

There was recognition that many key areas in the Plan necessitated continued partnership working, and there was wide support for the approach and issues outlined within the plan. Many partners considered that their own plans included work which would support the areas within the Plan.

Partners who have responded generally considered that the objectives fitted neatly with their own but that more overt references could be made to multi-agency work ASB teams, civil contingency, safer night-time economy multi-agency work. Some partners commented that partnership working could be afforded greater prominence and there should be a clear message that crime and disorder cannot be solved by the police alone, and that wider community safety issues were best addressed by a multi-agency approach.

Partners also made the links between the key areas included within the plan. For example, ASB offending, once investigated, leads to complex areas of need which cut across many of the areas of the plan, including domestic abuse and substance misuse. There was agreement that a multi-agency approach to mental health is needed. Two respondents considered that greater recognition should be given to the Suffolk Resilience Forum, which provides emergency planning for incidents in Suffolk.

Government Policy

One respondent considered that the plan should include some description of the government's rationale for introducing PCCs, others felt the elections and rationale were not communicated effectively by the government and as a result the public were not interested.

Engagement and Consultation

The plan clearly outlines the intention to consult in a variety of ways. Some partners suggested that existing mechanisms could be utilised. They welcomed the idea of having a direct communication channel to the PCC. There is a countywide body, which is a useful forum to co-ordinate consultation and councillors are an invaluable link to local communities. Town and Parish Councils would also like to be part of the on-going consultation as would the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

One respondent expressed a view that the Plan could be clearer on how the PCC will consult with staff and officers, whereas another respondent stressed the need to keep up staff morale.

Rural Issues

Some respondents noted that the Plan was fair to rural areas, and that it was good to see farming and agriculture specifically mentioned under business crime and a commitment to support farmwatch. Other welcome additions were the response for rural areas and initiatives on rural crime and metal theft. However one response suggested that the plan should give greater prominence to rural crime, pointing out that Suffolk is a rural county and many people have serious concerns about rural crime. There was a suggestion that it would be good to commit to the need for a dedicated rural crime police officer.

Offenders and Offending

It was suggested that prisons and probation should also be embraced in order that concentrated work on higher risk and repeat Suffolk offenders and the broader concept of integrated offender management can be better applied in the county for prisoners from and returning to Suffolk. There was a view that the Plan would be strengthened by specific mention of 180 Integrated Offender Management programme particularly as it manages those prolific offenders who commit a lot of offences, primarily acquisitive crime. At a strategic level greater improvement is needed in terms of repeat offending, and addressing the root causes of offending.

Substance Misuse

A view was expressed that the location of, and access to recovery services, should be carefully considered. On the subject of substance misuse there was a query whether funding would be available to develop proactive projects i.e. allowing an initiative to be put in place before a new substance becomes overly problematic.

With regard to the Alcohol Strategy, it could be clearer that Suffolk is attempting to develop a more tailored strategy for the County. Some of the tools available (such as Purple Flag) are more appropriate for urban or night time economy centres and less appropriate for smaller towns and villages.

Young People

The importance given to ensuring the meaningful and positive representation of young people was welcomed as was the acknowledgement that perceptions of young people are affected by views held by the public as to their involvement in crime and ASB.

Consulting young people via Youth Parliaments and Schools Council was supported but consideration should also be given to consultation with other groups of young people such as those in Pupil Referral Units and those in projects run by Social Care and the Youth Offending Service. Using apprenticeships and Police Cadets was welcomed but there was concern that these schemes would not have universal appeal to those young people not in education, employment and training.