

**ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**PAPER NO:AP16/58**

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
16 DECEMBER 2016**

**SUBJECT: SUFFOLK LOCAL POLICING MODEL - EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY:**

1. This report provides interim findings from the evaluation of the Suffolk Local Policing Model.
2. A second interim report will be presented to this panel in February 2017.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

## DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

### 1. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1.1. Suffolk Constabulary implemented changes to its local policing model (known as the Suffolk Local Policing Review or SLPR) in April 2016.
- 1.2. The interim findings of the SLPR evaluation are that the policing model is generally functioning as planned. Increasing criminal use of technology and the online environment, and increased reporting and recording of abuse and exploitation crime, has meant changes in workload and working practices. Locally, the Constabulary has also introduced three major new IT systems in the last three years. All of these changes have had impact which cannot be entirely separated in order to establish the effect of the introduction of the SLPR alone.
- 1.3. The key points of the new policing model are:
  - A revised county policing map with redefined 'locality' areas led by an Inspector;
  - A reduced number of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), strategically placed to respond to local demand;
  - A revised workforce, resulting in the right mix of warranted frontline police officers and PCSOs to deal effectively with today's policing challenges;
  - A redefined remit for SNTs to ensure that bureaucracy is reduced, visibility is preserved and local issues are addressed in the most effective way;
  - A reduction in the number of police station front counters, with revised and improved methods of community contact to ensure availability and accessibility to all;
  - Enhanced online presence to ensure that 24/7 online communication is available to all;
  - An enhanced process for investigations, enabling incidents to be dealt with by the best resource, improving the service to victims;
  - An increase in the number of officers in investigative roles who protect vulnerable people and deal with the most serious crimes;
  - Emergency Response Teams with a refined role to deal with the most urgent calls based on threat, harm, risk and vulnerability.
- 1.4. The key benefits of the new policing model are:
  - An operating platform that is fit for purpose and affordable, delivering the savings and reflecting changing demand;
  - A flexible workforce with the right skills to deliver excellent service;
  - Excellent local policing delivered in partnership;
  - Improved victim satisfaction and confidence;
  - The delivery of the Police and Crime Plan objectives;
  - Modernising working practices through better use of technology.
- 1.5. The SLPR was necessarily introduced on 1 April 2016 to enable savings targets to be met. Additionally, two other substantial changes were made to the organisation, the development of which had been progressing for a number of years prior to SLPR; Athena (a new operating platform for ICT services) and ERP (a digital resourcing

programme). The overall level of change at the point of the introduction of the SLPR was therefore the most significant for many years.

- 1.6 At this point of interim reporting the evaluation has identified issues with resource levels in several key departments. These challenges in particular have emerged from the positive news that the Constabulary has been recruiting police officers again; a high number of student officers are currently factored into establishments and will, in time, improve the effective strength (the actual number of officers who are fully able to be independently operational).
- 1.7 With such a large change programme, the Constabulary recognises issues with staff welfare, overtime and officer safety. It is taking steps to effectively manage its current vacancies across the organisation to ensure that no particular team holds a disproportionate number. Recruitment is also ongoing and the Constabulary is committed to continuously reviewing and improving its working practices through its collaboration with partners.
- 1.8 The full review will incorporate data analysis and stakeholder feedback. Part of this will be the feedback from the 18 SNT meetings which highlighted the following:-

#### How the Public Contact the Police

- 1.9 Early findings showed some difficulties in matching an increase in anticipated demand with the resource modelling of the SLPR. This had an impact on the service provided, causing delays in contact. Resource levels were addressed, in particular through increased provision into the Incident and Crime Management Hub (ICMH which has since made the workflow manageable.
- 1.10 There is some concern about the time taken to answer 101 calls. Whilst the average time for a controller to answer the call is less than three minutes, there are some who have had to wait prolonged periods. This is being addressed through enhanced resourcing and investment in technology.
- 1.11 The new website provides an enhanced range of options for users including on line crime recording, answers to frequently asked questions, how to deal with lost and found property and how to report a range of issues of concern to the police or partner agencies.
- 1.12 The SLPR gave functional responsibilities to those working within Safer Neighbourhood Teams covering areas such as mental health and chronically excluded people. Whilst this will have a positive effect upon areas of vulnerability, some people expressed concern over not having an identifiable officer or PCSO for a specific geographic area. In particular, Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NHW) Co-ordinators found difficulty in linking in with the SNT. There are now identifiable members of staff within each SNT that are the link with NHW and work is progressing to ensure there are clear geographic links with SNTs.

#### How the Police Communicate with the Public

- 1.13 During the initial weeks of following the launch of the SLPR, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes expressed concern at the proposed limited attendance at meetings. The significant number of Parish Council meetings alone meant attendance was going to be impractical, however adjustments have been made to this policy which now enables attendance at least once a year if requested and also where there is a significant issue that requires discussion. SNT's are

expected to have ongoing consultation with Parish Clerks. A newsletter has also been produced monthly and is available on line for anyone to access.

- 1.14 The timeliness of information sharing has also been an issue of discussion with some wanting detailed historic statistical information whilst others want more timely dynamic communication. Crime data is available online via the website with some information detailed on the monthly SNT newsletter. It is essential the information provided to NHW schemes and communities as a whole is timely and relevant and the Chief Constable has outlined how the enhancements to Police Connect will be further developed to enable this.
- 1.15 Visibility has been raised as a concern. Whilst it has been a feature of consultative processes prior to the SLPR, the specific issue of the shifts worked by PCSO's has been mentioned at a few meetings. This is currently being reviewed by the Constabulary but a change, if at all, must be affordable within the overall budget.
- 1.16 The Constabulary is committed to the provision of a quality service to all communities. A rural crime strategy is currently being finalised that enhances services to rural communities and ensures hidden harm in our isolated areas is identified and addressed.

#### Police Funding/Demand Management

- 1.17 The Chief Constable and PCC shared with those present at the meetings how the investment from the precept increase has enhanced the SLPR in the areas of vulnerability, hidden harm and cyber-crime investigation.
- 1.18 The current funding position of the Constabulary outlined in the recent HMIC publications that showed that the cost of police officers per head of population was around 20% lower in Suffolk than the national average. One area where this was of particular relevance was during discussion of parking enforcement that was of consistent concern across the 18 meetings. Whilst Suffolk Constabulary received less funding per head of the population when compared to the national average, staff are still expected to undertake parking enforcement duties that are undertaken by councils in all but 24 districts across the Country. An agreed proposal between Suffolk Senior Leaders has been reached that will see business cases presented to each District Council in the New Year. This will enable an effective and efficient parking enforcement operation across the County and will free up valuable time for the police resource, albeit limited, currently used to deal with this issue.
- 1.19 A presentation was made by the Chief Constable and PCC that illustrated the breadth of responsibilities the Constabulary now faces, including a video which has been viewed extensively over social media and at community events. There is general acceptance that the Constabulary has to prioritise the work based upon risk but those present also agreed for the need to deal with other issues of community concern in a proportionate way. Speeding, for example, continues to be an issue of concern. The enhanced roads policing resource was a welcome investment but community members sought better communication with the SNT.

#### Next Steps

- 1.20 In order to develop the understanding of the perceived impact of the model both on Suffolk communities, and on the police officers delivering the new model, an

extensive consultation period is now underway to capture the views of staff, parish councils and partners. This will be combined with the quantitative data analysis.

- 1.21 The findings of this consultation will be reported on in February 2017 with a full report in April 2017, one year after implementation.

## **2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 The financial implications of introducing this new policing model have been outlined throughout this report.

## **3 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 3.1 None

<b>ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)</b>	<b>PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'</b>
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	<b>No</b>
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	<b>No</b>
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	<b>Yes</b>
Have human resource implications been considered?	<b>Yes</b>
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	<b>Yes</b>
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	<b>Yes</b>
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	<b>No</b>
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	<b>Yes</b>