



PAPER AP21/30

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

A meeting of the Accountability and Performance Panel was held via Microsoft Teams at 09:30 on Friday 21 May 2021.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement), Christopher Jackson (Chief Executive), Anna Parkinson (EA to the PCC and CEO), Tim Passmore (PCC) and Vanessa Scott (Head of Policy and Performance).

Suffolk Constabulary

Rob Jones (Assistant Chief Constable), Steve Jupp (Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer), Simon Megicks (Assistant Chief Constable) and Jules Wvendth (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable).

In attendance for the public agenda

Councillor John Burns (Member of Police and Crime Panel), Andrew Eley (Democratic Services, Suffolk County Council), Vikki Irwin (Journalist, BBC), Mark Jepson (Chair of Police and Crime Panel), Tom Potter (Journalist, East Anglian Daily Times) and Councillor Keith Welham (Member of Police and Crime Panel).

Apologies

Chris Bland (Chief Finance Officer) and Rachel Kearton (Deputy Chief Constable).

PUBLIC AGENDA

1 Open minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2021 (Paper AP21/20)

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.
- 1.2 The actions were noted as complete/in hand.

2 **Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020-2021** Report by the Assistant Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer (Paper AP21/21)

2.1 The Assistant Chief Officer presented this report, highlighting the final position revenue underspend for the Group being £2.114m and the capital underspend £1.892m.

2.2 Attention was also drawn to the additional Government funding received to assist with costs arising from the pandemic and also to enable the PCC to grant additional funds to charities and voluntary sector organisations. In addition, a local tax income grant relating to council tax collection fund deficits will be received.

2.3 The PCC approved the proposed reserve transfers as set out in the paper and commended how the finances had been managed.

3 **Performance Priorities Monitoring Report** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/14)

3.1 ACC Jones presented this report.

Performance Report: Summary

3.2 The PCC was pleased to note the summary report.

Performance Report: Workforce

3.3 The PCC requested that Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) officers be included in future reports in order to provide a full picture of Suffolk Officers.
ACTION: Include ERSOU officers in workforce headcount

Performance Report: Domestic Abuse (DA)

3.4 The PCC was interested to learn of the bid to secure funding from the Home Office to enable an analysis and research project looking at the journey of victims of DA. ACC Jones said that he would provide further details about the project outside the meeting.
ACTION: ACC Jones to provide PCC with further detail about DA victim research project

Performance Report: Serious Sexual Offences (SSO)

3.5 ACC Jones drew attention to levels of convictions in this area. While they are still relatively low, they are improving and consistent with the national picture and most of the Forces in Suffolk's Most Similar Group (MSG).

3.6 He emphasised that in every case it is essential to consider the circumstances from the victim's point of view and bear in mind their wishes. In a number of cases this may involve supporting a victim and signposting them to organisations to assist their recovery rather than pursuing the criminal justice route.

3.7 As social restrictions are easing and especially the night time economy resuming, ACC Jones said that it was important for the Force to engage with the public particularly around people looking out for one another when they are out socialising and also expectations with regard

to male behaviour. The PCC said that he would be happy to support any public communications in this area.

ACTION: Communications plan (as social restrictions are eased) to be shared with PCC

3.8 The Chief Executive then asked whether the delays in the criminal justice system – delays further exacerbated by the pandemic – contributed to victims not supporting investigations. With precise data unavailable, ACC Jones said that he felt it must be a factor but efforts were made not to let it be an impediment. The clear message from investigators is that the delays in the criminal justice system should not have a bearing on a decision to seek justice through the courts. He added that victims who do pursue this route are supported throughout the process with each step explained as to what it means.

3.9 The PCC then asked for more information about the internship placement mentioned in the report, with the intern working on a project aimed at understanding non-engagement with younger victims. ACC Jones will brief the PCC further outside the meeting.

ACTION: PCC to be briefed further on internship placement and scope of the project they will be undertaking

Performance Report: Emergency and Non-Emergency Call Handling

3.8 This area of performance was considered in more detail at item 5 on the agenda.

Performance Report: Traffic Offence Reports (TORs)

3.9 The numbers of Killed or Seriously Injured collisions (KSIs) and TORs issued for mobile phone use have both fallen. In both cases this can in part be attributed to the lockdown and significantly reduced traffic volumes on the roads. TORs for seatbelt offences have increased however, likely as a result of the Force's support of the national initiative in this area.

Performance Reports: Violence with and without Injury

3.10 These reports were taken together. ACC Jones noted that with the night time economy largely closed, the associated violence had reduced. The charts contained within the report illustrate the impact of the lockdowns on these types of crimes. However, tackling violence remains a vital part of the Force's mission.

3.11 As social restrictions come to an end and a great many visitors expected in Suffolk over the summer, the PCC asked what plans the Force has in readiness to address any issues arising. ACC Jones explained that there were detailed plans in place, specific to each policing area considering factors such as hotels, campsites, visitor attractions etc. The Force is also engaging with partners, such as the Town Pastors, to plan for the increased activity. Shift patterns will be considered carefully and able to flex to meet varying levels of demand.

4 **Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) Compliance** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/23)

4.1 T/ACC Wvendth presented this report, highlighting key areas.

- 4.2 A new VCOP was launched by Government on 1 April 2021. The Force had prepared for this and communicated extensively internally to ensure awareness and delivery of the requirements of the Code which have so far been made clear by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). (At the present time not all requirements in relation to compliance with the Code have been clarified and finalised).
- 4.3 Suffolk Constabulary is in a good position with regard to the implementation of the strategy in this area and indeed is in a strong position nationally compared with other forces.
- 4.4 With regard to the ongoing concerns about the number of referrals to Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) services being made for victims who do not want such a service, T/ACC Wvendth reassured the Panel that a huge amount of focus remained on ensuring that officers ask victims whether or not they would like their details passed on to NSVC and record it on Athena accordingly. This is not only done via general internal communications but also contact is made directly with officers who have been found not to have "unticked" the automatic referral feature on Athena. A technical change to the system still appears unlikely as the other Forces which use Athena are content with the system as it has been set up.
- 4.5 There is also focus on the welfare of the Witness Care Unit. Workload pressures remain high, as is the case nationally, with delays in the criminal justice system exacerbated by the pandemic. An increase in staff numbers has helped considerably, providing additional support and reducing personal caseloads.
- 4.6 The Chief Executive shared the concerns that the delays put additional pressure on victims and staff but added that it must also affect those falsely accused of crimes awaiting trial, as had been shown recently in a case reported nationally. ACC Wvendth agreed with this and also commented that those awaiting trial may not be getting the intervention help they may need.

5 **Contact and Control Room (CCR) and Public Access** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/24)

- 5.1 ACC Jones presented this report highlighting key areas.
- 5.2 A programme of changes and improvements is in place being led by a dedicated and experienced Superintendent. The priorities for the next year are to reduce waiting times and abandoned call rates. While calls are triaged as they come in, the wider demand needs to be more imaginatively managed and properly resourced.
- 5.3 A shift pattern review is being undertaken to consider in more detail how resources are aligned. Staff and managers have agreed that if they were aligned better/more effectively, the CCR would see improvements even without increasing overall resources.
- 5.4 Work is going into understanding abandoned calls – about 13% of 101 callers abandon their call. The recorded messages they hear direct them to online reporting of crime and a correlation between abandoned calls and increased levels of online reporting can be seen. However, there are probably calls which are given up due to frustration at the waiting time.

5.5 Focus remains on channel shift to encourage people to use alternative methods to contact the Force. A “live chat” project has recently been successfully trialled and it will be accelerated in the months ahead. Initial data suggests that live chats handle 4 times as many “calls” in the same time frame as those on the phone.

5.6 ACC Jones said that a comprehensive communications plan to engage with the public about the different ways of contacting the Force has been drawn up. This will be shared with the PCC.

ACTION: ACC Jones to share comms plan around different ways of contacting the Force

5.7 The Chief Constable said that it was important to recognise the already considerable effort which has gone into public communication to encourage channel shift. Suffolk has looked at best practice elsewhere and worked extensively in this area. However, it has to be recognised that a proportion of the public will prefer to speak to a person within a public service and not use alternative methods. Therefore channel shift cannot be achieved at the same rates as in the private sector by organisations such as banks.

6 **Suffolk Collaboration Update** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/25)

6.1 The Chief Constable presented this report, which the PCC was pleased to note.

6.2 The Chief Executive asked if there were any developments with regard to the Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). The Chief Constable will provide a briefing outside the meeting.

ACTION: Chief Constable to brief Chief Executive re DAMS developments

7 **Update on Progress Against HMICFRS Inspection Recommendations** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/26)

7.1 This report was not discussed in any depth due to time constraints. Any discussion felt necessary will take place between the PCC and Chief Constable at a future Weekly Conference.

7.2 The Chief Constable, however, did comment that he had heard verbally from HMICFRS that they are content that Suffolk has fulfilled all outstanding AFI's arising from the PEEL inspection. Some of the national recommendations are not yet possible as external developments need to happen first; other recommendations may never come into being as circumstances change and the Home Office changes requirements. Suffolk's focus is always on improving.

8 **Any Other Business**

8.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 12:10 and members of the public left the meeting.

PRIVATE AGENDA

[A detailed account of the discussions and decisions on the following items is contained in the confidential minutes]

- 9 **Closed minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2021** (Paper AP21/27)
9.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.
- 10 **Protective Services Command Update** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/28)
10.1 ACC Megicks presented this report.
- 11 **Strategic Policing Requirement** Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP21/29)
11.1 ACC Megicks presented this report.

The meeting closed at 12:30

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Owner
3.3	Performance Report – Workforce: Include ERSOU officers in workforce headcount	Deputy Chief Constable
3.4	Performance Report – DA: PCC to be provided with further detail about DA victim research project	ACC Jones
3.7	Performance Report – SSO: Communications plan (as social restrictions are eased) to be shared with PCC	ACC Jones
3.9	Performance Report – SSO: PCC to be briefed further on internship placement and scope of the project they will be undertaking	ACC Jones
5.6	CCR and Public Access: ACC Jones to share comms plan around different ways of contacting the Force	ACC Jones
6	Suffolk Collaboration Update: Chief Constable to brief Chief Executive re DAMS developments	Chief Constable