

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

A meeting of the Accountability and Performance Panel was held via Microsoft Teams at 09:30 on Friday 18 March 2022.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Chris Jackson (Chief Executive), Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement), Kate Fitzsimons (Support Officer), Tim Passmore (PCC) and Vanessa Scott (Head of Policy and Performance)

Kenneth Kilpatrick (Chief Constable's Chief Finance Officer and Temporary PCC Chief Finance Officer)

Suffolk Constabulary

Rob Jones (Assistant Chief Constable), Steve Jupp (Chief Constable)

In attendance for the Public Agenda

John Burns (Member of Police and Crime Panel), Theresa Harden (Democratic Services, Suffolk County Council), Mark Jepson (Chair of Police and Crime Panel), Debbie Richard (Member of Police and Crime Panel), Adriana Stapleton (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Chief Superintendent Peter Gardner (OCU Commander, Metropolitan Police Service), Matt Simmons (Head of HR Service Delivery, Metropolitan Police Service)

PUBLIC AGENDA

1 Public Question Time

1.1 There were no questions from the audience.

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022 (Paper AP22/12)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

2.2 The actions were noted as complete or in hand.

3 Financial Monitoring (Paper AP22/13)

- 3.1 The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) presented this report.
- 3.2 The forecast revenue underspend at the end of the financial year for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and the Constabulary is £930k. The OPCC's forecast underspend of £55k is slightly higher than expected which was attributed to staff vacancies and some contingencies that were not used. The key contributor for the Constabulary's underspend of £875k is income, which is largely as a result of the receipt of recharges for the G7 summit and COP26. It was noted that similar receipts are not anticipated in future financial years.
- 3.3 The forecast capital underspend at the end of the financial year is £2m. This underspend is earmarked for ongoing Estates and ICT projects that are moving into the next financial year. Reassurance was given that the delays caused by the shortage of some goods and equipment was being managed to ensure there is no operational impact. The PCC will be kept updated and a further report will be brought to the next APP meeting in May.
- 3.4 The PCC was pleased to note the financial position and had no substantive questions. He highlighted that the force's budget was on target, which he felt was commendable.
- 3.5 In terms of inflation, the ACO said that the reserves should cover the rise in energy costs. Assumptions are based on the Treasury Forecasts used in the spending review. There will be a cost pressure in relation to the rise in fuel costs but that there is surplus that can be carried forward to manage this.

4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims (Paper AP22/14)

- 4.1 The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) presented the report highlighting key areas.
- 4.2 The ACC highlighted that the report reflects the changing way in which that vulnerability is addressed and the way in which officers and staff are integral in the victim journey.

Victims Code of Compliance (VCOP)

- 4.3 The ACC highlighted the depth of the requirements under the Code of Practice and the challenges that it brings.
- 4.4 A review has commenced of the force's operating model and the first principle is around effective initial contact with a victim. There is focussed effort in the areas most positively impacting a victim, such as the Victim Personal Statement (VPS), which demonstrates the impact of crime on the victim. The force has improved at offering VPS however the number of victims choosing to complete one is low. He added that the force is reviewing these low numbers as it was thought that the timing around when the option of a VPS is offered could impact its uptake. New technology available for officers is also assisting efficiencies in this area.
- 4.5 The PCC felt that the VPS is a powerful tool when it comes to prosecution and would be interested to know why they are not taken up by victims more frequently.

- 4.6 The PCC asked about the force's engagement with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and what work is being done to ensure prosecution. The Chief Constable spoke of the difficulties but assured that he meets regularly with the Senior Crown Prosecutor for the East of England to discuss issues. There is also a reporting structure in place where various issues are fed directly into the Operational Director at the CPS. The PCC and Chief Constable are also meeting with the Resident Judge and others in due course. The PCC will also raise with the Resident Judge the issues around when court is delayed at very short notice. The Chief Constable suggested that a further meeting is arranged with the Senior Crown Prosecutor and the PCC.

ACTION: The Chief Constable to facilitate a meeting between himself, the Senior Crown Prosecutor, and the PCC where issues relating to the courts can be discussed.

- 4.7 The Chief Executive asked about the Attorney General guidelines (issued in December 2020) and whether the requirement around full disclosure potentially translates as some cases not proceeding to charge, and the impact of this on officers' workload. The Chief Constable explained that this has increased the level of demand on officers and that there is now a small team in place to support the officers with preparing evidence needed at court. He added that this issue is raised frequently by frontline officers.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse (DA)

- 4.8 The ACC spoke of the tragic circumstance in which the VAWG strategy was developed, which was the murder of Sarah Everard. He assured that Suffolk remains in a strong position in terms of public trust and confidence. The strategy was felt to be excellent, and he emphasised the importance of the action plan. The key part from a policing perspective is the early identification and addressing of risk. The largest area of development is around ensuring the right support is available for the victim from the right agency.
- 4.9 The trial in Suffolk where victims contacting police are given a choice on the type of support they need was reported as working well. It is being academically evaluated and findings will be brought to a future APP meeting. He added that this is a good example of where the victim and their needs are put first.
- 4.10 VAWG now has a definition and there is a full list of offences. Misogyny is not currently categorised as a crime; however, it will be included in this list should the national picture change. Through the Safer Stronger Community Board there remains an excellent partnership response and full commitment to the local response to VAWG.
- 4.11 With the extra resource in the Contact and Control Room (CCR) the force has been able to better record risk assessment when a call is received from a victim of DA. Measures are in place to ensure CCR staff handle calls from victims empathetically and supportively.
- 4.12 The ACC added that there is strong evidence that shows the negative impact on small boys who have witnessed DA during their lives that then mature and perpetrate violence. Operation Encompass looks at providing extra support to children which helps to strengthen the impact of victimisation. The PCC commended the force's work around the emphasis on children being the innocent victims and the importance of this work given the likelihood of a child victim becoming a perpetrator. It was noted that around a third of DA incidents have children implicated in them.

- 4.13 The PCC raised the force's DA Continuous Improvement Plan and asked that he is updated on this at a Weekly Conference meeting.

ACTION: The PCC to be updated on the position of the force's DA Continuous Improvement Plan at a Weekly Conference meeting.

Stalking and Harassment

- 4.14 There have been changes to the way that the Home Office count and record Stalking and Harassment cases and protective powers to stop stalkers which have been used more readily. A rise in volume reflects the force using the right legislation and powers more precisely than previously.
- 4.15 Internal force operational boards review and discuss the level of online abuse and stalking. There is a digital footprint in over 9 in 10 investigations and the investment in the digital support officers, and the training of officers, has enabled evidence gathering in these cases.
- 4.16 The ACC emphasised that officers continue to make huge efforts to ensure that arrests of perpetrators are made swiftly.

Sexual Offending

- 4.17 The PCC asked what progress has been made with the desktop research and when the work on the findings will be concluded. The ACC said that the report will be shared at a Weekly Conference meeting and that the force is working with the University of Suffolk to build on the findings.
- ACTION: The research reports to be shared with the PCC at a Weekly Conference meeting.**
- 4.18 The PCC raised the issue with detective capacity. The ACC explained that there is a national issue with recruiting and retaining detectives. The Chief Constable added that the force is looking at ways to incentivise people to join and remain. There will be further discussion outside of the APP meeting.
- ACTION: The PCC and Chief Constable will discuss further at a Weekly Conference meeting.**

Stalking Protection Orders

- 4.19 The PCC asked if Orders are being used enough in Suffolk. The ACC assured that there is responsible use and that they are used only when it will make a difference to a victim.

Hate Crime

- 4.20 The Chief Executive raised the HMI report by Sir Tom Windsor and asked if Hate Crime cases were being handled consistently with that report. The ACC said that there is a robust scrutiny mechanism in place and that he feels there is balance. The Chief Constable added that in terms of the investigation of crime, the force follows the Home Office Counting Rules. The force was inspected by the HMI on Crime Data Integrity and were found to be satisfactory in this area; therefore, the Chief Constable has no concerns.

Modern Slavery

- 4.21 The ACC said that nationally enforcement is low and that in Suffolk there are a small number of cases entering the Criminal Justice System. However, he is not aware of any convictions on that specific legislation. There is now a better picture and understanding of Modern Slavery in Suffolk and it was felt that the county was in a stronger position. The PCC expressed that he would like to be kept updated on the numbers of victims in this area.
ACTION: The ACC to update the PCC on data relating to Modern Slavery outside of the APP meeting.

5 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending (Paper AP22/15)

- 5.1 The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) presented this report.
- 5.2 The ACC highlighted the areas where the force has improved, such as being more proactive in identifying suspects and taking positive action in bring them to justice.

Custody

- 5.3 The PCC asked the data pertaining to Suffolk is extracted and reported on to ensure a clear picture in the county.
ACTION: Suffolk related data on throughput to be extracted from the data pack in future reports.
- 5.4 ICVs continue monitor the welfare of detainees. The PCC spoke of appreciation for volunteers and their commitment.

Out of Court Disposals

- 5.5 The national change is being implemented locally to ensure the full range of Out of Court Disposals is used. A trial is underway in the county and more information and case studies will be brought to a future APP meeting. The PCC raised that there is a lack of understanding around Out of Court Disposals. He asked that there is further consideration on how public confidence could be boosted around this.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Unit (DAPU)

- 5.6 The Unit is proving to be an effective way of dealing with repeat perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. The PCC raised that he would be interested to see the results from the evaluation and also to understand lessons learned. The ACC confirmed that initial outcomes can be shared at Weekly Conference. The PCC suggested that there should be a more joined up approach and that the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) could be a good forum for this.
ACTION: The ACC to share the DAPU evaluation at a Weekly Conference Meeting.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Protections

- 5.7 The outcomes from MAPPA are strong. The Public Protection Unit in Suffolk manages offenders well. The PCC commended the efforts of the teams and the good work the force is undertaking overall to bring offenders to justice.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

- 5.8 The ACC said the key point is the effective reduction in reoffending which is largely a result of stronger national guidelines. The PCC questioned the cost effectiveness of the IOM and if there are areas that could be improved or be more effective and the role other agencies should play. The ACC said he felt the IOM was effective and there are strong relationships with the probation service and access to employment and housing. There are also good links with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at a local and strategic level. Overall, there are no concerns with partnership work.

6 Update on the work of the Rural Crime and Wildlife Team (Paper AP22/16)

- 6.1 The Chief Constable presented this report.
- 6.2 He highlighted the small structure of the team, the breadth of activities that they undertake, and the issues that face rural communities. The force act on identified priorities and there is strong publicity in the communities. There are good links with other agencies and there will be further consideration in this area if the county deal comes to fruition.
- 6.3 The volunteers on horseback in rural areas were commended for their work.
- 6.4 The Chief Executive asked what assurance the force could provide regarding domestic heating oil theft in rural communities, especially with the current global situation. The Chief Constable assured that currently oil theft is extremely low, but this will be considered by the Rural Team if there is an increase. The ACC added that there have been preventative messages circulated to rural communities.
- 6.5 The PCC raised the issues with Firearms Licencing. The Chief said that the Government are still reviewing the licencing fee and once the implications are understood then staffing will be looked at. The timeliness with the progression of applications have improved.

7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 11:45 and members of the public left the meeting.

PRIVATE AGENDA

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

8 Closed minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022 (Paper AP22/17)

- 8.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.

9 Protective Services Command Update (Paper AP22/18)

- 9.1 Detective Chief Superintendent David Cutler presented this report.

10 Protective Services CONTEST Update (Paper AP22/19)

- 10.1 Detective Chief Superintendent David Cutler presented this report.

11 Risk Register/ Chief Officer Risk Report (Paper AP22/20)

- 11.1 There was discussion by senior officers on areas within the report.

The meeting closed at 12:05

Summary of Actions

| Item | Action | Owner |
|------|--|----------------------|
| 4.6 | Courts: The Chief Constable to facilitate a meeting between himself, the Senior Crown Prosecutor and the PCC where issues relating to the courts can be discussed | Chief Constable |
| 4.13 | VAWG and DA: The PCC to be updated on the position of the force's DA Continuous Improvement Plan at a Weekly Conference meeting | ACC Jones |
| 4.17 | Sexual Offending: The research reports to be shared with the PCC at a Weekly Conference meeting | ACC Jones |
| 4.18 | Detective Capacity: The PCC and Chief Constable will discuss further at a Weekly Conference meeting | PCC/ Chief Constable |
| 4.21 | Modern Slavery: The ACC to update the PCC on data relating to Modern Slavery outside of the APP meeting | ACC Jones |
| 5.3 | Custody report: Suffolk related data on throughput to be extracted from the data pack in future reports | ACC Jones |
| 5.6 | DAPU Evaluation: The ACC to share the DAPU evaluation at a Weekly Conference meeting | ACC Jones |