



PAPER AP22/48

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

A meeting of the Accountability and Performance Panel was held at Police Headquarters Martlesham, and via Microsoft Teams at 09:30 on Friday 16 September 2022.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer), Kate Boswell (Executive Assistant to the PCC and Chief Executive), Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement), Elisabeth Hollingworth (Head of Commissioning and Governance), Christopher Jackson (Chief Executive), Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner).

Suffolk Constabulary

Eamonn Bridger (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable), Carol Dickinson (Modern Slavery and Vulnerable Communities Coordinator), Rob Jones (Assistant Chief Constable), Rachel Kearton (Deputy Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer).

In attendance for the Public Agenda in person

Terry Charles, Mark Jepson (Chair of the Police and Crime Panel), Franstine Jones (Member of the Police and Crime Panel).

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

John Burns (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), Penny Otton (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), Debbie Richards (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), Adriana Stapleton (Senior Democratic Services Officer, Suffolk County Council).

Apologies

Steve Jupp (Chief Constable).

PUBLIC AGENDA

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Tim Passmore welcomed everyone back to the first in-person public meeting at Police Headquarters since 2020, and to the first hybrid meeting where those unable to join in person were able to attend the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

A minute's silence was held to mark the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

1 Public Question Time

1.1 Questions were received in advance of the meeting from the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel in relation to item number 4 on the agenda, the Improving Confidence and Satisfaction Report, which the PCC confirmed would be covered. No further questions were received.

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2022 (Paper AP22/39)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.

2.2 It was noted that action point 5.9 would be reviewed during the meeting.

2.3 Upon action point 8.7, the PCC questioned the response received from the Constabulary providing further information on speed cameras, and requested clarification on how the location of fixed speed cameras was decided. Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC) Bridger confirmed that fixed cameras were the responsibility of the local authority, although in some instances the Constabulary are able to influence site location.

2.4 Upon point 8.6 the Chief Executive, in noting that data upon close passing of cyclists received from the Constabulary highlighted that there have been prosecutions. He asked whether the Constabulary were making this information sufficiently public to raise awareness and deter offenders. T/ACC Bridger confirmed that this would be considered for future communication strategies.

2.5 All other actions were noted as complete or in hand.

3 Financial Monitoring (Paper AP22/40)

3.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Kilpatrick, presented this report, which showed figures for the 4 months to the end of July 2022.

3.2 The underspend of £1.26M was forecast for the end of the financial year. The police pay award was budgeted at a 3% increase; this has now been confirmed as a 5% increase. There will be some additional funds from the Home Office to part fund the different. There is now the possibility that police staff will achieve parity with police officers and receive a 5% pay rise, and which has not yet been included in the figures. The impact of inflation on the next financial year continues to be monitored.

3.3 The PCC believed that Police Staff should receive the same 5% pay rise as officers, and asked if the possible national insurance changes being mentioned by government would affect the budget. ACO Kilpatrick confirmed that the Outcome Based Budgeting (OBB) process will be starting over the coming weeks to prepare for the next financial year, and which would allow time for some of these national decisions, such as a change in national insurance, and a possible energy price cap, to be understood and incorporated.

3.4 The PCC asked if Blue Light Commercial had been consulted with regards to bulk buying fuel. ACO Kilpatrick confirmed they have no purchasing power with the oil companies and are therefore unable to bulk buy fuel.

- 3.5 The PCC asked for comment on the reoccurring issue of collecting council tax for second homes within the county. ACO Kilpatrick confirmed proposals have been put forward for a second homes premium which would increase council tax revenues, and in turn increase Constabulary revenues, however this has yet to be delivered.
- 3.6 The PCC stated that the Constabulary had a good relationship with Sizewell C and EDF Energy and asked if everything was in place from a funding position. Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Jones commented that a lot of work has gone into building these relationships, and that the funding agreement is in place which will support the additional policing costs and the associated pressures that Sizewell C will cause for Suffolk.

4 HMICFRS PEEL Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary (Paper AP22/41)

- 4.1 The PCC praised this PEEL inspection as being a very good report, with Suffolk being a small force with a small budget per person. It was very commendable.
- 4.2 The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Kearton presented this report, highlighting that Suffolk Constabulary volunteered to be assessed as part of this pilot scheme, which has resulted in 6 good ratings, and 1 area for improvement around supporting victims. With Suffolk Constabulary being one of the smallest forces within the UK, this report highlights the best practice work being undertaken within the county. The Corporate Communications team will be able to build a campaign to promote the best practices here in Suffolk as identified by the inspectorate.
- 4.3 The report highlighted the fast track entry scheme for detectives, a scheme which has been adopted by the Metropolitan Police. It is known that this scheme attracts a different type of applicant, usually older and more mature, of greater ethnic diversity, and where typically applicants had other careers prior to joining the Constabulary. The report also highlighted the work of the Digital Support Officers, who can take information from technology devices such as a phone, analyse it quickly in order to feed it back into the investigation, and ensure victims of crime receive their devices back and can carry on living their lives. Finally, the Corporate Improvement and Innovation Strategy was noted as having delivered on a number of initiatives, which in the context of Suffolk are around efficiency. Resources are utilised effectively, with the results taking Suffolk Constabulary into the national scene, by doing things other forces have not done before.
- 4.4 The PCC asked for a progress update on the modernisation and update programme for the Contact and Control Room (CCR). ACC Jones confirmed that the first stage, comprising transformation of the switchboard, had been completed, and the second phase was well underway within the CCR. The third phase was due to commence, but to caveat, the Constabulary was seeing unprecedented demand within the CCR, particularly in respect of 999 calls.
- 4.5 In relation to Action Point 5.9 from the 8 July 2022 Accountability and Performance Panel (APP) Meeting and the possible correlation between 101-call abandonment and 999-call rate increase, ACC Jones confirmed that the CCR does not continuously monitor to see if this is the case. There is the possibility that the calls are abandoned as they have been redirected online. The Constabulary proposes to look at this in more depth for the next CCR report to be presented at APP.

ACTION – ACC JONES to include full data on the reported 101 abandonment calls potentially becoming 999 calls in the next CCR report to be presented at APP.

- 4.6 The Chief Executive stated that at the July APP meeting, the Chief Constable confirmed Suffolk Constabulary were not a force at risk of being placed into special measures, and the evidence within this PEEL reports supports his view, which is a good end to his tenure with Suffolk Constabulary. Of the forces put into special measures, the Chief Executive asked how has this happened. DCC Kearton confirmed it would be as a result of a PEEL inspection. They will have all been assessed under the same criteria as Suffolk, with the conclusion of the inspectorate resulting in a special measures rating.
- 4.7 Elisabeth Hollingworth asked with regards to the Digital Support Officers, whether this was a pilot scheme, and whether it concentrated on specific crimes, particularly vulnerable victims, with issues being raised at the National Rape Review around the speed to return electronic devices to victims. DCC Kearton advised it is not a pilot scheme, with it being an established part of the organisation in Suffolk. T/ACC Bridger added that the Digital Support Officers were introduced in two phases, initially into local policing, followed by serious crime investigations. They work directly with the safeguarding victims' team, and to get the devices back to victims as quickly as possible.

5 Supporting Vulnerable Victims (Paper AP22/42)

- 5.1 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Jones presented this report, highlighting that post-Covid delays within the Criminal Justice system has left a challenge for the Constabulary in terms of supporting victims going through the process, with them having to support them for longer, creating an increased demand, whilst not being ideal for victims.
- 5.2 One of the areas of challenge within this report is with the issues of data quality received from Athena. Data has been poorly or unreliably completed due to the current configuration of the system. This is now being focused on for improvement. The second challenge is the waiting time being experienced by vulnerable victims that come through via 101, which takes too long. However the changes currently being implemented within the CCR will help to improve this.
- 5.3 The Constabulary is taking steps to address the above issues, including the use of technology which will be transformative for victims. This will include live chat for Domestic Abuse (DA) victims, and the use of direct video conferencing with victims.
- 5.4 The PCC asked, regarding the issues around data quality what else could be done. ACC Jones confirmed there is a data quality board that meets to review the process. This review has been examining the data fields that currently don't get completed, with a view to ensuring these fields are made mandatory within Athena, thus ensuring they are recorded correctly. Work is also ongoing with the digital board to automate some of these processes, making it less reliant on data being input manually by officers.
ACTION – ACC Jones to continue to update the PCC on the improvement in data quality within Athena to support victims.
- 5.5 The PCC raised the issue of the current courts backlog within the Criminal Justice System, putting unnecessary strain on victims, and how the situation was being felt locally within Suffolk. ACC Jones confirmed that Suffolk Constabulary have prioritised victims of domestic

abuse, trying to use specialist detectives that stay with a victim throughout the criminal justice process. Many issues lie with instances of having to advise victims of late court changes. ACC Jones felt the level of referral support, preparing victims for court and checking in on victims in Suffolk was very good.

ACTION – ACC Jones to keep the PCC updated on improvements of victim communication feedback, specifically in relation to their progress through the courts system.

5.6 The Chief Executive asked whether, in respect of victims being able to give evidence via video link, was there any data regarding impact on conviction rates from using this method, as opposed to giving evidence from behind a screen. Further, were there any associated costs implications. The purpose of the questions was to ascertain whether informed choice as to a method of giving evidence improved the prospect of conviction. ACC Jones believes it came down to individual victims' personal choice. He did not believe there were any research upon this method of giving evidence, but will take this point on board and enquire if there is any data challenging the impact of video link evidence.

ACTION – ACC Jones to enquire if any research exists to support a chosen evidence delivery method in relation to conviction rates.

5.7 The PCC raised that from the data presented the highest demand within the county is from Lowestoft, and would like to know what could be done to improve this. ACC Jones responded that there is a strong correlation between poverty and social opportunity, plus factors of offender behaviour, which is all seen within Lowestoft. The approach within Suffolk is to deal with offenders and support victims, to be adaptive, victim focused and localised.

5.8 The PCC requested that the data for Hate Crime is broken down further within the report, to separate out the different crimes included under this title, and to include location information to see if there is a prevalence of crime / trends in certain areas.

ACTION – ACC Jones to request the Hate Crime data be broken down by crimes, and to include location information within the next Supporting Victims report.

6 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending (Paper AP22/43)

6.1 Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC) Bridger presented this report, highlighting that there are overlaps with the supporting vulnerable victims report.

6.2 The report highlights that the custody provision within Suffolk Constabulary is regarded as being outstanding nationally, although numbers are increasing within custody as the post-covid return to normal life continues. There are 3 main areas of concern within custody, which is creating a demand issue for Suffolk Constabulary. The first is around the removal of the virtual courts services, which was effective and efficient, and had been successfully used for 5 years in Suffolk. The court service is responsible for managing the process of getting detainees to court, due to the early stages of these changes any possible risk to the Constabulary are being monitored. The next area of concern is around provision for children held in custody once they have been charged. There is limited availability of provision outside of our custody blocks for children, so we are working with Children and Young People services within the county to understand the issues currently being faced. The final area of concern is around the lack of provision for mental health issues, with the Constabulary in the process of gathering data of those being held in custody as opposed to a specialised facility designed to support mental health crisis.

6.3 An area of development for the Constabulary is around the use of out of court disposals, following on from the national strategy, to result in swifter justice. Local implementation was disrupted due to covid, but in July 2022 Suffolk Constabulary went live with the two-tier approach, with an independent scrutiny panel being established to review this work.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger, to share the reports of the scrutiny panel for the out of court disposals in 6months time with the PCC.

6.4 Another area of innovation from Suffolk Constabulary is seen with the progress of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Unit (DAPU). The scheme tackles repeat offenders of domestic abuse, having assessed 394 people to date. Challenges with the scheme include the fact that you cannot mandate people onto it. However as an academic undertaking the scheme has now produced its first draft report, which is allowing the Constabulary to build on the picture, and examine how the scheme can be grown, and improve access for other offenders. Early indicators show that the scheme is having a positive impact.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger, to share the lessons that are being learned from the DAPU data with the PCC.

6.5 The PCC asked about outstanding suspects and how do the figures compare with 3 years ago. T/ACC Bridger confirmed with regards to the report data, overall numbers approximately 2yrs ago were 1600-1800 outstanding suspects. This has been addressed presently the numbers now being reported are much lower.

6.6 The PCC requested if there is further information with regards to the offender management scheme and the related economic cost-based analysis for the scheme.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger confirmed this does exist and will share with the PCC.

6.7 The Chief Executive raised the issues around strike action of Criminal Justice Barristers, which needs to be addressed by the new Minister of Justice. Stories being covered in the national media are stating that in a criminal trial, as result of the barristers' strike, the judge refused to extend the time the defendant was held in custody on remand, so they were released on bail. He suggested that this would result in an increased demand on the police, and asked whether this was being seen in Suffolk. T/ACC Bridger confirmed there have been a few cases within Suffolk, and that the responsibility of managing the individuals does then fall back to the police. Risk management plans have been put in place in these instances. Presently the figures are low, but the longer the strike continues there was the potential it will escalate. ACC Jones added that the demand that is being managed as a result of the barristers' strikes also included victims, witnesses and offenders.

7 Responding to Fraud (Paper AP22/44)

7.1 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Jones presented this report.

7.2 Despite the complexity of this area, the performance of the force in addressing fraud in Suffolk is strong. Where referrals are received via Action Fraud, the detection rate for Suffolk is 7.4%, which is higher than the national detection rate of 4.2%.

7.3 Suffolk Constabulary has a number of highly trained officers addressing fraud, who have the skills to look at the complexity of these crimes, bring these cases to trial, and who have a solve rate of approximately 20%.

7.4 The PCC asked regarding the issues around fraudulent activity whether in respect of those claiming the covid loans, were any due diligence checks in place prior to the loans being paid. He asked if where there is evidence of these loans having been fraudulently paid to fictitious companies, has Suffolk Constabulary been involved in investigating these crimes. ACC Jones advised he would ascertain the position regarding covid loan fraud investigations within Suffolk, and report back to the PCC.

ACTION – ACC Jones will find out regarding covid loan fraud investigations within Suffolk and report back to the PCC.

7.5 The Chief Executive raised that within the UK fraud cases are massively under reported, so how well were the police doing at tackling fraud nationally. ACC Jones responded saying the UK system is not working well in all areas but believes the preventative messaging communicated within Suffolk is helping people not to become victim to fraud. There are difficulties with perpetrators operating from abroad, and a belief that we cannot do anything about this. However this is not the case and there is ongoing work with the National Crime Agency to address this.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 1152 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]

9 Closed minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2022 (Paper AP22/45)

9.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.

10 Protective Services Command Update (Paper AP22/46)

10.1 Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC) Eamonn Bridger presented this report.

11 Protective Services CONTEST (Paper AP22/47)

11.1 T/ACC Eamonn Bridger presented this report.

The meeting closed at 1200

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Owner
4.5	ACC JONES to include full data on the reported 101 abandonment calls potentially becoming 999 calls in the next CCR report to be presented at APP.	ACC Jones
5.4	ACC Jones to continue to update the PCC on the improvement in data quality within Athena to support victims.	ACC Jones
5.5	ACC Jones to keep the PCC updated on improvements of victim communication feedback, specifically in relation to their progress through the courts system.	ACC Jones
5.6	ACC Jones to enquire if any research exists to support a chosen evidence delivery method in relation to conviction rates.	ACC Jones
5.8	ACC Jones to request the Hate Crime data be broken down by crimes, and to include location information within the next Supporting Victims report.	ACC Jones
6.3	T/ACC Bridger to share the reports of the scrutiny panel for the out of court disposals in 6months time with the PCC.	T/ACC Bridger
6.4	T/ACC Bridger to share the lessons that are being learned from the DAPU data with the PCC.	T/ACC Bridger
6.6	T/ACC Bridger to share the information on offender management and related economic cost-based analysis with the PCC.	T/ACC Bridger
7.4	ACC Jones to update the PCC regarding any covid loan fraud investigations that have happened / are happening within Suffolk.	ACC Jones