

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 7 March 2025.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Darren Horsman (Chief Executive Officer)
Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer)
Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement)
James Sheridan (Policy and Commissioning Officer)
Kate Boswell (Executive Assistant to the PCC and Chief Executive)

Suffolk Constabulary

Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable)
Eamonn Bridger (Assistant Chief Constable)
Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer)

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

No attendance from members of the public or Police & Crime Panel.

Apologies

Julie Dean (Assistant Chief Constable)
Rob Jones (Deputy Chief Constable)

PUBLIC AGENDA

1 Public Question Time

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited both Constabulary and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner attendees to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 He advised that no public questions had been received in advance of the meeting.
- 1.3 The PCC noted that according to the Office for National Statistics, Suffolk had the third lowest rate of recorded crime in the country, down from 17th four years ago. He stated that this was a significant achievement and thanked those present for their contribution. The PCC also updated the board on the ongoing discussions around devolution and the fact they would have an implication for policing, and that the team would be involved in discussions as developments progressed.

- 1.4 The PCC advised that the Home Office had increased the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee budget and while terms & conditions were not yet known, it would result in additional funding for officers.

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2025 (Paper AP25/10)

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.
- 2.2 All actions were noted as complete or in hand and were being followed up outside of the meeting.

3 Financial Monitoring (Paper AP25/11)

- 3.1 The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) presented the Revenue and Capital Monitoring Report as of 31 January 2025, detailing the full year forecast for 2024-25. The report highlighted a revenue underspend of £2.8M and a capital underspend of £1.1M at the end of March 2025. This was a result of the Constabulary achieving more income over the year to date and some slippage in the capital estates programme. Table 3.1 provided further clarity on these figures, including information on the pay and non-pay costs. The revenue forecast remained in a good position for 31 March, alongside the saving targets. The slippage in the capital estates programme meant that various items had been moved into the 2025-26 budget due to the management of procurement timelines.
- 3.2 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) added that the Commissioning budget, as referenced in section 2 of the report, showed a slight underspend by a number of commissioned services. The underspend for the Suffolk Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner budget line related to staff vacancies.
- 3.3 The PCC asked the ACO for an update on vacancy figures at point 3.2 of the report.
ACTION – ACO to supply the PCC with an update on vacancy figures as referred at 3.2 of the report.
- 3.4 The PCC asked whether areas from the original OBB savings plan could be reconsidered as a result of the Constabulary's current underspend figure. The ACO agreed that it did present a funding opportunity, usually any underspend is moved into the capital reserves, but he was happy to discuss this further with the PCC.
ACTION – ACO to discuss the use of the current underspend figures with the PCC.
- 3.5 The PCC asked at 3.3.1, what does "car allowances" cover. The ACO replied it included drivers 45p per mile reimbursement when using their own cars, stating there were only a few people entitled to an actual car allowance within the Constabulary.
- 3.6 The PCC asked what the maturity date was of the monies loaned to Norfolk at point 8.1. The CFO confirmed it was the 15 July 2024.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) referred to the pay related underspend and asked what the impact was, operationally, of people not doing these roles? The ACO replied that the impact operationally on front line policing was minimal, and the vacancies were largely for

police staff/back-office functions. Uplift clawback arrangements from the Home Office meant any force that goes below a set officer number has significant financial penalties, so all forces focus on front line police officers. This means that it is often the back-office functions that are impacted.

- 3.8 The CEO asked if vacancies were spread evenly across teams, or were they focussed in certain areas, and what was the anticipated vacancy factor. The ACO confirmed the anticipated vacancy factor was around 5%, with current figures at 8.4%. Previously it was running at 10-11% so there had been a reduction. The PCC commented that this had been the norm for the last couple of years. The control room is the exception because of the commitment to maintain its level of operators at 140.

4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims (Paper AP25/12)

- 4.1 ACC Bridger highlighted that victim code compliance was stable and performing at a good level, however there was no centralised national measurement or ranking for it which makes it hard to benchmark performance against others. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Multiagency Strategic Plan was currently being consulted on which would include the OPCC.
- 4.2 It was good to see a large increase in the use of Stalking Protection Orders (SPOS), Domestic Violence Disclosures (DVDS) and Sex Offender Disclosures, which were new tools given to policing. It was noted however, that they all came with additional financial pressures.
- 4.3 There had been a reduction in some areas of crime where we see highly vulnerable victims, however these areas can be under reported, so we need to treat this reduction with caution. There had also been a decline in child sexual abuse reporting, but a rise in solve rates. Work was being undertaken to understand the reason for the decline. Operation Soteria continued to progress, with plans to implement the national model in a way that works for a smaller force size such as Suffolk.
- 4.4 The PCC asked if there were any early indicators as to why the reporting of child sexual abuse has declined. ACC Bridger responded that it was too early to say and would look to provide an update in a month.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to update the PCC on the reduction of reporting in child sexual abuse via W/Conference in April 2025.
- 4.5 The Policy and Commissioning Officer referred to point 5.6 and asked how the continual rise in disclosures for the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) was being managed., ACC Bridger responded that both the DVDS and CSODS (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme) were managed by the safeguarding hub and as policing moved into newer digital methods, there was potential to generate capacity savings. ACC Bridger explained there was a pilot running within the constabulary around the wider use of video technology, which would end in April. The results of which would feed into future plans.
- 4.6 The CEO asked what the compliance figures looked like for DVDS and CSODS. ACC Bridger replied that the level of compliance was good, with everyone being assessed. The service was aligned to the MASH, the force therefore had an experienced body picking up the requests directly.

- 4.7 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked when the benefits from Operation Soteria would be seen. ACC Bridger responded that many areas of Operation Soteria were already in place, therefore it was not a big operational change, the team's knowledge and familiarity with the principals within the approach was growing. Joint operational meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) were now embedded, and improvements were being seen as a result. There remains challenges within the Suffolk courts system, but improvements could be attributed to Operation Soteria.
- 4.8 The PCC asked, in the context of the ongoing courts backlog, how much it cost to employ the additional staff within the Witness Care Unit as mentioned at point 3.8. ACC Bridger advised he would find out and report back to the PCC.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to confirm how much it costs to employ the additional staff within the Witness Care Unit as mentioned at point 3.8.
- 4.9 The PCC referred to point 4.4 and asked what the potential barriers to successful prosecutions were. ACC Bridger replied that the situation was complex with victims facing challenges and the force often not being able to obtain sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution as a result. Work had taken place with the CPS, looking at how victims could be supported in a different way, making them more familiar with the court process, surroundings and the legal terminology used. The unit often supports victims who are having to wait for over a year for their case to be heard, which relates back to point raised about the investment in the Victim Support Team.
- 4.10 The PCC added that with the government target to reduce VAWG by 50% in the next 10-years, why not set a utopian goal to eradicate this crime completely. The Chief Constable added whilst she wouldn't disagree with this ambition, there remained a large amount of work and energy in encouraging people to come forward and report instances of VAWG, it is a recognised area of under reported crime.
- 4.11 The PCC asked for clarification relating to the figures for victims' letters as referenced on page 4 of the paper. ACC Bridger advised that not all victims wanted a letter or were able to safely receive one, but there would also be some human error. The PCC suggested a statement be included to provide clarification. The Chief added that for some victims it would be a huge risk to receive a letter, or email, the force therefore must be mindful of this.
- 4.12 The PCC asked at point 6.2 what personnel changes within the CPS had delayed improvements. ACC Bridger replied that there had been several changes within the leadership at the CPS resulting in cancelled meetings and changes in the ownership of activities resulting in delays. However, stability was returning, and the team were looking forward to pressing ahead with improvements.
- 4.13 The PCC asked, referring to point 8.5, what were the metrics used to define young people. ACC Bridger replied that he believed it related to under 18s but would confirm.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to confirm the definition of young people at point 8.5 of the paper.
- 4.14 The CEO asked if at point 6.4, the increased charge rate for RASSO was sustainable. ACC Bridger replied it was a 12-month assessment, so believed it demonstrated a sustainable improvement, however there were still challenges within the system locally that needed to be resolved. He believed the position could be improved in the longer term.

5 **Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending** (Paper AP25/13)

- 5.1 ACC Bridger highlighted that nearly 30,000 people came through the custody suites in the past year, a figure far higher than in previous years. There were still some challenges around mental health detention, but it was improving. Improvements were being seen with the use of Out of Court Resolutions, Community Cautions and Community Resolutions; however, these diversionary tools could be utilised further. A review was being conducted looking at offender management within the community, due to increases in demand on the teams, the findings of which would be available in the summer.
- 5.2 The PCC asked what the consequences of the early release of offenders from prison within Suffolk were. ACC Bridger responded that an emergency response was put in place with partners when the decision was first announced, however it did create an additional pressure for the Constabulary. He advised that those released early were a cohort with no management order in place. The peak of early release was now over and there was a return to business as usual. The Chief Constable added that it was the responsibility of the Prison and Probation Service, and although it impacted the force, was worth stressing that the numbers within Suffolk were particularly low.
- 5.3 The PCC asked who was responsible for the lack of medical provision within custody as mentioned at point 3.4, and the unnecessary burden it placed on the police. ACC Bridger replied that for Mental Health, Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust were responsible for providing the people to respond and assess cases. The overall picture in the area was improving, and as an early adopter of Right Care Right Person (RCRP) the force were bringing less people with mental health issues into the custody environment.
- 5.4 The PCC asked if the evaluation of Out of Court Resolutions had a term of reference. ACC Bridger advised that there had been an initial approach, and discussions were ongoing to progress the work. If it went ahead, he would update the OPCC.
- 5.5 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked, referring to point 4.6, whether there were any changes to the Red Snapper programme as a result of the 2-year evaluation. ACC Bridger replied that there was a lot of information in the work undertaken, and suggested the Constabulary provide a separate briefing to the OPCC.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to provide a briefing to the OPCC on the 2-year evaluation for the Red Snapper programme.
- 5.6 The PCC asked why the dropout rate for the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Unit (DAPU) was so high and was there any additional data of those attending in terms of socio-economic background. ACC Bridger replied that it presented a challenge as it was a voluntary scheme, working with perpetrators who may gravitate back to their original patterns of behaviour. The scheme was because it was the right thing to do, however the force cannot force people to attend the course. The Chief Constable added that 16 people had successfully completed the scheme. The goal was to achieve long-term behavioural change, which would continue to be monitored, and a full evaluation would be completed in the future.

The CEO asked if the cost benefits could be considered when the full evaluation took place, in order to support the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.

ACTION – Constabulary to consider the cost benefit when full evaluation of DAPU takes places.

- 5.7 The PCC asked, in relation to Integrated Offender Management (IOM), if there were direct links with public sector procurement. ACC Bridger responded that the Department of Work and Pensions were the lead agency for employment of IOM.

6 Update on the work of the Rural Crime and Wildlife Team (Paper AP25/14)

- 6.1 ACC Bridger highlighted that the Rural Crime and Wildlife Team were now aligned to the Partnership Hub which was working well. There had been a significant reduction in the theft of GPS devices from agricultural vehicles, but it remained an under reported area. They also highlighted that there had also been a significant reduction in hare coursing within Suffolk.

- 6.2 The PCC stated that he felt the report was light on data which made it hard to demonstrate the good work being undertaken by the team. More data including figures for successful prosecutions and their resulting sentences would be beneficial in future reports. ACC Bridger agreed that future reports would include more statistics.

ACTION – ACC Bridger to include statistical figures in the next iteration of the work of the Rural Crime and Wildlife Team paper.

- 6.3 The PCC asked how the force was lobbying for further NAVCIS support to assist with the current work being undertaken at the Port of Felixstowe. The Chief Constable responded that NACSIS was funded nationally from the Home Office and suggested that the PCC request funding directly through the APCC for additional NAVCIS resource, alongside lobbying the NPCC National Lead for Rural Crime.

- 6.4 The PCC asked what was happening with the rejuvenation of the volunteers on horseback scheme. ACC Bridger responded that Suffolk had one of the strongest schemes in the country, but work was taking place to look at how it operated alongside expanding the volunteer network.

- 6.5 The PCC asked what further education had been provided to veterinary and dog day care workers as referenced at point 3.4 of the report. ACC Bridger explained that the team worked with the veterinary workforce, plus those providing dog day care to raise awareness of livestock worrying as it remained an under reported area of crime. These professions were exposed to it as part of their work, which could lead to essential intelligence.

- 6.6 The PCC asked about the continued partnership between the Rural Crime Team and Suffolk County Council events planning units, and what this involved. ACC Bridger responded that he believed the Rural Team liaised with the council's events team and shared any risks that may occur. He advised he would confirm the level of engagement between the two teams and update the PCC.

ACTION – ACC Bridger to check the level of engagement described between the Rural Partnership Team and Suffolk County Council and update the PCC.

- 6.7 The PCC asked how work was allocated to the Rural Crime Team considering the 10-point action plan and the organised crime report that was published two years ago. ACC Bridger advised that the paper set out the expectations for the team, they were relatively small and have aligned with the wider team at the Community Partnership hub. At a representative level they were part of the tasking and coordination process, which ensured they delivered on priorities and received the relevant intelligence. The team were skilled at communicating with the right people within the rural community, and whilst small there was a cost

associated with their work. National strategy was under review, so the work they completed needed to align to both local and national priorities.

- 6.8 The PCC asked if the draft Rural Crime Strategy addressed the issue of fly tipping, and who was responsible for this area of crime. ACC Bridger responded that it was an issue the public cares about but that the Local Authority was the responsible body for it within Suffolk. ACC Bridger confirmed the constabulary did work with partners and build intelligence where appropriate, but at the initial level the Local Authority were responsible. The PCC added that he would make this clear in one of his newspaper columns.
- 6.9 The PCC asked for a comment on what could be done to prevent livestock worrying. ACC Bridger responded that in part it was about knowing when it happened so a intelligence picture could be built, and then having patrols in place where possible, and target hardening high risk sites. All these actions need to happen simultaneously.
- 6.10 The PCC asked how the Constabulary planned to deal with the government proposal to ban trail hunting. ACC Bridger replied that it would be assessed as and when the legislation was passed.
- 6.11 The CEO asked whether the rural burglaries referenced at 4.7 of the report were domestic or commercial, and did they relate to organised crime. ACC Bridger replied that they were burglaries that took place in non-residential buildings, so related to the theft of equipment, machinery etc. Overall, these crime figures show a stable position rather than a reduction, and the Organised Crime Groups (OCG) who operated in these areas continued to be monitored to ensure the focus remained when an OCG had been disrupted.

7 Collaboration Report (Paper AP25/15)

- 7.1 The Chief Constable explained that the report was an annual paper however it contained one new area, that of the joint transformation programme. She invited questions.
- 7.2 The PCC asked what changes of governance and oversight were being considered at point 4.1 of the report. The Chief Constable responded that the current Strategic Planning and Monitoring meetings would be changing, alongside the project management programme to ensure that the two forces come together for joint decision making where there are joint finances between Norfolk & Suffolk.
- 7.3 The PCC asked for further details of the changes mentioned at point 4.1. The Chief Constable advised she would request the detail from ACC Dean and report back via Weekly Conference meeting.
ACTION – ACC Dean to provide further information at point 4.1 of the report, regarding the changes in governance and oversight being considered, via Weekly Conference.
- 7.4 The PPC asked what was being done to address the shortage of detectives as referenced at point 3.1.1. The Chief Constable responded that there were a number of national programmes for the recruitment of detectives including the fast-track detective programme. The new neighbourhood policing model also meant the position was significantly better regard detective numbers compared to previous years. Sickness, Health and Wellbeing were reported separately to APP via a different report, but generally Health and Wellbeing were not factors that contributed to detective shortages. A key reason for the

shortage related to pay and conditions, with uniformed officers receiving pay and conditions that were not applicable to detectives. This was set nationally so the constabulary could not change them locally.

- 7.5 The PCC asked if there needed to be more capacity within the vetting team. The Chief Constable replied that a number of vacancies within the team had been filled, and that the decision to no longer use Warwickshire would result in more efficiencies.
- 7.6 The PCC asked when contractors were not vetted, could this result in them being excluded as part of the procurement process. The ACO replied that you could not exclude them, and the vetting would flow out of a successful procurement process.
- 7.7 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked at point 4.1.3, what services may be available with the next generation of Single Online Home (SOH). The Chief Constable advised that the Deputy Chief Constable in Norfolk was the National Lead for SOH, and she would request an update from him on this.
- ACTION – The Chief Constable to provide details of the next iteration of SOH to the OPCC.**

8 Any Other Business

- 8.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 11:13AM when 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 17 January 2025 (Paper AP25/16)

- 9.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

10 Protective Services Command Update (Paper AP25/17)

- 10.1 Suffolk Constabulary gave a summary of this report and invited questions.

11 Risk Register / Chief Officer Risk Report (Paper AP25/18)

- 11.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

The meeting closed at 11.36AM.

Summary of Actions

Item / Paper	Action	Owner
3.3 Financial Monitoring	ACO to supply the PCC with an update on vacancy figures as referred to at 3.2 of the report.	ACO

3.4 Financial Monitoring	ACO to discuss the use of the current underspend figures with the PCC.	ACO
4.4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	ACC Bridger to update the PCC on the reduction of reporting in child sexual abuse via W/Conference in April 2025.	ACC Bridger
4.8 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	ACC Bridger to confirm to the PCC how much it costs to employ the additional staff within the Witness Care Unit as mentioned at point 3.8.	ACC Bridger
4.14 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	ACC Bridger to confirm the definition of young people to the PCC at point 8.5 of the paper.	ACC Bridger
5.5 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Bridger to provide a briefing to the OPCC on the 2-year evaluation for the Red Snapper programme.	ACC Bridger
5.6 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	Constabulary to consider the cost benefit when full evaluation of DAPU takes places.	ACC Bridger
6.2 Rural Crime and Wildlife Team	ACC Bridger to include statistical figures measures in the next iteration of the work of the Rural Crime and Wildlife Team paper.	ACC Bridger
6.6 Rural Crime and Wildlife Team	ACC Bridger to check the level of engagement meetings described within the report between the Rural Partnership Team and Suffolk County Council and confirm to update the PCC.	ACC Bridger
7.3 Collaboration Report	ACC Dean to provide further information to the PCC at point 4.1 of the report, regarding the changes in governance and oversight being considered, to the PCC via Weekly Conference.	ACC Dean
7.7 Collaboration Report	The Chief Constable to provide details of the next iteration of SOH to the OPCC.	Chief Constable