

## **NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK COLLABORATION PANEL**

A meeting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Collaboration Panel was held at The Oaksmere on Tuesday 01 July 2025 at 14:00.

### **Norfolk Attendees**

OPCC:	Sarah Taylor Mark Stokes Simon George	Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive Chief Finance Officer
Constabulary:	Paul Sanford Peter Jasper David Skevington	Chief Constable Assistant Chief Officer Director of Transformation

### **Suffolk Attendees**

OPCC:	Tim Passmore Darren Horsman Colette Batson Sandra Graffham Amanda Houchen	Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive Chief Finance Officer Head of Communications and Engagement Administrative Assistant
Constabulary:	Rachel Kearton Kenneth Kilpatrick Eamon Bridger David Skevington	Chief Constable Assistant Chief Officer Assistant Chief Constable Director of Transformation

### **PUBLIC AGENDA**

#### **1. Welcome**

- 1.1 The Suffolk PCC, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **2. Notes from last meeting**

- 2.1 The notes from the last meeting were agreed.

#### **3. Chief Constables' Overview**

##### **SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY**

- 3.1 Suffolk's Chief Constable provided an overview of Suffolk Constabulary's current position, stating it was an exciting but challenging time for policing. She had been in post for three years and in that time, there had been significant changes. Early pieces of work focussed on recruiting the right people and providing them with the right training, as well as the introduction of the People's Survey.
- 3.2 The People Survey had seen a 62% return rate for both forces and identified the key area of harassment and bullying in the workplace as an area for improvement. It had also discovered that there was a general appreciation for the increased investment in Learning and Development.
- 3.3 Suffolk Constabulary was performing well overall, with sustained efficiencies and improvements. Feedback from the PEEL inspection two years ago had resulted in significant improvement in the Contact and Control Room (CCR) performance, with further expected after the pending premises move and the success of the Digi Desk.
- 3.4 Next year's focus would be on April's HMICFRS inspection, with the expected onus on the CCR improvements, neighbourhood policing delivery, Clear Hold Build, Hotspot policing and organised crime. Further work will continue on the development of the Police Constable Entry Scheme (PCEP) which may include the introduction of part-time officers.
- 3.5 The Constabulary continues to have a heavy Domestic Violence (DV) workload, with National/Government targets to half knife crime, Devolution and Local Government Reform (LGR) also creating challenges and opportunities.

#### NORFOLK CONSTABULARY

- 3.6 Norfolk's Chief Constable reported that the collaboration between Norfolk and Suffolk remained strong. Both forces and PCCs faced joint challenges due to the Sentencing Review and what it would mean in terms of crime levels and public safety.
- 3.7 Right Care Right Person had landed well in both counties with a significant reduction in inappropriate calls for service. However, the issue of mental health bed availability remained.
- 3.8 The LGR (local government review) could lead to an adaptation of Norfolk's local delivery model as it was currently structured around existing district boundaries, with many staff working out of district council offices.
- 3.9 The government's efficiency programme also means that changes at Blue Light Commercial and 7Forces Procurement were also on the horizon.
- 3.10 Operationally abstraction remained an issue with mandatory training requirements up by 53%, adding pressure to staffing availability. The situation was starting to become unsustainable.
- 3.11 There was still doubt regarding the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee as it may not be achievable under the current funding envelope.
- 3.12 Suffolk's PCC thanked both Chief Constables for the overview and stated that the two constabularies were in relatively good positions despite the increased pressures on policing. This related to the burden of increased National Insurance contributions on employers.
- 3.13 Norfolk's PCC asked for clarification regarding the amount of mandatory training required as when she raised the issue with the College of Policing (CoP), they maintained it only amounted to eight and a half hours.

- 3.14 Norfolk's Chief Constable explained that there was basic core training and accreditation that police officers needed in order to be licensed to carry out their duties. There had also been an increase in requirements for Public and Police Safety Training (PPST), Taser, Firearms, and additional mandatory neighbourhood policing training expected soon. The eight and a half hours referenced by the CoP was just the online training. There is more mandatory training that is delivered locally. Suffolk's Chief Constable stated that the PPST training requirements had increased by 1 day a year, and that had a significant impact when delivered to 800 officers.
- 3.15 Norfolk's PCC stated that there appeared to be a disconnect between the CoP and operational reality. She therefore requested the provision of further information on the abstraction issue. This would include details of all mandatory training and its impact on the joint space, including a comparison of the training requirements now versus three years ago.  
**ACTION: Norfolk and Suffolk Chief Constables to provide details of mandatory training requirements, its impact on abstraction and a comparison of training over the past three years.**
- 3.16 Suffolk's PCC observed that in relation to procurement developments he was keen to support UK PLC and more specifically local Suffolk suppliers, however wider procurement collaborations didn't often allow this. Norfolk's Chief Constable agreed it was an issue that was of concern and that it was an area where Blue Light Commercial and 7Forces Procurement could do better.
- 3.17 Suffolk's Chief Executive asked if there were any other areas where savings or performance improvements could be made through further collaboration between the two forces. Suffolk's Chief Constable stated that it was more likely that efficiencies would lie in investing differently to save in the future but there could be limited structural changes to achieve one-off savings. The future would be more concerned with using technology to bring areas of work together rather than any changes geographically. Norfolk's Chief Constable echoed that an enhanced ICT function and local collaboration with partner agencies would garner efficiencies moving forward.
- 3.18 Suffolk's PCC referenced the Custody Investigation Unit changes and expressed the view that he felt there should have been discussion with Suffolk in advance of the decision. Norfolk's Chief Constable confirmed that there was discussion between the forces before the decision. He explained that the main driver was not to reduce costs, but to improve services for victims, particularly victims of domestic abuse. Cases which frequently change ownership create risk and Norfolk has had recent experience where this is the case. The changes are being made because they are believed to be in the public interest. Norfolk's PCC stated that gaps in communication should be resolved moving forward with the instigation of more regular collaboration panels.

#### **4. Joint Transformation Programme (JTP) Update**

- 4.1 The Director of Transformation provided an update on the Joint Transformation project, outlining the vision, the three identified pillars of work, project objectives and the progress to date.
- 4.2 The main areas that had been identified for transformation were primarily process heavy and where management showed an appetite for change. Notable areas mentioned were the CCR, where the constabularies were part of a pilot with Vodafone to use voice recognition on calls to 101. This was scheduled to start at the end July/August 2025. Suffolk's Head of Communications and Engagement asked if the pilot would run parallel to the current 101 system and if the public would be alerted to its implementation. The Director of

Transformation confirmed that the pilot would run in tandem with the current manual system and that callers would not be notified as it was no different to calling a bank and responding to the automated prompts.

- 4.3 Two HR processes had also been identified, with robotic automation already bringing efficiencies. Firearms licensing automation was also due to launch in July.
- 4.4 The Director of Transformation explained that from 17 July 2025, Suffolk and Norfolk were working as part of a National Team to become a centre of excellence for Automation and Robotics. The forces were already ahead of many in launching Copilot Chat on the secure IT system and were currently in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service to become a forerunner in how AI could be used to produce Statements and Evidence collation. Funding was also being sought to use AI to create applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), the project would first need to provide proof of concept and reassurance that a machine could produce them effectively.
- 4.5 The team's Technology and Innovation Lead had been tasked to engage with tech start-ups and bring AI companies on board to leverage commercial benefits. Whilst the project was relatively new it was already making efficiencies and savings in some areas.
- 4.6 Norfolk's PCC asked if there were any gaps between the project's ambitions and reality, and if people on the ground had been involved in the identification of smaller scale ideas. The Director of Transformation stated that they were alive to the need to prioritise activity and were opening up workshops to people throughout the two organisations. The intention being that they bring their problems to the team who would work with suppliers to find a way to resolve them.
- 4.7 Norfolk's PCC asked how the risks of introducing new technologies were being managed. The Director of Transformation explained that a workshop had been held to deal with the inherent risks and ethical issues, and that it would be underpinned by an Ethics Committee.
- 4.8 Norfolk's Chief Constable stated that the project's current focus was on process rich, staff heavy processes, and the identification of things that could make colleagues' lives easier. The real challenge would be in the capacity of the infrastructure to meet the opportunities that the Joint Transformation Programme identified.
- 4.9 Suffolk's Chief Executive stated it was clear the two-year project presented huge opportunities, but asked how far had thinking gone in terms of proving the project was working and then shifting those savings into MTFP. Suffolk's Assistant Chief Officer replied that given the two years to build capacity, savings would be embedded in the MTFP from 2027/28 once the programme had established itself.

## **5. Financial Planning 26/27**

- 5.1 Norfolk and Suffolk's Assistant Chief Officers presented a finance briefing on the potential impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Slides were shown highlighting extracts from the Spending Review document. There was a projected initial cash increase in the core police grant of around 4.8% in 2026/27, with decreases over the following two years. The projected figures included estimated increased funding from the police council tax precept, and it was thought that whatever the government decided to set the precept increase limit at the core grant would then make up the difference. The projected figure in 2026/25 was more than expected but the Police Funding Settlement was yet to be finalised.

- 5.2 Information regarding the Home Office Police Efficiencies and Collaboration Programme (PECP) was shared, highlighting the drive from above to gain benefits and efficiencies by improving technology and data quality. The bottom line being the Home Office wanted Police Officers to focus on policing and not on administration.
- 5.3 The initial increase in cash, reducing over subsequent years would suggest that forces were expected to invest in efficiencies initially to save in subsequent years. The Joint Transformation Programme was identifying various workstreams to achieve those savings.
- 5.4 Finally, Norfolk's Assistant Chief Officer identified 5 key challenges for the upcoming years:
- What would the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee look like and how would it be funded in year two
  - Funding for the Uplift programme
  - New burdens – such as the Sentencing Review
  - Technology spending and the requirement to front-load it
  - Sustainability targets and the fact there is no additional funding provided to achieve them.

*The open part of the meeting closed at 15:15.*

#### **Summary of Actions**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
3.15	Provide details of mandatory training requirements, its impact on abstraction and a comparison of training over the past three years.	Norfolk and Suffolks Chief Constables