

ORIGINATOR: COMMISSIONING OFFICER

DECISION NUMBER: 32 - 2025

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

**SUBJECT: AWARD OF CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION GRANT
– TOWN PASTORS**

SUMMARY:

1. In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
 - a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk.
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.
2. This report seeks approval to award a Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant to Town Pastors for £24,000 to contribute to delivery of their activities in the night-time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
3. The funding will enable crime and disorder reduction activity and support Theme 2 in the Police and Crime Plan by investing in an initiative which reduces demand on the police in the night-time economy, and reduces crime and disorder in Suffolk's towns.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) awards grant funding of £24,000 to Town Pastors for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendation set out above is agreed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Parry".

Signature:

Date: 20 October 2025

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
- a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk.
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2 In applying this provision, the PCC will ensure that the services commissioned are also consistent with the [Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029](#).
- 1.3 This report seeks approval from the PCC to award a grant of £24,000 to continue the support to Town Pastors enabling their work in the night-time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

2. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2025-2029

- 2.1 In March 2025, a new Police and Crime Plan for the period 2025-2029 was published. Theme 2 sets out the intention to provide services which support victims of crime and invest in initiatives which reduce crime, disorder, offending and prevent victimisation.
- 2.2 The proposed grant to Town Pastors will contribute to the following activity within Theme 2 in the Police and Crime Plan by:
- supporting problem solving in local communities by investing in local solutions and commissioning local assets which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder, or improve community safety.
 - considering initiatives which reduce the demand on the police.

3. TOWN PASTORS

- 3.1 The Suffolk Town Pastors scheme began in June 2006 in Ipswich, expanding thereafter to several other towns in Suffolk. The Town Pastors (central body) has been a registered charity since 2019. The Town Pastors administer the distribution of the PCC grant and maintain the quality of the schemes across the county.
- 3.2 Town Pastors are Christian volunteers from local churches who are out in town centres on Friday and/or Saturday nights, being a positive influence on the streets and providing help and support to vulnerable people. Street patrols are supported by a Prayer Team at a local base or home.
- 3.3 Fear of crime is a serious issue and Town Pastors have an important role in making people feel safe and improving the atmosphere by being a friendly presence on the streets. As trained volunteers they support people in need, help people to get a taxi or wait with vulnerable people, defuse potentially aggressive situations, provide advice, and encourage safe behaviour for all. They work as a team alongside the police, taxi drivers, door staff, CCTV staff and others who are involved in managing the night-time economy.
- 3.4 The presence of Town Pastors as a capable guardian prevents crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour in Suffolk's towns at night.

- 3.5 The Town Pastors have received funding from the PCC since 2014/15 to deliver the service, and regular data and information has been provided to monitor the delivery and the impact of the grant.
- 3.6 In 2024/25 PCC funding supported Ipswich and Bury Town Pastors, the two biggest schemes in the county, as well as Leiston and Felixstowe. The funding also supported the work of Town Pastors at Latitude Festival.
- 3.7 During the 2024/25 funding period Town Pastors undertook 7,687 actions compared to 7,654 in 2023/24; 6,016 involved directly helping a person or group of people (5,890). This made a positive impact and directly contributed to the personal safety and wellbeing of 201 people (245) while also reducing the risk of them becoming a victim of crime.
- 3.8 Town Pastors continue to play a significant role not just in crime reduction and prevention, but also in preventing paramedic/ambulance calls and A & E admissions (as well as saving police time in looking after vulnerable intoxicated people). Many situations involve Town Pastors caring for those involved in or affected by drunkenness and anti-social behaviour. Even in difficult situations Town Pastors continue to value and appreciate each person, treating them with dignity and respect whatever their background and circumstances.
- 3.9 Town Pastors regularly receive thanks and appreciation from those enjoying an evening or night out. This may be for helping them on a specific occasion or because people feel safer when Town Pastors are patrolling the streets.
- 3.10 In 2024/25 Town Pastors:
- contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 201 people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations helped reduce the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
 - alerted CCTV and/or police to 65 incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
 - were able to prevent/reduce crime on 46 occasions often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
 - reduced the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,316 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.
- 3.11 Town Pastors have requested PCC funding to support the Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Leiston and Felixstowe Town Pastors with their work in 2025/26 and the activity at Latitude in 2025, which includes:
- Bury St Edmunds: Town Pastors patrol from 10pm- 4am on Saturday nights
 - Felixstowe: Town Pastors patrol on the last Saturday of the month (payday weekend) 10.00pm – 3.30am. Patrols returned to pre-Covid times in January 2025
 - Ipswich: patrols are undertaken on Saturday nights from 10pm – 3am
 - Leiston: patrols are undertaken on three Friday nights each month 10pm – 12.30am
 - Festival Pastors: working at the Latitude Festival, these volunteers provide a visible, non-judgemental and friendly presence as capable guardians who help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and support vulnerable people when required.

Further detail of activities and outcomes is provided in Appendix A.

- 3.12 It is recommended that the PCC supports the continued activity of Town Pastors in these locations considering levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, areas of deprivation and demand from the night-time economy activity.

4. MONITORING AND OUTCOMES

- 4.1 Monitoring will be undertaken at six months and year end through written reports setting out activity and progress towards outcomes, case studies and financial expenditure. These reports will be supplemented by an annual meeting between the Town Pastors and the PCC to discuss progress against the grant. A final report will be submitted to the PCC by 31 May 2026.
- 4.2 Monitoring will indicate the extent of Town Pastors activities by all scheme areas and provide an overview of spend against the budget submitted to the PCC. Town Pastors will continue to evidence satisfaction with the service in a qualitative manner and should indicate where the service has contributed to the following outcomes:
- improved confidence, resilience and feelings of safety
 - reduced offending, violence & exploitation
 - improved mental health, reduced addiction and homelessness.
- 4.3 The financial breakdown of how the grant is to be used and the data outputs and outcomes will be continually monitored throughout the period of the grant award.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Available grant funding from the PCC's commissioning budget to Town Pastors is a maximum of £24,000 in 2025/26.
- 5.2 Town Pastors have proposed payment in two instalments, the first for the sum of £9,000 to be distributed to Bury St Edmunds (£5k) and Latitude patrols (£4k). The remaining £15K will be distributed between Bury St Edmunds (£5k), Ipswich (£5k), Leiston (£3k) and Felixstowe (£2k).
- 5.3 All Town Pastor schemes receive funding primarily from grants, and from donations made by local churches. Donations are also received from individuals. Grants may be accessed at a local level or through the Suffolk Community Foundation (for grants from funds such as The Suffolk Giving Fund, private funds and the High Sheriff's Fund). Funding also comes from a variety of other sources including councillors' locality budgets, support from local businesses (financially or in kind) and grants specific to the locality.
- 5.4 The PCC's grant funding is used specifically for staffing (paid coordinators in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich), radio/telephone costs, rent, training, insurance and equipment (including PPE).
- 5.5 Whilst the PCC funding supports two paid coordinators, most Town Pastors and support teams are volunteers bringing value for money to the service.
- 5.6 Evidence indicates the service delivered by Town Pastors in preventing public disorder and providing welfare support to vulnerable people helps to reduce demand on the Constabulary.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 An assessment of risk in delivery of the service has been undertaken considering the value of the grant sought, the duration of delivery and the grant recipient's history of delivery and ability to deliver. The monitoring arrangements outlined in the conditions of award reflect the fact that Town Pastors continue to deliver the service and regularly report on activity and outcomes.
- 6.2 Should there be any risk to the service being delivered in any of the towns covered, Town Pastors are required to notify the PCC.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) awards grant funding of £24,000 to Town Pastors for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

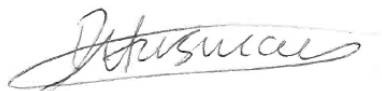
ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	NO
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	NO
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	YES
Have human resource implications been considered?	YES
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	YES
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	YES
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	YES
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.



Signature:

Date: 1 October 2025

Appendix A

Summary of Town Pastor activity during year April 2024-March 2025

Town Pastors have successfully continued their work across the county in four towns from April – August 2024, and in five towns from September 2024 – March 2025.

Based on figures that have been submitted from the schemes, Town Pastors have noted 7,687 actions. Of these actions, 6,016 involved directly helping a person or group of people. These figures are similar to the previous year despite the observation that, in Ipswich at least, the number of people out in the town at the weekends has decreased.

The figures for 2024-2025 reflect that Town Pastors made a valuable contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder in Suffolk towns:

- Town Pastors contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 201 people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations thus reduces the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
- Town Pastors alerted CCTV and/or police to 61 incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
- On 46 occasions Town Pastors were able to prevent/reduce crime often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
- Town Pastors reduce the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,319 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns during the year; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.
- Festival Pastors recorded 6,634 situations over four days in July 2024 involving personal safety/wellbeing, including child wristband distribution and five interactions related to pastoral care and/or mental health needs. Festival Pastors alerted security on two occasions, were able to prevent/reduce crime on one occasion.

During the year, Town Pastors have offered help, care and support in a non-judgmental and non-confrontational way:

- Town Pastors have given pastoral care and a listening ear in 117 situations where a person wanted to discuss problems they are facing in their lives i.e. marriage or relationship issues, drug issues etc. or where Town Pastors have dealt with a person who has/or is suspected of having mental health issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (often military/ex-military personnel), depression, feeling suicidal etc.
- Town Pastors cared for 87 people who were excessively drunk and incapable of looking after themselves. The necessity for ambulance call-outs for highly intoxicated individuals is greatly reduced when Town Pastors are on duty and able to care for these people. Each person was kept safe from theft of personal belongings while drunk and incapable. In addition, they were also protected from becoming the victim of a physical and/or sexual assault. In some of these situations Town Pastors will have called an ambulance if necessary.
- 5,225 people were provided with water/refreshment. Water improves hydration and general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour. Providing chocolate raises blood sugar levels, which are frequently significantly lowered by excessive alcohol consumption. This also improves general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour.
- There were 203 recorded encounters with people who are homeless or presenting as homeless during the year. These encounters often contribute towards the safety and wellbeing of these particularly vulnerable people.

- There were six recorded situations of domestic tension or violence. These include any incident between a couple that could become or has become violent where Town Pastor intervention takes place, or the situation is referred to Police or CCTV.
- There were 46 instances where a crime was prevented, or its' severity reduced as a result of Town Pastors defusing the situation.
- There were 22 recorded incidents where Town Pastors removed drugs, drug paraphernalia or engaged with people who appeared to have taken drugs.