



## **Eastern Region Innovation Network (ERIN) Sixth Collaboration Agreement**

**Subject:** Section 22a collaboration agreement to support the Eastern Region Innovation Network (ERIN)

**Originator:** OPCC Chief Executive on behalf of ERIN Director

**Decision Number:** 12 - 2026

**Reason for Submission:** For Decision

**Submitted to:** Police and Crime Commissioner

### **Summary**

1. The police and crime commissioners and chief constables in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk have agreed to work together to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of identified areas for collaboration and innovation, to protect front line operational resource and to optimise the delivery of each county's police and crime plan.
2. In order to pursue this objective, the above police and crime commissioners and chief constables first entered into a collaboration agreement under Section 22a of the Police Act 1996 in 2016. Over time the arrangements have been modified and formalised through four successive collaboration agreements.
3. This decision report seeks agreement on the sixth collaboration agreement which—given the success of the ERIN since the last collaboration agreement in 2023—continues the arrangements established in the fifth collaboration agreement.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the PCC:

1. Agrees to sign the attached Sixth Collaboration Agreement relating to the policing areas of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk and as described in this report.

## **Approval by PCC**

The recommendation as outlined above is approved.

**Signed:** Tim Passmore



**Signature:**

**Date:** 9 April 2026

## **Detail of Submission**

### **1. Objective**

- 1.1 The police and crime commissioners and chief constables in the Eastern Region have agreed to work together to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of identified areas for collaboration and innovation, to protect front line operational resource and to optimise the delivery of each county's police and crime plan.
- 1.2 ERIN is a centre of excellence in innovation and research. It works with constabularies across the region to test and implement transformational change and to harness and develop expertise and skills from across the region.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 ERIN has secured significant funding and resources for the Eastern Region to develop, accelerate, replicate and implement innovation. Working with local innovation teams, ERIN has identified opportunities such as auto-redaction and rapid video response, assisting forces to scale these up and replicate good work across the region.
- 2.2 ERIN monitors local activity and brings together teams from across the region to share good practice and develop ideas. It supports innovation, such as robotic process automation, and helps teams connect with partners across the region. This has seen the region's experts in transformation, ICT, procurement and information management come together to solve problems and share best practice. ERIN highlights funding opportunities and local innovation activity and has also created a skills database.

- 2.3 ERIN also acts as the Eastern Region representative at both the National Science and Innovation Board and the National Futures Board, and it links into key national bodies in science and innovation.
- 2.4 ERIN's success rests on enabling constabularies to share local developments and innovation. Central to the model are the local staff and officers who make up the wider network. ERIN has been recognised nationally for its work, winning the GOLD IESE Public Sector Transformation Award 2024 for Innovation. The model is now being replicated across the country.

### **3. Areas for consideration**

- 3.1 ERIN is a well-established collaboration network that has been externally recognised for its work and has successfully supported innovation across the Eastern Region since it was first formed in 2016.
- 3.2 Governance of ERIN rests with the police and crime commissioners through the Eastern Region Summit. At the latest summit, on 27 February 2026, the police and crime commissioners and chief constables received a report on ERIN's progress, ongoing projects, and its current and projected financial position. They also endorsed ERIN's work and indicated their decision in principle to continue with this effective collaborative network.

### **4. Other options considered**

- 4.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner could decide to withdraw from ERIN. This is not recommended because, with ERIN's support, Suffolk has led several important projects and adopted innovation from other partners. The police and crime commissioner also endorsed the continuation of the network at the Eastern Region Summit.

### **5. Strategic aims/objective supported**

- 5.1 This decision will support theme 2, objective 4 in the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029. In particular, the continuation of this collaboration will help the Constabulary and the PCC to:
  - 5.1.1 Invest in technology to support improvements in policing;
  - 5.1.2 Focus on a workforce culture of continual innovation, improvement and increased use of modern technology;
  - 5.1.3 Use technology to support value for money innovation, and environmentally sustainable solutions.

### **6. Financial and other resource implications**

6.1 The police and crime commissioners and chief constables agreed on ERIN's annual budget at the latest Eastern Region summit on 27 February 2026.

6.2 The budget for 2026-2027 is £258,806. Contributions are set using net revenue expenditure, which means Suffolk Constabulary's share for 2026-2027 is £23,811.

## 7. Environmental Implications

7.1 Where appropriate, environmental factors are considered at a project level and these are reported through project updates.

## 8. Other implications and risks

8.1 This collaboration agreement includes, for the first time, a process for the division of any redundancy liabilities which, while small, provides reassurance that clear processes are in place should redundancies occur.

8.2 Several ERIN projects support equality and diversity related areas of work—including projects that help to identify officers who show signs of abusive behaviour—which supports the use of proactive interventions.

## Originator Checklist (must be completed).

Please state 'yes' or 'no'

Checklist Item	Yes / No
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
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 Police and Crime Plan objectives?	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?	No
Have environmental factors been considered?	Yes

In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes
Is this report a Confidential Decision?	No

If yes, please state reasons below:

**Approval to submit to the decision-maker** (This approval is required only for submissions to the PCC.)

**Chief Executive**

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

**Signed:** Darren Horsman

**Signature:** 


**Date:** 19 March 2026

**Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

I certify that:

- a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,  
Or
- b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,  
Or
- c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves  
And
- d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

**Signed:** Colette Batson

**Signature:**  .

**Date:** 27 March 2026

**Public access to information:** Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential'. Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.