

Police Powers Scrutiny Agreement with Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality

Subject: Funding for Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) to deliver scrutiny of police powers.

Originator: Head of Policy and Performance

Decision Number: 10 - 2026

Reason for Submission: For Decision

Submitted to: Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Summary

1. This report proposes funding the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) to facilitate and deliver scrutiny of police powers.
2. The service will be delivered under a two-year grant agreement from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2028.
3. The overall cost is £25,200 per annum, which breaks down to £12,600 from the Police and Crime Commissioner and £12,600 from the Constabulary.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the PCC:

1. Approves the funding of £12,600 annually to ISCRE, from the PCC's corporate budget, for the two-year period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028, for delivery of the service as outlined in the report.

Approval by PCC

The recommendation as outlined above are approved.

Signed: Tim Passmore



Signature:

Date: 2 April 2026

Detail of Submission

1. Objective

- 1.1 Provide a mechanism for rigorous public scrutiny of the use of police powers to support public trust and confidence.
- 1.2 Reduce the likelihood of practice failures through early detection and community feedback and help to eliminate racial disparities in police interactions.

2. Background

- 2.1 Suffolk Constabulary's use of stop and search powers has been subject to community scrutiny for several years. The Stop and Search Reference Group (SSRG) was originally established following a report on Stop and Search in Ipswich by the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality. The report, published in 2008, made some key recommendations to improve practice. This included the establishment of a community led group to support Suffolk Constabulary with scrutiny of its use of stop and search to promote public confidence.
- 2.2 The PCC, in conjunction with Suffolk Constabulary, has funded ISCRE to run the Stop and Search Reference Group since 2012.
- 2.3 In 2014, to improve the use of stop and search nationally, the then Home Secretary announced the "Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme" to achieve greater transparency and community involvement in the use of stop and search powers. Since that time, further advice and good practice has been published via His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services inspection reports, as well as the Home Office, with regards to the use of community scrutiny panels.
- 2.4 In recognition that it is considered good practice to scrutinise Use of Force – including the use of Tasers and the use of Stop and Search – the terms of reference for the Stop and Search Reference Group were widened in 2024 to a Police Powers

Public Scrutiny Group (PPPSG). A two-year grant agreement was awarded to the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality in April 2024 to deliver this public scrutiny group.

2.5 During the current two-year grant period there has been notable impact on police practice, as the following examples demonstrate:

2.5.1 Example one – Stop and search of an Iranian male, who wore tracksuit trousers under his jeans, which was reviewed at the public scrutiny meeting. The officers pulled the jeans to just above his knees and searched him. Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), this is a more thorough search as it involved the removal of more than just outer garments, and it should have been undertaken out of public view. This was identified as an area where knowledge and policy were unclear and the training and policy terminology used in by the Constabulary was different to the College of Policing guidance. The joint policy has been changed and the correct terminology included in the personal safety training provided to officers. This gap would not have been identified as swiftly without the public scrutiny mechanism.

2.5.2 Example two – Public scrutiny feedback on searches being conducted in full view of the public has led to the Constabulary reviewing and revising guidance to ensure discretion and that the person’s wishes are taken into account (where practicable) for the location of the search, noting that not all people want to be searched out of public view or in more discreet settings.

3. Areas for Consideration

3.1 This report requests funding for the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) through a grant agreement for two-years, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028. The PCC has the power to issue a grant in accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 wherein the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:

- a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
- b) b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.

3.2 Police Powers are a recognised deterrent to crime and disorder, but use of powers can be perceived as disproportionate to certain groups and misunderstood by the wider community.

- 3.3 This decision supports the Commissioner’s Public Sector Equality duty to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups.
- 3.4 It also specifically delivers against the Commissioner’s equality objectives to:
- ensure transparency of information relating to equality;
 - engage with Suffolk’s communities to understand their needs and ensure they are taken into account in the delivery of policing and services to victims.
- 3.5 A grant is the proposed funding arrangement due to the following reasons (in line with the Norfolk and Suffolk Financial regulations document, revised April 2025):
- 3.5.1 The work of the Scrutiny Group is to improve community confidence in the use of police powers. There are benefits to the police in terms of proposed good practice and improved procedures—but these benefits extend to the wider community as well;
- 3.5.2 This is not the type of provision where we could expect ‘sanctions’ for non-delivery, as the group relies on community interest and voluntary attendance.
- 3.5.3 The current mature monitoring arrangements in place with ISCRE, for reporting on the Police Powers Scrutiny Group, will continue with a few amendments to the requirements in the Memorandum of Understanding (see section 4).
- 3.6 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Suffolk Constabulary would pay the grant quarterly in arrears and on receipt of financial monitoring information, based on the activity undertaken in that period. That activity would be in line with the provisions outlined at 4.3 being delivered and the monitoring requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) being met.

4. Delivering the Police Powers Scrutiny

- 4.1 The service to be provided by ISCRE for this grant includes additional hours compared to the grant awarded in 2024. This is to support an increase in the number of taser samples scrutinised (from three to five samples bi-monthly), and to allow two additional hours bi-monthly for reviewing Body Worn Video footage (a total of four hours bi-monthly and increasing the number of samples reviewed from three to six). This increase in scrutiny capacity is a key step in evolving the public scrutiny mechanisms from a sample-based review to a more comprehensive accountability mechanism reflecting the complexities of modern policing.

- 4.2 ISCRE will continue to discuss one of the five taser samples, two Use of Force samples, and three Stop and Search samples at the Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group.
- 4.3 ISCRE will ensure the following requirements are met/in place:
 - 4.3.1 Develop the terms of reference (TOR) for the Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group meeting;
 - 4.3.2 Ensure the TOR are shared with those who wish to attend – so the Group retains a clear sense of purpose – and to ensure that mutual understanding supports effective chairing and administration);
 - 4.3.3 Enable a wide range of people to attend the meetings;
 - 4.3.4 Continue to prepare, publicise, manage and administer six Group meetings per year (at least two to be held in person to engage new communities and geographies). Publicity will be shared with the OPCC and the Constabulary;
 - 4.3.5 Scrutinise ‘stop and search’ records, ‘use of force’ records, and ‘taser’ records;
 - 4.3.6 Continue to update the Constabulary on the use of Section 60 and complaints relating to Stop and Search;
 - 4.3.7 ISCRE will continue to provide scrutiny of Body Worn Video (BWV) footage in relation to police powers and feed the learning into the Group;
 - 4.3.8 ISCRE will continue to engage in police force training in relation to police powers. The proposal is to deliver six separate engagements over the course of the year;
 - 4.3.9 ISCRE will continue to consider attendance at other Constabulary recommended training or awareness opportunities to enhance its understanding of police training and practices;
 - 4.3.10 ISCRE will, where appropriate and reasonable, and on an ad hoc basis, provide feedback to the OPCC and the Constabulary on relevant policy implementations.
- 4.4 The new arrangements will be effective from 1 April 2026.
- 4.5 The work and findings of the Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group will be reported to the PCC’s Accountability and Performance Panel (APP) in January and July for the duration of the grant period. In addition, representatives from ISCRE, the OPCC and the Constabulary will be required to attend the bi-annual monitoring meetings held in Spring and Autumn.
- 4.6 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ISCRE, Suffolk Constabulary and the OPCC, will support collaborative working practices to aid delivery of the service and payment of the grant.

- 4.7 Attendance at the Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group will include a senior representative from the Constabulary and may also include other policing colleagues to support the sharing of learning.

5. Other options considered

- 5.1 Having no public scrutiny arrangements for police powers, as it is not a statutory requirement. This is not considered appropriate because building public trust and confidence in policing and ensuring transparency regarding the use of police powers is a Suffolk Police and Crime Plan commitment.
- 5.2 A voluntary Independent Advisory Group (IAG). There is no longer a Suffolk IAG, and it is not deemed a sustainable mechanism for the public scrutiny of wider police powers. The partnership with ISCRE is well established in Suffolk, and the grant award covering the period 2024-2026 delivered a valuable service, with a wide variety of community engagements for public scrutiny including young people and children in schools.

6. Strategic aims/objectives supported

- 6.1 Ensuring transparency regarding the use of police powers is a commitment in the 2025-2029 Police and Crime Plan.
- 6.2 It is recognised by both Suffolk Constabulary, and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, that external community scrutiny plays an important role in supporting public confidence, and improving quality, consistency and transparency in the use of police powers.
- 6.3 Providing grant funding to ISCRE to deliver the Public Scrutiny Group for Police Powers will therefore support this key strategic aim. It will also ensure that appropriate regard is given to members of the community with protected characteristics, particularly in relation to ongoing efforts to eliminate racial disparities in police interactions.

7. Financial and other resource implications

- 7.1 The overall cost is £25,200 per annum, comprising £12,600 from the Police and Crime Commissioner and £12,600 from the Constabulary. The release of funding from the OPCC will be paid quarterly in arrears on receipt of the monitoring

information—including a breakdown of expenditure in the respective period, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

8. Financial and other resource implications

8.1 There are no environmental considerations to note within this decision report.

9. Other implications and risks

9.1 None.

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?	Yes
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

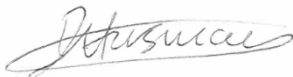
If yes, please state reasons below:

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: 20 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.
- e)

Signed: Colette Batson



Signature:

Date: 20 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.