

## **Accountability and Performance Panel Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** Friday 6 March 2026

**Meeting Location:** Police Headquarters, Martlesham

### **Present:**

#### **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner)

Sandra Graffham (Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Communications)

Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer)

Fraser Cooper (Head of Policy and Performance)

Amanda Houchen (Commissioning Officer)

Kate Fitzsimons (Policy and Performance Officer)

#### **Suffolk Constabulary**

Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable)

Dan Vajzovic (Deputy Chief Constable – via teams)

Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer)

Alice Scott (Assistant Chief Constable)

Julie Dean (Assistant Chief Constable – via teams)

### **Apologies**

Darren Horsman (Chief Executive Officer, Suffolk OPCC)

### **Public Agenda**

**1**     **Public Question Time**

- 1.1 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Tim Passmore, welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited those attending from both the Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 The PCC advised that a public question had been received in advance of the meeting, from Simon Furlong (Deputy Chair of Police and Crime Panel), and invited him to ask his question.
- 1.3 *Question received from Simon Furlong:*
  - I. *"To the Chief Constable - Trust and confidence in policing is a key issue affecting all police forces and I am pleased to see that there is an independent advisory and scrutiny panel for the Constabulary's race action plan. I have been unable to locate any feedback from this panel on the Constabulary's website apart from links to the national oversight board. Can I ask what feedback the Chief Constable has received from the panel and have they endorsed the progress undertaken to date - and if not, what remedial actions are being implemented?"*
  - II. The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) responded stating that the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) is a major area of focus for Suffolk Constabulary, noting that an independent community scrutiny panel was established last year to review progress against the plan's four pillars and has already endorsed the Constabulary's 2025–2026 self-assessment. The DCC explained that the panel's scrutiny activity is recorded in the published minutes of the PRAP Scrutiny Board but highlighted that governance could be strengthened further. Work is underway—led jointly by the panel chair, the OPCC, and a Superintendent—to recommission and refine the scrutiny panel for 2026–2027, with a clearer remit and more formal reporting arrangements. The DCC confirmed that the PCC will receive a full update on the panel and its intended function before the next meeting.  
**ACTION – The DCC to provide a full update on the new arrangements for the PRAP panel, its function and its formalised reporting arrangements at the next APP meeting.**

## **2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 16 January (Paper AP26/10)**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.
- 2.2 The actions were noted as complete.

## **3 Financial Monitoring Update by the Assistant Chief Officer (Paper AP26/02)**

- 3.1 The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) introduced the financial monitoring report.

- 3.2 ACO Kilpatrick reported a projected £4.2m underspend in revenue and a £6.2m underspend in capital expenditure, driven mainly by reduced operational and pay-related costs, along with lower property, transport and energy expenses—although potential Middle East developments could adversely affect energy prices. The capital underspend reflects the reprofiling of major schemes, including the purchase and refurbishment of Landmark House and the relocation of public contact management functions. The Suffolk Budget Monitoring Report outlines progress under theme one of the Police and Crime Plan, which focuses on delivering an efficient and effective police force.
- 3.3 Referring to page three of the Budget Monitoring Report, the PCC explained that £163k is additional to the grant received from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) - for the provision of four Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) who were appointed over a year ago. This funding brings the number of IDVAs to 16.
- 3.4 The PCC noted, in paragraph 2.7, that Employer National Insurance contributions and the increase in the National Minimum Wage have put extraordinary pressures on the charities and voluntary groups supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and this is reflected in increased OPCC funding figures. Referring to the Suffolk Futures Fund run by Suffolk Community Foundation - the PCC noted a contribution of £80,000 by his office, which has been match-funded by private donations and philanthropy. This will benefit many young people across the county.
- 3.5 Responding to the PCC's questions about forecast underspends, the ACO explained that the main reason for the underspend is lower energy costs. Energy prices have returned to levels seen before COVID-19 and before the invasion of Ukraine, which had not been expected when the 2025/26 budget was set. The ACO also noted that energy prices are hedged for 2026/27, but this will be checked with the estates team to confirm there is no risk of price volatility next year. Although there is a temptation to further reduce the energy budget, the plan is to hold any savings centrally until it becomes clearer how costs will change in 2026/27 and, more likely, 2027/28, when a price spike is expected due to the conflict in the Middle East. In summary, the financial position is sound, with sufficient resilience to mitigate fluctuations in global energy prices.
- 3.6 The PCC highlighted that work is progressing to clear the backlog of firearms licence renewals. This is important for Suffolk's rural economy and because Suffolk as a county has the highest rate of firearms ownership per head of population.
- 3.7 In relation to specific grants (paragraph 6.1) the PCC noted the Constabulary's headcount for officers was more than sufficient to maintain full funding eligibility from the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) grant.

#### **4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims Report from the Chief Constable (Paper AP26/12)**

- 4.1 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Scott outlined the Constabulary's strong commitment and performance in supporting vulnerable victims, including compliance with the Victims' Code,

domestic abuse enforcement and improvements in the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO), supported by close partnership work through the Local Criminal Justice Board. However, ongoing pressures such as court backlogs, accreditation delays and workforce capacity continue to affect services. These pressures pose risks to service quality and victim confidence, reinforcing the need to strengthen the victim's voice, data insight, demographic understanding and outcome-focused performance measures. Strategic work to improve victim support continues but remains challenging during this period of transition and limited resources.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to review this paper with the OPCC after the current cycle to ensure it continues to meet requirements.**

- 4.2 The PCC queried a reference in paragraph 3.2 to the potential abolition of PCCs, and ACC Scott apologised for the wording used. The PCC noted that he considered the idea of creating mega-forces and removing PCCs to be misguided and that the information had been presented unhelpfully.
- 4.3 The PCC asked about the impact of extensive court backlogs and pressures on staff, and ACC Scott explained that additional staff have been employed and the way the team works has been changed to create a one-team approach. However, some staff manage caseloads of more than 300. Frequent re-listings and short-notice changes are causing significant difficulties and can be distressing for victims, witnesses and suspects, as well as challenging for staff. When asked what a normal post-COVID caseload would look like, ACC Dean said that establishing a benchmark has been difficult due to persistent backlogs, though historically it was likely around 35–50 cases. Investment has been necessary to support staff both in managing workload and maintaining welfare, given the emotional impact of regularly delivering disappointing updates to those affected by delays. The PCC expressed his frustration with the Ministry of Justice for a lack of long-term planning, suggesting that temporary measures such as the Nightingale courts used during the COVID pandemic could be reintroduced as a short-term solution.
- 4.4 In reference to Norfolk Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) - paragraph 3.9, the PCC asked for clarification on the reference to the “top ten repeat victims in Suffolk”. ACC Dean explained that this refers to individuals who contact the service frequently and require support to help prevent their further victimisation. The Chief Constable (CC) added that some people may be repeatedly victimised by different offenders due to exploitation, and the focus is on providing appropriate protection and support to reduce the risk of further harm. Part of this may be supporting them to make safer choices in their relationships, which could apply to repeat victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.5 Head of Policy and Performance, asked, in reference to the national domestic abuse joint justice plan and the government strategy around Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), what additional commentary the Constabulary could provide around activity already in place, that aligns with that. ACC Dean explained that extensive work is underway across multiple teams, which brings together all related workstreams—including VAWG and domestic abuse—under the oversight of the refreshed

Vulnerability and High Harm Board launching later this month. The Constabulary's attendance at the inaugural national VAWG conference provided valuable multi-agency insights that can be benchmarked against and translated into a high-level implementation plan for the next 6–9 months. Alongside this, the Op Soteria self-assessment received positive feedback from the national team, enabling the Constabulary to progress independently while continuing collaborative engagement and focusing on our self-identified improvement areas. Overall, the Constabulary has strong evidence of what works and is actively exploring innovative practices from other forces—including new operating models and workload structures—which will shape significant developments in the coming months.

- 4.6 In response to a question from the PCC about advances in technology, ACC Scott reported that the force is reviewing its use of TechSafe and similar alert technologies, ensuring they are widely promoted and embedded into frontline teams as early-intervention tools. Alongside this, broader work is planned to improve responses to stalking and harassment, supported by strengthened governance under the Vulnerability Board. The focus remains on high-harm victims, offenders, and priority locations, complemented by strong partnership work through activities with neighbourhood and community policing teams. Overall, the force has a comprehensive approach to tackling violence against women and girls, with significant opportunities for further development. When asked how information from different agencies is used to improve the service provided to victims, ACC Dean explained that the Constabulary is improving how learning is captured and fed into operational practice. This includes simplifying agendas, developing thematic feedback processes through the Vulnerability Board, and incorporating insights from multi-agency case reviews—both anonymised and detailed. These lessons will inform not only frontline activity but also training and development, including specialist investigator training. Overall, the focus is on standardising feedback mechanisms, so they consistently drive improvements in both practice and training.
- 4.7 The PCC asked for further context around training and the use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (paragraph 5.4). ACC Dean replied that the force has been working to standardise the number and quality of cases submitted to court, focusing particularly on improving outcomes within the first 48 hours and increasing the success of Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders. Success rates have been rising, and the next step is to embed these approaches more consistently as early-intervention and safeguarding tools for frontline officers. Ongoing feedback from legal teams, investigators, supervisors, and outcome data is being used to refine case detail and tactics, with all learning fed directly into training delivered by experienced detectives and frontline training programmes.
- 4.8 The Head of Policy and Performance asked for context around the steep increase in the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) applications received since 2014 and whether there is currently a backlog and if so, what mitigations are in place to address this. ACC Scott replied that there is currently a significant and growing backlog of cases with many falling into higher-risk categories that require frequent review. To manage this, a proactive team is being deployed for a short, intensive period to address

immediate high-harm concerns and ensure the force remains on top of rising demand. Looking ahead, the continued increase in volume, driven in part by wider public awareness, means the force is likely to seek additional resources or organisational changes within the next 6–12 months to maintain effective oversight and responsiveness. The PCC asked ACC Scott to bring that back as an action at the appropriate time.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to provide an update to the OPCC on the increase in DVDS applications and the steps in place to mitigate the backlog.**

- 4.9 Referring to page eight of the report, the PCC asked the Chief Constable for further information about the training of trainers for the new Frontline Responder Course for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences. The Chief Constable explained that the Constabulary’s Op Soteria work has been highly successful, and, building on nine months of development and strong feedback from the national team, there is now a clear opportunity to extend this learning into frontline response and safeguarding practices. By updating frontline officers on recent progress, and by taking advantage of officer turnover within Community Policing Teams (CPT), the Constabulary will support the wider rollout of improved skills and approaches. Longer term, there is an ambition to embed tailored VAWG training within community policing teams, ensuring frontline officers remain well-equipped to deal with any situation. In a follow-up question concerning the Child Sexual Offence data on page nine of the report, the PCC queried whether it was accurate to state that these offences had continued to decline, noting that the figures appeared to have increased over the past 12 months.

**ACTION: ACC Dean to review the source of the data to determine which data pack the figures were drawn from and provide clarification to the PCC.**

- 4.10 In reference to paragraph 7.9, the PCC asked if the post of Diverse Communities Coordinator had been filled. ACC Scott noted that the role is currently being recruited and is at the vetting stage. Concerns were raised about the need for more proactive succession planning, given the sensitivity and importance of the role, though it was acknowledged that notice periods and individual circumstances can be hard to anticipate. In the meantime, CPT officers and other staff are covering the responsibilities to prevent gaps in service. All parties agreed on the importance of filling the post as quickly as possible to ensure continuity.

- 4.11 Referring to page 11 of the report (Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking) the PCC reflected on a successful multi-agency day of action in Sudbury that delivered impressive results within a short timeframe and received national attention, including coverage by the media and involvement from the policing minister and the National Crime Agency. Much of the operation’s footage used nationally was filmed locally in Suffolk, underscoring the Constabulary’s contribution. The PCC suggested that such positives could be reflected in the report. The Chief Constable acknowledged this, confirming that the structure of the paper is being reviewed to better showcase good practice. Overall, the PCC’s comments emphasised recognition and praise for the Constabulary’s outstanding efforts in this area.

## **5 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending (Paper AP26/13)**

- 5.1 Introducing this report, ACC Scott highlighted that performance across several areas remains strong, with custody throughput at record levels and medical provision at its best in years - supported by a newly introduced custody shift pattern that is beginning to reduce reliance on non-custody staff. Preparations for the ongoing HMICFRS inspection are positive, and there have been notable improvements in bail management, restorative justice referrals, and on reoffending rates within the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Unit. While challenges persist—including court backlogs, mental health related delays in custody, and the higher risk profile of Suffolk's Integrated Offender Management (IOM) cohort—the Constabulary is continuing to focus on these areas, alongside efforts to increase completion rates for key offender focused programmes.
- 5.2 The PCC expressed his concerns about issues linked to the custody suite and a new shift pattern referenced on page three of the report. He highlighted a longstanding problem involving the lack of suitable accommodation for individuals experiencing mental health crises. After speaking with the mental health practitioner in one custody suite, he noted that this shortage continues to create significant operational pressures. Responsibility for providing appropriate accommodation lies with the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT), and the PCC believes that the Trust has repeatedly failed to deliver this, despite the issue having persisted for a long time. While acknowledging that solutions cannot happen instantly, he asked what more can be done to encourage the NSFT to act. The PCC expressed willingness to support efforts to press the NSFT but emphasised that the current situation is unacceptable and is negatively affecting both staff and the individuals in need.
- 5.3 The Chief Constable reported that, since the introduction of 'Right Care, Right Person', the force is not as engaged in these cases as it was some years ago. However, she expressed ongoing concern that the NSFT still lacks sufficient and appropriate mental health provision for the area. The Chief Constable emphasised that police custody is not an appropriate place for people who are mentally unwell, as it places an unfair duty of care on staff who are not trained to manage severe mental health needs. She feels this situation does not support a coordinated or effective mental-health system for the people of Suffolk and she believes the issue should continue to be raised through the Health and Wellbeing Board and she would welcome the PCC's support to bring that sense of responsibility as a collective.  
**ACTION: The PCC to raise this issue via the Health and Wellbeing Board.**
- 5.4 Referring to paragraph 4.5 of the report, the PCC asked for clarification about whether victims pay to take part in the Victim Impact Awareness course and how the scheme operates. ACC Scott explained that most courses are self-funded by participants, but there is recognition that some individuals cannot afford to pay and should not be excluded on financial grounds. To address this, 50% of the income from the course is reinvested into developing new diversionary options and supporting a hardship fund. This fund ensures that eligible individuals can still access the course even if they face financial barriers.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to report back to the PCC on the cost of the Victim Impact Awareness course and provide details on how it is operated financially.**

- 5.5 The PCC asked for clarification on the evaluation project around Out of Court Resolutions (OOCRs) – referenced in paragraph 4.9 of the report. ACC Scott explained that the evaluation will assess three key areas: the cost and productivity benefits of using this alternative route compared with traditional criminal justice processes; the impact on recidivism, recognising that measuring long-term reoffending requires sufficient time; and evidence of behavioural change. She also noted that legitimacy is an important consideration, and expanding the use of such resolutions can help prevent further offending, ease demand on the criminal justice system, and still deliver positive outcomes for victims. The University of Suffolk is contributing by examining the broader impact of this approach.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to provide the expected timescale of the project and report back to the PCC.**

- 5.6 The Head of Policy and Performance asked for an update regarding a review of the restorative justice process from the victim’s perspective, which aimed to capture qualitative insights and identify best practice, as referenced in the last Managing Offenders report but not included in this report. No update was available immediately, but ACC Dean took an action to provide one.

**ACTION: ACC Dean to provide an update regarding a review of the restorative justice process from the victim’s perspective to the OPCC.**

- 5.7 On page eight of the report, the PCC noted a welcome decline in crown court cases but expressed serious concern about the significant rise in magistrates’ court cases shown in Figure 5. He strongly criticised the earlier closure of two magistrates’ courts, which have contributed to current pressures. Unsure what the immediate solution is, he resolved that while the Local Criminal Justice Board will do what it can, the government, especially the Ministry of Justice, must show leadership and develop longer-term plans to address the issue. ACC Dean noted that, while an over-listing issue has now been addressed, the temporary arrangement for Cambridge Crown Court to take on some Ipswich Crown Court cases ended on 1 March 2026. As a result, those cases will now return to Ipswich, meaning the current figures may not fully reflect demand. Once the transferred cases reappear in Ipswich, crown court demand may rise again, potentially increasing pressure on the system. The PCC indicated a strong interest in pursuing further dialogue on this issue with ACC Dean.

**ACTION: ACC Dean to provide an update for the PCC ahead of the next meeting on the volume of cases appearing at Ipswich Crown Court.**

- 5.8 Referring to paragraph 7.4 of the report, the PCC queried the high drop-out rate of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Unit, and he asked what can be done to improve the numbers. ACC Scott noted that initial consent can be a major barrier and perpetrators cannot be compelled, while mental health issues can also render some individuals unsuitable. Although these limitations affect uptake, work is underway to improve accessibility and explore additional options to widen participation where appropriate. Behaviour-change sessions have been particularly successful, but programme

completion and its evaluation require long-term measurement. ACC Scott noted that it will be important to review progress in six months to understand the programme's ongoing impact. The PCC asked if there is a mechanism for finding out what other forces do in this space. ACC Scott explained that the force is actively involved in regional and national working groups, as well as collaborating with the College of Policing, to share learning and drive innovation. She highlighted the Accountability, Respect, Change (ARC) course as an example of this work and noted that one of their investigators recently received national recognition for innovation. The force continues to review what other forces are doing to identify further opportunities and is frequently visited by others interested in Suffolk's approach. While the force performs well relative to its size and the breadth of responsibilities placed on individual officers, ACC Scott emphasised a commitment to continual improvement and striving for excellence. The PCC expressed his interest in hearing more at a future meeting.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to provide an update to the PCC in September 2026, on the progress of the behaviour change sessions.**

- 5.9 The PCC asked for additional context in relation to Integrated Offender Management (IOM) in Suffolk - referring to paragraph 10.7 of the report. ACC Scott clarified that the force uses the Qlik analysis tool to conduct risk assessments and ensure consistency with other regional forces, helping avoid both over and under estimation of risk. She noted increasing numbers of offenders relocating from other counties into Suffolk, requiring their inclusion in IOM cohorts. As a result, the force continually reviews its risk profile, structures, and resourcing needs, particularly in specialist pathways, and is engaged in complex discussions with multi-agency partners about shared pressures. ACC Scott also highlighted that the Sentencing Act 2026 is expected to increase demand on IOM services, meaning resourcing requirements in this area will likely need to be reconsidered moving forward.
- 5.10 In the context of paragraph 10.8 and the anticipated increased demand in IOM, alongside the Strategic Efficiency and Technology paper issued in November 2025, the Head of Policy and Performance asked if there was any commentary or assurance on how that review and recent IOM review would be linked. ACC Scott explained that the force is continuously monitoring developments and working closely with partners through governance meetings to understand the wider impact of anticipated changes, which will affect not only IOM cohorts but the whole organisation. She highlighted potential increases in compliance monitoring, breach activity, and offender management demands, noting recent probation presentations that shed light on forthcoming pressures. The force is tracking these issues to ensure a multidisciplinary approach, recognising that changes may also affect frontline policing, and safeguarding responsibilities, particularly for families and children connected to offenders serving short sentences. Strong partnerships and robust, well-placed risk assessments will be essential as the system evolves and it will require close, ongoing monitoring.
- 5.11 The PCC expressed his optimism for a new initiative being developed with partner agencies to help offenders into employment. Although still in the early stages, recent

meetings have been encouraging - and helping even a small number of people into work could meaningfully reduce reoffending. This as an exciting opportunity for Suffolk and the wider community.

## **6 Responding to Fraud Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP26/14)**

6.1 Introducing this report, ACC Scott explained that the force is fully aligned with national strategies, including the new Report Fraud system which has replaced Action Fraud, and she outlined the role of the central Fraud Assessment Unit in triage and expertise. Victim-support processes, tiered care, and growing prevention work, delivered jointly with Trading Standards, were also highlighted by ACC Scott, alongside increased focus on cyber capabilities and organised-crime disruption. She noted, however, that rising demand is a growing concern and is beginning to exceed capacity, with true levels of fraud likely to be higher than recorded. Fraud remains a significant national issue, compounded by technological and system limitations, and the force is working to implement new fraud and economic-crime capabilities. These developments aim to better equip front-line officers and response teams to deal effectively with the wide range of fraud and financial-crime reports emerging within local communities.

6.2 The Policy and Performance Officer observed - in reference to the data table on page three of the report - that the totals in the primary classification rows do not match the overall number of investigations shown in the first row. She acknowledged that a helpful explanation has already been provided, indicating the force is confident in its reporting standards, but asks for further clarification on the nature of the uncategorised cases and why the dashboard currently omits them from the displayed totals. ACC Scott acknowledged the discrepancies raised in the data table and agreed that notable variations exist, likely due to how the dashboards are filtered and populated. She proposed reviewing the table to ensure it is reformatted appropriately for future meetings and provides the information required.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to review the data table on page three of the report, ensuring it is reformatted for future meetings to provide the information required.**

6.3 The PCC noted that ethnicity is recorded as “unknown” for 49% of victims in the table on page four, which seems an exceptionally high proportion. ACC Scott explained that providing ethnicity information is voluntary, and individuals are not required to disclose how they self-identify. As a result, there are challenges across all crime types in recording this data accurately, and any gaps must be marked as “unknown” to avoid making assumptions. She noted that this is an issue nationally, and there is an ongoing drive to improve data quality. The Constabulary is actively working across several thematic areas to strengthen the accuracy of its ethnicity recording. The Chief Constable added that high levels of “unknown” ethnicity data may also reflect victims’ lack of confidence in disclosing personal information, potentially due to fears they will receive a different standard of service. She stressed the importance of the Constabulary building trust so victims feel assured that their crime will be investigated properly, even when contact is not face-to-face. As the Constabulary increasingly adopts technological and digital solutions to manage crime demand, ensuring victims

retain confidence in self-reporting remains a key concern. The PCC is keen to follow this up in due course.

**Action: ACC Scott to provide an update on ethnicity data recording and victim confidence ahead of the next APP meeting.**

6.4 On page five of the report, at paragraph 3.4, the PCC noted the Fraud Assessment Unit's (FAU) commitment to "ongoing oversight with reviews of all live fraud investigations every 28 days," asking how this was progressing. ACC Scott noted that this area of work remains significantly under-reported. While existing resources are managing effectively for now, any substantial rise in reporting, at the level they believe should realistically be occurring, would place considerable pressure on the Constabulary's capacity. The PCC noted the report stated that "many fraud offences don't require direct intervention by the force" and asked for further clarity on this. ACC Scott explained that the fraud strategy involves multiple reporting routes depending on the type of fraud. Some reports made through national mechanisms are not always passed back to the local force, meaning that a number of Suffolk victims may not be identified locally and therefore no local action can be taken. Some of the fraud reported will be passed back to the force so that a local investigation can be conducted. Whichever constabulary or agency conducts the investigation they will have the same legal obligations around victim care.

6.5 The PCC queried whether the Fraud Protect and Prevent Officer role, which has been funded through the Pooled Business Rates Fund, has been filled. ACC Scott believes that it has been filled and safeguarding work with victims is already underway. The PCC asked how effective the role has been and what impact it has had, noting that preventing crime is crucial.

**ACTION: ACC Scott to report on the effectiveness and impact of the Fraud Protect and Prevent Officer role via Weekly Conference and provide a briefing note to the PCC.**

6.6 The PCC suggested that future reports include relevant data and non-confidential examples of multi-agency collaboration to illustrate what has been achieved. This would support understanding, strengthen public confidence, and help highlight positive outcomes. The PCC also requested clarification on the statement in section 4.3 referring to fraud as a "secondary crime". ACC Scott explained that while fraud may be the primary offence in some investigations, it frequently emerges as a secondary element within serious and organised crime cases, such as human trafficking or other complex offences. Following financial activity often reveals associated fraud and related offences, which then fall within the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) space and require additional investigation. Although prosecutions may include a wide range of charges, the role of fraud, and its economic impact and enabling function, should not be overlooked within these wider criminal operations.

6.7 Referring to paragraph 5.4—the PCC asked what benefits the funding secured from the National Crime Agency will enable the force to deliver. ACC Scott noted that the new approach is enabling the force to dedicate focused effort to pursuing outstanding fraud suspects and progressing existing investigations. Early data shows that

February's deployment has already resulted in an arrest and several voluntary interviews, allowing 13 fraud cases to advance more quickly than they otherwise would have. She explained that further work is planned in this area and that the force is also reviewing how other forces are using similar funding to ensure their own approach is comparable and effective.

- 6.8 On page eight, paragraph 7.2 the PCC noted the inclusion of fraud in the Strategic Policing Requirement and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue (HMICFRS) Inspection Framework, and he asked how this is progressing. ACC Scott noted that it was too early to draw conclusions, as the inspection is still in the fieldwork phase. She explained that the force has already submitted thousands of documents to HMICFRS as part of the preparatory process, and the inspection fieldwork is expected to take place at the end of March and beginning of April 2026. Although outcomes cannot yet be assessed, the force welcomes the inspection as an opportunity to reflect on current progress and identify areas of future development. The Chief Constable added that the force will receive a debrief in May 2026.

**ACTION: Following the HMICFRS debrief in May, ACC Scott to provide an update for the PCC on the Constabulary's effectiveness in tackling fraud.**

- 6.9 The PCC asked when the 'Fraud and Economic Crime App' will come into use in Suffolk. ACC Scott explained that the force has a substantial queue of innovation projects awaiting work by the ICT team, particularly around app development and system integration, which is affecting progress on the app. Although the technology has been designed and is now with developers, capacity in ICT is stretched due to the volume of digital tools the force is seeking to develop. The app needs to be fully integrated into local systems and tailored with the appropriate materials and structures for Suffolk's frontline teams, and this localisation work is a key reason for the delay. The Chief Constable noted that implementing the app is not as simple as transferring the product from the City of London Police, as it must be integrated with Suffolk's numerous existing systems. ACC Scott explained that once in place, the app will provide frontline officers with a single, mobile access point for guidance on the wide range of fraud types and the appropriate next steps, improving their ability to respond effectively while out in the field.

- 6.10 On page 10, paragraph 11.5 the PCC noted the Constabulary has seen little improvement in the ability to demonstrate proactive identification of organised crime groups where the primary criminality is fraud, use of ancillary orders in connection with fraudsters or co-ordinated prevent activity in relation to organised fraud criminality. He asked what can be done to improve in this area. ACC Scott explained that there is a whole system approach to tackling fraud, recognising that while traditional serious and organised crime (SOC) activity can be identified and addressed through established national mechanisms, the rapidly expanding online landscape presents increasing challenges. Although the force remains successful in this area, fraud is increasingly emerging as a significant criminal enterprise, often running alongside other SOC investigations. As online offending grows at pace, the key challenge is maintaining the technological and investigative capabilities needed to keep up and respond effectively.

## **7 Procurement and Commercial Strategy Report by the Chief Constable (Paper AP26/15)**

- 7.1 The PCC reiterated that for 18 months running, Suffolk has maintained its performance as the county with the third lowest crime rate in the country, which, bearing in mind the level of financial support received per resident from the Home Office, is a very commendable performance.
- 7.2 The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) noted that this is the first time the paper has been presented to the panel and he welcomes feedback on whether it meets expectations. He explained that the paper forms part of a wider efficiency and productivity suite and therefore focuses on the fundamental building blocks of procurement, including contract standing orders, compliance with the Procurement Act 2023, and the principles underpinning third-party expenditure, which totals around £38 million annually. The report also outlines how value for money is achieved through local, regional, and national arrangements. He added that the paper highlights financial and social value benefits delivered through the Seven Force Strategic Collaboration Programme and BlueLight Commercial, as well as assurance received from audits of procurement controls. The ACO then touched on the broader national context, including the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP), which he noted as positive but more challenging to implement than originally anticipated, and the potential future impact of proposals within the police reform white paper.
- 7.3 The PCC noted that the paper successfully sets the context and that it will be valuable to review progress over the coming months, particularly given that £38 million, around 22% of total expenditure, is spent on goods and services, with the remaining 78% relating to staffing costs. He highlighted the financial pressures caused by increased employer National Insurance contributions, for which full government funding has not been provided, and asked the ACO to comment on how similar cost pressures are affecting suppliers and the overall challenge of managing contracts under these conditions.
- 7.4 The ACO explained that rising employer National Insurance contributions have created unavoidable cost pressures for suppliers, with some seeking contract variations because their prices were agreed before the increase was announced. While certain contracts allow inflationary uplifts to absorb these costs, others do not, leading some suppliers to request additional funding. The force does not automatically agree to such requests; instead, it undertakes detailed negotiation and open-book scrutiny to verify any proposed increase. In a small number of cases, agreements have been reached to share the additional cost 50/50 in order to maintain essential services while ensuring suppliers also contribute to the financial impact.
- 7.5 The PCC emphasised the importance of social value within publicly funded procurement and asked for further information on the use of the £27,000 in donations referenced in the report, noting that such detail could encourage wider participation. The PCC also highlighted the potential for procurement activity to support

apprenticeships and initiatives aimed at reducing reoffending, such as Prisoners Build Homes. In addition, the PCC raised environmental and ethical considerations, including the carbon footprint associated with supply chains, particularly in relation to energy sourcing, and the ethical implications of working with certain countries. The PCC noted that these issues pose ongoing challenges for police procurement and asked for comment on how they are being addressed, especially in the context of BlueLight Commercial's national role.

- 7.6 The ACO clarified that the donations referenced relate to charities supporting policing and community outcomes, with no political donations involved, and agreed to provide examples. It was noted that although many contracts are operated jointly between Suffolk and Norfolk, social value reporting is disaggregated by county. In relation to sustainable procurement, the ACO explained that while contract standing orders require suppliers to meet sustainability obligations, enforcement remains challenging, as responsibility for evidencing compliance sits primarily with suppliers. Many suppliers now publish their own sustainability charters, which form the basis of assurance provided to the force. Seven Force Commercial Services maintains oversight of this area; however, it was acknowledged that they do not have the capacity to audit every supplier individually, and reliance is therefore placed on supplier self-certification supported by occasional independent verification.
- ACTION: ACO Kilpatrick to provide examples of charitable donations which support policing and community outcomes.**

- 7.7 The PCC sought clarification regarding section 5.3, noting that the programme sets out ambitious national targets for police efficiencies and collaboration. He queried the government's assertion of achieving £38 million in annual police officer time savings over five years, expressing uncertainty about how such figures had been derived or validated. The PCC further asked whether these national expectations were likely to create pressures or implications for local delivery, or whether they should be regarded as aspirational rather than realistically achievable. The ACO noted that responsibility for monitoring progress against the national programme's targets lies with the PCC rather than the Constabulary. He advised that nothing published to date by the NPCC suggests that these ambitious targets are sufficiently developed to inform local planning. While potential productivity gains may allow the Constabulary to do more with existing resources, these are not assumptions that would be incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan. He observed that national initiatives are increasingly being passed down to regional and local levels, and Suffolk will assess these on a case-by-case basis and adopt only those elements that are relevant to local needs, noting that a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate.

- 7.9 The PCC asked for clarification on the difference between cashable savings and cost avoidance. ACO Kilpatrick explained that cash-flow savings occur when the force directly reduces expenditure—for example, procuring an item for £80 instead of £100—thereby removing cash from current costs. Cost avoidance, by contrast, involves preventing future expenditure, such as redesigning a service or using different technology or suppliers to avoid incurring a projected £100 cost. He noted that, while

different in nature, both approaches can lead to tangible and meaningful savings rather than notional or non-cashable efficiencies.

- 7.10 The PCC observed that while the distinctions between cashable savings and cost-avoidance are clear, government reporting often presents a confusing picture, with Home Office figures lacking clarity and consistency. He noted that investment in new technology can significantly increase productivity even when overall spending remains the same and queried how such gains are captured within formal productivity measures. In response, the ACO stated that policing leaders are moving away from claiming marginal gains—such as saving seconds or minutes—as these cannot be meaningfully measured or redeployed. Instead, the focus is now on identifying substantial, genuinely deliverable efficiencies that result in hours of savings and therefore represent real, cashable benefits. He added that these tangible savings can then be incorporated into future budgets, encouraging a more robust and outcome-focused approach to benefits realisation.
- 7.11 The PCC invited any other business and noted a message regarding an organisational achievement. DCC Vajzovic reported that the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit's (ERSOU) Proactive Economic Crime Team (PECT) had been nominated for, and won, 'Team of the Year' at the National Public Sector Counter Fraud Awards. He added that several of the team's investigations had taken place in Suffolk and that further details on ongoing ERSOU work would be shared after the meeting. The PCC welcomed the update and noted that the Eastern Region Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) is regarded as one of the strongest nationally. He reiterated previous concerns that any proposed national changes to ROCUs or wider policing structures must demonstrate clear, evidence-based improvements over the current model. He then closed the public part of the meeting, thanking attendees—both online and in person—for their contributions.

## **8 Any Other Business**

- 8.1 No further business.

*The open part of the meeting closed at 11:23.*

### **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 16 January 2026 (Paper AP26/16)**

- 9.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **10 Joint Operation Command Update Report (Paper AP26/17)**

10.1 Suffolk Constabulary provided an update on this report and invited questions.

**11 Risk Register/Chief Officer Risk Report (Paper AP26/18)**

11.1 Suffolk Constabulary provided an update on this report and invited questions.

*The meeting closed at 12:07.*

**Summary of Actions**

<b>Item / Paper</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
1.3 (II) - Public Question Time	The DCC to provide a full update on the new arrangements for the PRAP panel, its function and its formalised reporting arrangements at the next APP meeting.	DCC Vajzovic
4.1 Supporting Vulnerable Victims Report	ACC Scott to review this paper with the OPCC after the current cycle to ensure it continues to meet requirements.	ACC Scott
4.8 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	ACC Scott to provide an update to the OPCC on the increase in DVDS applications and the steps in place to mitigate the backlog.	ACC Scott
4.9 Supporting Vulnerable Victims Report	ACC Dean to review the source of the data to determine which data pack the figures were drawn from and provide clarification to the PCC.	ACC Dean
5.3 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	The PCC to raise this issue via the Health and Wellbeing Board.	PCC Tim Passmore
5.4 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Scott to report back to the PCC on the cost of the Victim Impact Awareness Course and provide details on how it is operated financially.	ACC Scott
5.5 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Scott to provide the expected timescale of the evaluation project and report back to the PCC.	ACC Scott
5.6 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to provide an update regarding a review of the Restorative Justice process from the victim's perspective to the OPCC.	ACC Dean
5.7 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACTION: ACC Dean to provide an update for the PCC ahead of the next meeting on the volume of cases appearing at Ipswich Crown Court.	ACC Dean
5.8 Managing Offenders and	ACC Scott to provide an update to the PCC in September 2026, on the progress of the behaviour change sessions.	ACC Scott

Reducing Reoffending		
6.2 Responding to Fraud Report	ACC Scott to review the data table on page three of the report, ensuring it is reformatted for future meetings to provide the information required.	ACC Scott
6.3 Responding to Fraud Report	ACC Scott to provide an update on ethnicity data recording and victim confidence ahead of the next APP meeting.	ACC Scott
6.5 Responding to Fraud Report	ACC Scott to report on the effectiveness and impact of the Fraud Protect and Prevent Officer role via Weekly Conference and provide a briefing note to the PCC.	ACC Scott
6.8 Responding to Fraud Report	Following the HMICFRS debrief in May, ACC Scott to provide an update for the PCC on the force's effectiveness in tackling fraud.	ACC Scott
7.6 Procurement and Commercial Strategy Report	ACO Kilpatrick to provide examples of charitable donations which support policing and community outcomes.	ACO Kilpatrick