Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner

*Making Suffolk a safer place to live, work, travel and invest*

# WEST SUFFOLK AREA PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held at The Racing Centre, Newmarket on Tuesday 13th October 2025 at 6.30pm.

**PRESENT:**
**Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner**
Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Simon Morgan (Head of Communications and Engagement)
Nicola Gully (Policy and Commissioning Coordinator)

**Suffolk Constabulary**
Superintendent Pete Partridge
Inspector Tim Scott

Public: Three people

## POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CONSTABULARY OVERVIEW

A public meeting was held at The Racing Centre, Newmarket. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Tim Passmore, provided an overview of current policing and criminal justice issues affecting Suffolk. He highlighted that Suffolk remains one of the safest areas in the country and discussed national proposals around the police mega forces, stressing the importance of retaining local policing and visibility. He advised that exploratory discussions were taking place regarding closer collaboration or possible merger arrangements between Suffolk and Norfolk, but he emphasised that no decisions had been made and that any changes would need to demonstrate clear benefits. The PCC also updated attendees on issues relating to RAF Barnham, concerns about potential asylum accommodation proposals, police funding pressures, and the ongoing process to recruit a permanent Chief Constable.

Superintendent Pete Partridge and Inspector Tim Scott provided an overview of local policing activity across Forest Heath, Newmarket, Brandon and Mildenhall. They reported strong performance by local community policing teams, including hotspot patrols, neighbourhood policing activity, stop searches and arrests. Key priorities remain acquisitive crime, drug supply and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Officers outlined successful action against county lines drug networks, illicit tobacco sales and problematic vape shops, alongside targeted work to address ASB and retail crime. The importance of improving communication with local communities and increasing awareness of police activity was also discussed.

The PCC and Constabulary representatives discussed a number of wider policing and community safety issues. These included concerns regarding reductions to Serious Violence Duty funding, the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), plans for a new police control room, investment in technology and equipment, and the benefits of greater national consistency across policing systems. Significant discussion focused on the growing use of drone technology, including locating missing people, supporting searches, responding to incidents and tackling criminal activity. Attendees heard examples of how drones have already supported emergency services and how expanded capability could benefit Suffolk in the future.

The meeting concluded with discussion about rehabilitation and reducing reoffending. The PCC outlined programmes designed to support offenders who wish to change their lives, including employment, skills training and housing initiatives for prisoners approaching release. Questions were also raised about support for vulnerable individuals displaying challenging behaviour within local communities. The PCC emphasised the importance of early intervention, rehabilitation and partnership working, while recognising that not all outcomes are successful. Representatives from Suffolk Constabulary confirmed the PCC's continued support for frontline policing and community safety initiatives.

The PCC invited questions from the audience:

*QUESTION 1: A member of the public asked whether new technologies are being developed to prevent vehicle number plate fraud.*

RESPONSE: The PCC noted that developments are being explored around more secure or number plates which would be harder to counterfeit. The PCC welcomed such developments and highlighted the importance of linking them with improved ANPR capability and data analysis to support policing activity.

QUESTION 2: *A member of the public described ongoing concerns about a neighbour displaying aggressive and intimidating behaviour. What can be done to help?*

RESPONSE: The PCC acknowledged the difficulties such situations create for communities and agencies. He explained that while there are no simple solutions, early intervention, support services, youth programmes and rehabilitation initiatives can help some individuals change their behaviour. He also highlighted the OPCC's grant funding and commissioning work aimed at preventing offending and supporting vulnerable people.

QUESTION 3: *A member of the public asked if rehabilitation programmes support people while they are in prison or only after release.*

RESPONSE: The PCC explained that support begins while individuals are still in prison. Programmes identify people who want to make positive changes and provide opportunities linked to employment, skills training and rehabilitation. Examples

included previous successful HGV driver training schemes and newer programmes supporting construction skills opportunities for offenders preparing for release.

QUESTION 4: *A member of the public asked whether organisations such as Town Pastors could potentially benefit from drone technology in the future?*

RESPONSE: The PCC advised that drone technology is developing rapidly and has significant potential for improving situational awareness and supporting community safety. While specific arrangements would need further consideration, the technology could complement existing methods of monitoring and reporting incidents.

QUESTION 5: *A member of the public asked - if Suffolk and Norfolk police forces were merged, would there be one Police and Crime Commissioner?*

RESPONSE: The PCC explained that the position remains unclear due to ongoing national discussions about police governance and reform. Current plans suggest PCCs will remain until at least 2028, but any future arrangements would depend on government decisions. He noted that a merger would require detailed consideration of governance, finance and council tax implications and could take several years to implement.

QUESTION 6: *A member of the public asked whether the Superintendent and Inspector were satisfied with the PCC's support for policing.*

RESPONSE: Both officers confirmed that the PCC is supportive of Suffolk Constabulary and its work, and that they value his support for policing and community safety initiatives.

The PCC thanked everyone for their questions and closed the meeting at 19:22.