

Precept proposal 2023/2024 overview

This short document provides a high-level overview of Suffolk Constabulary's precept proposal to enable the force to continue to deal with growing challenges and make good use of new technologies to further improve the service it provides to the public and victims.

I will continue to ensure I hold the Chief Constable to account regarding the delivery and implementation of these improvements and will keep the public updated by publishing quarterly updates in the same way I have in previous years.

Implement a Rapid Video Response for victims of Domestic Abuse

The Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated the use of technology to hold online meetings via video links. These innovations hold great promise for the future in terms of how the police can engage and interact with the public through the resolution of calls and virtual interviews with victims and witnesses.

Rapid Video Response (RVR) is an immediate video response service to a call for service, that would have otherwise awaited a physical response. RVR has already been successfully introduced in some police services in the UK enabling victims of domestic abuse to report matters and engage at a time and place that suits them. Evaluation has shown that that this has led to further increases in victim satisfaction levels due to the speed and ease with which victims are connected to specially trained police officers and staff.

The proposal to increase the policing element of the council tax will enable the Constabulary to acquire technology and recruit additional police officers and staff to deliver RVR in Suffolk to further enhance the quality of service for victims and to bring offenders to justice.

Digital engagement with the Constabulary

Societal changes and the availability of new technology is such that the Constabulary must continue to adapt and be able to deal with calls for service through several channels. The Constabulary has successfully introduced systems that enable the public to contact the Police through email, text and online chat. However, to enhance the service provided for Suffolk's diverse and growing population the Constabulary must do more to build capacity and capability to enable the public to report incidents to the police and engage with them using the social media platform they are most comfortable using and familiar with.

The proposal to increase the policing element of the council tax would enable the Constabulary to acquire technology and recruit approximately 14 additional personnel to manage a wider range of social digital communications. This will be additional to and not replace the 999 or 101 system as I recognise that the 101 service is important for those that want to speak to someone directly. However, the public rightly expect the Police to be easily contactable and able to provide information promptly and at a time that suits them through digital systems and technology they use as part of everyday life to access many other public and private organisations.

Enhancing the services provided through digital platforms will help the Constabulary meet national policing targets set out by the Government and provide even more channels through which the public can contact the police and for the police to engage with the public. Furthermore, doing so will help ease pressure on emergency and non-emergency telephone lines as well ensuring the Police continues to adapt and improve its communications with all demographics and communities across Suffolk.