

Questions posed at PCC Candidate Briefing Session 22.03.21

What is the Force's approach to Serious and Organised Crime in Ipswich? While it is noted there have been significant and welcome arrests, what about the residual crime that persists?

The Force takes a robust and proactive approach in this area. There has been investment in the "Kestrel Teams" which have been formed in order to dynamically deploy into a particular area to target specific crime. The team supports community policing priorities and deals with criminality such as drug crime. In addition, the Force has recently recruited a number of new Superintendents, with the new Ipswich Superintendent (who has transferred from the Met) having significant experience in this type of crime.

How many Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) does Suffolk have? Are there any plans to increase the number?

There are just under 50 PCSOs in Suffolk. They are a combination of those employed by the Force, some part funded by partners, and others fully funded by partners. Whilst they form a very valuable part of the workforce mix, there are no plans to increase the number.

What percentage of 999 calls relate to Domestic Abuse? And what percentage of 101 calls?
NEED STATS.

What is the strategy around the multi-agency approach to issues such as mental health?

The Force works closely with partners in order to signpost those who suffer from mental health issues to the services they may require.

What is the Force's approach to Gender Crime?

Currently Suffolk is one of the 39 Forces (out of 43) which does not record this as a hate crime. However, now this issue is much more in the forefront of people's minds, it is being debated at both local and national levels.

Women's safety is not just the responsibility of the police. Are there good channels of communication with partners, particularly with regard to street lighting?

Yes. The Force is well connected with partners at both strategic and tactical levels. For example, the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner are both part of the Suffolk Public Sectors Leadership Group and the Chief Constable is a member of the Suffolk Chief Officer Leadership Team (SCOLT) which sits beneath it. In addition, area Superintendents work alongside their respective councils. There is therefore much opportunity for communication and influence both ways and recently this has included street lighting.

During the last year (of the pandemic), what has the morale of officers been like? And how have sickness levels been?

The pandemic has in fact helped give officers and staff a strong sense of purpose. Morale has been very good. Sickness levels are currently at 4.6%, which is below the national average. Sickness levels in fact have improved throughout the pandemic. Officer and staff health and wellbeing are a priority for the Force.

Concern is often expressed by the public at the lack of front counter services at police stations, since the decision was taken to close the majority of them. Is there any consideration being given to re-opening them, perhaps staffed by volunteers as done in other Force areas?

The decision to close front desk services was not just a financial one. Demand analysis was undertaken to inform the decision. Footfall was very low and the percentage of those using front counter services for a policing purpose was extremely low. Therefore it did not make sense to maintain the service and by withdrawing it, the Force made savings of £1.4m which could be invested elsewhere. The manning of counters by volunteers was considered but felt very difficult to manage.

How is it decided what is taken to the media? How should the force engage with the media?

It is important for the force to understand the local media and nurture a trusting/challenging partnership. Representatives from the media regularly attend open meetings and are also invited for confidential briefings to ensure any media reports are as well informed as possible. It is important for the Chief Officers and senior officers to be seen in the media so that communities come to recognise and trust them.