

APPENDIX TO PAPER NS14/16

**NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK COLLABORATION PANEL –
30 April 2014**

CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM – PAPER NS14/14

Comments from the floor.

Stephen Bett (Norfolk PCC) allowed 45 minutes for comments and questions from the floor to be directed to the Panel. There were approximately 100 people present. The following is a summary of the points made.

1. Karen Read (Norfolk Branch Secretary, Unison)

Asked if a decision on the Contact and Control Room (CCR) had already been made.

Stephen Bett responded that no decision had been made as yet.

2. Yvonne Cleary (Regional Organiser, Unison)

Asked how public consultation on the business case could be undertaken as the business case had only been made public the week before this meeting.

Stephen Bett responded that Norfolk Police needed to know if the CCR is going ahead (Plan A). If there was a delay or no decision today they would have to look to 'Plan B' to find savings.

3. Paul Ridgway (Norfolk Police Federation)

Asked what 'Plan B' was.

Tim Passmore (Suffolk PCC) said there were alternatives to fill the budget gap and in particular there were other opportunities for collaboration in the public sector that would bring cost savings.

Simon Bailey (Norfolk Chief Constable) said they would protect the front line whichever plan went ahead but if the recommendation for a single CCR was not implemented, Norfolk Police would be facing a £1million year on year gap (equivalent to 20 police officers). Therefore they may have to reduce staff, potentially Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) or Support staff.

4. Michelle Lillie (Norfolk Police Federation)

Questioned how much had been spent on the business case and asked how long was needed to make a decision.

Tim Passmore responded that a proper business case had been needed and the two Chief Constables undertook to present this to the PCCs. More information had been provided over the last few weeks at his request. This meeting was an opportunity to listen and discuss the proposals in an open and transparent forum. He said he may be able to form a view today but any formal decision would be processed over the next few weeks.

5. David Ellesmere (Ipswich Borough Council)

Asked the Suffolk PCC if a decision would be taken today and whether this would be made in the public or private part of the meeting.

Tim Passmore said he hoped to give a strong indication today. Chris Jackson (Chief Executive OPCC Suffolk) clarified that the Collaboration Panel was not a decision making body but that the PCC in Suffolk would issue a formal 'Decision' paper in due course.

6. Councillor Andrew Cann (Ipswich Borough Council)

Asked what proportion of the Police budget was spent through the payroll. He suggested that Zero Based Budgeting should look to make 30% savings.

Simon Bailey responded that non-pay was constantly being reviewed and reduced.

Douglas Paxton (Suffolk Chief Constable) reported a variable £9million on non-pay and that savings of 2.5% from each force will be made in each of the following three years. Most consultations felt this would be stretching for a Zero Based Budgeting approach.

Stephen Bett said 17% of the Norfolk Budget was non-payroll i.e. other costs.

7. Toby Walton (Suffolk Police)

Asked if increases to council tax had been considered to help close the financial gap.

Stephen Bett responded that increases up to the 2% cap had been applied in Norfolk this year and last.

Tim Passmore said that in Suffolk the precept had been frozen but that he would look at an increase if he needed to. He believed that there were other efficiencies that could be made before considering that option.

8. Bill Laight (Suffolk CCR)

Asked whether amalgamation into a single CCR would still take place in line with the original timescales (October 2015), if a decision on the CCR was delayed any further.

Tim Passmore said it would be delayed depending on the decision.

9. Paul Ridgway (Norfolk Police Federation)

Said the Police Federation would not support 'Plan B'. He pointed out that Norfolk MPs also rejected any reduction in front line Policing.

Stephen Bett said they preferred not to reduce the front line and would do everything possible but if they had to, they would consider this option.

10. Yvonne Cleary (Regional Organiser, Unison)

Supported the Police Federation position not to accept front line cuts. She made the point that police staff are also a crucial part of the team and that the CCR should be viewed as a front line service. The Unison 'no to one CCR' petition had 3,888 signatures to date and depending on the decision at the meeting, they would look to get more support.

11. Maxine Cordall (Norfolk Police Federation)

Stated that so many cuts had already been made and asked when would the PCCs go back to government?

Tim Passmore said there was an ongoing dialogue with the Home Office. He agreed there is a point at which cuts should be limited, and this discussion would really need to be had with HM Treasury.

Stephen Bett said the position was that cuts will continue regardless of who is in government and therefore there is a need to make more savings and efficiencies.

12. Karen Wiggins (Norfolk Police)

Asked about the implications for Norfolk staff of the proposed Shared Services Partnership (SSP).

Simon Bailey said that there was a business case and Target Operating Model which set out the need for a Head of Shared Services. The role of this person would include making decisions on resources. ERP will save 40 posts. The proposed SSP would reduce jobs further in Norfolk but create jobs in Suffolk.

13. Michelle Lillie (Norfolk Police Federation)

Noted that we are now so far down the collaboration route that any decision affects both Norfolk and Suffolk.

Tim Passmore said that CCR and SSP are only part of the savings 'jigsaw' but that Norfolk and Suffolk do need to work together. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) reported that Norfolk and Suffolk are a good example of collaboration. County policing is important to retain a sense of identity and so whilst collaboration is important and could save money, he said it was important to protect the front line and the CCR.

Stephen Bett said he did not want to reduce the number of Police or PCSOs and agreed the CCR should be classed as a front line service. He reiterated this was not a 'Norfolk versus Suffolk' issue as any loss of Police Officers or staff would affect both counties. However, savings need to be found. He supported collaboration and, contrary to reports in the media, he was not in favour of regional policing but did support collaboration regionally on big issues such as Serious and Organised Crime and tackling Cyber Crime.

14. Sarah (Suffolk CCR)

Asked if 'higher level' cuts were being considered including at senior officer level.

Stephen Bett said they had saved £300k from the Norfolk PCC office this year and were planning to save £1.2million from the OPPC Norfolk and £35million from the constabulary in his term in office. 83% of their budget is staff.

Tim Passmore said £100k savings had been made from the Suffolk PCC office and confirmed that senior officer numbers had also been looked at.

Simon Bailey said plans for a four year period reflected reductions in staff at senior levels but noted there was a number below which they would not want to operate and the Constabulary is not far off that now. £24million had been saved between the two organisations in recent years. The reduction in the number of Inspectors in particular means the Constabulary is already 'lean'.

Douglas Paxton agreed saying it was a fair question but that the Police must have the resources to discharge their legal responsibilities.

15. Matt Gould (Suffolk Police Federation, resident Norfolk)

Asked whether there was any science behind the numbers needed to safely run the Police Service (and said he had heard 1,200 cited) or was the plan to continue with savings and see what happened?

Simon Bailey said they knew exactly how much resource was needed to police the demand 365 days a year.

Douglas Paxton agreed there was a method for calculating staff numbers and that the level of threat and risk were factored in. He said that he did not recognise the figure 1,200. He noted that in 2013/14 satisfaction was up and recorded crime was down despite the budget cuts.

16. Caren Reeves (Norfolk Unison)

Said that support staff do not feel valued and she felt that 120 Suffolk and 200 Norfolk staff were being 'exchanged' to get the figures right. They are very disappointed.

Stephen Bett said he would have liked the decision to be made in February 2014. He was well aware of the strength of feeling and would like to conclude the matter as soon as possible.

17. Mary Thompson (Unison)

Cited the joint Ambulance service where she said a decision had been made too quickly and without proper consideration of the consequences. She felt this showed the CCR should not go ahead.

Simon Bailey said these concerns could be addressed.

The meeting then returned to the agenda Item NS14/13.