

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AC20/26

SUBMITTED TO: AUDIT COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON EMBEDDING OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update on the work undertaken to implement and embed the nationally developed Code of Ethics into the Suffolk Constabulary.
2. There are no financial risks associated with this report.
3. There are no other implications or risks associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Committee is asked to note the continued work undertaken to implement the Code of Ethics within the Suffolk Constabulary.
2. As work to embed the Code of Ethics has been moved to business as usual, that this annual paper is discontinued.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Code of Ethics was launched by the College of Policing in 2014 to “support each member of the policing profession to deliver the highest professional standards in their service to the public.” The code has nine principles and ten standards of professional behaviour that every member of the police service should abide by and embed into their daily decision making.
- 1.2. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies launched the Code of Ethics following the College of Policing release. This involved the dissemination of an Integrity leaflet, communication on both intranet sites and force announcements. It also led to the introduction of a joint Norfolk and Suffolk Ethics Committee in March 2015. The committee has been replaced by the Joint Integrity Board, which has broader terms of reference and does welcome the discussion of topics with an ethical dimension. Topics discussed at the Joint Integrity Board include appropriate use of social media, business interests and politically restricted posts and how the organisations can properly embed learning from misconduct cases and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigations. There also remains a Suffolk only forum which is described below.
- 1.3. The Constabularies have now worked in collaboration with Durham University Business School for five years, and during this time have they have undertaken two employee engagement surveys with the Constabularies. Within the surveys, the Constabularies are able to track progression with the embedding of the Code of Ethics with both officers and staff. The Constabularies would have been due to run a further survey in November 2020, but owing to COVID-19 this has been postponed.
- 1.4. Work to embed the Code of Ethics is regarded as “business as usual” within the Constabulary, with a number of mechanisms in place to ensure the promotion of it.

2. CODE OF ETHICS TRAINING

- 2.1 As per previous updates, work continues to embed the Code of Ethics. Questions in relation to the Code of Ethics are tested at interview for all new police officer recruits. In addition, all chairs of Interview Panels are now required to undertake Unconscious Bias training in line with valuing difference. All new police staff starters to the Constabulary are also provided with a copy of the Code of Ethics with their contract of employment, and this therefore forms part of the induction process.
- 2.2 All new police officers undertaking initial training cover the Code of Ethics in a number of ways, including specific inputs on both the Code of Ethics and the National Decision Making Model, of which the Code of Ethics is an integral part. The Code of Ethics, and the values within it, also run through other training inputs to student police officers as a “golden thread” such as within personal safety training, where discussions around ethical decisions in this context are held.

3. THE STRATEGIC EQUALITIES & ETHICS BOARD

- 3.1 The Strategic Equalities and Ethics Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, continues to have responsibility for enhancing the trust and confidence in the ethical governance and actions of Suffolk Constabulary. The board continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

- 3.2 Organisational issues discussed at the previous meeting in September included Stop and Search, Hate Crime and Workforce Data with contributions from Professional Standards external partner organisations and workforce groups such as the Suffolk Association of Women in Policing (SAWP), Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) and Suffolk Police Federation.
- 3.3 The Deputy Chief Constable is responsible for determining the agenda. Individuals can submit agenda items concerning ethical issues via a written submission referring to the Code of Ethics to be discussed by the group. The confidential reporting system may also be used to raise concerns regarding the ethical conduct of others, and such cases will be referred by the Head of Professional Standards to the Deputy Chief Constable.

4. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

- 4.1 Suffolk Constabulary has been working in partnership with the Policing Research Unit and Durham University Business School since 2016, and have taken part in two Employment Engagement surveys which provide results expressing an individual's alignment with the values of the Code of Ethics. Previous results have been provided in the paper compiled last year.
- 4.2 The Constabulary would have been due to take part in a further survey this autumn; however, this has been postponed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 As per the measures outlined in this paper, work to embed the Code of Ethics has been incorporated into business as usual within the Constabulary over a number of years. It is therefore proposed that this paper will be the final update on the work to embed the Code of Ethics.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 7.1 There are no implications or risks identified.