



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

ORIGINATOR: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING

DECISION NUMBER: 27 - 2023

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

SUBJECT: AWARD OF CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION GRANT – TOWN PASTORS

SUMMARY:

1. In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
 - a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.
2. This report seeks approval to award a Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant to Town Pastors for £24,000 to contribute to delivery of their activities in the night time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
3. The funding will enable crime and disorder reduction activity and support Objective 2 in the Police and Crime Plan by investing in an initiative which reduces demand on the police in the night-time economy and reduces crime and disorder in Suffolk's towns.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) awards grant funding of £24,000 to Town Pastors for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendation set out above is agreed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Parry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Signature:

Date: 23 August 2023

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) can commission services that:
- a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.

This is in accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. In applying this provision, the PCC will ensure that the services commissioned are also consistent with the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan.

- 1.2 This report seeks approval from the PCC to award a grant of £24,000 to continue the support to Town Pastors enabling their work in the night-time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

2. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 In February 2022, a new Police and Crime Plan for the period 2022-2025 was published. Objective 2 sets out the intention to provide services which support victims of crime and invest in initiatives which reduce crime.

- 2.2 The proposed grant to Town Pastors will contribute to the following activity within Objective 2 in the Police and Crime Plan:

- Support problem solving in local communities by investing in solutions which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder and improve community safety.
- Consider with the Constabulary areas where investment might reduce non-crime demand on the police.
- Understand the impact of substance misuse on crime and disorder.
- Initiatives which reduce the demand on the police in particular policing the night-time economy (NTE), anti-social behaviour (ASB) and reducing crime and disorder in our towns.

3. TOWN PASTORS

- 3.1 The Suffolk Town Pastor scheme began in June 2006 in Ipswich, expanding thereafter to a number of other towns in Suffolk. The Town Pastors (central body) has been a registered charity since 2019. Town Pastors administers the distribution of the PCC grant and maintains the quality of the schemes across the county.

- 3.2 Town Pastors are Christian volunteers from local churches who are out in town centres on Friday and/or Saturday nights, being a positive influence on the streets and providing help and support to vulnerable people. Street Patrols are supported by a Prayer Team at a local base or home.

- 3.3 Fear of crime is a serious issue and Town Pastors have an important role in making people feel safe and improving the atmosphere by being a friendly presence on the streets. As trained volunteers they: support people in need, help people to get a taxi or wait with vulnerable people, defuse potentially aggressive situations, provide advice, and encourage safe behaviour for all. They work as a team alongside the police, taxi drivers, door staff, CCTV staff and others who are involved in managing the night-time economy.

- 3.4 The Town Pastors have received funding from the PCC since 2014/15 to deliver the service, and regular data and information has been provided to monitor the delivery and the impact of the grant.
- 3.5 In 2022/23 PCC funding supported Ipswich Town Pastors and Bury Town Pastors, the two biggest schemes in the county to operate. The funding also supported the work of Town Pastors at Latitude Festival. Overall Town Pastors worked in eight towns from April – September 2022 and five towns from October 2022 to March 2023 as Beccles, Haverhill and Sudbury Town Pastors ceased patrols. This was due to a combination of factors including changing demand in the towns leading to reduction in need for the service and lack of volunteers.
- 3.6 Despite the reduction in locations and changes in the night-time economy post-pandemic, recorded activity by Town Pastors increased significantly in 2022/23 compared to the previous year. There were 7,925 actions undertaken in 2022/23 (up from 4,631 in 2021/22) of which 6,235 involved directly helping a person or group of people (3,653). A positive impact was made, contributing to the personal safety and wellbeing of 242 people, by ensuring safe access to transport home or that individuals were reunited with friends, therefore reducing the risk of being a victim of crime.
- 3.7 Town Pastors continue to play a significant role not just in crime reduction and prevention but also in preventing paramedic/ambulance calls and A & E admissions (as well as saving police time in looking after vulnerable intoxicated individuals). Many situations involve Town Pastors caring for those involved in or affected by drunkenness and anti-social behaviour. Town Pastors continue to value and appreciate each person, treating them with dignity and respect whatever their background and circumstances.
- 3.8 Town Pastors regularly receive thanks and appreciation from those enjoying an evening or night out. This may be thanks for help on some specific occasion or thanks because people feel safer when Town Pastors are patrolling the streets.
- 3.9 In 2022/23 Town Pastors:
- contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 242 people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations thus reduces the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
 - alerted CCTV and/or police to 81 incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
 - were able to prevent/reduce crime on 89 often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
 - reduced the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,303 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns during the year; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.

Further detail of activities and outcomes is provided in Appendix A.

- 3.10 Town Pastors have requested PCC funding to support the Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Leiston Town Pastors with their work in 2023/25 and the activity at Latitude in 2023.

4. MONITORING AND OUTCOMES

- 4.1 Monitoring will be undertaken at six months and year end through written reports setting out activity and progress towards outcomes, along with financial expenditure. These reports will

be supplemented by regular meetings between the OPCC and Town Pastors to discuss patrols and recruitment. A final report will be submitted to the PCC by 31 May 2024.

- 4.2 Monitoring will indicate the extent of Town Pastors activities by scheme area and provide high level information against the budget breakdown submitted to the PCC. Town Pastors will continue to evidence satisfaction with the service in a qualitative manner.
- 4.3 Given the current, reduced service, it is proposed that Town Pastors also regularly update the PCC on:
- Progress with recruiting volunteers;
 - Confirmation that the local schemes are keeping their local police contacts informed of patrol schedules/changes;
 - An assessment of night time economy activity and the need for the service in each area;
 - Work with the Ipswich Safer Streets project team.
- 4.4 The financial breakdown of how the grant is to be used and the data outputs and outcomes will be continually monitored throughout the period of the grant award.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Town Pastors have supplied an indicative budget for 2023/24 proposing that PCC funding is used to support the largest schemes in Bury St Edmunds (£10k) and Ipswich (£7k), Leiston (£4k) and a contribution to Latitude patrols (£3k).
- 5.2 Grant funding from the PCC's commissioning budget of up to a maximum of £24,000 is recommended for 2022/23. This is an increase on the funding for 2022/23 due to the inclusion of the Leiston scheme which continues to respond to local demand.
- 5.3 The recommended funding amount of £24,000 is sufficient in Town Pastors view to deliver their anticipated level of service alongside their other income from charitable giving and commercial donations.
- 5.4 The PCC's grant funding is specifically towards staffing (paid coordinators in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich), radio/telephone costs, rent, training, Insurance and equipment (including PPE).
- 5.5 Evidence indicates service and financial benefits in terms of reduced costs and resource implications on the Constabulary as a direct result of the work of Town Pastors in preventing public disorder and providing welfare support to vulnerable people.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 An assessment of risk in delivery of the service has been undertaken and delivery challenges are set out in section 3 of this decision paper. This assessment has considered the value of the grant sought, the duration of delivery and the grant recipient's history of delivery and ability to deliver. The monitoring arrangements outlined in the conditions of award reflect the fact that Town Pastors continue to deliver the service and regularly report on activity and outcomes.
- 6.2 Should there be any risk to the service being delivered in any of the towns covered, Town Pastors are required to notify the PCC.

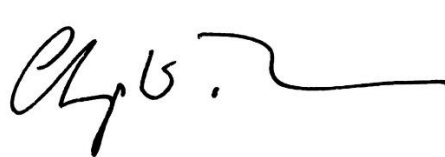
7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) awards grant funding of £24,000 to Town Pastors for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	NO
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	NO
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	YES
Have human resource implications been considered?	YES
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	YES
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	YES
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	YES
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

Chief Executive	
I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.	
	
Signature:	Date: 29 August 2023

Appendix A

Summary of Town Pastor activity during year April 2022-March 2023

Town Pastors have successfully continued their work across the county in eight towns from April - September 2022, and in five towns from October 2022 – March 2023.

Based on figures that have been submitted from the eight schemes, Town Pastors have noted 7,925 actions. Of these actions, 6,235 involve directly helping a person or group of people.

These figures are significantly higher than the previous year due to more Town Pastor patrols taking place as Covid-19 risks decreased, and more consistently having 2 pairs of Town Pastors on patrol in Bury and Ipswich on Saturday nights.

The figures for 2022-2023 reflect that Town Pastors made a valuable contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder in the eight Suffolk towns:

- Town Pastors contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 242 people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations thus reduces the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
- Town Pastors alerted CCTV and/or police to 81 incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
- On 89 occasions Town Pastors were able to prevent/reduce crime often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
- Town Pastors reduce the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,303 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns during the year; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.

Case studies have been provided for Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe and Ipswich showing the impact Town Pastors made and feedback from individuals. The following feedback is from the police Community Engagement Officer based in Leiston.

'I'd like to thank you for helping to maintain links with local police in your role with Leiston Town Pastors and for allowing me to attend your meetings. Please also pass my thanks to the volunteers whose time is valued by police. Leiston Town Pastors have undoubtedly contributed to lessening police demand over the years and the difference the team has made to the towns' night-time economy has been obvious to we Officers who have experienced some of the towns' busier nights. Although Leiston is certainly not as busy these days as it used to be at night time, the presence of Leiston Town Pastors continues to have a deterrent effect and is appreciated by local people, as they mention it at our police community meetings.'

During the year, Town Pastors have offered help, care and support in a non-judgmental and non-confrontational way:

- Town Pastors have given pastoral care and a listening ear in 183 situations where a person wanted to discuss problems they are facing in their lives i.e. marriage or relationship issues, drug issues etc. or where Town Pastors have dealt with a person who has/or is suspected of having mental health issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (often military/ex-military personnel), depression, feeling suicidal etc.
- Town Pastors cared for 126 people who were excessively drunk and incapable of looking after themselves. The necessity for ambulance call-outs for highly intoxicated individuals is greatly reduced when Town Pastors are on duty and able to care for these people. Each

person was kept safe from theft of personal belongings while drunk and incapable. In addition, they were also protected from becoming the victim of a physical and/or sexual assault. In some of these situations Town Pastors will have called an ambulance if necessary.

- 5,081 people were provided with water/refreshment. Water improves hydration and general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour. Providing chocolate raises blood sugar levels, which are frequently significantly lowered by excessive alcohol consumption. This also improves general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour.
- There are 207 recorded encounters with people who are homeless or presenting as homeless during the year (a rise from 88 encounters in the previous year). These encounters often contribute towards the safety and wellbeing of these particularly vulnerable people.
- There are 8 recorded situations of domestic tension or violence. These include any incident between a couple that could become or has become violent where Town Pastor intervention takes place, or the situation is referred to Police or CCTV.
- There are 2 recorded situations of racial tension which were incidents of violence, abuse or threatening behaviour (verbal or physical) on the basis of an individual's race or ethnic background where Town Pastors witness, intervene or report.