

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

A meeting of the Accountability and Performance Panel was held at Police Headquarters Martlesham, and via Microsoft Teams at 09:30 on Friday 19 January 2024.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer), Kate Boswell (Executive Assistant to the PCC and Chief Executive), Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement), Amanda Houchen (Administrative Assistant), Christopher Jackson (Chief Executive), Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner).

Suffolk Constabulary

Eamonn Bridger (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable), Julie Dean (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable, joined via Teams), Rob Jones (Deputy Chief Constable), Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer).

In attendance for the Public Agenda

Joao Santos (Local Democracy Reporter).

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

Mike Chester (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), David Ellesmere (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), David Goldsmith (Substitute Member of the Police and Crime Panel), Sarah Mansel (Chair of the Police and Crime Panel), Debbie Richards (Member of the Police and Crime Panel), Adriana Stapleton (Senior Democratic Services Officer, Suffolk County Council), David Smith (Member of the Police and Crime Panel).

Apologies:

Elisabeth Hollingworth (Head of Governance and Commissioning), James Sheridan (Policy and Commissioning Officer) Vanessa Scott (Head of Policy and Performance).

1 Public Question Time

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) welcomed everyone to the meeting, advising that no questions had been received in advance of this meeting, and invited both Constabulary and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner attendees to introduce themselves.

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 17 November (Paper AP24/01)

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the PCC.
- 2.2 All actions were noted as complete or in hand and were being followed up outside of the meeting.

3 Financial Monitoring (Paper AP24/02)

- 3.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Kenneth Kilpatrick presented this report.
- 3.2 The ACO advised that the report showed the position as at the end of November 2023, and provided a full year forecast. The Constabulary underspend is just over £2M, there is forecast surplus within Specific Government Grants of £0.675m, and a capital position underspend of just over £400K. The non-pay related costs are reported as approximately a £600K overspend, which is forecast to return to a break-even position by the end of the financial year. The capital underspend of £420K, as detailed in Appendix B, relates mostly to IT projects and refreshes.
- 3.3 The PCC asked for further information relating to the capital slippage. The ACO responded that delivery dates from suppliers are being moved and the Constabulary has no influence over this. He added that the Constabulary takes a prudent approach with regard to the use of income from investments which is treated a windfall income with operational income being used to fund operational expenditure, with the majority of funding being re-occurring and/or staff costs.
- 3.4 The PCC asked if the 7% pay increase, which was budgeted at 3%, was covered by the Home Office. The ACO responded that the gap between these figures was funded by the Home Office, so that therefore the 2023-24 pay award has been covered.

4 Improving Confidence and Satisfaction (Paper AP24/03)

- 4.1 Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC) Eamonn Bridger presented this report.
- 4.2 The key points to highlight within this report are most notably the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the locally generated Victims Survey, and the work overseen by the Public Confidence Board and Public Complaints. Overall confidence is a difficult area to assess, and more could be done within Suffolk to improve this position.
- 4.3 Confidence surveys can be undertaken with any member of the public, not necessarily people who have had direct contact with the Constabulary. 450 interviews have been completed over the past 12 months and scores compared to the 3 year average are showing a slight decline with Suffolk ranking below the national average. There are a number of local improvement schemes underway, including the implementation of the new local operating model, which launched in December 2023, and which focuses on localised policing and public contact.

- 4.4 There are largely positive trends seen within the area of victim satisfaction, and overall it is showing an upward trend when looking at the 3 year data. Suffolk Constabulary recognise that Rural Crime is an area of decline. However it has declined from an exceptionally high position and was an outlier of very high positivity.
- 4.5 Domestic Abuse satisfaction rates remain a force priority, and overall Suffolk continues to score highly in this area. Public Complaints are showing a slight decrease in victim satisfaction scores; however this is an area of fluctuation that requires further monitoring over a longer period. The datawash of the Police National Database remains ongoing, and work continues on the cases that have been highlighted locally with the results being reported via the appropriate channels.
- 4.6 The PCC asked what is required to help improve the confidence and trust rankings for Suffolk Constabulary. T/ACC Bridger responded that firstly it related to staff/officer conduct which is being addressed with the ongoing cultural changes and expected work standards. Secondly it is related to service delivery, which is a key focus of the Chief Constable's Strategic Plan.
- 4.7 The PCC asked if the new policing model will help to address the concerning figures for rural crime, the lack of follow-up and linking in with the victim's code of practice and the importance of keeping people updated. T/ACC Bridger responded that overall improvements are being seen in keeping people updated. The new policing model will assist in enabling greater contact with the public particularly in harder-to-reach areas.
- 4.8 The PCC expressed his confidence in the new policing model asking when the evaluation results would be expected. T/ACC Bridger responded that the model went live in December 2023 with the first data report expected in June 2024.
- 4.9 The PCC asked for an update on the implementation of the victim code. T/ACC Bridger will provide further details on this directly to the PCC.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger to provide further details of the implementation of the victim code to the PCC.
- 4.10 The PCC expressed his concerns over the server failure and asked what back up plans were in place. T/ACC Bridger confirmed that contingency plans are in place for IT failures. However it cannot be guaranteed to back up every single piece of information.
- 4.11 The Chief Executive asked if the server failure had resulted in any operational issues, and asked for reassurance that no further incidents that could impact on evidential data. T/ACC Bridger confirmed that the only data affected was the victim surveys, and there are documented plans in place regarding the back-up and contingency of all the IT systems for operational data.
- 4.12 The PCC asked if the new policing model will help with community engagement activity and stop abstraction. T/ACC Bridger responded that there are certain operational activities that would trigger a full surge, resulting in abstractions; however this is a last resort. With the new model these officers will be the last officers used to support wider operational issues even in periods of increased demand.
- 4.13 The PCC asked what benefits will be seen from the Race Action Plan, and how they will be measured. Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Rob Jones responded, confirming that the national

plan has been running for over a year, with a unique Suffolk plan looking at improving the quality of data and to determine the impact of race on the quality of the service provided by the police. The recruitment of an independent chair for Suffolk will help the Constabulary to identify where best to focus their attention.

ACTION – DCC Jones to provide a report to the PCC on the Suffolk Race Action Plan after the first 6 months of activity.

- 4.14 The PCC asked if the reporting period for complaint cases taking an average of 77 working days is considered good or bad. T/ACC Bridger believes this figure is satisfactory but would need to look at the data further. T/ACC Bridger to provide an update to the PCC accordingly.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to provide further data to the PCC around the reporting periods for complaints, and if the 77 working days reference in the report is considered good or bad.
- 4.15 The Chief Executive referenced the potential changes to the running of misconduct hearings recently highlighted in the national media. He enquired whether there would be any resourcing and cost impact for the Constabulary in implementing these. The Chief Constable responded that training has been identified to be undertaken by both ACCs to be qualified to Chair misconduct panel hearings. She believes that the increase in conduct cases is as a result of the implementation of the cultural improvement scheme, with workplace behaviour that is no longer considered acceptable being reported. There is anticipation of additional pressures for the Chief Officer team to deal with these conduct cases, and the impact on the team will be monitored.
- 4.16 The PCC asked if the increase in conduct cases is as a result of having a younger workforce. The Chief Constable responded that trend data within this area can be provided to the PCC, but it appears to be people who are older and further into their service whose behaviour is now being reported. With the cultural improvement plan, the expected standard is made clear to new officers as to what behaviour is or is not accepted.
- 4.17 The PCC asked if the new Serious Sexual Misconduct Team is associated with to the number of complaints received. The Chief Constable responded that this is about the vulnerability of victims, the need for higher standards in dealing with these victims, and getting this right.

5 Responding to Calls for Assistance (Paper AP24/04)

- 5.1 T/ACC Bridger presented this report.
- 5.2 Overall this area is starting to show improvements, particularly in relation to the investments made through the precept funding. The Constabulary does recognise that the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection did result in a grading of inadequate. However a huge amount of work has been undertaken in this area to improve this.
- 5.3 From a 999 response perspective calls remain at a high level, showing a 30% increase on a 3-year basis, resulting in 130,000 extra calls over a 12-month period. The average time to answer has fallen rapidly over the past 3 months, and the grade A response times are strong in both urban and rural areas. For 101 response the demand remains at high levels over the past 2 years, with a 15% increase in demand being seen. The area of abandonment remains a concern, and despite small progress this year there remains a large amount of work to do in this area. Single Online Home has been a positive transition, and the benefits of having this option, particularly webchat, has already been seen. Further improvements are

expected with the expansion of webchat facilities and when the Digital Desk is fully online by the end of the financial year.

- 5.4 The RCRP initiative is seeing approximately 20% fewer incidents requiring officer attendance since launching in October 2023. Suffolk Constabulary will move to Phase 2 in February 2024, and continue to engage with the national strategic group and other force areas.
- 5.5 Domestic Abuse Video Response (DAVR) is on track. The team is now live, and will be fully established by the end of March 2024. Further work in this area includes evaluation, and possible expansion into other areas of policing.
- 5.6 The PCC commented that he is pleased with the improvements being seen within the Contract and Control Room (CCR), and the investment in this area is absolutely critical. He asked for reassurance that the CCR will be maintaining the levels of 140 call handlers, and asked if there are plans for further recruitment as people leave the organisation. T/ACC Bridger confirmed this level will be maintained, due to intentional over-recruitment for the CCR, and that the resource levels are being met.
- 5.7 The CFO asked if the CCR demand continues to increase, is the target number of 140 the right number to have. T/ACC Bridger responded that it is too early to say but would like to wait until the use of the digital tools were fully embedded before reassessing. The Chief Constable added that the launch of the new policing model may also help with a reduction on demand as it imbeds, which will also be evaluated.
- 5.8 The Chief Executive confirmed that there will be a DAVR and the Digital Contact Desk report to APP later this year.
- 5.9 The PCC asked for clarification of the DAVR system and how calls are routed through to it. ACC Bridger confirmed that calls will still come in via the control room via 999 or 101, and in instances of DA they could be routed to the DAVR team rather than requiring in-person police officer visits.
- 5.10 The PCC asked if call back technology has been considered to address the abandonment rate within the CCR. T/ACC Bridger replied that this has been considered at various stages over the years but has been discounted. The Chief Constable added that there are operational considerations with a call back service as you don't know who will answer the phone, which could cause problems for potentially vulnerable people.
- 5.11 The PCC asked if the Thrive Model, as referenced in Appendix 2 is due a refresh considering the pattern of crime has changed. T/ACC Bridger confirmed that this is a national standard that Suffolk Constabulary work towards and there is no current intention to update this.

6 Use of Police Powers (Paper AP24/05)

- 6.1 T/ACC Bridger presented this report.
- 6.2 The PEEL inspection graded Suffolk Constabulary as good in this area. Suffolk are identified nationally as an icebreaker force for the work undertaken. There is good governance and partnership working, so the force is in a strong position. The disproportionality in Stop and Search remains stable within the county but slightly higher than the national rates. Key areas

of focus for the force are further use of body worn video (BWV) and scrutiny, and ensuring training and awareness programmes are in place. The Optic platform is now being used for all recordings allowing for live time and digital inputs. The force is seeing disproportionality in the use of force, which is an area of concern being addressed. However, this is reflective of the national trends that are being seen. Every instance of taser use within Suffolk is scrutinised, with 18 incidents of firing occurring within the reporting period. There has been an internal review following a College of Policing update on the use of taser, impacting on the need to deliver training and consequently taking officers away from the front line.

- 6.3 The PCC asked if there are training schemes for behavioural detection for officers, which could help to reduce the number stop searches. T/ACC Bridger confirmed that the training programme is continuously reviewed based on national guidance and improvements from feedback received from the scrutiny panel, which is a continuous process.
- 6.4 The PCC asked as to the nature of learnings incorporated within the stop search training packages. T/ACC Bridger responded that training is able to utilise video footage of how searches are conducted. The use of the BWV footage shows how people are treated, how to come across in a human way, and highlights officer behaviour and conduct.
- 6.5 The PCC asked about the figures for searches being conducted on those aged 10-14 years old in the mid-Suffolk area. T/ACC Bridger replied that he would need to look into this issue.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger to check the figures within tables 14, and to provide the breakdown of figures regarding the mid-Suffolk column and the age ranges for both table 13 and 14.
- 6.6 The PCC asked whether strip searches on females were conducted by female officers. T/ACC Bridger responded that wherever possible this will happen, and only in exceptional circumstances would searches not be same sex.
- 6.7 The Chief Executive asked how many officers carry tasers, where did the Force fit nationally on usage, and whether carrying a taster was voluntary. T/ACC Bridger replied that Suffolk is at the lower end of taser usage. Further confirming a taser is voluntary. DCC Jones added that there are 315 Suffolk officers taser trained, with 292 carrying tasers and being accredited.
- 6.8 The PCC asked if there was anything the Constabulary would like to see to help address and prevent county lines within Suffolk. T/ACC Bridger responded that the work around County Lines has successfully diminished the threat, and the partnership approach in this area remains very strong. He doesn't believe there is anything new or innovative in this area to be implemented, but will seek some further feedback around this to share with the PCC.
ACTION – T/ACC Bridger to provide further feedback into possible options to help address and prevent County Lines within Suffolk.
- 6.9 The PCC asked about local lines within the county and if they are an increasing problem. T/ACC Bridger replied that he believes that their occurrence was presently static within the county. However it would be naïve to say supply could be eradicated, and work continues to ensure drug lines are disrupted as much as possible and enforcement is implemented.

7 Workforce Report (AP24/06)

- 7.1 DCC Rob Jones presented this report.
- 7.2 DCC Jones advised that the key points within this report included the increase in overall staff numbers which is reflective of the increase in control room operators, and that further the Constabulary has a young and inexperienced workforce. Recruitment and retention remain a key priority for Suffolk Constabulary and at present it is a very competitive work market.
- 7.3 The PCC asked for clarification in the differences with the figures at point 2.1 of the report and those in the Chief Officer conclusion. DCC Jones confirmed that the difference is total headcount versus the figures used for full time equivalent, establishment and strength. The Chief Constable added that all student officers within their first 12 months of employment are counted in headcount but are not counted within the establishment figures.
- 7.4 The PCC asked what the attrition rate is of those who have joined Suffolk Constabulary, and whether this was an issue. DCC Jones responded that whilst it can be an issue he was happy that the force offers quality training that is delivered in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University. This can result in people becoming a more marketable commodity and attractive to offers from other employers. The number of people retiring and leaving are monitored. There are discussions with managers as to the reasons behind this to see if the Constabulary can address this. There remains a high level of leavers within their first 2 years of joining the Constabulary.
- 7.5 The PCC asked about the detectives targeted variable payments (TVP) and whether the decision to stop these payments will affect detective numbers. DCC Jones responded that the payment is for people who have the investigative qualification, so they may not be detectives. The decision to remove the TVPs wasn't taken lightly, but the force did not consider this this will have a substantial impact on detective numbers.
- 7.6 The PCC asked to see the results of the People Opinion Survey as referenced at point 7.4 of the report.
ACTION – DCC Jones to provide the PCC with a copy of the results of the People Opinion Survey via Weekly Conference.
- 7.7 The PCC asked how training course attendances are evaluated to ensure they have been worthwhile. DCC Jones responded that the College of Policing sets standards which trend towards a higher level of investment. The Constabulary has completed a detailed submission to the College of Policing on the training delivered here in Suffolk, officials from the College will be coming to visit Suffolk Constabulary to discuss this further.
- 7.8 The Chief Executive stated that the OPCC asked for the report to cover Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) but that this had not been included. He asked what the targets for staff and officers were to complete PDRs and how does the process work. DCC Jones responded that point 8.8 in the report touches on E-PDRs but there aren't any figures supplied. With the E-PDR platform the expectation is everyone will have an annual integrity test, with SMART goals entered, which will allow success to be measured. In terms of the analytics of how many people have had an E-PDR there is not the current capacity to deliver this qualitative data. PDRs are used within the promotion process, and it is thought that over 50% of employees within the Constabulary have a completed PDR, although they are not linked to pay scales. The Chief Constable added that pay scales are linked to length of service, but for promotions applicants require a minimum of 2 PDRs within the system to enable them to progress with development opportunities.

ACTION – DCC Jones to ensure that the next workforce report includes the statistical figures for E-PDRs.

8 HMICFRS Child Protection Inspection (AP24/07)

- 8.1 The PCC asked for clarification around the recommendations not signed off by HMICFRS, and asked if there was a timeline for when these will be completed. DCC Jones responded that all recommendations are reviewed by a gold group which he chairs, and he expected completion within the next 6 months.
- 8.2 The PCC asked what the difficulty with recommendation 2 being completed was. DCC Jones replied that for this recommendation there are a lot of different families, partners, foster families, and children that move, therefore developing consistent protocols for all of them is difficult. There are good local relationships, but it is difficult to deliver across all of the care protocols. T/ACC Bridger added that the Philomena protocol is recommended for use, but the Constabulary is unable to say it is used in every instance. He explained there needs to be an understanding from the inspectorate around having timelines to allow the practice to embed and take place.
- 8.3 The PCC questioned what more needs to be done around the risk of siblings / friends of the victim. DCC Jones responded that this area of work requires the constant training of police officers. Mindsets are required that can see the big picture, and understand how the whole system works.
- 8.4 The PCC asked about the MARAC recommendations and if other agencies are taking their responsibility. DCC Jones replied that getting the right people to multi-agency meetings is tough, and this recommendation refers to the quality of the decisions made within the MARAC as well as addressing the volume that goes through this. If partners don't attend the meeting it is monitored and there is accountability. T/ACC Bridger added that ensuring that whoever chairs the meeting is equipped to deliver the accountability and holding others to account can be difficult, but it is being worked on.
- 8.5 The PCC asked whether there was difficulty in increasing the investigative bandwidth for the digital link for Child Abuse Image Database (CAID). DCC Jones responded that work is ongoing to address the issue and it is a key part of the ICT strategy.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 12:08 and when members of the public left the meeting.

PRIVATE AGENDA

[A detailed account of the discussions and decision on the following items is contained in the confidential minutes]

10 **Closed minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023** (Paper AP24/08)

10.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

11 **Strategic Policing Requirements** (Paper AP24/09)

11.1 Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC) Julie Dean presented this report.

12 **Civil Claims and Employment Tribunals** (Paper AP24/10)

12.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

The meeting closed at 1220.

Summary of Actions

Item / Paper	Action	Owner
4.9 Improving Confidence	T/ACC Bridger to provide further details of the implementation of the victim code to the PCC.	T/ACC Bridger
4.13 Improving Confidence	DCC Jones to provide a report to the PCC on the Suffolk Race Action Plan for the first 6 months of activity.	DCC Jones
4.14 Improving Confidence	T/ACC Bridger to provide further data to the PCC around reporting periods for complaints, and if the 77 working days reference in the report is considered good or bad.	T/ACC Bridger
6.5 Use of Police Powers	T/ACC Bridger to check the figures within tables 14, and to provide the breakdown of figures regarding the mid-Suffolk column and the age ranges for both table 13 and 14.	T/ACC Bridger
6.8 Use of Police Powers	T/ACC Bridger to provide further feedback into possible options to help address and prevent County Lines within Suffolk.	T/ACC Bridger
7.6 Workforce Report	DCC Jones to provide the PCC with a copy of the results of the People Opinion Survey via Weekly Conference.	DCC Jones
7.8 Workforce Report	DCC Jones to ensure that the next workforce report includes the statistical figures for E-PDRs.	DCC Jones