

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP24/24

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
24 MAY 2024**

SUBJECT: TACKLING SERIOUS VIOLENCE

SUMMARY:

1. This report details the current performance, demand, and activity in relation to Serious Violence. It provides an update in respect of activity being carried out within policing to tackle and prevent serious violence.
2. The period of reporting refers to the date range of 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024, the previous 12 months refers to 01/04/2022 – 31/03/2023, the 2019 baseline is the full 2019 calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is asked to consider the progress made by the Constabulary and raise issues with the Chief Constable as appropriate to the PCC's role in holding the Chief Constable to account.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tackling serious violence features as a Constabulary commitment within the Police and Crime Plan 2022-2025 [Police-Crime-Plan-2022-2025.pdf \(suffolk-pcc.gov.uk\)](#) and as a priority within the Chief Constable's Force Strategic Plan 2023-2028. [Chief Constable's Delivery Plan 2023-2028 | Suffolk Constabulary](#).

1.2 It is recognised that the Constabulary's response to offences involving serious violence is imperative to keeping people safe, protecting people from serious harm supporting victims and establishing wider trust, confidence, and satisfaction in our service. The Serious Violence Duty has now a developed strategy and Strategic Needs Assessment. There will be a focus on this within the report for this period.

1.3 The Home Office serious violence strategy defines serious violence as specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and County Lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.

1.4 **The primary offences and themes this report refers to are:**

- **Violence with injury**
- **Violence without Injury**
- **Knife Crime**
- **County Lines**
- **Prevention Activity**

1.5 Whilst Rape and Serious Sexual Offences and domestic abuse could be included within the Serious Violence criteria, these offences are reported on separately in the 'Supporting Vulnerable Victims' report. Previously, this paper has reported on the Child Exploitation and Gangs and MACE meetings, however, this is extensively reported in the Supporting Children and Young People paper. Some reference is, however, made to actions we are taking to tackle broader offences involving Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 In 2021, serious violence was adopted as a national policing priority following a significant rise in offences such as homicide, knife crime and gun crime across all force areas since 2014. The government published its Serious Violence Strategy in 2018, focusing on tackling County Lines and misuse of drugs, early intervention, and prevention, supporting communities and local partnerships and law enforcement and the criminal justice response.

2.2 In 2022, the government launched the Serious Violence Duty. This ensures relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.

3. SUFFOLK CONTEXT

3.1 A Suffolk Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) was produced in September 2023 by The Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics (SODA) as part of the county's Serious Violence Duty Strategy. Further detail on the Serious Violence Duty is outlined at section 5.

- 3.2 The [Suffolk Statistics – Key Focus Areas for Suffolk](#) (July 2023) were produced by SODA highlights key points in regards to what data is telling us about Suffolk which should be considered within the Serious Violence Duty. These were explored in the previous report.

4. GOVERNANCE

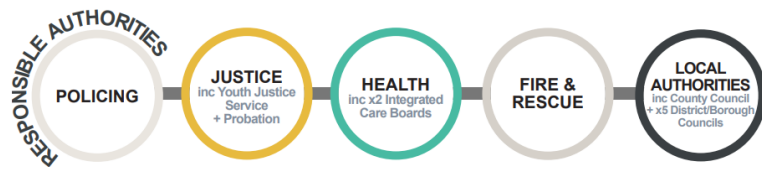
4.1 There is a significant amount of activity, both from within the Constabulary and in partnership that is relevant to our commitment to continuously review and improve the policing response to violence. Violent crime remains a policing priority and performance across all aspects is monitored through various forums, from reducing violent crime by prevention activity, improving solved rates and focusing on enhanced policing in key areas. The governance around serious violence is maintained through both internal meetings and boards and those held with in partnership with key stakeholders. A summary of some of the key meetings that drive activity in this areas:

- Bi-monthly Force Performance Meeting: This meeting reviews force performance, how Suffolk is performing in a national context, as well as reviewing the most similar group forces.
- Local Policing Board: This meeting reviews both command and area performance and monitors both reduction and solved rates and oversight of both internal and partnership working to improve performance in this area.
- Domestic Abuse Continual Improvement Group: This directs the force response to Domestic Abuse, which makes up a significant proportion of the overall violent crime.
- Violence against Women and Girls Steering Group: Partnership response to violence against women and girls across the county, targeting activity, engaging with communities, and providing a holistic response. This reports into the Safer Stronger Communities Board.
- Violence against Women and Girls Internal Governance: This is under review and it is proposed that an internal focus across all business areas to ensure a robust response embedding learning taken from published reports. This will be reported on in the next paper to the Panel.
- Drugs Board: Focuses on the Constabulary response to drugs, directing and monitoring both prevention activity and targeted response to drugs and associated crime across the county.
- Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups: Monthly meetings held on area and at force level that monitors violence and directs activity and targets resource to address violence hotspots using temporal and geographical analysis. The meeting also uses Vulnerable Victim, Offender and Location data to ensure that protective measures are put around victims and that offenders are targets.

4.2 This provides some detail of the governance structures within the constabulary and how activity around serious violence is co-ordinated across the Constabulary. The list is not exhaustive and throughout serious violence remains a key theme.

5. SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY (SVD)

5.1 The Serious Violence Duty was introduced in 2023 and places a requirement for the local government area to work together and to plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence in an area, the causes of that particular violence and to prepare and implement a strategy for the local area.



5.2 Since the last reporting period the Serious Violence Strategy has been published([here](#)). There is the Serious Violence Duty Holders meeting, this is the forum where the Duty Holders steer activity and ensure all requirements of the Duty are undertaken, making decisions on behalf of the Suffolk system, particularly in aligning and co-ordinating the effective use of resources and capacity to deliver priorities including specific agreement on use of the serious violence (sv) funding available in line with Home Office conditions. Demonstrating the Constabulary’s commitment to the partnership, this meeting is chaired by police. The meeting, while the partnership was embedded, the strategy formed and the strategic needs assessment completed met on a monthly basis. Following publication of the SNA and the Strategy in January, the partnership will now meet quarterly. This will be kept under review. The strategic priorities are detailed below:



5.3 The Serious Violence Partnership is linked through existing workstreams these include Criminal Exploitation, Violence against Women and Girls and the Combatting Drugs Partnership. The use of the public health approach to the existing workstreams will ensure that partners work together to commission services and make best use of resources that have the greatest impact on serious violence in Suffolk.

Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment

5.4. The Strategic Needs Assessment recognises that Suffolk’s crime rate tends to be below both regional and national averages, with Suffolk under-indexing against all types of offences, except for Violence without injury, sexual offences, and Possession of weapons offences, which are in-line with England’s averages. Knife and firearms related crimes were proportionally lower across Suffolk than both regional and national averages in 2022.

5.5. The Strategic Needs Assessment will not only direct activity around serious violence through the partnership, but it will identify areas that the Constabulary needs to focus on, such as Children and Young People. Risk factors were looked at across three different levels, individual, which are the most powerful indicators for serious violence in children and young people aged between 7 and 25, interpersonal, children aged 15 and under were more vulnerable to family level disruption and poor supervision and communities/society where poverty continues to have a significant impact.

- 5.6. Some of the key findings of prevalent risk factors in Suffolk include low educational achievement, Suffolk's average attainment score of 8 is lower than the national average; absence from schools, there are more 16 and 17 year olds not in education or employment than the national average: unemployment, poverty and being a looked after child are all highlighted as risk factors. The Constabulary has identified some of these factors and these are addressed through the Children and Young People (CYP) Delivery Group. Unsurprisingly, young males commit most serious violent crime.
- 5.7. The SNA has also provided the partnership with a comprehensive understanding of those who are likely to be a victim of Serious Violence. This allows for a coordinated partnership response from the Duty holders. Due to the high prevalence of Domestic Abuse, females are more likely to be victims of violence. However, young males are more likely to be a victim of knife crime as both victims and suspects. Those under 30 years are more likely to be victims of crime, making up 46%. This is particularly true for Sexual Offences, knife crime and robbery.

Serious Violence Duty Funding

- 5.8. The Constabulary is able to bid into the funding to support initiatives that meet the criteria. They were successful in the first round of funding. Below is a summary of the bid and its outcomes.
- 5.9. The SVD holders met and reviewed all applications for the SVD Prevention Fund - £163562.41 was awarded to some 15 initiatives across the Key Target Area. The initiatives had to meet a set criteria against specific objectives with key target areas.

SVD Licencing Officer Project

- 5.10. A successful bid was made to the Serious Violence Duty fund for a SVD Licencing Officer for the project. The project was run between 1st September 2023 and 31st March 2024. There was a comparative data set of the duration of the project to the same date parameters from the previous 12 months. The project sought to reduce vulnerability and therefore incidents of serious and sexual violence in the night-time economy. The project had a strong focus on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN).
- 5.11. There were three clearly identified objectives:-
1. To reduce violence with injury and sexual violence linked to the licencing and night-time economy industry through engagement with venues.
 2. To reduce violence with injury and sexual violence in public open spaces linked to the licencing and night-time economy industry through engagement with community stakeholders.
 3. To reduce violence with injury and sexual violence linked to the licencing and night-time economy industry through engagement with educational establishments.
- 5.12. To meet the first objective, five nightclub venues were identified to receive intervention from the Licencing Officers, this included specific inputs on sexual harassment, vulnerability, welfare engagement, safe intervention, and safe spaces. All venues were selected against a range of factors that were footfall, policing demand, and history of serious or sexual violence linked to the venues.
- 5.13. All venues adopted the "Safety and Welfare" policy created by the SVD licencing officer. As part of the policy, they agreed for a member of staff to be designated as a "Welfare Officer".

In short, the role of this person was to identify vulnerability or potential vulnerability, offer support and where necessary intervene.

5.14. Four out of the five venues realised an overall reduction of demand reduction. Four of five of the venues saw a reduction in Serious Violence and Sexual offending ranging from 90% to 22%. The fifth venue saw no change.

5.15. A snapshot of the results are below.

Demand Reduction during period	Sexual or Serious Violent Offence reduction	Total beneficiaries	Total potential engagement
38.1% ▼	47% ▼	2,811	81,661

5.16. The second objective was met using various different methods including:

- A countywide public survey
- Information sharing between police and local authorities
- Public Engagement/Policing Operations

5.17. An online survey was launched to benchmark the public feeling regarding the safety of night-time economy and provide “unheard” public experiences of being out at night in Suffolk.

5.18. The survey sought public opinion on what makes them feel safer, how resources should be used to keep the night-time economy (NTE) safe and to identify unknown locations of concern

5.19. The Survey was launched in the final week of September 2023 and concluded on 31st October 2023. 774 responses were received. Information obtained through the public survey was shared with local authority partners. The survey showed that least favourable tactics to make people feel safe in the NTE included CCTV and safety campaigns, such as licensing SAVI. 85% of respondents agreed that police visibility is what made them feel safe. This included an awareness of police patrolling routes home.

5.20. The top comment that added to feelings of vulnerability when on route home from a night out was the streetlights being turned off. From the information obtained by the survey additional officers were deployed to patrol these routes at relevant times to provide visibility and engagement. Through these patrols 28 interventions took place, resulting in the engagement of 199 individuals.

5.21. During the time period a number of interventions were conducted by police and partners. This ranged from simple visibility, to identifying and protecting lone vulnerable people, to positive engagement with females in the company of men to ensure their welfare and reduce vulnerability. In all 18 vulnerable locations were visited by the officers as part of their dedicated patrols. During one of these patrols, officers supported the deployment of the SOSBus into Ipswich town centre. The SOSBus was able to provide 35 direct interventions for those who would otherwise have been left vulnerable within the NTE. The interventions ranged from use of a mobile phone charger, to bottles of water and flip-flops to walk home in.

5.22. The third objective of the project was the least familiar to the police Licensing Team and proved to be the most challenging to achieve. An educational product has been produced that focusses on perpetrator behaviour and highlights the consequences of serious violence

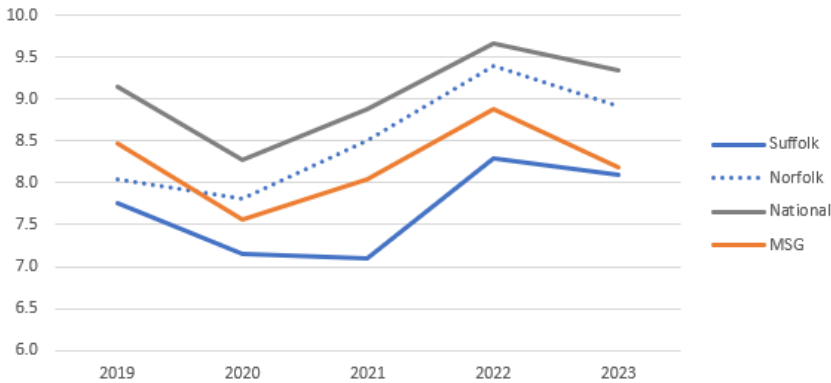
and how “one punch can kill”. This product is subject to being agreed to be included within the “One Cop Stop” schools delivery packages.

- 5.23. This project has provided proof of concept that an officer dedicated to working directly with the highest risk venues in Suffolk can reduce serious and sexual violence and reduce overall NTE demand. It is hoped the legacy of this project will be the continued focus on welfare and vulnerability at these venues.

6. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

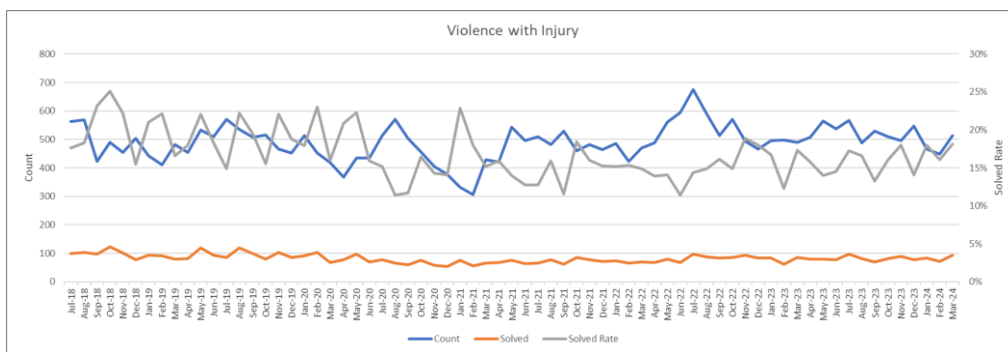
- 6.1. Performance in Suffolk around Serious Violence is improving. Performance is monitored through the Force Performance meeting that are held bi-monthly and aspects are also reported on through the Local Policing Board. Increases and reductions in crimes inform the Area Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG), who look holistically to identify key locations, repeat victims and priority offenders. This allows for targeted activity, such as pulse patrols to be focused where there are increases and impact is then monitored.

- 6.2. Nationally, Suffolk has the 7th lowest reported violence with injury crimes per 1,000 population. Reviewing local data the overall downward trend has continued in the first three months of 2024. This is demonstrated in the graph below:



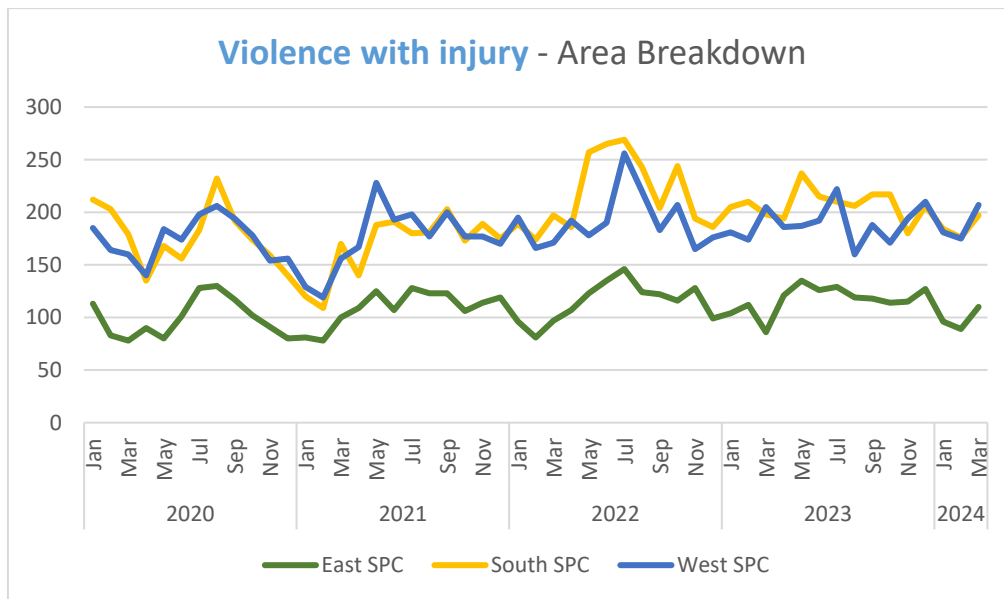
a) ONS figures to the end of 2023 showing number of violence with injury crimes per 1000 population

- 6.3. The chart below shows a rolling violence with injury across Suffolk and the solved rates. There was a reduction during the pandemic, and a peak of reported incidents in the Summer 2022. However, since then, there has been an overall decrease in violence. There was a slight increase in Summer 2023. This is usual and aligns to peak demand periods in the Summer months, the overall crime rates continue on a year on year reduction.

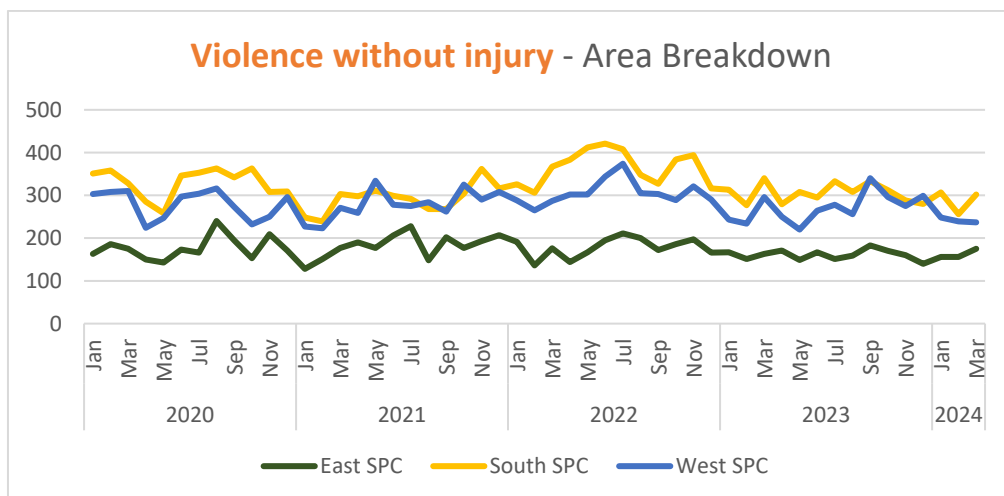


b) Violence with injury number of crimes and solved rates across Suffolk

- 6.4. The below chart at c) the amount of Violence with injury followed by the violence without injury chart d) , this time broken down into the three geographical command areas over the last 4 years. Again, the violence with injury demonstrates the reduction in the pandemic and then the peak in 2022 and overall decline in violence with injury since that time. The violence without injury presents similar data. This is further demonstrated in the table e) below. To provide a clearer indication there is 2019 data which shows pre pandemic levels, violence without injury crime has decreased by 705 crimes, but violence with injury has increased by 263 crimes.
- 6.5. The South has seen the most significant decrease in violent offences. The East have seen no decrease in violence with injury offences, but have a decrease in violence without injury. However, the decrease in offending is lower than both the West and the South areas.



c) Violence with injury area breakdown over the last 4 years.



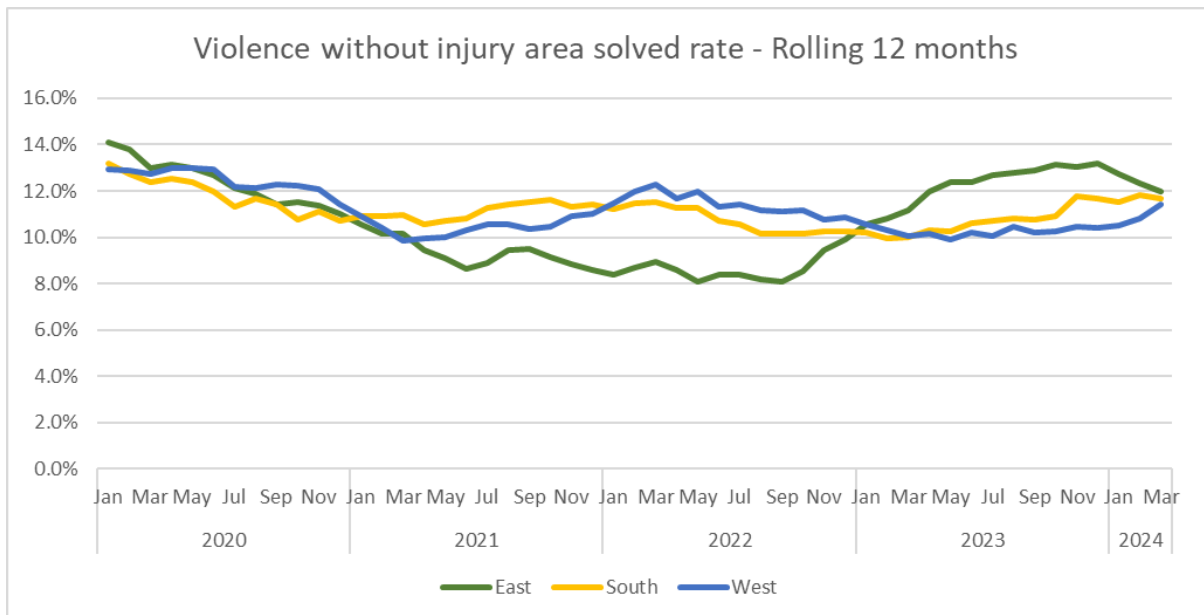
d) Violence without injury area breakdown by area over the last four years

		L12M	P12M	Percent Difference (to L12M)	2019 Baseline	Percent Difference (to L12M)
Violence with injury	East	1,403	1,403	0.0%	1,334	5.2%
	South	2,439	2,662	-8.4%	2,229	9.4%
	West	2,277	2,331	-2.3%	2,293	-0.7%
Violence without injury	East	1,946	2,132	-8.7%	2,217	-12.2%
	South	3,605	4,323	-16.6%	3,804	-5.2%
	West	3,212	3,607	-11.0%	3,447	-6.8%

e) Tabular form of violence with and without injury comparative year on year data showing a 2019 baseline

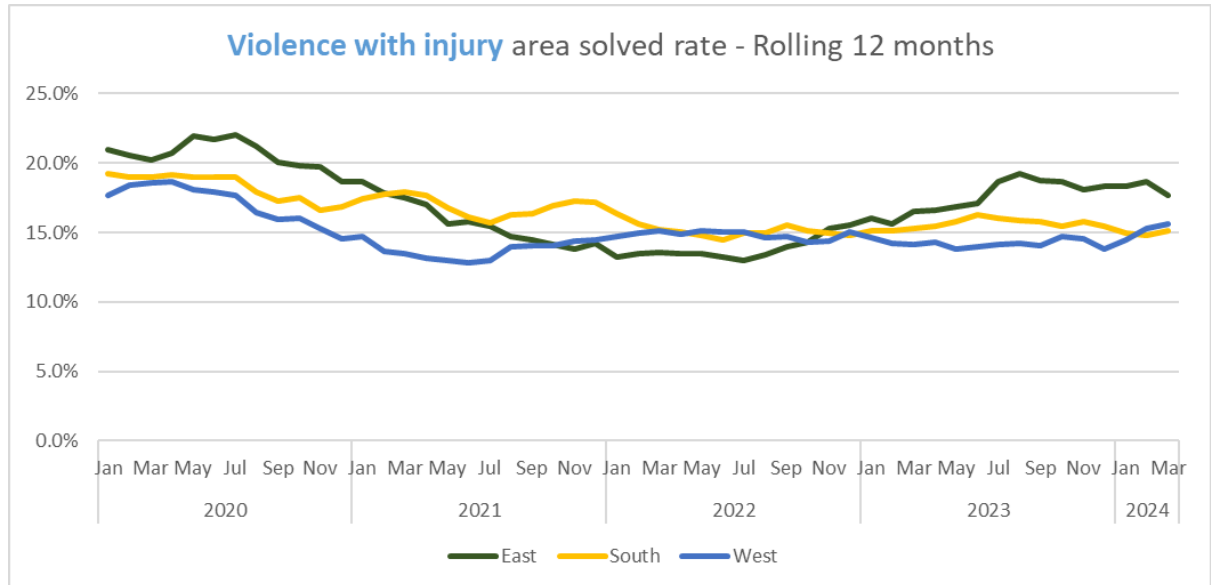
Solved Rates

- 6.6. Solved rates in Suffolk have increased slightly as the number of crimes recorded has reduced. However, the actual numbers of crimes solved has reduced. This follows the national trend of reduction in solved rates. This is an area of focus for the constabulary and work to improve solved rates is directed through the Investigative Standards Board. There are regular audits to identify areas for improvement which directs specific activity. Over the previous 12 months the East Area have noticeably improved their solved rates and have a higher percentage solved than both the South and West Area at 13.89%
- 6.7. The below charts show the solved rates for both Violence without Injury f) and Violence with injury g) over rolling 12-month periods. Each chart is followed by a table demonstrating the overall Suffolk solved rate for both violence without injury and violence with injury. This includes a comparative with the pre pandemic solved rates.



f) violence without injury solved rates over rolling 12 month period broken down into geographical command area

Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent Difference (to L12M)	2019 Baseline	Percent Difference (to L12M)
Violence without injury	Created Count	8,857	10,136	-12.6%	9,524	-7.0%
	Type 1-8 count	1,035	1,049	-1.3%	1,281	-19.2%
	Solved Rate	11.7%	10.4%	1.3p.p	13.5%	-1.8p.p



g) *violence with injury solved rate over the rolling 12 month period broken down into geographical command area*

Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent Difference (to L12M)	2019 Baseline	Percent Difference (to L12M)
Violence	Created Count	6,175	6,435	-4.0%	5,880	5.0%
	Type 1-8 count	984	974	1.0%	1,127	-12.7%
	Solved Rate	15.9%	15.1%	0.8p.p	19.2%	-3.3p.p

7. IMPACT OF CHANGES IN HOME OFFICE CRIME COUNTING RULES APRIL 2023

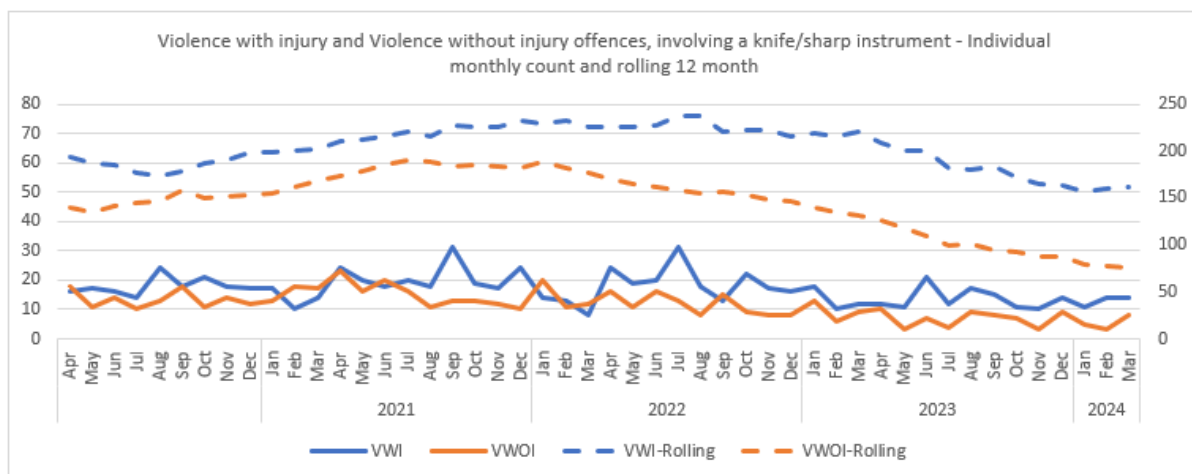
- 7.1. In the previous reporting period reference was made to the changes to Home Office Counting Rules which could see the number of crimes recorded reduce. Early indication is that this has had an impact on behavioural crime types, including malicious communications, harassment, and stalking offences. This may have had a slight impact on the number of violent crime recorded, however, this is unlikely to have had any meaningful impact on violence with injury offences, as this would ordinarily be principle offence.
- 7.2. The police will continue to pursue all offences involved, understanding how they are linked, as part of their thorough investigative work. For example, under these changes, where a victim has experienced an assault with criminal damage occurring to their property, police will now put the assault at the forefront of their investigation. The changes will assist in standardising counting rules with the 'principal offence' approach across the board, to record the crime which has the most impact on a victim.

8. KNIFE CRIME

- 8.1. The methodology for the below knife crime data – A Violence with Injury or Violence without Injury investigation with a Keyword of Knife/Sharp instrument recorded.

8.2. Fortunately incidents of incidents involving a knife, or another sharp object remain low comparative to other forces. For serious offences involving a knife or sharp instrument Suffolk had the 5th lowest reported crimes in December 2022 to December 2023. However, this is an area that the constabulary keeps under review as the impact of those who are victim to knife crime can be devastating.

Knife Crime volume, per month and rolling 12 months, for Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury.



h) ONS Chart showing knife/sharp instrument enabled violence with injury and violence without injury on a rolling 12 months, with overall crime trajectory

8.3. The above chart h) shows data in two different ways. The smooth lines at the bottom show the volume of Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury offences per month over time, this fluctuates month to month, Violence with Injury peaked in September 2021, and July 2022. Violence without Injury has not recorded such a steep peak. The monthly volume makes direction of travel harder to identify. The dotted lines have been provided above, these show the rolling 12-month count, allowing for the direction of travel to be presented more clearly. It can be seen since the rolling 12 months of March 2023; the volume of Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury knife crime has decreased.

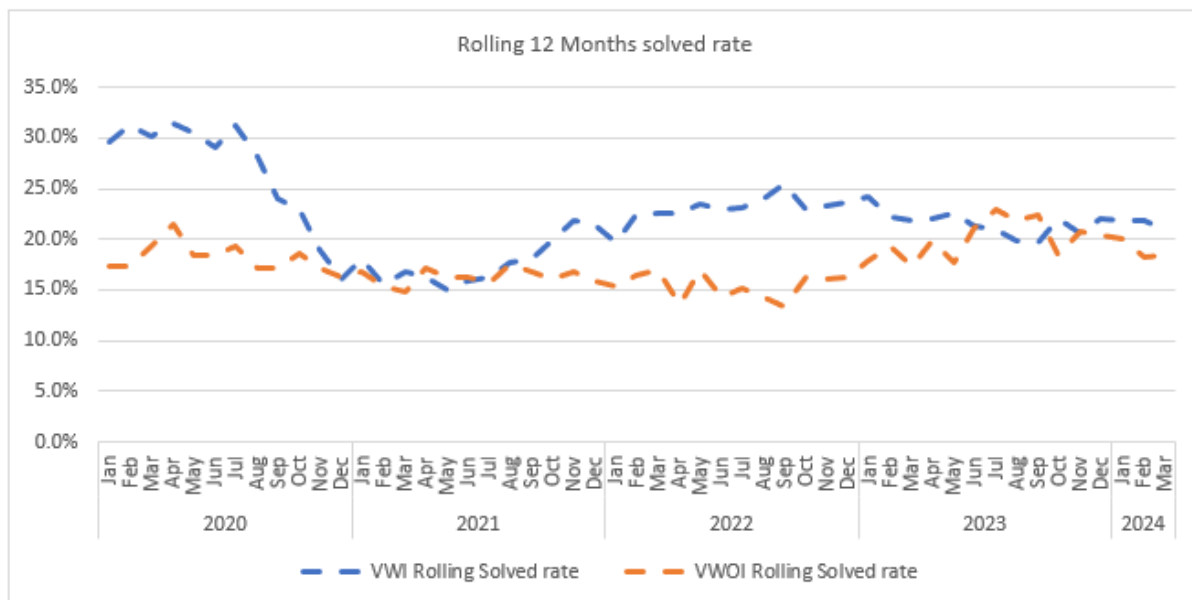
Knife Crime volume, Last 12 months compared to the Previous 12 months.

		L12M	P12M	Percent Difference (to L12M)
Violence with injury	County	160	219	-26.9%
	East	36	47	-23.4%
	South	56	97	-42.3%
	West	68	75	-9.3%
Violence without injury	County	76	130	-41.5%
	East	17	38	-55.3%
	South	35	45	-22.2%
	West	24	47	-48.9%

8.4. The above table shows for Violence with Injury knife crime investigations when comparing to the previous 12 months, all areas have seen a decrease in volume, however, the South Area has seen the most significant reduction of 42%. The West has seen the smallest

decrease. Violence without Injury knife crime has also recorded a decrease when comparing to the previous 12 months. This is most pronounced in the East who have realised a 55% decrease.

The chart below i) shows knife enabled violence with injury and knife enabled violence without injury solved rates as a force. It is worth noting that the numbers recorded over the year period are small numbers



i) The solved rate for knife/sharp instrument violence with and violence without injury over a rolling 12 month period.

Tackling Knife Crime - Operation Sceptre

8.5. As in previous years, Suffolk continues to support and participate in the national weeks of action to tackle knife related crime, Operation Sceptre. During this year's national weeks of action to tackle knife crime, forces were requested to conduct enhanced enforcement, engagement, and education, deploying a range of tactics to suit local knife crime profiles.

8.6. The Op Sceptre week took place from the 13th November to 19th November 2023, and the results from this week are summarised below:

- 4 search warrants
- 13 direct arrests with 10 knives recovered
- 49 Stop and Searches recovering 3 knives
- Knife bins recovering 1647 knives
- Comprehensive media and social media plan developed and implemented
- Schools engagement through School Liaison Officers
- Test Purchase Operations
- Retailers visited across the county and provided advice

8.7. The next Op Sceptre week of Action will commence in May 2024, and we look forward to supporting the initiative and tackling more knife crime within our communities.

9. CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD

9.1. Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) is a whole system approach delivered in an operational way to improve the local response to tackling Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) threats. CHB is a preventative partnership approach which requires engagement and active participation including from statutory, third and private sector partners. The Home Office initiative is designed to deliver impact by reducing SOC threats and create change from within communities to build sustainable safety and increase community resilience.

9.2. Suffolk Constabulary is an active participant in the CHB initiative and has identified its first formal site within Felixstowe after engaging in the initial pilot scheme with a location in Lowestoft. The Clear phase is well developed and a wealth of activity has taken place, with supporting partnership structures now being developed along with formal communications and public engagement to support the Hold and Build phases.

10. SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

10.1. The Serious Organised Crime (SOC) teams are a vital part of Suffolk's response to violence. The activity they co-ordinate is assessed against threat, harm, and risk to the Constabulary. The response is governed through the Serious Organised Crime board and reviewed locally through the Force TTCG.

10.2. Examples of some of the work undertaken by the SOC Team and how this supports local priorities are detailed below.

10.3. Operation Harewood (under the Op Hull umbrella) was an investigation into a criminal gang based on the East side of Ipswich, involved in the supply of Class A drugs, money laundering and knife enabled violence. The operation ran for twelve weeks, with twelve nominals arrested and charged over the course of operation.

10.4. Recognising the threat posed by the group and the tendency to commit spontaneous acts of violence, a phased and agile approach to deployments was adopted from the outset. The approach allowed SOC investigators to respond swiftly to reports of violence or increasing tensions in the town. This proved useful in mid-December 2023 when following reports of a subject being responsible for a stabbing, officers were able to support local officers by remanding him into custody for class A drug supply offences, with evidential difficulties preventing the stabbing from being progressed.

10.5. Information and intelligence gathered through the deployment identified three of the twelve members as being key top tier members within the group, directly involved in co-ordinating violence against rival groups. Two further subjects had long been suspected of selling significant quantities of Class A drugs in Suffolk, with no charges ever brought against them.

10.6. The final arrest phase saw the seizure of 150k worth of cocaine, 15k in cash and two offensive weapons. With charges of conspiring to supply heroin and cocaine, concerned in the supply, offensive weapons and money laundering against our nominals.

10.7. SOC have maintained a footprint in Op Hardshell (CHB), which has since taken over as a priority from Hull.

11. PREVENTION

County Licensing Activity

- 11.1. The Suffolk Police Licensing Team are responsible for and manage the organisational response to premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003. There are currently 4604 premises in Suffolk with a live premises licence (an increase of 64 venues). The team also hold records for 2112 unlicensed, suspended, closed, or revoked licensed premises.
- 11.2. In this reporting period (Q3/Q4) there were 1,081 incidents recorded at licensed premises within Suffolk. This is a slight decrease on the previous recording period which recorded 1,084 incidents and a decrease on the number of recorded incidents in the previous year during this period, which recorded 1,284 incidents.
- 11.3. The highest incident demand area is South Suffolk, with Ipswich Borough accounting for 47% of all incidents. The Licensing Team undertake a staged escalation process in relation to enforcement of the Licensing Act 2003. The area district or borough council are the Licensing Authority. Action taken by the police licensing team is taken in consultation with and in consideration of the councils own licensing policies.
- 11.4. Over the last reported period the following activity has been conducted:
- Engagement – 27
 - Advice – 25
 - Warning – 18
 - Action Plan – 2
 - Review – 2
 - Prosecution – 0

**Further engagement and advice activities have taken place but there is an issue with how these are currently recorded and how the data is produced which is in the process of being corrected*

- 11.5. A review is completed for all incidents across the County each month. Premises are Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rated based on a number of factors that drive demand. High priority (red) premises are adopted by the Licensing Team as a priority premises and a Licensing Officer allocated to each premises to reduce policing demand and prevent potential harm to the public. These premises have been selected based on the volume, nature or increase of incidents identified at the location. A Prevention Activity Log (PAL) is recorded and allocated for local ownership supported by the licensing officer, working closely in partnership to resolve long term issues.

12. AREA ACTIVITY

Activity undertaken in the East Area

- Licenced Premises are a priority for Community Policing Team's and visits are carried out weekends, targeting those cause most concern using VVOL and Innkeeper intelligence.
- The "Kestrel - East" Team continues to deploy across the East Area, predominantly in an engagement role, particularly within the rural and market towns and villages, but also in support of local policing priorities and problem-solving initiatives. Stop and search remains a

significant tactic across all the proactive teams, which is regularly demonstrated to be used to good effect.

Activity undertaken in the South Area

- Licensed premises visits have continued within the South with 79 having been conducted between Jan and March 2024. In December 2023 the Kestrel team worked with Ipswich Borough Council town councillors, ASB team and the licensing team to carry out licensed premises visits and conducted high visibility patrols throughout the town centre with positive engagement with multiple premises and members of the public.
- There has been a particular focus on previously categorized red venues. These venues have subsequently been downgraded to Amber due to a decline in reported incidents and improvements made.
- In Ipswich Central a problem solving plan was instigated in the town centre as a result of ASB and associated violent offending, including a high-profile Affray. The response phase of this involved adopting as a local priority, working with partners including Ipswich Borough Council, targeted bespoke patrol plans with resource support across the Southern area, resulting in both positive engagement and enforcement activity and a substantial reduction in demand in terms of reports and crimes.
- During County Lines Intensification week a knife arch was placed inside Suffolk New College, Police worked with Suffolk New College and Ipswich Borough Council Community Safety Team. This was used as a focal point for students and staff to speak with Police about serious violence and knife carriage. This attracted positive publicity both on social media and within the internal college corporate communications department. Weapon sweeps were also conducted throughout the South during this week.
- Community pop up events and surgeries have been rolled out across the South as part of the newly devised engagement strategy and during this period has included targeted pop-up engagement events at Ipswich Town Football Club during match days in the fan zone. This incorporates crime prevention advice and the issuing of rape alarms and purse bells.
- Ipswich night-time economy portfolio holder Inspector has been in regular contact with Ipswich Borough Council in relation to a proposal called 'Ipswich Rules'. The initiative, led by Ipswich borough council, is to provide training to accredit safe venues at night and safe spaces in the day, posters for 40 lamp posts and foot banners for high footfall areas – this is being fully supported by the Police as we work together as part of the Ipswich Community Safety Partnership.

Activity undertaken in the West Area

- Ongoing management of a priority individual with disruptions to deny them access to vulnerable people, a closure order on a premises used by the priority individual, the issue of a Community Protection Notice (CPN) and applications for a Criminal Behaviour Orders(CBO) and attempting to secure a conviction of serious violent offences.
- Cuckoo visit of vulnerable adults which has resulted in the arrest of a suspect for Possession With Intent To Supply (County Lines offence) and who was in possession of a zombie style knife. Suspect has links to serious violence offences in Essex.

- Forest Heath saw specific pulse patrols directed on to Newmarket High St throughout November and December in response to it being an identified VAWG hotspot. Patrols focussed on reassurance and tackling any identified violent crime or safeguarding of vulnerable people.
- Knife crime and further school inputs continue in Mildenhall and Newmarket following knife related incidents in the respective areas.
- Meetings between Community Policing Teams and Youth Justice Services every 6 weeks to discuss current young persons under YJS and emerging threats, ensuring high threat and harm risks are identified and tackled.
- Joint Police and Mid Suffolk Council response to drugs and ASB at a particular address in Stowmarket resulting in a closure order.
- An address was targeted in Bury St Edmunds having been linked to drug supply and resulting ASB resulting in a full closure order.

13. COUNTY LINES

- 13.1. The definition of County Lines is shown at Appendix 1.
- 13.2. County Lines is a factor in violent crime both locally and nationally. Activity around County Lines is co-ordinated through a number of forums, the Drugs Delivery Group for the overarching strategic response, the Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG) process to co-ordinate resources and activity, the Serious Organised Crime Board for those that have higher threat risk and harm and through the partnership Combating Drugs Board for a multi-agency approach.
- 13.3. County lines can be scored (Tier 1) or unscored (Tier 2). The scoring is determined when there is an indication of risk and harm. Tier 1 lines are categorised into low, medium or high risk. Unscored lines are where there is intelligence only, but there is no indication of threat, risk or harm that is known to police.
- 13.4. Suffolk currently has 22 County lines. East Area have low risk 1 tier 1 County Line and no tier 2 lines. The South have 2 low risk tier 1 Lines and 13 tier 2 lines, and the West have no tier 1 lines and 6 tier 2 lines. The tier 1 lines in Suffolk are all determined as Low Risk.
- 13.5. Although there has been an increase since the last reporting period on the number of County Lines, there has been a reduction in number of the lines that pose the highest threat, harm and risk (7 to 3).
- 13.6. County Lines Intensification Week (CLIW) is a key date and is a nationally co-ordinated response to County Lines. CLIW took place from the 4th March to the 11th March 2024. This was successfully co-ordinated and had significant impact across the County.

Summary of key activity

- 40 arrests (34 adults)
- 3 knives and 6 Imitation firearms (Air/BB style guns) recovered
- 5 National Referral Mechanisms (NRM's) submitted where there have been concerns over people being exploited linked to County Lines
- 6 County lines disrupted resulting in 11 charge/remands

- Overt Cuckoo address checks have been conducted throughout the week on multiple addresses across the force. Checks resulted in identifying of 1 County Line active in the area and 2 arrests being made.
- Community Engagement events saw 2862 young people and 358 adults engaged with; the events were focused on highlighting the signs of exploitation through County Lines
- Kestrel team conducted a joint operation with UK border force in Lowestoft with 2 x drugs dogs. Vehicles stopped and searched under border force powers and penetration tests completed as well as several vessels being boarded. Good proactive and disruptive visit.
- Continual Professional Development activities through Intranet where available. Intranet sliders each day raised awareness of county lines methodology and investigative tools to tackle county lines dealing.
- Overt search patrols and weapon sweeps across all area parks and known drug dealing locations. Joint activity between police search officers and Ipswich Borough Council Community safety.
- Op Makesafe carried out at 9 hotels – inputs given to staff and posters left to be displayed

14. OPERATION OROCHI

- 14.1. The Constabulary continues to support disruption activity under Operation Orochi. This is Metropolitan police led initiative, involving the sharing of information and tactics with county forces. The aim is to identify and arrest the individual controlling the dealer's mobile phone. Suffolk Constabulary's Serious Crime Disruption Teams (SCDT) lead operational delivery of Orochi in Suffolk, and since June 2023 they have continued to achieve significant successes including:
- 2 defendants from London were sentenced to 6 years in prison after supplying Class A drugs from London to Suffolk. The defendants were located at their home address in East London after supplying cocaine into Bury St Edmunds.
 - A male was identified as the line holder for three drugs lines that supplied Class A drugs between the Metropolitan Police area and Suffolk. 2 males have been arrested and charged, one has pleaded guilty and awaits sentence, the other male awaits trial.
- 14.2. The County Lines model was operating in Lowestoft. The phone line was attributed to a local male and was found to have been supplying Class B drugs to children in the Lowestoft area. The male was arrested, he has pleaded guilty and currently awaits sentencing.
- 14.3. Op Louden relates to the supply of Class A drugs across Suffolk and Norfolk. 6 drugs lines were identified for dealing class a drugs and with links to firearms. A firearms warrant was executed and an imitation firearm was seized. Male was sentenced to over 4 years imprisonment.
- 14.4. In addition, there were 223 disruptions against serious and organised crime in Suffolk in the 6 months from June 2023 to December 2023.

15. HOMICIDE

- 15.1. Following recommendations coming from the Response to Preventing Future Deaths Report relating to the Victims of Stephen Port (April 2022) and the Vulnerability Knowledge Practice Programme (VKPP) Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides Year 3 Report, changes to the standard operating procedures of both Contact and Control Rooms (CCRs) when responding to report of Sudden/Unexplained Deaths have already been made. This is to now include questions regarding protected characteristics of the deceased, carry out intelligence checks for any history of Domestic Abuse/Violence across all police systems and to ensure that the death is recorded on Athena (to allow for a periodic review of all Police Attended death in order to identify patterns or links between them). This work is continuing to be further developed in line with other national recommendations made on the Recording and Attendance at Sudden and Unexplained Death.
- 15.2. In response to the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Guidance to Forces for Homicide Prevention Debriefs, all new Homicides will be subject of a Rapid Debrief within 14 days to identify strategic learning and prevention opportunities from both Police and Partners. The HWG template for reviews will be used and the review will be carried out by the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) level 3 Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) in charge of the investigation. This will involve partnership engagement where necessary and the debrief report will be signed.

16. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1. The Home Office has allocated funding to support the local implementation of the Serious Violence Duty until 31 March 2025. The SVDP Board has approved 15 bids a number of bids in respect of interventions. The funding will be released quarterly on the submission of a reporting spreadsheet in the quarter following delivery.

17. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 17.1. There are no risks identified at the present time. This will be kept under review.

18. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

- 18.1. Serious violence is a wide ranging subject that is focussed on by many areas of the public sector and Constabulary teams. The paper evidences complex governance and strong plans that will seek to make Suffolk even safer where violence is concerned. Importantly, offending rates remain low and have decreased in most areas during the reporting period. There are some slight improvements to outcomes and Suffolk performs well when compared nationally and against MSG partners.
- 18.2. There is extensive evidence of the Constabulary working with partners to impact on the wide range of relevant criminality. There are good initiatives around prevention and pursuing offenders and there has been good progress made against priority areas such as county lines and serious and organised crime.

Appendix 1

Definition of County Lines

The Home Office has defined County lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line.” They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Suffolk Constabulary has a clear governance structure for maintaining accountability and delivery of drug related activity in tackling supply and harm caused, this is through the Suffolk Drugs Board, chaired by Chief Superintendent (County Policing Command) and a specific County Lines Board which is headed by a Detective Chief Inspector (CSIM) focusing on enforcement activity.

In Suffolk County Lines are identified through both intelligence and evidence-based activity. Tier 1 lines are then scored through a Matrix which considers risk and harm, including serious violence and weapons.