

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 24 May 2024.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer), Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement and acting Chief Executive Officer), Amanda Houchen (Administrative Assistant), Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner), James Sheridan (Policy and Commissioning Officer), Vanessa Scott (Head of Policy and Performance).

Suffolk Constabulary

Eamonn Bridger (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable), Julie Dean (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable), Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer).

In attendance for the Public Agenda

Lynette Morton

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

David Ellesmere (Police and Crime Panel Vice Chair), David Goldsmith (Police and Crime Panel Substitute Member), Adriana Stapleton (Police and Crime Panel Officer), John Ward (Police and Crime Panel Member).

Apologies:

Rob Jones (Deputy Chief Constable).

Due to technical issues this Accountability and Performance Panel was not recorded. These technical issues also meant the on-line audience had no sound.

1 Public Question Time

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) welcomed everyone to the meeting, invited both Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner attendees to introduce themselves, and advised that one question had been received in advance of this meeting from the member of the public in attendance.
- 1.2 The member of the public posed the following question: Can you please enumerate the achievements which you perceive to have had a positive and effective outcome since you became Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk?

1.3 The PCC explained that there were many initiatives that he felt had been particularly successful over the years, so it was difficult to narrow them down to just a few. He highlighted Crime Reduction and Disorder Grants and the expansion of the Cadets as particular points of pride. Both initiatives are undertaken to improve young people's lives and ensure they have the tools to make better life choices. He also detailed the IDVA service that helps victims of Domestic Abuse and is funded by a direct grant from the MoJ as being a particularly effective scheme. The PCC also expressed his pride in the progress made to combat County lines within Suffolk.

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 1 March (Paper AP24/20)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2024 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 AP24/21)

3.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Kenneth Kilpatrick provided a high-level summary of the report, explaining that it focused on the Budget versus Actual spend for the Constabulary and Group Revenue and Capital position for the 2023/24 FY.

3.2 The report shows a Group Revenue surplus of just under £3m for the financial year, driven by a Constabulary underspend of £2m and a surplus in government grants of £870k. The operational underspend is due to a combination of factors including savings, receipt of service credit notes and an increase in income versus budget of £3.5m. The over-achievement of £870k in specific grant income is related to the funding per officer over and above the maintenance headcount of the Police Uplift Programme.

3.3 Capital expenditure was £1.126m lower than budget due to underspends driven by the timing of capital projects. This has meant that all capital expenditure in year has been funded by revenue contributions with no impact on the capital financing reserve. The ACO requested the slippage be carried over to the next financial year.

3.4 The PCC highlighted the Police Uplift Programme and reported that the target of 1403 officers would likely remain the same for September and March. The Force currently have a headcount of 1425 which would ideally be maintained.

3.5 The PCC stated that he had attended the APCC General Meeting on 23 May where it was announced that £250m of funding had been earmarked for technology in policing over the next 4 years, with £80m being provided in 2024/25. Information on how to access this funding would need to be gathered. The ACO stated that work was already in train to make connections in this regard.

3.6 The PCC expressed his continued concern regarding the backlog of cases in the Criminal Justice system which has an impact on financial resources.

- 3.7 The Chief Constable (CC) stated that there had been reports in the media of other forces suspending arrests as a result of the backlog, she wanted to reassure the PCC that Suffolk would not be following suit.
- 3.8 It was agreed that the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) would discuss a query on specific capital projects outside of the meeting.
- 3.9 The PCC noted that an underspend with surplus income was a more advantageous position to be in than the alternative.

4 Supporting Children and Young People (Paper AP24/22)

- 4.1 Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Eamonn Bridger presented the report.
- 4.2 The Constabulary were in a strong position around its prioritisation of young people and children. The National Child Protection Inspections had highlighted some areas of improvement which were still being worked towards, but overall signs were positive.
- 4.3 New statutory guidance to safeguard children will help to embed the existing work in Suffolk and provide an opportunity to review terms of reference to ensure compliance. These are being developed and are expected to go live in December 2024. The changes may also create an additional requirement for the force's Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSPs) to take on the role of Partnership Chair, a position that was previously held by an independent member.
- 4.4 The PCC asked if there would be any resourcing implications if the chair role in Suffolk is undertaken by the force's DSP. ACC Bridger stated that the chair would be confirmed from among safeguarding partners in due course, after which there would be clarity in this regard.
- 4.5 ACC Bridger explained that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was highly regarded and that 98% of all referrals were resolved without police investigation.
- 4.6 The PCC referred to page 5 point 2.4.4 of the report and noted the largest figure of cases referred to CYP MASH were categorised as 'Other'. Could this data be broken down into more specific themes as it would help the OPCC team when considering future grants/commissions. ACC Bridger stated that as the MASH was multi-agency, he did not have direct access to this information. The PCC requested that this be clarified in future reports.
ACTION: PCC asked if the Constabulary could clarify specific themes categorised under 'Other' CYP MASH referral outcomes in future reports.
- 4.7 The Policy and Commissioning Officer made an enquiry regarding the 98% figure quoted by ACC Bridger and the figure stated on page 6, point 2.4.9 of 85.5%.
ACTION: ACC Bridger to gain clarification regarding which is the correct figure for MASH contact resolved without requirement for police investigation.
- 4.8 Suffolk's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are currently subject to review by the Improvement Sub-group. The PCC asked what the review would entail and what the timescales for completion were. ACC Bridger explained that a significant amount of work was required to ensure all agencies are participating fully in the future and that

there is a shared vision to ensure MARAC is as effective as possible. There was currently no date for completion available, but timescales could be obtained. The PCC expected to be updated on progress at the next SSCB.

ACTION: ACC Bridger to provide timescales for MARAC Review delivery.

PCC to get an update re progress with the MARAC Review outcomes at the next SSCB.

- 4.9 ACC Bridger continued to explain that the Constabulary's work around missing children had made a significant impact, seeing a 35% reduction in the last 12 months which is far below the 5-year average. The work is under continuous audit to ensure that the force are not missing reports.
- 4.10 The PCC asked if there are any trends why children go missing; greater information regarding common themes would help shape the OPCC's commissioning priorities going forward. ACC Bridger confirmed the information was available and could be provided in greater detail outside of the meeting. The Chief Constable added that low education levels and school attendance was certainly one of the themes related to missing children.
ACTION: ACC Bridger to provide more detailed information regarding the themes on why children go missing in Suffolk.
- 4.11 ACC Bridger reported that there had been a slight decrease? in live Child Sexual Abuse and Online investigations, however urged caution as there are indications that there will be more demand in the coming months. The Public Protection Unit's ability to identify victims has seen an improvement however the more successful they become the more resourcing pressure there is on the team.
- 4.12 The Policy and Commissioning Officer referred to the ICAIT review in 2021 referenced on page 17, point 2.11.9; did the force feel the additional capacity has impacted outcomes as intended. ACC Bridger stated that the increase in staff was primarily to stay on top of the existing work, however the upturn in charging decisions to clear the backlog could be in part due to increased capacity. It was also explained that finding appropriate officers at detective level is a continuing issue. Staffing this area is difficult due to the nature of the material individuals are exposed to and it is felt that rotating personnel is necessary for mental well-being. The Policy and Commissioning Officer enquired whether the 2021 recommendations were still relevant today. ACC Bridger stated that the world had moved on and that the Constabulary is continually working to make the best possible use of detectives within this difficult area.
- 4.13 ACC Bridger highlighted the continued work on engagement with young people in schools, stating that 70,000 children had been engaged with in the reporting period. He explained that he is the new Youth Justice Chair and that it was an excellent example of multi-organisational working.
- 4.14 Children in custody figures are now back to pre-COVID levels, with mental health challenges in custody continuing to be a concern. The force is in constant dialogue with experts to make improvements. Work is also ongoing to make custody a more child-friendly environment with the aim of minimising repeat offending. The introduction of technology into cells is also ongoing.
- 4.15 It was reported that the Cadets initiative continues to be successful with their attendance planned at both the Suffolk Show and Latitude this year. There is an ongoing review due to the withdrawal of Fire Service support. A safeguarding audit has also been successfully

completed. The PCC stated that he had attended the Cadets Annual Parade, and it had been the best he had ever seen. He wanted to pass his thanks on to all volunteers for their hard work.

- 4.16 ACC Bridger finished his summary by stating that the Constabulary was in a positive position with regard to its work around children and young people, that there were still areas to work on but there was an ongoing commitment to the task in hand.

5 Neighbourhood Crime and ASB (Paper AP24/23)

- 5.1 ACC Bridger presented the report and confirmed that there were no major areas of concern considering the Constabulary had been rated good in this area of the PEEL Inspection. He reported a consistent decline in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) throughout the County, stressing this is not the case nationwide and that the Prevention Hub and Community Policing Teams remain successful in dealing with low level issues of Anti-Social Behaviour before it turns into crime. Superintendent Wratten oversees the force's response to ASB and is working to deliver the revamped National Action Plan.
- 5.2 The introduction of Single Online Home that enables the public to report directly to the force, diverting low level ASB away from emergency systems has thus far been positively received by the public.
- 5.3 ACC Bridger reported that the force had been awarded £1m of ASB Hotspot funding from the Home Office which he would be leading (with bi-monthly oversight) to deliver a comprehensive plan for effective use of the funding. The PCC commented that ASB was not just a police problem and that councils also had a part to play in its prevention with regard town planning and housing. He also noted that it was not just the domain of young people. He enquired as to the timings for delivery and requested an update at Weekly Conference in due course.
ACTION: ACC Bridger to provide the PCC with an update on the force's progress with delivering the ASB Hotspot Policing Project at a future Weekly Conference (timing likely to be in 2 months' time).
- 5.4 ACC Bridger reported that residential burglary recorded offences were down by 11.5% compared to the previous year, with solved rates also showing a slight improvement. Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) showed that Suffolk was the leading force in reducing residential burglary offences when compared to similar forces. These results were evidence of the excellent prevention and converter work carried out over the period.
- 5.5 Robberies were also down by 20%, again with a small increase in the solved rate. ACC Bridger explained that the majority of robberies were low-level, street-level crimes rather than residential or business. An initiative in Ipswich had seen a reduction of 67% since the plan was adopted showing the force is in a very strong position. He stated there were only 16 instances of offences against businesses recorded in the period, 44% of which led to sanctions.
- 5.6 October 2023 saw the launch of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Retail Action Plan; Suffolk Constabulary is largely compliant. The force recognises that retail theft is under-represented and is looking to engage with retailers to change policies and attitudes regarding reporting. The PCC stated there needed to be a way to encourage people to

report and to gain greater partnership with retailers because retail theft was particularly costly for small businesses. There was a perception that the police would not follow-up on thefts of under £200 in value. ACC Bridger explained that it certainly wasn't the policy of Suffolk Constabulary, however clearly a proportionate approach was needed.

- 5.7 The PCC invited ACC Bridger to comment on the good work of the KESTREL Teams to prevent neighbourhood crime. ACC Bridger agreed that the teams were an important investment and provided key opportunities to remain flexible and proactive when responding to emerging neighbourhood crime.
- 5.8 The Policy and Commissioning Officer referred to page 3, point 2.4 of the report, noting the change of ASB classifications in 2024. He enquired regarding the timescales for the change and if the force would see it as a way of driving them towards compliance with the areas of improvement noted by HMICFRS regarding the recording of ASB Personal. ACC Bridger confirmed he didn't have the exact dates for implementation, but it was likely to be in time for the delivery of the next Neighbourhood Crime and ASB paper in six months. He also stated that he believed the force would continue to treat this area as a priority and is already putting every effort into improving ASB recording.
- 5.9 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) asked whether the introduction of Single Online Home had seen an increase in ASB cases reported to the local authority and whether it made it harder to track trends. ACC Bridger explained that Superintendent Wratten was the single point of contact with the local authority so would be across the issue. He confirmed that sometimes other agencies are the most appropriate parties to deal with ASB before escalating it to the police, but confirmed it is important to check that the new system is not just shifting demand elsewhere.

6 Tackling Serious Violence (Paper AP24/24)

- 6.1 ACC Bridger presented the report and noted that it complimented the Domestic Abuse and Supporting Victims papers that the force also produces for the Accountability and Performance Panel.
- 6.2 ACC Bridger stated that there were good governance arrangements and plans in place to deal with violent crime within the county, this was evidenced by the performance for the period.
- 6.3 The Serious Violence Duty was introduced in 2023, with local authorities working together through the development of a Countywide Needs Assessment that led to a strategy for Duty Holders to take forward and steer activities.
- 6.4 One such example was the creation of the SVD Licencing Officer Project which focussed on reducing serious and sexual violence within the night-time economy. Five venues received the intervention, with the majority seeing a reduction in serious violence and sexual offending. Survey work has been undertaken to gauge the impact of the work with a view to expanding the initiative across the county.
- 6.5 ACC Bridger referred to national data that highlighted relatively low reported violence with injury figures, however, solved rates require improvement.

- 6.6 The PCC asked what would need to be done to improve solved rates in the county. ACC Bridger quoted several key points that needed to be taken into consideration when looking at the issue. Firstly, the effectiveness of the current workforce is impacted by its lack of experience; a programme of continuous development is needed to remedy it. Secondly, work is needed to increase the confidence of victims in not just the police, but the Criminal Justice System as a whole. The current situation means victims are reluctant to support a prosecution. Thirdly, this lack of confidence extends to the wider community which means there is often a lack of willingness to provide information, intelligence or witness statements where a crime has occurred. Greater community engagement is needed. Finally, greater use of technology such as CCTV and facial recognition is required to remove wherever possible the reliance on human evidence, increasing the chance of successful prosecutions.
- 6.7 ACC Bridger stated that knife crime remains low with Suffolk having the 5th lowest figures in the country. The PCC asked what the age profiles of victims and those committing offences were as it would be interesting to see whether the PCC funded initiatives such as the Divert programme were having an impact on statistics. ACC Bridger confirmed that knife crimes were predominantly perpetrated by young males and that work previously mentioned in the Supporting Children and Young People report engaging students in schools often focussed on the topic. The more work that could be done to engage with young people in this area the better. The PCC agreed and stated that further conversations could be had to investigate what more could be done.
- 6.8 ACC Bridger reported on Clear, Hold, Build (CHB), a Home Office driven scheme to address localised Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) threats. After an initial trial in Lowestoft the scheme will now be introduced in Felixstowe.
- 6.9 The Head of Policy and Performance asked what the positive benefits of the pilot scheme were and why Felixstowe had been selected. ACC Bridger explained that the Lowestoft pilot had been completed some time ago, so it was difficult to speak in specifics. The conclusion regarding the pilot came not just from Lowestoft but from successes from around the country. The decision to introduce the scheme to Felixstowe specifically was based on detailed analysis and the identification of the area as a focus of Serious Organised Crime at a local level and based on threat indicators that could be discussed in a closed forum. CHB deploys multi-agency initiatives to an area to tackle SOC and then apply location target hardening thereafter to ensure SOC does not return. It is the first time SOC can be tackled by all agencies, enabling sustainability and tailoring to an area. The Chief Constable stated that progress in Felixstowe would be monitored with a view to rolling the initiative out to other areas of the county in due course.
- ACTION: ACC to update the PCC on the Felixstowe CHB initiative as it progresses (and share the detailed analysis which led to the decision).**
The PCC to attend the Safer, Stronger Board presentation.
- 6.10 ACC Bridger reported that Suffolk continued to make progress in terms of counteracting County Lines activity. There is currently two Tier 1's and 19 Tier 2's operating in the county, which is a huge reduction, however the threat still remains. March saw an intensification of activity with a number of arrests and the use of Operation Orochi to ensure high level operators are caught outside of the county.
- 6.11 The PCC stated that these were excellent results and enquired whether new synthetic opioids have become an issue for the force. ACC Bridger explained that the county-wide

Drugs Board Partnership are monitoring them and trying to understand how much of an issue they are, by monitoring crimes and fatalities related to drug taking.

- 6.12 The Head of Policy and Performance asked if the force expects the implementation of the new requirement to do a rapid debrief within 14 days of a homicide being resource intensive. ACC Bridger explained that the county experiences low numbers of homicides. The process is something that is already in use and there may be some deaths where this process will be used even if they do not end up being classified as a homicide, but he couldn't foresee any problems.

7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 11.30 when members of the public left the meeting.

PRIVATE AGENDA

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

8 Closed minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2024 (Paper AP24/25)

- 8.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

9 Protective Services Command Update (Paper AP24/26)

- 9.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

10 Strategic Policing Requirement (Paper AP24/27)

- 10.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

The meeting closed at 12.00.

Summary of Actions

Item / Paper	Action	Owner
4.6 Supporting Children and Young People	Constabulary to clarify specific themes categorised under 'Other' CYP MASH referral outcomes in future reports.	ACC Bridger
4.7 Supporting Children and Young People	ACC Bridger to gain clarification regarding which is the correct figure for MASH contact resolved without requirement for police investigation.	ACC Bridger

4.8 Supporting Children and Young People	ACC Bridger to provide timescales for MARAC review delivery. PCC to get an update re progress with the MARAC Review outcomes at the next SSCB.	ACC Bridger PCC
4.10 Supporting Children and Young People	ACC Bridger to provide more detailed information regarding the themes on why children go missing in Suffolk.	ACC Bridger
5.3 Neighbourhood Crime and ASB	ACC Bridger to provide the PCC with an update on the force's progress with delivering the ASB Hotspot Policing Project at a future Weekly Conference (timing likely to be in 2 months' time).	ACC Bridger
6.9 Tackling Serious Violence	ACC to update the PCC on the Felixstowe CHB initiative as it progresses (and share the detailed analysis which led to the decision). The PCC to attend the Safer, Stronger Board presentation.	ACC Bridger PCC