

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 July 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 and acting Chief Executive Officer), Amanda Houchen (Administrative Assistant), Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner), James Sheridan (Policy and Commissioning Officer).

Suffolk Constabulary

Eamonn Bridger (Assistant Chief Constable), Julie Dean (Assistant Chief Constable), Rob Jones (Deputy Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer).

In attendance for the Public Agenda

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

Mike Chester (Police and Crime Panel Member), David Ellesmere (Police and Crime Panel Vice Chair), Simon Furlong ((Police and Crime Panel Independent Member), Phanael Mutumburi (ISCRE), David Smith (Police and Crime Panel Member).

Apologies:

Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable).

1 Public Question Time

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

2 Open minutes of the meeting held on 24 May (Paper AP24/28)

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 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 AP24/29)

- 3.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Kenneth Kilpatrick noted that the report covered period 2 of the forecast, and was therefore early within the financial year, resulting in some uncertainty in terms of movement between expenditure lines.
- 3.2 In summary the Constabulary has a revenue underspend of just over £900k and are forecasting capital expenditure to be on budget. Within the report, table 3.1 provides an explanation for the revenue movements, and details the overspend on both pay and non-pay. The operational expenditure overspend mirrors previous years, with the target of reaching break-even at the end of the financial year.
- 3.3 In terms of the Police Uplift Programme, for this financial year there is a £40K penalty for every officer under the 1,425 headcount figure, therefore the Constabulary are continuing to target this number.
- 3.4 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) confirmed that the budget for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is forecasting an underspend of £104K, which is largely driven by pay-related staff vacancies, but this should change later in the year.
- 3.5 The PCC commented that a £40K penalty for every officer below the target number of 1,425 would hit hard. He referred to the King's speech that announced a drive to recruit additional officers, which if based on a pro-rata basis would be around an additional 150 for Suffolk. There is a concern that such an increase in numbers within Suffolk would be difficult to recruit. The PCC stated that the new Home Secretary has made no commitment to reviewing the funding formula for the county.
- 3.6 The PCC asked for clarification as to the spend for ANPR cameras, and what it related to. The ACO responded that the spend was within the joint space, therefore it would be for cameras in both Suffolk and Norfolk.

4 Improving Confidence and Satisfaction (Paper AP24/30)

- 4.1 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Bridger highlighted the key points within the report, noting that it covered the period up until the end of December 2023. He explained confidence and satisfaction levels are difficult to assess, with it being only the second set of survey results after a number of years without data following Covid. It is worth noting that some of the people surveyed had not had any interaction with the police.
- 4.2 In all areas the stats for Suffolk have declined over the past three years, however the figures are still above the national average. There are a number of initiatives taking place within the county to improve performance, but clearly there are some challenges around how the public are viewing policing.
- 4.3 The victim satisfaction data, deals with local victims' experience with Suffolk police and offers important insights. However, the provider of this data has come to the end of their contract, and it will not be renewed, therefore this is the last time the data will be presented in its current format.

- 4.4 The ACC explained the Confidence and Satisfaction dedicated board is now part of the wider Local Policing Board to integrate it with other areas of oversight work. The Domestic Abuse survey is back online and continues to provide positive rates of satisfaction from this cohort of victims. It is also noted that there has been an increase in complaints cases against officers and staff, reflecting the national picture.
- 4.5 ACC Bridger stated that the new Community Policing Model, with its increased visibility, is showing figures increasing from 200 to over 1000 contacts per month. He said the comments and feedback received about the new Community Policing Model indicate how well it is working.
- 4.6 The PCC commented that the feedback he has received from his interactions with the public regarding the new Policing Model, indicated it has been well received, and that public support is strong.
- 4.7 The PCC asked for an update on the Single Online Home system. ACC Bridger explained the system is still new to Suffolk and there have been some initial teething problems. Within the system there are nationally set requirements, and the ability to influence any changes is proving challenging. The demographic data that is requested remains important for policing. Suffolk Constabulary is in the early stages of Single Online Home, and future add-ons will improve its efficiencies.
- 4.8 The PCC highlighted the decline in satisfaction for rural crime. ACC Bridger explained rural crime started at a very high rate of satisfaction, however as these scores have declined it is something that should be addressed. When officers engage with the rural crime community, they are hearing that the response from the Constabulary is positive. Part of the issue is that the survey is aimed at crimes that happen in a rural area as opposed to rural crime. New strategies have been implemented by the Rural Crime Team, which are in the early stages and will continue to be monitored. The PCC requested further information to be provided on these strategies.
- ACTION – ACC Bridger to provide an update for the PCC on the new strategies being deployed by the Rural Crime Teams.**
- 4.9 The PCC raised the continued issue of the courts backlog and the concern that the police are negatively associated with it. ACC Bridger responded that this remains a big issue and the force are still seeing difficulties in this moving forward. There are instances of victims of crime being given court dates which are years ahead, and this can result in a high victim attrition rate. The Constabulary has invested in additional support services, which adds a financial burden. The PCC added the delays in getting cases to court does impact the taxpayer with the burden of care it places on the police. ACC Bridger commented that the local Criminal Justice Board is live to these issues plus the additional challenges as publicised by the early release of some prisoners from September 2024. The PCC added that the potential impact on victims of the proposed early prison release is a real concern.
- 4.10 The PCC asked what the Constabulary are doing to improve long term public trust and confidence. ACC Bridger responded that it is about listening to what communities want and what local needs are. Suffolk Constabulary continues to perform at the highest level professionally, and with the expectation that its officers are professional, courteous and polite.

- 4.11 The PCC commented that he felt communication with members of the public who report a crime, could be improved. ACC Bridger responded that we live in an age where people self-serve more than ever, with future plans to allow self-access for reported crimes as part of the technology improvement. There is also a need to ensure that traditional methods are still available for those that wish to be contacted in a traditional way.
- 4.12 The PCC asked if the additional PCSOs paid for by Ipswich Borough Council were now in place, and how their impact would be measured. ACC Bridger confirmed that a range of indicators will be looked at for the Southern area, plus the addition of launching the new tool “MyTeam” which provides direct information on the productivity of everyone that works within a location.
- 4.13 The PCC raised a concern around the increase in misconduct cases and asked how management are dealing with this. The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) reported that Professional Services have seen a huge increase in the volume of work over the last two years, which reflects the increase in complaints received. An additional member of the leadership team has been put in place, plus three additional investigating officers, four additional detective constables within the corruption unit, a prevent officer, and a hearings manager, so that complaints and conduct are resolved more quickly.
- 4.14 The CFO enquired how satisfaction will be monitored going forward if the contract for the current provider is not being renewed. ACC Bridger responded that there will be a focus on compliance within the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) and appreciates that this does align with the PCCs Police and Crime Plan. The Constabulary are currently trialling lower cost options, including the potential expansion in the use of video response which is currently utilised with victims of Domestic Abuse. Additionally, the Single Online Home system has an option to use cost free response surveys. There are a range of options being looked at but at present there is no fixed position on how this data will be measured in future.
- 4.15 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked for an update on Hotspot Policing and how this was being delivered within community policing. ACC Bridger replied that the Home Office funding for Hotspot policing is bid for retrospectively and is being used to cover overtime for ASB in hotspot areas. There remains some nervousness around the change of government, as the Constabulary has to spend the money in advance and then claim it back via a bid to the Home Office afterwards. ACC Bridger explained there is over 10 years of evidence showing that hotspot focuses are successful, he also reassured the panel that the Constabulary use the strategy continuously regardless of funding. The PCC clarified that the partnership fund is up to £1m across all 43 forces.

5 Responding to Calls for Assistance (Paper AP24/31)

- 5.1 ACC Bridger presented this report, noting that overall, it painted a positive picture, which could not have been achieved without the investment that has been made through the precept. Despite the inadequate grading from the last inspection, the work to transform the Contact and Control Room (CCR) continues and the force is confident that they’ll be an improved grading come the next inspection.
- 5.2 Traditional 999 phone calls and expectation on the police remains high, with over 130,000 calls per year into the Suffolk Constabulary and call numbers continuing to increase. The

ability to answer all calls under the 10 seconds target has seen a huge improvement, with over 90% of calls achieving this. Importantly grade A response times remain reasonable within urban and rural settings. Non-emergency 101 response calls also remain at a high demand level. Abandonment of calls is an area that is still being focussed on, which has improved over the past 12 months. Some calls are abandoned very quickly, which indicates callers are moving to other channels of reporting such as webchat or Single Online Home.

- 5.3 There is a clear government expectation for the use of Right Care Right Person (RCRP), which Suffolk Constabulary adopted early. Phase 1 has been a strong success for the county, demonstrating positive partnership work. Phase 2 went live earlier this year, focussing on walkouts from healthcare settings, and there have been very few escalations seen. Phase 3 is due to go live imminently with a focus on transportation, and the final phase will follow later in the year.
- 5.4 The PCC offered his praise for the improvements seen within the CCR as documented within the paper. Equally the approach and phased roll out of RCRP has been well received and shows the benefit of the consultation work that was carried out with partners prior to launch.
- 5.5 The PCC asked, at point 4.20 of the report, are we remaining at full strength within the CCR of 140 operatives. ACC Bridger confirmed the CCR operative numbers are at full strength.
- 5.6 The PCC asked what can be done about the high staff turnover rate within the CCR. ACC Bridger responded that staff retention and well-being is being looked at, including possible issues around working environment. Compared to other industries with call handlers, the retention figures for the Constabulary are positive. Often call operators move into other roles within the Constabulary, which is not as much of a loss as it might seem.
- 5.7 The PCC asked what plans are in place to manage the peak demand in summer. ACC Bridger responded that during the peak period of July and August a planned shift pattern is in place that allows for overlap and resilience, he also highlighted that the team is not subject to abstractions.
- 5.8 The PCC asked why the level of demand for 101 has not declined, and what could be done to reduce this demand. ACC Bridger replied that the expectation on the public sector remains high, with the public referring things to the police that perhaps they previously wouldn't. One area being explored is to see if any of these calls are misplaced and can be diverted to the relevant body for support.

6 Use of Police Powers (Paper AP24/32)

- 6.1 ACC Bridger presented the report, overall, the Constabulary is in a strong position, particularly when it comes to partnership working with agencies locally. From an inspection perspective this area is graded as good, which nationally is hard to achieve, so the force is aware this grading will be difficult to maintain. There has been a reduction in Stop and Search in Suffolk of 21%, with an increase in items found. Suffolk Constabulary conduct five searches per thousand people compared to the national rate of nine. Disproportionality remains an issue in Stop Search and more broadly around use of police powers, but the data in Suffolk remains relatively stable.

- 6.2 An area of challenge relates to data retention and having to delete footage recorded by Body Worn Video (BWV) within certain time frames. This can impact on its availability for the scrutiny process. There have been challenges with the number of OPTIK licences that are in place as the organisation has grown, as well as ensuring the forces relatively young workforce are informed and their use of police powers continue to be developed.
- 6.3 The PCC introduced Phaniel Mutumburi from ISCRE, who are the authors of Appendix B within the report and invited him to comment from his perspective. Phaniel responded that the Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group (SPPPSG) has been established, and commended both the Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the level of transparency that allows members of the public to scrutinise police powers. He reported an increase in interest from members of the public to be involved. In terms of numbers, Suffolk has always led by example, and has bucked the national trend, demonstrating effective use of police powers within our county. ISCRE would encourage the continued trend of focussing on the effectiveness of how the police use their powers. Body Worn Video (BWV) is an essential tool for both police and members of the public to scrutinise what is happening, therefore the lack of footage due to its deletion, or having not been recorded at all is a concern that needs to be addressed.
- 6.4 The PCC asked what is being done to address the BWV issues raised in Appendix B. ACC Bridger responded that the challenges around data retention in some instances are beyond the forces control, and there is ongoing work around the retention of BWV data. In some instances, those not prosecuted have rights to their data and have it deleted, plus there are examples of officers not turning on their camera, which can be officer error, or equipment error. Training has been re-issued to all frontline officers to address some of the challenges with the BWV footage and data output. Digital transfer from the device to a suitable information sharing platform is a challenge as it is managed by front line officers. Therefore, work to address these challenges is ongoing.
- 6.5 The PCC asked what should be done from a management and training perspective to ensure the standard of the forms improve. ACC Bridger replied that some forms make for uncomfortable reading. However, there are clear expectations around standards and as a learning organisation the force are able and willing to be transparent around this. In some instances, direct individual feedback will be given, alongside further training, lessons learned and positive reinforcement. Overall, there are vastly more good forms than bad ones, with a 95% compliance rate for completion.
- 6.6 The PCC asked if the Constabulary are supporting ISCRE with engagement at educational events. ACC Bridger responded that both the Constabulary and ISCRE have been involved in a number of joint engagement initiatives.
- 6.7 The PCC asked what needs to be done to improve the disproportionality for under 18-year-olds. ACC Bridger replied that this is a huge challenge for policing across the country. There is a need for continued engagement with the communities that are most effected by the use of powers, and reinforcement with the police that these powers are to be used only when there is the supporting intelligence.
- 6.8 The PCC asked about behaviour detection and how it can be utilised within Stop Search. ACC Bridger responded that specific training is required for delivering behaviour detection, there is a true science behind it, and both conscious and subconscious bias can have a huge impact

on it being delivered correctly. It therefore remains a tool used by the Project Servator team who have received the relevant training.

- 6.9 The PCC asked if there is a more significant drugs problem in Ipswich than anywhere else within the county. ACC Bridger responded that Ipswich is the biggest commercial location within the county, is the biggest transient area, and has the biggest long-standing threat of drug dealing, County Lines and other organised crime. In part this concentration within Ipswich is due to transport links to London. The threat of County Lines has hugely diminished over the past couple of years, due to the huge success of Operation Orochi.
- 6.10 The PCC asked why the find rate in strip searches has reduced significantly.
ACTION – ACC Bridger to find out why the find rate in strip searches has reduced significantly and provide an update to the PCC.
- 6.11 The PCC noted his concern about the strip search undertaken on a 13-year-old, which resulted in drugs being found, asking how normal this is. ACC Bridger replied that searches within custody is a vital part of keeping both staff and detainees safe. There is guidance and criteria that has to be met for a strip search, however the risk of having a 13-year-old alone in a cell with controlled drugs could be hugely problematic had the drugs not been found. There are times when, with the right criteria applied strip searches can be essential.
- 6.12 DCC Jones commented that it should be noted that front-line officers put themselves at risk whenever they are delivering these stop searches, without knowing what they may find. The use of force within Suffolk is low and proportionate and delivered with respect, which is something to be proud of, all whilst striving to be better.

7 **Workforce** (Paper AP24/33)

- 7.1 DCC Jones presented the report, highlighting the strong position in Suffolk. with the highest officer numbers for some years, providing visible officers that are embedded within our communities. Suffolk Constabulary remain committed to delivering the headcount figure of 1,425, to ensure funding from the government and the avoidance of penalty deductions.
- 7.2 The PCC asked what strategy has been implemented to improve the recruitment of ethnic minorities. DCC Jones responded that the hard work to be more representative of Suffolk around ethnicity has not had the impact hoped for. There are several reasons, which includes the structure of applications, the vetting process, and understanding what the force are looking for. With the new Operating Model seeing an increase in engagement opportunities, the force should gradually see more people from diverse background wanting a career in policing.
- 7.3 The PCC expressed his concern in the increase of conduct cases by 79%, and asked what is being done to address this issue and the underlying trends causing it. DCC Jones responded that he does not feel the behaviour of the workforce is getting worse, but there is a cohort of male officers behaving in a sexually inappropriate way to both members of the public and to other members of staff, who are letting down the reputation of the entire Constabulary. This behaviour will not be tolerated, with people now coming forward and reporting this.
- 7.4 The PCC asked what can be done to increase the speed of conduct cases. DCC Jones responded that not everything is within the force's control. There is a large regulatory

framework which provides individual protection, and ensures that the misconduct allegations are proved, making it fair and balanced. A significant change over the past few weeks is to have Chief Officers chairing these panels with an independent legal advisor, the Constabulary welcome this change. Senior management will report back on how these changes work.

- 7.5 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked if the Stay & Say interviews being conducted by HR have resulted in themes being identified and has resulted in retention of any staff. DCC Jones responded that if a leaver has had a clash with their line manager, when that manager conducts an exit interview, they will not give honest feedback to flag this. Therefore, these interviews with HR are allowing for a more honest dialogue with potential leavers. The overwhelming theme for police staff leaving is around pay and flexibility. Feedback received from those who have left, is that they miss the purpose and teamwork within the Constabulary.

8 Keeping our Roads Safe (Paper AP24/34)

- 8.1 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Dean noted that there is a significant amount of breadth and complexity within the report, and the overall key message shows there is exceptional governance within the area, particularly when it comes to partnerships with local agencies. The focus from a policing perspective remains on enforcement, and there are also many examples of successful cross-departmental working within the organisation.
- 8.2 There has been a slight increase in the Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) figures over the period, however there is only one hotspot within Suffolk. This is the junction of the A1156 Norwich Road in Ipswich, which has resulted in additional patrols. The KSI figures for motorcycles remain disproportionate but action is being taken to reduce motorcycle casualties. KSIs involving young people account for 26% of all KSI's, which reinforces the need for further education for young drivers, which is a focus for the force.
- 8.3 For safety camera generated enforcement there has been a 72% increase for the average speed cameras within the county, although a large proportion of this was generated by the A14 road works. The fixed speed cameras have seen a 63% decrease across the county, which is a similar decrease being seen across the country. An update on the progress with partners for the cameras at Brightwell Lakes to be turned on will be provided.
ACTION – ACC Dean to provide the PCC with a progress update on the average speed cameras at Brightwell Lakes.
- 8.4 Suffolk Constabulary continues to focus on the 'fatal four' offences in line with the National Roads Policing strategy. In May 2024 the force hosted Operation Alliance working with the Eastern Regions 7 Forces. This operation saw 100 vehicles stopped, four people arrested, five vehicles seized, and over 100 fines totally £22K.
- 8.5 The Suffolk Community Speedwatch scheme continues to be a positive community engagement initiative, with over 20,000 warning letters sent, and 899 volunteers engaged within the scheme.
- 8.6 Operation Snap is the Constabulary's response to the submission of dash cam footage from members of the community where they see or witness poor or inconsiderate driving. All submissions are reviewed by an experienced roads officer and assessed as to whether an

offence has been committed, and if the force is in a position to offer a warning letter, progress to prosecution, or take no further action.

- 8.7 The PCC commented that the overall speeding figures within the county continue to be a disappointment. With young drivers being particularly vulnerable, what else needs to be done to improve these figures. ACC Dean responded that this is being explored with the Roads Policing Team, with a focus on reducing younger casualties.
ACTION – ACC Dean to update the PCC on progress of plans to ensure younger drivers are safe on Suffolk’s roads.
- 8.8 The PCC asked what coverage the mobile ANPR cameras available in Suffolk provide. ACC Dean to find out how many vehicles have access to the mobile ANPR cameras and provide an update to the PCC.
ACTION – ACC Dean to find out how many vehicles have access to the mobile ANPR cameras and provide an update to the PCC.
- 8.9 The PCC asked whether the Sentinel teams are currently at full strength and how many there are. ACC Bridger responded numbers are at FTE as per the paper, but there are abstractions from this team to support other areas of the Constabulary, with this being the usual approach to flex operational teams to support wherever needed.
- 8.10 The PCC commented that the 106 agreement for funding from Sizewell C for additional officers and vehicles will be fully resourced by early 2025.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 There was no other business.

The open part of the meeting closed at 12:02 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]

- 10 **Closed minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2024** (Paper AP24/35)
- 10.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 11 **Risk Register / Chief Officer Risk Register** (Paper AP24/36)
- 11.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.
- 12 **Civil Claims and Employment Tribunals** (Paper AP24/37)

12.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

The meeting closed at 12:10.

Summary of Actions

Item / Paper	Action	Owner
4.8 Improving Confidence and Satisfaction	ACC Bridger to provide an update the PCC on the new strategies being deployed by the Rural Crime Teams, and how they are progressing.	ACC Bridger
6.10 Use of Police Powers	ACC Bridger to find out why the find rate in strip searches has reduced significantly and provide an update to the PCC.	ACC Bridger
8.3 Keeping Our Roads Safe	ACC Dean to provide the PCC with a progress update on the average speed cameras at Brightwell Lakes.	ACC Dean
8.7 Keeping Our Roads Safe	ACC Dean to update the PCC on progress of plans to ensure younger drivers are safe on Suffolk's roads.	ACC Dean
8.8 Keeping Our Roads Safe	ACC Dean to find out how many vehicles have access to the mobile ANPR cameras and provide an update to the PCC.	ACC Dean