

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 13 September 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

Julie Dean (Assistant Chief Constable), Rob Jones (Deputy Chief Constable), Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable), Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer).

In attendance for the Public Agenda via Teams

Rowena Lindberg (Police and Crime Panel Substitute Member), Adriana Stapleton (Police and Crime Panel Support Officer).

Apologies:

Eamonn Bridger (Assistant 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 19 July 2024 (Paper AP24/38)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 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 AP24/39)

- 3.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) presented the period 4 Financial Monitoring report, covering until the end of July 2024. The key headlines were a revenue underspend forecast of £1.6m capital. The table at point 3.1 shows current underspend across expenditure lines, the related corporate and continuous inflation costs, and a forecast of a break-even position by the end of the financial year, with the current underspend being largely driven by interest income and recharges from mutual aid.
- 3.2 Section 5 of the report for specific grants, highlights the requirement to maintain the officer headcount figure of 1425, which will be scored at the end of the month. The latest figure from the Constabulary is that this target will be met if not exceeded.
- 3.3 The PCC noted a comment of concern relating to budget setting and the financial settlement that will be received from the government, who so far have provided no indication of the figures. He is very much aware that the country has financial difficulties and is concerned that they will place the burden onto the Council Tax locally.
- 3.4 The PCC commented on the officer headcount figures, and the penalty clauses for not hitting the mandated figure of 1425, believing this approach distorts organisational behaviour.
- 3.5 The PCC commented on the government announcement of a potential uplift of 13,000 police officers; he has spoken with the new Home Secretary regarding how this would be funded but no answer has been forthcoming.
- 3.6 The PCC asked at section 8 of the report, how the cash balance has increased by £20m in two months. The ACO responded that the pensions grant is received from the Home Office as a lump sum, which then reduces over the year, therefore the report is showing a large spike in the cash balance. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) added that this is the highest cash balance seen within the financial year.
- 3.7 The PCC asked whether the difficulties in replacing fleet vehicles have been due to financial pressures or supply chain issues. The ACO confirmed that the supply chain lead times have improved greatly, however there is still a time delay for commissioning vehicles and ensuring they are kitted out to the specification required by the police.
- 3.8 The PCC asked for further details to be provided at point 3.3.1 for £249k non-paid costs overspend relating to legal and subsistence and hotel costs. The ACO responded that the key area of overspend are related to legal costs and will provide further details.
ACTION – ACO to provide the CFO with a detailed breakdown of the £240K non-paid costs overspend relating to legal and subsistence and hotel costs.
- 3.9 The PCC asked are the ANPR cameras listed under Joint Capital Expenditure are those positioned in vehicles or on the roadside. The ACO replied that he would confirm this detail and provide an answer to the CFO.
ACTION – ACO to confirm ANPR cameras listed in the Joint Capital Expenditure are positioned in vehicles or on the roadside.

4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims (Paper AP24/40)

- 4.1 Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Jones presented this report, stating that overall Suffolk Constabulary are proud of the quality and range of support that they provide to victims.

- 4.2 The PCC asked with reference to point 1.6, what additional resources had been provided to deal with the problems caused by the courts backlog. Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Dean responded that after Covid an additional 10 posts were put into the Victims and Witness Care Unit, and the report refers to the continuance of these posts. They are temporary positions, but the Constabulary are retaining them as the criminal justice system isn't recovering at the speed anticipated.
- 4.3 The PCC asked at point 3.1 of the report, what new metrics are being considered, and how this relates to Athena. ACC Dean replied that the Victims Code has introduced several changes, and that there will be a responsibility for all agencies to report compliance against the code. Work is ongoing with changes due April 2025. For Athena there remains some challenges with data extraction, but one force area is currently running a trial and is assisting Suffolk in terms of how data can be secured against the Victim's Code.
- 4.4 The PCC asked for an explanation of what the graphs on page 5 and 6 of the report are showing. DCC Jones responded that the graphs were intended to provide further detail of sustained good levels of compliance. For future papers the Constabulary will look to present the information in a more effective format.
ACTION – DCC Jones to ensure “VPS/BIS Offered” and “% provided information about investigation” are presented differently for the next report.
- 4.5 The PCC queried, whether 60% of victims being offered a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) is a good enough figure. DCC Jones responded that the percentage figure is what is captured through the system, and that officers do not always record when this work is done. He also noted that the timing of when a personal impact statement is taken is also important. Sometimes it is immediately recorded on Body Worn Video (BWV), and other times longer-term statements will be taken and therefore not included in the figures. The important part is having this ready for the decision point of charging and for presenting at court.
- 4.6 The PCC asked if there are sufficient resources in place to support with the ongoing courts back log to support both victims and witnesses. ACC Dean responded that the planned courts recovery for March 2025 is looking unlikely and discussions are ongoing as to how the Constabulary work across the partnership to provide support to victims.
- 4.7 The PCC asked who is responsible for supervising the early released prisoners and is the Constabulary prepared and able to deal with any increased criminality triggered by it. ACC Dean explained the Probation Service is responsible, and Suffolk Constabulary will continue to work with them in partnership. The Constabulary will track released individuals to assess the impact both on the community and the force.
- 4.8 The PCC asked what the Constabulary are doing to improve Domestic Abuse (DA) outcome rates as referenced at point 5.3. DCC Jones responded that this is down to training, with new recruits and the continuous professional development of all police officers focusing on providing the best possible support for Domestic Abuse victims. Part of this is ensuring the capturing of strong evidence as close as possible to the event happening, including the use of BWV to show the situation as it happens. It will be victim informed, documenting any injuries both physical and psychological, including coercion and financial control. It may include recordings of 999 calls made, finding witnesses and CCTV, plus the impact of any children who are exposed to DA. Another part for consideration is the risk assessment, with

high-risk DA perpetrators being prioritised every day, to ensure they are being brought to justice.

- 4.9 The PCC asked what has driven the increase in Clare's Law disclosures. DCC Jones responded that residents in Suffolk can make a Clare's Law request online, via the Single Online Home portal. The use of technology has made it easier and more accessible.
- 4.10 The CFO asked at point 5.3, the reduction of Domestic Abuse crimes is attributed to the changes in the Home Office counting rules, does the Constabulary have a feel for the actual movement. DCC Jones replied that Home Office changes provide a more consistent national picture in how you classify multiple victims and events, and to improve the integrity of the data. The figures are not like for like so it is difficult to determine the actual direction of travel when comparing with the old data sets. There is a focus on repeat victims and stopping those patterns of behaviour rather than an analysis of the figures at this stage.
- 4.11 The CFO asked at table 5.4, what has driven a 20% reduction in Incidents with High-Risk Assessments. DCC Jones replied that for high-risk cohorts' higher quality interventions can be implemented, which are more likely to result in behavioural change.
- 4.12 The PCC welcomed the 13% decline in Domestic Abuse figures, however he noted that solve rates have also reduced and asked what else could be done by the Constabulary to improve this. DCC Jones responded that there are two areas being worked on, under the 3-year Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy. Technology and methods have changed so a refresh to push stronger positive outcomes is underway. Secondly the ongoing challenges of the criminal justice system means Constabulary are looking at the use of Out of Court Disposals for offenders and outcomes and where the DA Perpetrator scheme could be utilised.
- 4.13 The PCC asked with reference to the table at the top of page 11, was the Constabulary confident it contained the correct data. DCC Jones responded that no they weren't, and they were grateful that this had been highlighted. The data for each area is correct but there is a missing line, which when added would mean the totals column would then be accurate.
ACTION - DCC Jones to share the complete chart from p.11 of the report with the PCC.
- 4.14 The PCC asked at point 6.3, what are the specific areas of improvement required between the force and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The Chief Constable stated that regular meetings at all levels between Suffolk Constabulary and the CPS, look at what improvements can be made to ensure victims receive the best service from both agencies as and when they arise. There were no specific areas.
- 4.15 The PCC asked as mentioned at point 6.8 why the CPS struggling to meet the 28-day turn around. ACC Dean said there are healthy discussions around resourcing challenges faced by both organisations. The CPS is also affected by the backlogs within the Criminal Justice System. In terms of holding the CPS to account for turnaround times, they are evaluated on this nationally. The PCC asked if the CPS is lobbying to address the issues with the courts. ACC Dean responded that she would be happy to discuss the point via a separate meeting.
ACTION – ACC Dean to further discuss the CPS and courts lobbying issues with the PCC.
- 4.16 The PCC asked if the Mountain Healthcare Contract as referenced at point 6.10, has now been resolved. ACC Dean replied that work continues with 7-Forces Procurement. In terms of delivery against the contract, resourcing is at about 80% overall, with Suffolk's figure

being in the region of 85%. In terms of travelling and out of hours transfers, this is subject to discussion at both the local and regional meeting. Mountain Healthcare have been held to account where they have not been able to resource the site appropriately, but the resourcing picture continues to improve, and discussions are continuing with NHS England.

- 4.17 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked if any of the internal learnings from the Operation Soteria assessment could be transferred to DA. DCC Jones stated there are similar principles used, and Suffolk are strong adopters of Op Soteria so case studies from the assessment could be provided to discover learning to transfer to DA.

ACTION – DCC Jones to provide further case studies from Op Soteria highlighting internal learnings that are transferable to DA.

- 4.18 The PCC asked what benefits are being seen from the Hate Crime Action plan. DCC Jones responded that hate crime is very sensitive to national events, and the action plan understands and responds to this. Within the Operating Model Suffolk Constabulary is working to build better engagement with people from backgrounds who are more likely to be targeted by hate. Nationally work is being done to look at the threshold of classification for what is free speech, what is unpleasant content, and what is a hate incident that needs to be recorded by the police.

- 4.19 The PCC asked that following a meeting with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, are police officers trained to respond to instances where specialist support dogs are interfered with. The Chief Constable responded that this is one of the many examples of someone who could be a victim of hate crime, which is included within the training of officers, but the specifics of the victims' needs may not be tailored to one particular set of circumstances.

- 4.20 The PCC asked what the Diverse Community Coordinator will be delivering. DCC Jones responded that an update on the role would be provided in the next report.

ACTION – DCC Jones to provide an update on the Diverse Community Coordinator role in the next Supporting Vulnerable Victims report.

- 4.21 The PCC asked at point 8.2 does the Unaccompanied Asylum Children Team place additional demand on the Constabulary. DCC Jones responded that the numbers are low and the policing role is quite specific.

5 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending (Paper AP24/41)

- 5.1 ACC Dean provided a brief overview of this report stating that it spans several areas across the Constabulary both in Suffolk & the joint space. The ongoing backlogs within the Criminal Justice System as previously discussed, remains a challenge to both the Constabulary and partners to manage offenders and to seek timely access to justice.

- 5.2 The PCC asked at point 3.4, is the golden hour working and what difference is it making to performance overall. ACC Dean replied that it is working well with significant improvements seen in the partnership with Custody, CSIM and the Safeguarding Management Team.

- 5.3 The PCC asked if the release plans are being shared, what are its implications, and who is responsible to ensure this happens. ACC Dean confirmed the plans are shared, which with youth offenders helps to keep them secure so hopefully they don't reoffend. In terms of responsibility, it would be the Youth Offending team, however it is very case specific. The

team will engage with the parents or carers, look at the release plan and see what can be done to prevent reoffending.

- 5.4 The PCC asked at point 3.9 when there is a positive sample and diversionary services are available, does an offender have to attend, how is this paid for, and what follow-up is in place. ACC Dean replied that the referrals onto diversionary services are voluntary. ACC Dean will share a list of the services officered and how the referrals work.
ACTION – ACC Dean to share further details with the PCC on referrals to the diversionary services.
- 5.5 The PCC asked as the mental health bed capacity remains an ongoing concern, what are Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT) doing to provide additional beds for the people of Suffolk. ACC Dean replied that detainees in Suffolk who require a mental health bed, will follow an escalation process requiring chief officer approval. NSFT are contacted to ensure the process to obtain a bed is being precipitated. DCC Jones added that overall, he believes the situation is improving, however there remains a shortage nationally of beds to support those in mental health crisis. The fact remains that even if a bed is available it may not be within the county. Keeping people held in unsuitable police detention is now rare compared to two years ago. The PCC added how does this fit within Right Care Right Person (RCRP). ACC Dean replied that currently RCRP does not pick up the custody element, but there has been discussion as to whether it should. The Chief Constable added that RCRP is a 4-stage approach, with stages, 1 and 2 completed within Suffolk. Stage 3 will look at transformation, and finally stage 4 concentrates on the cost of the elements.
- 5.6 The PCC asked at point 3.15, what the timescale is for receiving the results of the Custody Survey. ACC Dean replied that she would confirm and let the PCC know.
ACTION – ACC Dean to update the PCC on the timescale for the Custody Survey as referenced at point 3.15 of the report.
- 5.7 ACC Dean mentioned to the PCC that Suffolk Constabulary has been recognised by the National Police Chiefs Council for their leading work on Out of Court Resolutions. The PCC thanked ACC Dean for this update.
- 5.8 The PCC asked for clarification of the final sentence at point 4.8 of the report. ACC Dean agreed that the wording could be better, but she believed it was saying that the expansion and communication with voluntary groups across Suffolk would result in a better understanding within communities of exactly what Community Resolution entails.
- 5.9 The PCC requested further information on the research that has been completed at point 4.12 of the report.
ACTION – ACC Dean to provide further details to the PCC of the research that has been conducted as referenced at point 4.12 of the report.
- 5.10 The PCC asked who will be paying for the costs as referenced at point 4.15 in the future. ACC Dean confirmed that currently these costs are paid for by Suffolk Constabulary, and moving forward it will be paid for by the offender.
- 5.11 The PCC asked for a breakdown of the ethnicity figures at point 4.17 of the report.
ACTION – ACC Dean to provide a breakdown of the ethnicity figures as referenced at point 4.17 of the report.

- 5.12 The PCC raised that at point 4.22 the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data is for 2022, and therefore over two years old. ACC Dean responded that the national data is delayed in terms of timeliness but point 4.19 of the report shows that for the period July 2023 – June 2024 within Suffolk 93% of offenders were not suspects in further offences in the following 12–18-month period.
- 5.13 The PCC asked what changes are being proposed for the Bail Management Unit as mentioned at point 5.2 of the report. ACC Dean responded that the Athena 6 upgrade will result in some automation, which would allow resources to be reprioritised across the organisation.
- 5.14 The PCC asked how Restorative Justice can be further developed and is there any evidence that its use helps to reduce reoffending. ACC Dean explained there are real opportunities to expand this, including the use of testimonials showing both victim and offender perspectives. In terms of figures around reducing reoffending, this would need to be looked at further.
ACTION – ACC Dean to look at the Restorative Justice data to see if it supports a reduction in reoffending rates.
- 5.15 The PCC expressed concern that out of 115 perpetrators who joined the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme, 63 have withdrawn. ACC Dean responded that the Constabulary recognise that these figures could be better, and if the 115 referrals had been triaged and reduced, a higher completion rate would have resulted. DCC Jones added that a triage process has now been put in place, the aim of this is to address the attrition rate. The PCC requested updated figures once the triage process is imbedded.
ACTION – ACC Dean to update the PCC with the DAPU programme figures once the triage process has been imbedded.
- 5.16 The PCC asked with reference to the Public Protection Unit, is it known how many sex offenders were originally Suffolk residents, versus those who have relocated to the area since being placed on the register, as there is a funding implication. The Chief Constable responded that is difficult to define exactly what classifies as being ‘originally from Suffolk’.
ACTION – PCC / Chief Constable to look further at the funding question for registered sex offenders within the county via Weekly Conference.
- 5.17 The Policy and Commissioning Officer asked on page 21 of the report, does the screenshot showing cases that are arrest ready but without an Officer in Charge (OIC) allocated impact the forces’ ability to arrest. ACC Dean responded that the screenshot was of a constantly fluctuating data set, and that not having an OIC allocated does not mean work is not going on in the background.
- 5.18 The PCC asked at point 10.1 of the report, does the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team get paid to caretake cases from other areas. ACC Dean responded that it is usual to caretake cases for other force areas, and other areas will caretake some of Suffolks cases. There is no funding, it is a quid pro quo arrangement.
- 5.19 The PCC asked what changes within the probation services have resulted in a reduction in IOM cases. ACC Dean responded that she was unsure and will find out.
ACTION – ACC Dean to update the PCC on changes within the probation services that have resulted in a reduction of IOM cases.

6 Responding to Fraud (Paper AP24/42)

- 6.1 DCC Jones summarised that the Constabulary's response to fraud is a complex process. The Constabulary tries to keep it simple making it as easy as possible for victims of crime to navigate their way through the process. The biggest influence Suffolk Constabulary has in this crime area is around delivering successful local preventative advice and working with partners such as Trading Standards, to minimise the impact on individuals and communities within the county.
- 6.2 The PCC commented that the data within the report shows a considerable increase in fraud, therefore what plans are there for increasing capacity in the future. DCC Jones responded that investigating fraud is a balance between a special team, investigators and the Community Policing Teams. Currently the force is successful at solving fraud investigations where the suspect is located within Suffolk. Training is currently provided by the City of London police, which ensures that all officers are receiving the necessary knowledge to deal with fraud. Suffolk Constabulary is solving more investigations compared to two years ago, so is keeping pace in terms of outcomes and conditions.
- 6.3 The PCC asked about fraud offences recorded and investigated in Suffolk but not requiring direct input from the Constabulary. DCC Jones responded that as fraud is a borderless global crime, and much of it originates via AI systems internationally, ERSOU picks up international coordination and provides the Constabulary with data, this helps to provide an overall picture of fraud in Suffolk. The Constabulary will continue to act and concentrate on where it can intervene positively within the county. Action Fraud plays an active role in fraud investigations, plus the amount of work done by banks as part of their customer service provides early intervention identifying financial irregularities.
- 6.4 The PCC asked with reference to point 3.7 of the report, do cease and desist notices work. DCC Jones replied that they are an appropriate intervention which does work, particularly for people that aren't directly involved in criminality.
- 6.5 The PCC asked at point 7.9 of the report Suffolk has been assessed as 'stronger', what is required to improve this rating further. DCC Jones responded that this is a good position to be in, and further details will be included within the next report.
ACTION – DCC Jones to ensure further details are provided within the next fraud report to support the NCO self-assessment rating.
- 6.6 The PCC asked when will the Fraud App be launched. DCC Jones responded that work is ongoing to achieve this.
- 6.7 The PCC asked how the ICT network will be upgraded to meet the requirements of the new Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting and Analysis Service (FCCRAS) which is intended to replace Action Fraud. DCC Jones responded that he was unsure of the detail and would provide the PCC with an update once further information was available.
ACTION – DCC Jones to provide an update to the PCC on the ICT network upgrades required for FCCRAS.

7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 There was no other business.
The open part of the meeting closed at 11:25 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 19 July 2024 (Paper AP24/43)

8.1 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

9 Protective Services Command Update (Paper AP24/44)

9.1 Suffolk Constabulary invited questions on this report.

The meeting closed at 11:30.

Summary of Actions

Item / Paper	Action	Owner
3.8 Financial Monitoring	ACO to provide the CFO with a detailed breakdown of the £240K non-paid costs overspend relating to legal and subsistence and hotel costs.	ACO
3.9 Financial Monitoring	ACO to confirm ANPR cameras listed in the Joint Capital Expenditure are positioned in vehicles or on the roadside.	ACO
4.4 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	DCC Jones to ensure “VPS/BIS Offered” and “% provided information about investigation” are presented differently for the next report.	DCC Jones
4.13 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	DCC Jones to share the complete chart from p.11 of the report with the PCC.	DCC Jones
4.15 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	ACC Dean to further discuss the CPS and courts lobbying issues with the PCC.	ACC Dean
4.17 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	DCC Jones to provide further case studies from Op Soteria highlighting internal learnings that are transferable to DA.	DCC Jones
4.20 Supporting Vulnerable Victims	DCC Jones to provide an update on the Diverse Community Coordinator role in the next Supporting Vulnerable Victims report.	DCC Jones
5.4 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to share further details with the PCC on referrals to the diversionary services.	ACC Dean

5.6 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to update the PCC on the timescale for the custody survey as referenced at point 3.15 of the report.	ACC Dean
5.9 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to provide further details to the PCC of the research that has been conducted as referenced at point 4.12 of the report.	ACC Dean
5.11 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to provide a breakdown of the ethnicity figures as referenced at point 4.17 of the report.	ACC Dean
5.14 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to look at the Restorative Justice data to see if it supports a reduction in reoffending rates.	ACC Dean
5.15 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to update the PCC with the DAPU programme figures once the triage process has been imbedded.	ACC Dean
5.16 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	PCC / Chief Constable to look further at the funding question for registered sex offenders within the county via Weekly Conference.	PCC / Chief Constable
5.19 Managing Offenders and Reducing Reoffending	ACC Dean to update the PCC on changes within the probation services that have resulted in a reduction of IOM cases.	ACC Dean
6.5 Responding to Fraud	DCC Jones to ensure further details are provided within the next fraud report to support the NCO self-assessment rating.	DCC Jones
6.7 Responding to Fraud	DCC Jones to provide an update to the PCC on the ICT network upgrades required for FCCRAS.	DCC Jones