

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2013

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Foreword from the Chairman

“This first year of the Police and Crime Panel has been one of learning and assimilating complex information at a considerable pace; as the reading of this report clearly demonstrates.

The office of Police and Crime Commissioner came into being in November 2012 and thus the Panel had to deal with a totally new entity. I am proud to say that the Panel has undertaken its role with due diligence and professionalism. In particular I should like to thank Rev Canon Paul Daltry, Vice-Chairman, who has unstintingly supported me and given the Panel the benefit of his substantial knowledge with regard to the Night time Economy. I should also like to thank the officers for their excellent work and helpful advice throughout the year.”

PATRICIA O'BRIEN

Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Introduction and Background

This is the first annual report of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel, which was established in 2012 in compliance with the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Police and Crime Panel held its first formal meeting in October 2012. Tim Passmore was elected as the first Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Suffolk on 15 November 2012, with responsibility for setting the direction and objectives of the Suffolk police force, and for holding the Chief Constable to account. PCCs are responsible for the police budget and local council tax precept within their area including crime and disorder reduction and victim support grants.

The Police and Crime Panel's role is to scrutinise and support the performance of the PCC over a range of policy areas, including the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel also has a role in the handling of complaints against the PCC and the confirmation of key staff posts within the Office of the PCC.

The Panel comprises elected members of local authorities across Suffolk working alongside two people who are independent co-opted members. Together the Panel members reflect the breadth of communities in Suffolk.

The Panel has certain statutory functions, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:

- reviewing the police and crime plan
- reviewing the PCC's annual report
- reviewing the policing precept
- carrying out confirmation hearings for certain senior appointments
- carrying out confirmation hearings for the chief constable
- investigating complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC
- supporting and scrutinising the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC

Further information about the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel is available on the Panel's website at: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-community/working-in-partnership/police-and-crime-panel>.

The Panel's annual report will normally cover the past calendar year, however in this first instance it also includes the latter half of 2012, when the Panel was first established.

Other Public Scrutiny of the PCC

Ultimately, the PCCs are held to account by the electorate, with elections every 4 years. In addition, the Suffolk PCC has held various meetings in public, such as his meetings with the Chief Constable every two months, and a series of public forums in each district / borough across the county. There is also ad-hoc direct engagement of public, community groups, Councillors, etc. with the PCC or the Panel, and there has been public scrutiny via national Select Committee(s), and also in the Local and National Press / Media.

Who's Who

The members of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel are:

Cllr Patricia O'Brien	(County Council, Conservative) [Chairman]
Rev. Canon Paul Daltry	(Co-opted) [Vice Chairman]
Mr. Manwar Ali	(Co-opted)
Cllr Alison Cackett	(Waveney District, Conservative)
Cllr Glen Chisholm	(Ipswich Borough, Labour)
Cllr Peter Gardiner	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr Len Jacklin	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr Diana Kearsley	(Mid Suffolk District, Conservative)
Cllr Tim Marks	(St Edmundsbury Borough, Conservative)
Cllr Josh Sayles	(Suffolk Coastal District, Conservative)

Cllr Eddie Stewart (Forest Heath District, Conservative)
Cllr Rex Thake (Babergh District, Independent)
Cllr David Wood (County Council, Liberal Democrat)
[Each of the councillor members also has a named substitute member]

Some part-time officer support to the Panel is provided by the host authority, Suffolk County Council, on behalf of all the Suffolk Local Authorities. The additional costs incurred in supporting the Police and Crime Panel are funded from a specific Home Office grant made available for this purpose.

Panel Activities and Achievements 2012/13

During 2012 and 2013 the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel has held six formal Panel meetings, on 23 Oct 2012, 25 Jan 2013, 8 Feb 2013, 4 Mar 2013, 5 July 2013, and 11 Oct 2013. There was a desire to ensure that these public meetings offered county wide opportunity for participation, and as such the March and July meetings were held in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, respectively, with the other meetings being held in Ipswich.

Details of the formal meetings and the agendas and papers for them are available online: <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/index.aspx>. *[On that web page, select the link to: 'Police and Crime Panel (Joint Committee)']*

In addition to the six formal Panel meetings in 2012 and 2013 there have been meetings at various points in the year involving one or more Panel members, such as planning and briefing meetings with the Chairman & Vice-Chairman, informal meetings with the PCC and his staff, Panel workshops in September and December 2013 to plan and scope the forthcoming meetings, and participation by the Chairman in the Home Affairs Select Committee in May 2013.

To date there have been just three instances where members of the public have written specifically to the Police and Crime Panel requesting that a particular issue be considered by the Panel.

The Panel's achievements can be summarised as follows:

Prior to the November 2012 PCC Elections, the Panel:

- Confirmed membership of 11 Suffolk councillors and appointment of two co-opted members.
- Appointed its Chairman and Vice Chairman for the 2012/13 year.
- Agreed its Rules of Procedure.

- Reviewed the approach to developing and determining Local Policing Priorities.

After the PCC Elections, in **January 2013** the Panel:

- Reviewed the PCC's draft Police and Crime Plan for Suffolk, and the PCC's proposed Precept for Suffolk. Formal reports and recommendations to the PCC were written and are available on the Panel's website.
- Agreed delegation arrangements for dealing with complaints against the PCC.
- Considered a report on the PCC's decision making arrangements.

In **February 2013** the Panel held a formal Confirmation Hearing for the appointment of the new Chief Constable for Suffolk. The Panel's formal report and recommendation to the PCC is available on the Panel website.

In **March 2013**, the Panel:

- Developed working practice to promote the work of the Panel, including using the County Council's website.
- Considered an update on the PCC's framework for commissioning and awarding grants for crime and disorder reduction.
- Considered information about feedback received by the PCC on his Draft Police and Crime Plan.
- Reviewed the Panel Arrangements, Rules of Procedure and finances.
- Had various members involved informally in providing feedback on PCC's proposed grant awards, considering queries from UK Youth Parliament about 'Youth PCCs', and participating in the PCC's public engagement meetings in various locations across the county.
- Vice-chairman participated in the Local Government Association (LGA) PCP conference held in London. Some of the learning and ideas were then used in formulating the Suffolk Panel's annual work programme, for example the review each quarter of one of the PCC's four key objectives in his Plan.

In **May 2013** the Suffolk Panel Chairman was one of three invited to give evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee in London. The Suffolk PCC also gave evidence to the Select Committee.

In **July 2013**, the Panel:

- reviewed the PCC's Annual Report and highlighted the decline in performance of the solved rate for domestic crimes and for serious sexual offences; there would be regular updates to the Panel on this matter.
- discussed speeding, and the use of mobile camera vans, and requested a summary of the analysis after it had been prepared for the PCC.

- highlighted the importance of joint working with other agencies, including local authorities and the Voluntary & Community Sector, in tackling anti-social behaviour.
- looked at the PCC's 'Public Engagement and Decision Making Framework'. Panel members questioned the PCC about engagement with young people, engagement with recipients of crime and disorder reduction grants, and support for existing initiatives focused on alcohol abuse and the night-time economy. It was agreed that the Panel would receive future Press Releases about the PCC's priority focus areas.
- reviewed specific PCC Decisions including variation of some of the Chief Constable terms and conditions (T&Cs). Noting the lack of a national agreement on T&Cs and personal insurance, the Panel expressed concern to the Home Office in a letter in August, to which a supportive response was received from the Minister in October, coincident with his visit to Suffolk.
- discussed and agreed its annual [Forward Work Plan](#).

In **October 2013**, the Panel:

- held a further review of PCC commissioning, with the PCC repeating his commitment to continued commissioning of good, collective work, on crime reduction and prevention by local voluntary sector organisations.
- following further discussion with the PCC about the Constabulary performance in dealing with Serious Sexual Offences, the Panel requested more detailed focus, at its next meeting, on what the PCC is intending to do to drive improvement.
- members undertook to help raise awareness and encourage the public to report to the Constabulary, and if not satisfied, then to contact the PCC directly with factual information about their concerns regarding policing.
- reviewed and agreed to continue the existing arrangements for handling PCC complaints.
- agreed to continue the practice whereby Panel members would hold a workshop to prepare for the next public Police and Crime Panel meeting, to scope the key lines of enquiry in advance of the meeting.

In **November 2013**, the Panel Chairman took part in the second Local Government Association Police and Crime Panel conference in London, at which there was further mutual shared learning with other Panels, one year on from the PCCs commencing their roles.

Panel Development and Training

Four Panel induction meetings have been held, on 24 July 2012, 10 September 2012, 18 October 2012 and, following the County Council elections, 28 June 2013.

In addition some of the Panel members or support officers have participated in PCP shared learning conferences organised by the LGA in March and November 2013, and by CoPaCC in October 2013.

The induction events and conferences have all generated useful insights which have been incorporated into the Suffolk Panel's forward thinking, as well as providing opportunity for sharing with others the experiences and achievements of the Suffolk Panel.

Some stakeholder feedback has also been directly solicited, the responses to which are shown at the end of this Report.

The Panel's Forward Work Plan

In including a matter in its Forward Work Plan, the Panel takes into account that:

- the matter comes within its terms of reference;
- there is a significant level of public interest in the matter;
- it is an issue which has been raised by auditors or other inspection regimes,
- the effect of new government guidance or legislation;
- there is an opportunity to identify and promote good practice;
- priority should be given to subjects where scrutiny could make a difference by having a positive impact and adding value to the work of the PCC.

The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel considered its annual work programme in draft in April, and it was published for discussion and agreement at the July 2013 Panel meeting. The annual forward work plan is focussed around:

- Nominally quarterly formal meetings, with considerable informal preparatory work and stakeholder interactions around these.
- Regular statutory reviews such as the PCC's annual proposed precept (and any formal variation to the PCC's police and crime plan).
- Some topics for more specific focus arising from previous Panel meetings, or matters arising in between the formal meetings. This has included, for example, focus on Commissioning, Serious Sexual Offences, Mobile Speed Cameras, the PCC Complaints process, the 'Stage 2' transfer of staff from PCC to Chief Constable, and the process regarding property transactions.

- A quarterly schedule of Status Reviews focused on each of the (four) strategic objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017.
- The Panel's own annual report, summarising achievements in the preceding year.
- Annual appointment of the Panel Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- An 'Information Bulletin' containing briefing information of potential interest to the Panel (e.g. A summary of PCC Decisions since the last meeting).

The Panel's published Forward Work Plan is available online at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-community/working-in-partnership/police-and-crime-panel> (the link to the Forward Work Plan is about half-way down the page)

Feedback

Feedback was requested and received from some of the Panel's key stakeholders is as follows:

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Tim Passmore:

"Clearly the Panel should focus on its statutory purpose and deliver that against the Ministerial and Parliamentary intent of the legislation which was for the Panel to be a light touch scrutiny vehicle. That said it is important to have people appointed to it who are prepared to acquire the knowledge to support and challenge in a meaningful way. It requires time and application to discharge the Panel Members' role in an effective way in the relatively infrequent interactions with the Commissioner. Minimising member turnover and maximising attendance at meetings would be helpful in this regard."

Chief Constable, Douglas Paxton:

"I am grateful for the invitation to comment on the work of the Panel over the course of past year and on the areas of focus for the year ahead."

Firstly may I compliment the Chair of the Panel, the Members and Suffolk County Council Officers in delivering the first full year of work. In a brand new landscape of operational independence, governance and scrutiny, it is a credit to all of the key players in Suffolk that in very quick time the arrangements have shown to be both workable and in line with the overall scheme intended by Parliament.

Secondly, it is important in this context to bear in mind that the legislation puts some distance between the role of the Chief Constable and the work of the

Panel. It is of course for the Police and Crime Commissioner to scrutinise my delivery of an efficient and effective police service whereas it is for the Panel to scrutinise and support the Commissioner. I can only say that in my view this is an important part of the discipline inherent in the legislation and I do feel it is both helpful and commendable that the Panel has adhered to this principle very closely. Preserving the operational independence of the police service in a democracy is incredibly important and I feel that the Suffolk Crime Panel has played its role in securing just that.

In general terms I have observed that the Panel has exercised scrutiny where performance information has indicated the Commissioner's scrutiny role may benefit the public interest, and I am thinking of the sexual offences detection rate in particular. I am pleased to say that the Commissioner's focus with the plan and the ongoing scrutiny has enabled the Constabulary to make significant progress and the Panel will no doubt have satisfied itself and that in this, and other examples, the governance model has proved effective.

In terms of potential focus in the future I am pleased to confirm as Chair of the Norfolk/Suffolk local Criminal Justice Board that both Tim Passmore and Stephen Bett are now full members of the Board. Together we are starting to work with renewed vigour on the topics of witness services, criminal justice system efficiency and reducing re-offending. This aspect of the Commissioner's work, alongside an enhanced role in co-ordinating community safety and having due regard to safeguarding were clear aspirations for the Government when creating the Commissioner's role. The Constabulary intends to play its part in shaping and contributing to a new partnership environment in which the potential of the Commissioner's role can be fully realised. These are new and exciting opportunities and no doubt various elements will attract the Panel's interest.

I hope the above comments are helpful and if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me."

Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Cllr Colin Spence:

"The Panel has clearly established itself on a firm footing with the introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and has engaged in a broad range of work scrutinising the performance of the PCC. The Panel has applied a degree of challenge and support for the PCC's activities over the priority areas encompassed in the Police and Crime Plan.

It is clear from both the Police and Crime Plan and the work of the Panel to date that partnership working will be the key to successful delivery of Policing

and Community Safety in the future. The Panel should ensure that the approach to partnership working is effective and is maximising the benefits for the people of Suffolk and is delivering value for money.

The Panel has operated effectively in the last 12 months and I am confident that will continue as the approach becomes increasingly established. I believe the work of the Panel would, at this stage, benefit from a wider engagement with other stakeholders to ensure its work and scrutiny continues to be developed from a fully informed position.”

Safer Suffolk Partnership - Community Safety Team, John Sanderson:

“The work of the Police and Crime Panel has been logically structured and has covered the significant areas of policy development and decision making pertinent to the Police and Crime Commissioners activities. Informal discussions with supporting officers and the Panel Chair have been effective in suitably identifying the topics for the panel to consider. The Panel has clearly used the information that drives PCC decision making around ongoing Force Performance to focus some of the scrutiny it has undertaken.

For 2014/15 the increased remit of the PCC in commissioning funding for victim services will be a key topic for the Panel to consider. The immediate and ongoing impacts of the reducing funds available for Community Safety work, and the changes to the process for allocating this funding, will also be important. The Panel may also wish to scrutinise the role of the PCC in leading partnership work.

It is important that the Panel continues to draw on a range of stakeholders to identify the topics it considers. It could be effective to increase the contact between Panel members and practitioners in order to allow a more informed view from the wider panel members.”

Suffolk County Council Monitoring Officer, Tim Ryder:

“I attended the early meetings of the Panel but not the March, July or October meetings. Consequently, some of my observations may no longer be relevant! I have been involved in the informal workshops and planning sessions.

(i) The Panel were thrown in at the deep end with the early meetings having to review the Police and Crime Plan, the proposed Precept, and the Confirmation Hearing for the Chief Constable; all weighty topics at a time when relationships, confidence and understanding were at an early stage.

While the Panel performed their statutory responsibilities, I did not feel that they were operating as a team when questioning the PCC. Individual members asked questions but then the focus would suddenly switch, not necessarily being focussed on key risk areas. Requests from the Chairman for question or comment would often be followed by silence.

However, my impression from the informal sessions recently is that this has changed, and there is more active participation. Understanding of the role of the Panel, the PCC and the Constabulary's objectives has increased and this is reflected in the quality of discussion.

Aside from the statutory responsibilities, early Panel agendas did appear to be officer led but this is also improving. Members are now recognising their role, picking up the current focus of the public and the media, networking within their authorities and using the Police and Crime Plan as a focus.

I sense that the Panel are now finding their feet, and that they also feel that the PCC has been in post for over a year and should be accountable. References to the previous regime or a lack of detailed knowledge are no longer acceptable to the Panel, and there is more challenge which is good.

(ii) As well as continuing with the examination of key areas of the Police and Crime Plan, in the coming year the Panel should focus on the impact of any budget decisions/commitments made when the Precept is presented. If additional funding is going towards a particular objective, are the performance improvements being achieved? Are efficiencies being achieved without reducing performance? What are the real impacts of reductions? etc etc

(iii) I still think that there is more scope for Panel members to be seen to be representing/putting forward views from their home authorities and this should be developed more, possibly with support from the officer group. This will then be reflected in greater participation in the formal Panel meetings. Greater awareness and attendance by the public would also help to focus the meetings."

Local government / political reporter, East Anglian Daily Times / Ipswich Star, Paul Geater:

"I only attended one police and crime panel, in October. The meeting was very different to "normal" political committees – but did allow a good level of questioning of the PCC and senior officers on specific issues on the agenda – I was at the meeting to report on the issue of sexual offence figures.

I did feel it would have been useful to have the senior officers at the meeting slightly earlier – there were times when issues were being raised which the PCC said were more operational and the presence of a senior officer might have been able to come up with a rapid answer and allowed the meeting to move on quicker.

Overall, though, I felt the meeting was very productive.”

Contacts and Further Information

If you would like further information about the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel please visit the website at <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-community/working-in-partnership/police-and-crime-panel>, or contact Suffolk County Council, on Telephone: 01473 265119, email: committee.services@suffolk.gov.uk.

Glossary

CoPaCC	‘Comparing Police and Crime Commissioners’ (http://copacc.org.uk/)
LGA	Local Government Association (http://www.local.gov.uk/)
Panel	The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PCP	Police and Crime Panel